

# Back on track



## Mayor's message

Bundaberg Regional Council's 2024-25 budget paves the way for our region to get back on track, with its focus on essential services like roads, rubbish and community services.

This is the first budget of a new Council and represents a renewed focus and a fresh start.

In a difficult economic climate, we've delivered a moderate rates increase which acknowledges the course correction needed as a result of Council's current financial position.

The new Council's commitment to reducing costs has resulted in a more than \$5 million reduction from the projected deficit with common sense savings found to prevent a higher rates increase.

Importantly, capping has been applied to residential and agricultural rating categories to limit the impacts of property valuations.

We're delivering a capital budget that is within the means of our community and which funds our existing committed projects.

Highlights of the 2024-25 capital program include:

- \$5.2 million to reimagine a scaled-down ANZAC Park redevelopment ensuring we can return memorial services to this significant location as soon as possible and lay the foundations for more significant redevelopment in future budgets when Council is in a financial position to do so and after conducting meaningful consultation with the veteran community.
- \$4.75 million to continue the Coastal Sewerage Diversion project which will make the most of the Rubyanna Wastewater Treatment Plant and facilitate growth along the coastal strip.
- \$3.6 million in flood upgrades to Duckpond Road to significantly reduce the isolation time for impacted residents in that area.
- \$6 million for sand nourishment and a rock wall at Woodgate Beach for crucial erosion prevention.
- \$27.5 million for the finalisation of the Bundaberg Aquatic Centre which will provide the community with three new pools for a range of uses from learn-to-swim and rehabilitation to training and competition.

It is a capital budget that prioritises essential maintenance and upgrades while taking a considered approach to existing and continued investments.

There are no new borrowings projected for this financial year. We're not putting any more money on the credit card, reducing the burden for ratepayers.

Across the organisation we're identifying sensible savings to keep pressure off rates and rents while ensuring core service delivery is maintained.

While we are still facing a significant operating deficit, Council has been united in its effort to repair the budget in just twelve weeks since being sworn in. Our approach will be to reduce expenditure and avoid increasing revenue.

Our community is faced with the challenges of the rising cost-of-living and it is vital that Council balance its service delivery against what our community can afford and the services and projects that are the business of Local Government.

There is much more work to do and it is clear that it will take more time to achieve our goals but we are, without doubt, back on track.

**Mayor Helen Blackburn**  
Bundaberg Regional Council