

27 June 2018

## **Mayor Mick Curran – 2018-19 Budget Speech**

The adoption of the budget is one of the most important and considered responsibilities we have as elected representatives, to lead our community and plan for its future.

I am pleased to say that Councillors have spent considerable time in the budget deliberations, assisted by the senior executive and managers of Council.

Council has historically fulfilled a number of traditional service roles, which are often described as 'roads, rates and rubbish'.

However, the role of local government has changed significantly and now modern local government is very much about providing opportunities for its residents and building community wellbeing.

Councils right across Queensland, are now responsible for not only basic services, but also play a vital role in building community confidence, improving liveability and providing a positive operating environment.

Council does this through a range of activities and initiatives such as, planning for the future, promoting all forms of sustainability, actively enhancing the built and natural environment, providing assistance to social groups, clubs, associations, as well as support for a range of community events.

Council also has a significant role to play in economic development through marketing and promoting the region and supporting the local business community.

At the same time, it must be acknowledged that Council's budget process should meet the benchmarks set out by the Queensland Audit Office in relation to asset sustainability ratios, net financial liabilities ratios and having a positive operating surplus ratio.

These benchmarks have been met. Further to this, budgetary forecast through to 2028 indicates that Gympie Regional Council will continue to meet these benchmarks and remain in a responsible and strong financial position.

The challenge in any budget, as Councillors are well aware, is to deliver the services expected by our community whilst making our region a great place to live work and play.

I, like my fellow Councillors, also acknowledge that any rates rise which affects our residents must also be kept to a minimum. To this end, the average residential ratepayer will see an increase of 2.5 per cent on their rates.

It must also be remembered that Council is affected in the same way as the average household and business, by outside influences including increased service costs such as utilities and materials.

As a result of this, Council must continue to look inward and improve on how our services are delivered. I would like to highlight some significant capital works and service programs which will be delivered in the forthcoming year.

It is my belief that our residents have the right to a quality of life and the opportunities which other regions enjoy, and these projects and services will assist in achieving this.

### ***Highlight projects***

Over \$27 million dollars will be spent on our road network across the region:

- \$3 million for bridge replacements, \$3.5 million on gravel road sealing, \$7 million on road maintenance and an additional \$500,000 for unsealed road maintenance.
- Council has allocated \$2.5 million for our mowing and slashing work across the region.

The budget also includes:

- \$4.3 million for our parks network such as recreation parks, sports grounds, recreation trails, landscaping, tree management and foreshore vegetation.
- \$8.7 million towards the regions waste services and facilities, including \$1.3 million to commence the design phase and the beginning of construction of the new Waste Management Transfer Station.

The \$2.8 million dollar youth precinct at Nelson Reserve and the old Gympie Memorial Pool site will become a hub for not only our youth, but families with a skate bowl bouldering wall and pump track.

Plus Council will deliver the Kilkivan Equestrian Centre with \$2.065 million.

The Mary Valley will see the \$300,000 Mary Valley Rail Trail from Imbil to Brooloo.

\$340,000 will be spent on the Our Towns project at Rainbow Beach main street and esplanade for underground electricity and new street lighting and another \$175,000 allocated for the Rainbow Beach viewing platform.

\$940,000 has been allocated for Stage 2 of the River to Rail trail and the upgrade of the Sands Riverside Parkland.

The Upper Mary Street Revitalisation project has received \$3 million over two years and \$1.35 million for the infrastructure improvements for the Gympie Aerodrome.

Councillors, I commend this budget to you and would ask you to endorse the budget which has whole of region benefits and will continue to see this council remain in a strong financial position.