



EMBARGOED UNTIL MIDNIGHT TONIGHT, 11/11/2013

STARTS

Council Saves Bus Service

South Burnett Regional Council intends to provide support in this year's budget to the Brisbane Bus Lines to retain the Bus Service to Murgon.

Mayor Wayne Kratzmann met with representatives of the Bus Line on Friday where he outlined the importance of the transport service to the South Burnett and adjacent regions of Cherbourg, Toowoomba and Somerset. The Brisbane Bus Lines service does not attract any subsidy and the Mayor was advised that it runs at a substantial loss for the company.

Mayor Kratzmann will put a resolution to the next meeting of council on Wednesday 20 November 2013 to subsidise the Transport Service to the 30 June 2014, which will give Council and the community time to submit a proposal to the State and Federal governments. The Mayor has had discussions with all Councillors who fully support this plan in principle.

Council has also contacted neighbouring Council's who would have been affected by the closure for support. Mayor Kratzmann said, "Whatever the outcome of the decision of neighbouring Councils, South Burnett was committed to the service being retained".

Mayor Kratzmann said, "It was imperative to act immediately as once a service ceased running, it would have been a huge task to get it operating again".

"The next course of action would be to form a working committee made up of Council and community members, representatives of Brisbane Bus Lines and key transport stakeholders to put forward a submission to the government," said Mayor Kratzmann.

Brisbane Bus Lines Senior Director Ian Mitchell said "it was refreshing to have discussions with Mayor Kratzmann on Friday about the difficulties the service has been facing over several years. It had seemed to us that we were a forgotten essential service."

Mr Mitchell went on to explain that the decision to cease services had been personally very difficult. His Grandfather settled on property outside Murgon in 1918 and the family still holds that property today. Son James (4th generation) volunteered with Blaze Aid for six (6) months helping locals with repairs after the recent floods.

Mr Mitchell continued, "In the end though, if the numbers don't add up no amount of personal attachment to the service will pay the bills. The efforts of local Councils, especially South Burnett which has taken a lead role is most welcome and I look forward to working with Mayor Kratzmann and all interested parties to maintain the services. Locals know what is needed."

Council will take the lead to have the bus service retained on a permanent basis, but this will only be achieved through the combined efforts of all stakeholders.

ENDS