



## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to Bundaberg Regional Council's Budget for 2011/2012.

Every year seems to bring more challenges and this past 12 months has seen our region devastated by the worst flooding in over 60 years and seen the indirect impacts of the entire State of Queensland affected by natural disasters.

The personal cost of these events can never be fully measured, and while the financial impact on our community can be quantified, we as a region are likely to feel the effects of this disaster for many years to come.

This coming financial year, Council's capital works program is dominated by the largest ever budget allocation of over \$40 Million for transport infrastructure including reconstruction of many of the roads, bridges and culverts that were damaged in the recent floods. We expect that flood repair work for our road network will continue into 2013.

In recognition of the ongoing difficult economic climate and the increased financial pressure faced by our community, Council has retained the 10% discount for early payment on Net General Rates for all Ratepayers.

Eligible pensioners will see an increase in the Council Rebate from \$90 to \$110 per year.

As well as facing a flood damage bill of around \$50 Million, ongoing challenges continuing to face Council include:

- Increased operating costs to meet new standards in areas such as Environmental Compliance;
- Escalation in costs for utilities such as electricity and fuel, despite ongoing efforts to reduce consumption;
- The reduction in financial support from State and Federal Government; and
- Increasing community expectation in demand for new and higher levels of service.

In closing, I would like to again thank my fellow Councillors, Chief Executive Officer Peter Byrne, our Directors, Managers, Senior Officers and staff for their continued professionalism and cooperation in preparing this Budget.

**Cr. Lorraine Pyefinch, Mayor**



## BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

This has been one of the most challenging budgets since amalgamation and has been based around affordability and providing a framework for the long term financial viability of the region.

Council is committed to providing efficient, cost effective services and will be conducting an extensive review of the existing organisational structure over the next 12 months so we can remain sustainable into the future and minimise rate increases.

It is equally important to continue to invest in much needed infrastructure such as roads, water mains and sewerage to cater for the predicted growth.

The significant reduction and availability of State subsidies, which equates to millions of dollars every year, coupled with a cap on developer contributions, impacts on Council's ability to provide essential infrastructure.

### **Long Term Financial Forecast**

Council has adopted a Long Term Financial Forecast, which provides a blueprint for the future and sets out anticipated annual rate rises at a more affordable level.

The 10 year strategy looks to meet the expectations of the community and also provide prudent financial management. Council will ensure it continues to ease the cost of living pressures but also deliver key infrastructure to cater for future growth.

Council will continue to investigate ways to work smarter and more efficiently and maintain future loans at an appropriate level.

### **Budget Focus**

Council believes this is a responsible Budget which is essential to the effective functioning of our Region and helps ensure that the Bundaberg Region is an attractive and agreeable place to live and a great destination for visitors to enjoy.

Council is proud that our region has one of the lowest rates in regional Queensland, whilst still providing extensive services and value for money for our residents.

Providing key essential services and delivering sustainable infrastructure projects has been the focus of this year's Budget, whilst providing Ratepayers with the vast range of important community services.

Despite recent climatic events, Bundaberg Regional Council has provided funding to ensure that all our localities and public facilities are well maintained and meet the needs of our growing population.

### **Budget Overview**

- An average general rate increase of 4.85% for the whole region;
- An early payment discount of 10% off the Net General Rates.  
(NB: For Pensioners, this discount applies after the Pensioner Rebate is deducted.)
- Council's rebate for eligible pensioners will increase from \$90 to \$110 per annum;
- Utility Charge for Sewerage of \$536. Increased EPA requirements and community's expectations of stringent treatment standards has required an increase of 5% on last year;
- Utility Charge for Cleansing and Waste Management is \$273. This equates to \$3.50 for the collection and disposal of each bin and \$3.50 for the recycle bin collection, with its labour-intensive sorting and recycling, per collection; and
- Utility Charge for Water Access has a modest increase of 5% to \$352. The consumption charge has not increased for the rural and coastal communities. The former Bundaberg City residents' consumption charge will be in line with the rural and coastal communities.



### **Infrastructure**

Essential infrastructure such as roads, water and wastewater services form a large part of the \$101 million Capital Works Program.

Over \$40 million will be spent on transport infrastructure in the 2011-2012 Budget, focusing particularly on improving and maintaining footpaths and our road and drainage network, essential to supporting continued growth.

Major initiatives include:

- \$20 million on flood damaged roads;
- \$2 million on additional works to flood damaged roads;
- \$5 million on bitumen resealing and overlays, and gravel re-sheeting;
- \$1.8 million for the Airport link road;
- \$1.6 million for the Geramanbulyan Creek Bridge on the Wallaville Goondoon Road;
- \$250,000 for upgrading a section of Barolin Esplanade;

- \$150,000 for the upgrade to a section of the Coonarr Road;
- \$675,000 Shell Street Burnett Heads Upgrade;
- \$275,000 Hume Street upgrade and drainage;
- \$400,000 for Traffic Signals at Maryborough and Crofton Streets;
- \$800,000 for upgrading of Targo Street between George Street and Normanby Square;
- \$400,000 for the upgrade of a section of Clayton Road;
- \$600,000 for Preliminary Drainage in Bundaberg Port area Burnett Heads (Stage 1);
- \$750,000 for Drainage improvements in the Beach Milieu Estate;
- \$500,000 for Drainage Design and to commence works at Sandpiper Grove, Moore Park Beach;
- Additional \$2 million for drainage improvement to many areas across the region;
- \$725,000 for installation of Pathways - Mary Kincross Park coastal pathway upgrades, Hughes Road, Osprey Drive, Sylvan Drive Moore Park, Bundaberg East, Norville, Childers Schools, and connecting Hinkler Avenue with the river pathway.

