



with Mayor Bill Shannon

Council decision on library well received

THE decision by the Cassowary Coast Regional Council to apply for funding for a replacement library for Innisfail has been well received by the community.

Both Federal and State Government Members of Parliament have openly supported this project and hopefully we will be successful when the Federal Government announces the successful applicants. The library is the last of the community assets affected by Cyclone Larry not to be restored and the replacement will also provide much needed additional community space and facilities. The library is proposed to be built on council land beside and to the rear of the Shire Hall. The other project considered for this funding was the Mission Beach pool, to be built at Marc's Park, the only suitable site, with the other considered areas eliminated for a variety of reasons.

Mission Beach is the only community of its size in Queensland that does not have a swimming pool and its residents pay high rates and have relatively few facilities. The increasing danger from stingers is a critical safety factor.

Council deliberately and openly progressed both projects so that last minute problems would not leave council without a project to submit.

As the projects were being developed by consultants and community input sought, it became increasingly clear that both were well deserving of support.

The decision by council reflects a win/win outcome. With the library to be submitted for federal funding and the pool for state funding. In both cases a contribution of approximately \$1 million from ratepayers will be required, plus the use of existing council land.

Both projects will require modest annual cash funding. The significant cost to council will be the depreciation charges on the capital assets.

The cash contributions to the library are in fact the proceeds from the sale of the cyclone damaged building and the insurance payout, so this new facility would be achieved very economically.

This council has set a high standard with regard to charging depreciation and running balanced budgets. The provision of these assets will mean therefore that efficiencies will need to be realised, or other savings made, otherwise rates will need to increase.

The level of service expected by the community always comes at a cost and that is why council first needed to be satisfied that both the library and the pool were worthwhile projects, widely supported by the community.

If both these projects are funded, no community in the Cassowary Coast region should feel disadvantaged. Cardwell is getting sewerage. Tully is getting the \$6 million Multi Purpose Centre. Innisfail will have had the facilities damaged by Cyclone Larry restored to better than pre Larry condition and the water and sewerage infrastructure backlog substantially addressed. Mission Beach will be getting their long awaited pool.

So hopefully the library funding will be forthcoming in April 2010 and through council budget deliberations and Sport and Recreation funding, in October 2010, the Mission Beach pool can also be commenced.