

13 September 2011

Green light for new office accommodation

Indigo Shire Council at its monthly meeting tonight has agreed to develop much-needed office accommodation for staff by extending and refurbishing existing facilities at Yackandandah and Beechworth.

The issue of office accommodation has been under consideration for some years by both the previous Council and the current Council, and various approaches to resolve the lack of suitable working premises have been considered in that time.

Indigo Mayor Cr Ali Pockley said the Victoria State Government had promised funding of \$2 million for capital works over four years and it had been confirmed that this funding could be put towards new Council office accommodation.

“On top of this, the State Government has also committed \$4 million over four years for roads and bridges, so Indigo Council is in an ideal situation now to resolve two pressing issues – the urgent need for better offices and funding for our roads and bridges,” Cr Pockley said.

Cr Pockley said that a report by Charles Kwong and Associates indicated the maximum amount Indigo Shire Council could borrow for office accommodation was up to \$5 million.

“This funding from the State Government means Council will only have to borrow up to \$2.5 million for the office accommodation project,” Cr Pockley said. “This is a much more palatable position for us to be in. The accommodation issue has to be resolved because it is only getting worse, and this is the most affordable way to do it.”

“In the past two financial years Council has delivered 90% of the Capital Works budget – a vast improvement on the 30% in the years before that. And this extra \$4 million for roads and bridges over four years will mean we can be more proactive and provide even better results in this area.”

Cr Pockley said factors leading to this decision included:

- Inadequate office space causing inefficiencies
- A need for a more efficient and effective workplace
- Desire to provide better customer service
- Poor conditions of the offices in Yackandandah (Wellsford Street building is passed its usable life, Ardesville building needs to be preserved for heritage reasons)
- Limited office space for future growth
- OH&S non compliance in some of the offices
- Escalating maintenance cost of current offices.

The decision involves demolishing the front office in Yackandandah and one building in Wellsford Street as well as The Shed meeting room, constructing a new office on the site and refurbishing the heritage-listed Ardesville site fronting High Street. In Beechworth, the existing office space will be extended behind the Memorial Hall.

Cr Pockley said it was expected design work would be finalised by May next year, with construction starting soon after that and finishing by May 2013.

END

For more: Mayor, Cr Ali Pockley, 0448 803 411