

# CBD vision gaining momentum with businesses and shoppers

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by Pam McKay USE THIS CONTENT

L-R Russell Claus (RRC CBD Revitalisation Program Coordinator) with Bronwyn Fenech are ready to roll up their sleeves and get to work revitalising the city's Business District. Photo: Chris Ison / The Morning Bulletin

Chris Ison

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BRONWYN Fenech owns a gurney - and she's not afraid to use it. And use it she does to keep her patch in Rockhampton's CBD spick-and-span. Ms Fenech operates her website and graphic design studio from a rented building in East St.

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She takes pride in maintaining the area and her will to do it was reinforced by Gilbert Rochecouste, a leading authority in placemaking who visited the city in August.

He was engaged by the Rockhampton Regional Council to create a place vision for the CBD.

Mr Rochecouste said Rockhampton had the makings of a smaller scale Melbourne, and told property owners and retailers they had to own and drive the revitalisation of the city heart.

Ms Fenech embraced the message, as did dozens of other key stakeholders who then signed on to help deliver the vision.

Late yesterday, about 35 of them met with council representatives, including planning manager Russell Claus, to formulate an action plan.

Ms Fenech said the time was right to revitalise the CBD, given major projects such as the \$65million Empire riverfront apartment hotel were nearing completion.

And, she said, it had to be a team effort.

"We really need to clean and beautify the CBD. Building owners need to take pride in their buildings and tenants do too," she said.

"Little things can make a big difference and that can include something as simple as cleaning the fascia of a building.

"Working with council, we can achieve a great result for everyone."

**Rockhampton CBD revitalise project - art:** Rockhampton artists have set up a pop-up art studio in a shop in the Kern Arcade, East St, as part of the revitalisation of the CBD project. Here is some of the activity in the shop.

Ms Fenech said that a more attractive CBD would inspire confidence and help to attract more investors, businesses and visitors.

Mr Claus is impressed with the positive feedback flowing from the CBD since Mr Rochecouste's visit.

"They see more hope than they have had in a long, long time," he said.

"We have excellent foundations in Rockhampton but it will take time to see the physical transformation, the transformation in how people interact with the CBD and attitudes in general as to the value of the CBD.

"It's like any journey; it begins with one step. We've already taken a few steps. As long as we maintain forward momentum, we will get fit enough to run faster."

#### **RIVERBANK HIGHRISES**

The Empire, the \$65million riverfront apartment hotel, is set to open in mid-November. It boasts 98 hotel apartments, 40 luxury residential apartments, and three restaurants.

The \$22million Southbank on Victoria will be completed by December. It stands eight storeys high and has 55 architecturally designed apartments.

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