

RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC CRISIS. COUNCILLOR SAYS WE CAN SOFTEN THE BLOW.

This may be a national and international pandemic, but Noosa Councillor Brian Stockwell believes Local Government can play a major role in softening the blow to our economy.

Councillor Stockwell says Noosa Council can urgently bring forward some of the spending that might usually be delivered over a longer period. He says “Federal and State Governments are not the only ones able to deliver a stimulus package. We can also do it much closer to home.”

The veteran Councillor and planner said the pandemic will hit local economies like ours very hard, with our reliance on tourism, hospitality and casual work.

Cr Stockwell released an action plan of his top priorities;

- Increase the local effect of Federal and State stimulus by channelling it quickly into local, temporary employment initiatives.
- Bring forward Noosa infrastructure jobs that are of a size and nature suited for local contractors in order to generate local jobs.
- Develop a local employment initiative in collaboration with Noosa training providers, existing Skilling Queensland providers (e.g. Noosa Training Centre and Landcare) and community service providers. This should be aimed at temporary employment for people who may usually work in hospitality and other sectors now laying off workers.
- Accelerating bushfire recovery actions, providing home assistance to the elderly, increasing attention to weed removal and rehabilitation in Council natural areas, waterways and beaches and maintaining and upgrading the trail and walking path network may be just some of the types of projects suitable for such an employment initiative.

Councillor Stockwell says recent years of prudent budget management by Noosa Council have given them room to eat into cash reserves.

He said “I believe that in the coming months providing meaningful livelihoods for retrenched workers in our community is more important than a budget surplus. We are talking about local lives and jobs.”

Councillor Stockwell says all local leaders need to work tirelessly to protect Noosa in the challenging months ahead.

“The road ahead is a rocky one. We need to keep experienced, level heads working very hard to coordinate our response to this calamity, to represent all of our community and to stay in front of a very fast-moving crisis.”