



Monday, July 20

New Whitsunday ROC Executive Officer helps embrace digital economy

HELPING the region embrace the digital economy is one of the top priorities of Whitsunday ROC's new Executive Officer Heather Norris.

The Whitsunday ROC (Regional Organisation of Councils), representing Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday local government areas, had identified the need to develop a digital economy strategy, said Ms Norris, who has taken up the role.

The strategy would ready industry, business, government agencies and communities to maximise opportunities, she said.

"This includes preparation to take optimal advantage of the high-speed broadband to be delivered by companies such as the NBN."

The digital economy is the global network of economic and social activities enabled by platforms such as the internet, mobile and sensor networks.

"It is therefore a global marketplace underpinned by online systems, processes and services which are accessible to any individual or organisation for the purpose of transacting electronically," said Ms Norris.

"This will provide enormous opportunities for local government, health, education, business and industry to be a catalyst for change, as well as strengthening the existing economic base and facilitating diversification."

The Whitsunday ROC has endorsed the strategy and has assumed responsibility for implementation of the strategy and action plan across the Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday regions.

A reference group is being formed, with representatives across key business and industry groups to provide advice on implementation of the strategy.

Whitsunday ROC chair, Mackay Mayor Deirdre Comerford, said the organisation's mayors had welcomed Ms Norris to the Executive Officer role.

"Heather is well known in the region and the ROC is very happy to have such an experienced person aboard," Cr Comerford said.

"One of her initial projects is the digital economy strategy, which the ROC is very passionate about."

PHOTO CAPTION: [Whitsunday ROC's new Executive Officer Heather Norris \(second from right\) with chair, Mackay Mayor Deirdre Comerford \(right\), and \(from left\) Whitsunday Mayor Jenny Whitney and Isaac Mayor Anne Baker.](#)

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