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New Council library and admin centre moves forward

The development of a new Fraser Coast Regional Council library and administration building in the Hervey Bay City Centre has taken a step forward with the project now moving to the detailed design phase.

At its meeting this week, Council endorsed the ‘functional brief’ and concept design prepared by architecture firm Group GSA, which will now be refined into a detailed design prior to construction starting in early 2023.

Cr David Lee said the functional brief outlined plans for a much larger building than originally envisaged to ensure it met the needs of our growing population for decades to come, and acted as a catalyst for further economic development and business investment.

“Council is partnering with the Australian Government through the Hinkler Regional Deal to breathe new life and opportunities into the Hervey Bay City Centre,” he said.

“In developing a new Hervey Bay Library and Council Administration Centre incorporating a Disaster Resilience Centre, we want to create an iconic building that sets the benchmark for business, investors and developers.

“The library and Council administration building will be a central civic hub where individuals, professionals and families can come to learn, network, socialize and benefit from Council services.

“The building will also include a new Disaster Resilience Centre, empowering Council to deliver a coordinated frontline response leading up to and during natural disasters and crises.”

Cr Denis Chapman said the increased scope for the building meant increased costs, while COVID-19 impacts on the supply chain and building price rises had also impacted on cost estimates since the Hinkler Regional Deal was first announced three years ago.

“The current Hervey Bay library has a floor space of 1685 square metres, which is too small for our population now and doesn’t meet Australian and Queensland library building standards,” he said.

“The new library will be more than double this size at 3650 square metres with a range of modern, community spaces to ensure we can cater for our growing population over the next 20 years.

“Council has also decided to combine the library and administration centre in the one building, to bring more Council staff together from multiple sites into the one building, and to integrate parking with the new building.

“Using innovative design principles, the new Hervey Bay Library and Council Administration Centre incorporating a Disaster Resilience Centre will maximise the available space to benefit all users for decades to come.

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“While more work needs to be done as part of the detailed design phase, it is estimated the total cost of the Hervey Bay City Centre redevelopment project will be just over \$100 million, with \$40 million being provided from the Australian Government through the Hinkler Regional Deal.”

Cr Jade Wellings said bringing hundreds of Council staff together from multiple sites into the one building would help provide more efficient services for the community.

“Council wants the Hervey Bay City Centre in Pialba to be the city’s primary destination for commercial activity, cultural engagement, education and social recreation, and the establishment of a new library and Council administration building will help achieve that goal,” she said.

“A City Centre Master Plan is in the process of being finalized while there will be significant work done to prepare a transport and traffic management strategy as we build a better city centre and civic precinct in the heart of Hervey Bay.”

After the detailed design is complete, Council anticipates calling for tenders for the building works by October 2022, with construction starting in about March 2023 and the new building is due to be completed by December 2024.

The building work will be funded through a mix of Australian Government funding (\$40 million), Council land sales (estimated at \$5.3 million) and Council borrowings (estimated at \$58.48 million).

Additional background

The Hinkler Regional Deal for the Bundaberg-Hervey Bay region is an Australian Government initiative in partnership with the local Councils that seeks to build on the area’s strengths to provide economic growth and long-term employment.

Group GSA is an award winning national architecture and design firm that has worked on major projects such as shopping centres, business precincts, schools, banks and libraries throughout Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia.

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