

Development investment to

Research reveals Gold Coast infrastructure charges are much higher than other cities

had something when he said last year that he'd be better off taking his development investment money to Ipswich rather than continue to do battle with Gold Coast city bureaucrats.

New independent research commissioned by SDGCI reveals infrastructure charges imposed on new development here are on average up to 200 per cent higher than Brisbane, Logan City, Ipswich City, Tweed Heads and Townsville.

GOLD Coast City Council appears to be working hard to chase development business investment away from its own municipality and into the welcome arms of an unlikely rival – Ipswich.

That's the way it seems to peak infrastructure body Sustainable Development Gold Coast Inc (SDGCI).

The heritage-rich city just happens to hold 43 per cent of southeast Queensland's available industrial land sites and the welcome mat is out for developers – Gold Coast-based ones too.

SDGCI president Greg Short feels that Coast businessman Craig Gore may have

Town planner Mr Short said Brisbane-based Place Design Group research compiled in a 70-page fact-filled comparison of local government new infrastructure charges showed some alarming differences.

"In just one example of a hard-hitting highly credible study – one about shopping centre site investment – it demonstrated that a comparable 5000sq m neighbourhood shopping centre on a 15,000sqm site in the Coomera Town Centre would incur a Gold Coast city infrastructure charge of \$7.1 million," he said.



Ipswich holds much of southeast Queensland's available industrial land



advertising promotion

charges drive savvy rival city

"Note this would be a relatively small development, not a major one."

He said the same development on comparable land at Rosewood in Ipswich City would on average only incur upfront charges of \$389,000.

"So it's not hard for a development company to see its best return on investment would come from going to the heavily populated Ipswich area to provide closer convenience services to that part of the city," said Mr Short.

"It seems incredible that Gold Coast City Council has to milk new development so viciously in contrast to Brisbane and Ipswich when the city has such a huge concentrated high-value rating base from the famous property market for its tourism industry and upmarket housing estates on the beach, golf and waterfronts."

Mr Short said the 70-page dossier was 'very expensive' to commission and was an essential investment by SDGCI to produce factual evidence that the Gold Coast Council had got it wrong.

"Brisbane city, for example, shows the folly of the Gold Coast city's supposed research. The equivalent new shopping centre development at Rochedale would incur infrastructure charges of \$3.4 million whereas the subsidised area of Woollongabba it is \$2.9 million," he said.

"How is that similar to Coomera's \$7.1 million developer contribution on a comparable site?"

Mr Short said the comparison study was done to a set formula that allowed real site comparisons in five different local authority regions and entailed detailed sampling for development of industrial land, office blocks, shopping centres, sub-divisions, apartments, duplexes and single dwelling housing.

"This is real evidence the council cannot, and should not, ignore if it wants to encourage sustainable development of the city," he said.

• Brian Harrower



Picture: Kerri Shaw

Above: Town planner Greg Short and property analyst Colleen Coyne with a copy of the damning report on the Gold Coast's infrastructure charges

