

## **Speech to Brisbane city Council**

### **BANYO SCIP**

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2009**

Thank you Madam Chair, I'd like to talk about the Banyo Suburban Centre Improvement Project.

Banyo area is doing it pretty tough at the moment, the Banyo Shopping Centre certainly is being affected by the current economic climate. Madam Chair there's been a number of redundancies with large employers in the area recently, and the shopkeepers there are doing it pretty tough I must say. They're competing against Westfield Chermside, they're competing against Centro Toombul, and they're also competing against Nundah which has been a great success in recent years as a result of the SCIP that was done by Lord Mayor Jim Soorley in 2002.

So Madam Chair, Banyo Suburban Centre Improvement Project is something that's badly needed in the Banyo area, the shopping centre certainly is looking run-down. Unfortunately because of the current economic climate, the business owners and the property owners don't seem to have a lot of money to be spending on actually doing up their premises at the moment.

At the moment we're in the middle of the voting process for the SCIP. As Councillors would know, a majority of property owners who will be affected by the Benefited Area Levy must vote in favour of it. Madam Chair, I understand a couple of years ago, the rules changed so that not only do a majority have to be in favour of it, those who don't vote, are counted as no votes. That certainly changed since the Nundah SCIP.

So Madam Chair, it's been very tough work, working on the property owners to get them – to convince them to vote for the SCIP under the economic circumstances, where they've got to pay considerably higher rates over the next 10 years.

I've sent them all four letters, met with them, and Councillor COOPER has been assisting as well. Councillor COOPER and I met with the property owners on a night with Council Officers. I've been continuing to speak with them, I've been ringing them, the Council Officers have been talking to them as well. Lots of emails have been exchanged.

I really want to say how hard the SCIP team are working to get those property owners to vote in favour of the SCIP, especially Scott Chaseling and Paul Songhurst.

Madam Chair, however I'm a little bit concerned. So far seven votes have come in out of the 17 properties. Four of those are in favour and three are opposed. I'm working on the ones that are opposed, hoping that they'll change their mind before the close of voting which is getting very close, this Thursday in fact.

As for two of the voters who are opposed, I'm working very hard and hopefully I might be able to turn them around. But Madam Chair, I am getting concerned that the vote is going to fall short, and I think that it's important that we all acknowledge why that might be.

The Council is putting up \$1.625 million into the project. The property owners are going to be asked to put back \$353,000 over 10 years in higher rates. So Council's actually putting in about \$1.3 million.

Madam Chair I'll work very hard between now and close of business on Thursday to try and get the vote up, but Madam Chair as I said, I am a bit concerned. Some of the property owners are very hard to contact, or we don't have their phone numbers. Writing to them and trying to track down their email addresses and their phone contacts is quite difficult.

But Madam Chair, hopefully the vote will get up, but I am concerned it might not. Now if that's the case, I would like to appeal to the LORD MAYOR, because Council is prepared to put in \$1.625 million into the project, \$353,000 to be recovered. Now Madam Chair, if the vote doesn't get up, I would hope that the LORD MAYOR might consider to still spend money in the Banyo Shopping Area in the public space. He's not compelled to, I will not criticise him if he doesn't, because the SCIP rules are quite clear, that there needs to be a majority of owners in favour of the SCIP to go ahead.

But Madam Chair I would appeal to the LORD MAYOR, if the vote doesn't get up, that some money is put aside for the public space in Banyo.

I'll give the reason why that's the case. Over the last few years, property owners, members of the public, businesses have been approaching me and approaching Council to fix up some of the public space. When those approaches come forward, naturally they go off to Local Asset Services and Madam Chair, the managers have come back to me and said we don't really want to spend money on footpaths at Banyo. We don't want to put planter boxes in that have been requested. We don't want to put trees as requested, we don't want to put in bench seats that are requested; because the SCIP's coming.

Well Madam Chair if the SCIP doesn't come, I think that Council still does have a responsibility to look after the shopping centre.

But as I said before Madam Chair, the property owners know what the rules are as far as the SCIP's concerned, but I would like to think that if the vote doesn't get up, that there might be some room in the LORD MAYOR's budget. We know that there's \$1.625 million already committed in the budget coming up. The LORD MAYOR's made that quite clear. I would hope if the vote doesn't get up, that at least some of that money will still go to the Banyo Shopping Centre.

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