

Media Release

Wednesday 26 June 2024

Cassowary Coast 2024/25 Budget Tackles Unprecedented Depreciation Costs

Cassowary Coast Regional Council's 2024/2025 Budget was handed down at a Special (Budget) Meeting on Wednesday 26 June 2024.

Mayor Teresa Millwood presented her first budget for this term of Council, saying that she refused to accept a rate rise without forensically seeking cost savings first.

“I made a commitment to the community when I was voted Mayor earlier this year to keep this council focused on essential services of roads and rubbish, and to provide ratepayers with value for money,” Mayor Millwood said.

“This year our budget has been heavily impacted by inflation which has seen the cost of building roads and basic infrastructure increase substantially.

“Ambitious waste reduction targets set by the Queensland Government has increased our costs for waste and resource recovery operations by 30%.

“And a mandatory transport revaluation of Council’s roads, bridges and pathways has resulted in a whopping 13% increase in depreciation expense.”

By Australian Accounting Standards and performance measures set out by the Queensland Audit Office, councils must account for depreciation in its financial statements.

The 2024/25 Budget provides for \$103 million of expenditure for operations which is made up of:

- \$33 million for employee expenses
- \$33.8 million for materials and services
- \$36.3 million for depreciation

“This is by far the greatest amount of depreciation required to be accounted for within any of our Council’s prior budgets, representing one-third of our operational spend, and \$4.1 million more than last year’s budget,” Mayor Millwood said.

“Without intervention, these increased cost pressures would have resulted in an 10% rate rise which I refuse to accept, so we’ve been going through every line with a fine-tooth comb to find savings at every opportunity.

“Thankfully, through \$1 million in operational efficiencies we’ve been able to bring the minimum increase in residential general rates to 5%.

“I am deeply conscious of the effects of cost-of-living pressures. We have worked hard to keep the 5% discount for rates paid by the due date, and the pensioner discount of \$300 – one of the most generous in the state.

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“Council will continue to offer interest-free payment plans to residents who are in hardship.

“Council continues to invest in the Cassowary Coast’s natural environment and sustainability through the renewal of our biosecurity planning, the rollout of actions from our Cassowary Conservation Policy, coordination of a feral pig control program and a range of activities associated with the review of our Reef Guardian Council action plan.

“And I’m pleased to see kerbside recycling finally being provided to our community in 2025.”

The Budget invests in our future with a record \$70.4 million in essential capital investment, including:

- \$17.9 million towards CBD Revitalisation
- \$27.1 million for water and wastewater infrastructure
- \$11 million for road improvements, pathways, bridges, culverts and recreation areas
- \$5.2 million for stormwater drainage
- \$2.4 million for waste and resource recovery

“The renewal of our fundamental needs ensures our future prosperity. And thankfully, the Queensland and Australian Governments have come to the party in helping us deliver some of these projects through more than \$21 million in grant funding.

“We need to try and encourage people to come and live here, so we’re looking for ways to attract and support businesses and cultivate industry in the Cassowary Coast. To help do this, the budget allows for key community and economic development projects including a priority development area plan of Mourilyan Harbour and the launch of a Cassowary Coast Investment Prospectus.

“We’ll also continue to support our tourism industry, and our Community Grants and Support Program.

“To summarise, the 2024/25 Budget is underpinned by managing unprecedented cost pressures whilst delivering critical services and infrastructure in the interest of our community. While we feel the effects of being a small ratepayer base and how this impacts our economic pressures, we have to be thankful that we live in the best place on Earth – our one coast, Cassowary Coast.”

For more information about the 2024/25 Budget visit www.cassowarycoast.qld.gov.au/publications-and-media/budget