

Do you qualify for once-over?

WARANA surveyors and town planners Goodwin Midson entered 2011 refreshed, energised and focused on a new operational direction.

And they have local marketing firm Chilli as well as the State Government's Jobs Assist program to thank.

Chilli is a Jobs Assist consultant and has worked with 30 local businesses over the past 11 months. Those have ranged from automotive, legal and accountancy to construction, medical, tourism, retail and real estate.

"Each has seen the benefit of having a fresh pair of eyes come into their business and provide mentoring, advice and support," Chilli's Strategic Development Manager Carlee Driscoll said.

"Essentially the driving force behind the scheme is about the preservation and maintenance of jobs in mid to large sized businesses in key regional areas.

"The Sunshine Coast is one of these key areas that are considered vulnerable.

"The scheme suits all different types of businesses on the Sunshine Coast.

"The eligibility and nature of this scheme does make it ideal for businesses who operate in industries that have been knocked around by the GFC and other external factors. Most of our clients working through the program are good strong businesses but they have been impacted by



REFRESHED: The Goodwin Midson team focused and re-energised for 2011 are (from left) Wayne Keyworth, Ian Holt, Drew Westbrook and Rob Fulloon.

PHOTO: NICOLA BRANDER / 196692B

the economic downturn.

"The scheme is still running and we would certainly encourage local businesses to at least see if they qualify for the grant."

She said the two-phase program was geared towards providing practical outcomes to improve business, whether it was a marketing plan, strategies to take the business online, help with staff training or customer research.

"Now that we can look back over the projects we have been working

on, we can see positive changes to businesses who are now able to either better understand their business or customers, or those who now have a plan, a process or a structure that is enabling them to operate more efficiently or effectively than before."

Local Goodwin Midson Director Rob Fulloon said the company had already been Chilli clients but signed up for Jobs Assist on advice from their marketing officer.

"It was very good. It allowed us

to get advice on areas where we could improve our business – and ones that we typically wouldn't flag ourselves to put money into in this environment," he said.

"We are a company that doesn't do a lot of marketing, so Chilli gave us some good advice on how to better service our clients and expand our markets."

Mr Fulloon said the only cost to his business was taking his staff off line for two, two-hour meetings. The entire process from initial

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Phase 1 (offering up to \$3000) is a full business audit where the consultant reviews the whole business including financials, processes and structures. Chilli also includes a focus on staff culture, sales and marketing and customers. The ensuing report identifies key priority areas the business needs to work on to ensure they can sustain their business and therefore their workforce.

Phase 2 (offering up to \$5000) helps the business work on one or all of those priority areas. This enables businesses to tap into additional external resources that they wouldn't necessarily be able to find the budget for. DEEDI meets the costs through the grant scheme.

Criteria

You need to have a Queensland registered ABN, an operating base in an area considered vulnerable (such as the Sunshine Coast), 10 or more full time employees and an ability to demonstrate in their financials that they have seen a specified drop in working capital.

Contact DEEDI on 5451 6300

meetings through to an action plan took a few months.

The majority of the "leg work" is done by the consultant at no cost.

"I would absolutely recommend it. These new systems are aimed at hanging onto our existing, good clients and if we can do that, we will be able to hang onto our staff."