## Water and Wastewater

Water and Wastewater Highlights of this Budget include:

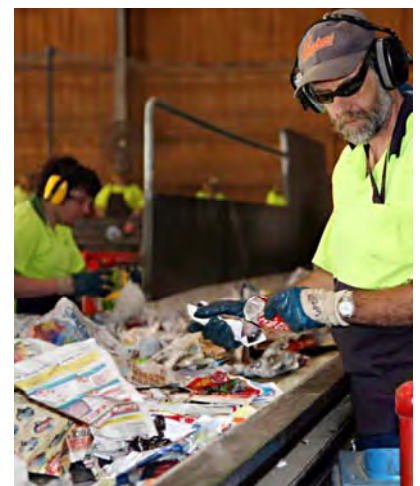
- \$11.6 million for Sewer Plant and reticulation upgrades including:
  - \$500,000 for Bourbong Street Sewer pump station upgrade;
  - \$1 million for Sewerage pump station and rising main in the Bargara / Coral Cove scheme;
  - \$2 million for the Commencement of Stage 1 of 2 at the Gin Gin Sewerage Plant Upgrade;
  - \$2 million for commencement of Millbank Sewerage plant upgrade;
  - \$2 million for commencement of Thabeban Sewerage plant upgrade;
- \$9.8 million for Water Treatment Plant upgrades and Reticulation including;
  - \$3 million for the implementation of the fluoridation program as required by State Government legislation;
  - \$3.5 million for the construction of a 6 megalitre reservoir at the Hummock.

## Waste and Recycling Services

Over \$15 million has been allocated to deliver waste management services to residents and to facilitate further efficiencies in refuse disposal processes to meet new State Government legislative requirements.

The Budget provides for:

- \$4.7 million for Refuse and Recycling Collections;
- \$6.7 million for Operation of Refuse Disposal Facilities/Transfer Stations across the Region;
- \$250,000 for Operation of Material Recycling Facility;
- \$1 million to commence construction of the next cell at the regional land fill site; and



- \$500,000 to install weighbridges at University Drive and Qunaba refuse collection sites.

### **Parks and beaches**

Our parks and beaches are some of our most popular recreation areas across the Region and Council is committed to providing, maintaining and developing them for current and future generations. Over \$9 million has been allocated towards maintaining public areas, parklands and foreshore areas, including extensive mowing and tree maintenance programs and maintaining play equipment and shelters.



Substantial capital works include:

- \$370,000 for upgrade and new works on the foreshore and beaches;
- Over \$1.2 million for replacement and upgrade works in parks and associated facilities across the region;
- \$100,000 for improvements at cemeteries across the region.



### **Community Services**

Council has given a strong commitment to community development, participation and service delivery by allocating \$16.3 million towards community, cultural and sporting facilities around the region.

Community and Social Services Highlights include:

- \$2.7 million for Library Services operations;
- \$1.2 million for operation of Art Centres;
- \$5.3 million for Community Care, HACC and Respite Centre operations across the region;
- \$1.35 million for the construction of eight (8) Seniors Units at Margaret Olsen Place; and
- \$450,000 for a major upgrade of the Bundaberg Library facility which is the service hub for the libraries across the region.

## **Natural Resources**

Initiatives to preserve our unique natural assets are also provided for in this Budget, with funding allocated towards the development of Foreshore and Reserve Management Plans and projects, together with development of sustainable operational practices aimed at reducing Council's carbon footprint.

Specific initiatives include:

- \$600,000 for Natural Resource Projects and Management;
- \$60,000 for Waterways management; and
- \$800,000 for Land protection measures.

## **Planning and Development**

Council continues to strive to improve its development assessment methods to provide a more streamlined service for the development and construction industries. The introduction of electronic lodgment services for Development Applications will enhance service delivery and approval response times.

Key operational expenses include:

- \$1.3 million for Sustainability Planning;
- \$3.6 million for Planning and Development Assessment including commencing work on the New Regional Town Planning instrument; and
- \$2.1 million for Building and Plumbing Services.

## **Economic Development**

Council is committed to facilitating the economic development of the region and the promotion of its many attractions to potential investors and tourists alike. Significant funding has been allocated for:

- The completion of Stage 2 of the Gin Gin Streetscape Upgrade;
- The design and construction of the Bundaberg Regional Recreational Precinct at the Agrotrend grounds; and
- The construction of the new Bundaberg Regional Athletics facility.
- The design and commencement of construction of the next stage of the Childers Streetscape.

## **In Summary**

The Customer Service Charter has outlined Council's commitment to excellence in service, by providing a responsive and timely service to residents. This charter has guided the priorities in the 2011/2012 Budget.

Council is working extremely hard to lessen the effects and impacts of on-going amalgamation costs, rising fuel and electricity costs, income shortfalls suffered as a result of the recent downturn in the global economy and the recent floods. This Budget addresses these important issues and plans and delivers for the future growth and development of the region.