



Whitsundays future looking bright



From the desk of...

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Just recently, the Mayor of the Whitsundays, Jennifer Whitney and the Whitsunday Regional Council released the budget for the 2015/16 financial year. For a change, councils financial position reads very positively.

Some major points from the budget information newsletter are:

- Council has managed to deliver a low cost general rate increase of 2%, while also removing the \$100 infrastructure levy.
- Through the Mayor's Budget a robust capital works program will be delivered which will see \$28.4 million spent on infrastructure across the region. This will ensure community assets valued in excess of \$1.3 billion are managed on a whole-of-life basis to ensure they are conserved, while also catering for future growth. The community now has the ability to step forward with confidence and positivity after a difficult period where Council had to realign how it operates and deliver a renewed focus. This focus has driven the organisation forward on the basis of fiscal responsibility and discipline in expenditure.
- Council has strived to reduce debt and has been able to now reduce debt to its lowest level since the 2010/11 financial year.
- Debt reduction now provides Council with flexibility and choice, with future loan borrowings being planned well in advance and undertaken in a responsible manner. Regional growth and development is the key as our region enters a period of potential high growth, with development in tourism, agriculture, resources as well as transport and logistics all at varying stages of planning and approval.
- Collectively, these projects represent in excess of \$4 billion in new projects which will provide our region with much needed jobs and prosperity.
- In addition to these important strategic documents, Council-led projects such as the Whitsunday Coast Airport International Export Hub is a catalytic enabler to positively grow our region.
- The Mayor's Budget will strengthen Council's financial position, by delivering an operating surplus of \$15,803,705, a retained surplus of \$802,341 and a cash position projected to stabilise at \$30 million, restoring and cash backing our reserves. The 2015/16 budget is a balanced and responsible budget that will deliver our key priorities to ensure this Council continues to be strong and sustainable.

A little kitchen magic

Today's kitchen is a place for gathering, eating, cooking, relaxing, entertaining. If you've decided to completely replace your kitchen and see yourself as a budding kitchen planner, here are some of the tried and tested rules of how to design a kitchen.

The golden triangle. At the basis of a functional kitchen design is layout. Consider the three most important functions within a kitchen – food preparation, cooking and storage – and you have the three most important areas – sink, stove and fridge. These three areas form a triangle within which the majority of kitchen traffic will flow. If the triangle is too small, people will be tripping over each other. If the triangle is too large, cooking will become tiring. Ideally the combined distance between the three areas should be less than ten metres.

Island lifestyle. If your kitchen is large enough, an island bench is a great way to make it a place to socialise as well as cook. An island fitted with a sink can also enhance the functionality of the kitchen's golden triangle.

Make your benchtop tops. Have a look in magazines for some kitchen ideas. The modern look is all about natural textures with thick edges. Marble, granite, stone composites, polished timber and poured concrete.

Stock up on storage. You can never have too much storage in the kitchen. Consider the easiest way to get to those things you use the most. Drawers maximize storage space by making it easy to access places otherwise hard to reach. Deep drawers are perfect for pots and pans. Shallow drawers are great for cutlery.

Streamline. No more wasted space collecting dust. Cupboards should reach the ceiling or bulkhead. Benchtops

should remain flat, sleek and uncluttered with few visible joins and no appliances out on permanent display. Consider disguising your dishwasher behind a door in the same material as the cupboards. Keep your handles low key, or even remove them altogether by using invisible 'finger pulls' cut into the edge of the cupboard door. Smooth lines and clear benches give the feeling of openness to your kitchen.

Colour (but not too much of it). Neutral colours are calming, won't date and they go with anything. Light colours or natural wood can visually enlarge a space. Keep darker colours to the bottom row of cupboards. While dark colours make an impact, they can overwhelm small spaces. For that creative burst of colour, the best place is the splashback or the front panel of island benches.

Switch on to lighting. Good lighting should be functional and add an element of style. Every work surface should be well lit by appropriate lighting. Over-bench lighting is great for your vision, and the atmosphere of the kitchen.

Courtesy The Reno Kings.



Vietnamese Spring Rolls



Ingredients

50g rice vermicelli noodles
8 spring roll rice wrappers
8 cooked prawns
A bunch of mint and coriander, chopped
4 lettuce leaves, finely chopped
1 carrot, peeled and cut into small thin strips

Method

Cook the rice vermicelli for about 5 mins in boiling water before draining and setting to one side.

Submerge the rice paper wrappers in warm water one at a time and lay flat on the work surface.

Add a prawn, some thinly sliced carrot and lettuce, leaving a gap around the sides. Fold the bottom edge of the paper so it is covering the filling and then roll as tight as you can.

Serve with a dipping sauce.

Colour schemes and ideas

The right colour combination can instantly transform a space. From cool whites and neutral shades to dark contrasts and daring brights, there are plenty of ways you can use colour to bring your home to life. Look through paint company's Colour Schemes and Ideas for inspiration to get you started.

Courtesy British Paints



What's your home worth?

The latest percentage price changes published for houses by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The weighted average price of established houses for the eight capital cities has increased 1.6 per cent since the previous quarter and there has been a 6.9 per cent annual price increase.

m
melbourne

Q'rtley change +0.6%
Annual change +4.7%

s
sydney

Q'rtley change +3.1%
Annual change +13.1%

b
brisbane

Q'rtley change +0.4%
Annual change +3.9%

a
adelaide

Q'rtley change +0.7%
Annual change +2.5%

p
perth

Q'rtley change -0.1%
Annual change -0.3%

h
Hobart

Q'rtley change +0.5%
Annual change +1.9%

c
canberra

Q'rtley change +1.1%
Annual change +3.0%

d
darwin

Q'rtley change -0.2%
Annual change -0.4%

Treating property investing as a business



The biggest mistake people make is not treating property investing as a business.

It is really important to have a business plan and build a good team around you of people who can assist you make the right decisions.

Conduct repairs quickly. A simple coat of paint, removal of a wall or a more elaborate renovation can make a big difference to the value of your asset. In addition to the capital improvement your yield can be increased substantially by repairs and improvements that tenants will pay extra rent for.

Depreciation schedule. A depreciation schedule is the schedule of items that can be depreciated at a certain rate allowing you to claim a tax deduction against your taxable income. The reality is that an investment of a few hundred dollars can literally save you many thousands of dollars in tax, even for an older property you have just purchased.

Increase rents regularly. You should regularly review your rents and ensure they are at market levels. A small regular review is much better than an infrequent review where the increase is so high that it shocks the tenant and they move out of the property.

Focus on the bigger picture. If you are serious about your property investing you should consider building a portfolio. In order to do this you need to be able to leverage the equity you have in your property. The higher your equity and rental returns, generally the more you can borrow.

Pay down non-deductible debt first. Most experienced investors will know that it can be tax effective to pay down non-tax deductible debt before tax deductible.

Contact our Property Management department on 07 4948 8500 for any assistance you may need with your investment portfolio.

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Thinking of selling, call the Whitsunday team



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