

**15 June 2017**

## **Budget delivers a healthy, smart, creative region**

The community is the big winner in Sunshine Coast Council's 2017-2018 budget adopted today (June 15).

Mayor Mark Jamieson said council's record \$722 million budget focused on delivering Australia's leading healthy, smart and creative region – for today and for generations to come.

“Our commitment to our residents is to focus on protecting and enhancing our environment, building a strong community and growing the economy – and that is what we are doing,” Mayor Jamieson said.

“This budget delivers that and more, as we build on the solid foundations that have been laid by our council over the last five years.

“The strength of this council is our stability and our prudent financial management, underpinned by a clear plan for the future of our community.

“What is important is that council is delivering on our plan for the future and we are now seeing the benefits of maintaining our focus on the directions we have set for the region.

“Major projects are moving from the drawing board to become reality, exactly as planned.”

The \$722 million budget includes \$106 million to maintain, renew and replace roads, pathways and stormwater assets and \$70 million towards maintaining, renewing and replacing council's many parks, gardens and sporting facilities.

“Our libraries, gallery and community facilities - which are some of the community's most loved assets - will receive \$37 million which will help enhance the liveability of our Sunshine Coast,” Mayor Jamieson said.

“Council will also invest \$30 million in maintaining our programs and services to support local business and industry to grow, encourage new investment to generate more jobs, attract major events and maintain our holiday parks.

“We will also invest \$7 million in community events and grants and \$32 million for environment, including beach, foreshore and bushland conservation and clean energy projects.”

Mayor Jamieson said general rates for the majority of ratepayers would increase by \$28 to \$1166 and the cost to collect a 240 litre wheelie bin would increase by \$4 to \$280. The combined increase equates to 2.3%.

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The Environment Levy will increase by \$2, the Transport Levy will increase by \$15 and the Heritage Levy will increase by \$3, a combined annual increase of \$20.

“Overall, this represents a bottom line increase of \$1 per week for most ratepayers, which can be reduced by taking advantage of the early bird discount which has been retained, along with the pensioner discount,” Mayor Jamieson said.

“As part of the budget, council will deliver a \$237 million capital works program which includes \$59 million on transportation and stormwater projects; \$17 million on waste management infrastructure; \$12 million on community and sporting facilities; \$9 million on parks and gardens, cemeteries and beach accesses; \$3 million on environmental assets and coast, canals and waterways; and \$2 million on the aerodrome and holiday parks.”

Mayor Jamieson said council would also continue its commitment to the region’s game changing projects which would help drive a stronger economy and generate jobs and provide access to new services for the community.

“Work will continue on the Maroochydore City Centre and council will invest \$62 million in the Sunshine Coast Airport Expansion Project, which will be funded from the initial payment received from council’s commercial partner in the airport, Palisade Investment Partners,” Mayor Jamieson said.

“Collectively these two projects alone are forecast to generate more than 30,000 jobs over the next 20 years, which is a significant dividend for our residents, particularly our children and young people who will have greater opportunities to stay on the Coast and pursue their careers locally.”

### **Environment receives green tick of approval**

Preserving and enhancing our region’s natural environment has been given the green tick of approval in this year’s budget.

Community and Environment Portfolio Councillor Jenny McKay said council would invest more than \$32 million in our conservation land, maintaining our beaches, foreshores, bushland and waterways and supporting the valuable work of our volunteers who work tirelessly to keep our living and natural environment healthy.

“The environment remains a clear priority and this is why council will continue our investment in the region’s environmental assets and initiatives,” Cr McKay said.

“The \$9.8 million investment generated from council’s Environment Levy will help keep the Sunshine Coast in a leading position in terms of the region’s outstanding environmental credentials.

“The Environment Levy will increase by \$2 to \$72 per annum and will go towards buying, protecting, enhancing and managing environmentally significant land and a host of other important local conservation programs.

“Council has purchased almost 2900 hectares across the region and we will continue to grow our conservation estate as a great legacy for future generations.

“The Environment Levy will also help to protect our beaches, foreshores, bushland and waterways and support and assist many community members and volunteers who work tirelessly with council to protect and enhance our environment.

“Our environment is one of our greatest assets, and our council intends to keep it that way.”

### **Investing in a stronger community**

Community and Environment Portfolio Councillor Jenny McKay said maintaining the vitality of our communities was in clear focus in council’s budget.

Cr McKay said \$21 million would be spent on libraries, including \$2 million for library resources and digital services and \$1.8 million for education and literacy programs.

“More than 5,000 people visit one of Sunshine Coast Council’s eight libraries and two mobile libraries every day,” Cr McKay said.

“And with 2.5 million items loaned out each year, we know our investment benefits many people.”

Council will invest \$7.3 million on major community venues and community halls across the region including Sunshine Coast Events Centre and \$4.7 million on our sporting facilities – Sunshine Coast Stadium (\$480,000), Maroochy Multi-sports Complex (\$1 million), Meridan Sports Complex (\$1.8 million), Caloundra Indoor Stadium(\$100,000) and Arthur St Tennis Centre Caloundra (\$235,00).

“Sunshine Coast Aquatic Centres will also receive upgrades of \$1.6 million, which are all part of council’s commitment to encourage as many residents as possible to lead active healthy lifestyles,” Cr McKay said.

“Our communities are the essence of what makes the Sunshine Coast such a great place to live and council places a high value on its partnership in building a strong future for our residents – those who live here today and those who will live here in the future.”

### **Tourism and events help put Sunshine Coast on the map**

Tourism plays a vital role in the Sunshine Coast economy and the 2017/18 budget will ensure the region maintains its reputation as the major events capital of regional Australia.

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Tourism, Events and Sport Portfolio Councillor Jason O'Pray said the \$6.1 million raised by the Tourism and Major Events Levy would be divided between Visit Sunshine Coast (\$3.8 million) and council's major event sponsorship program (\$2.3 million).

"This Levy helps to promote the region as a tourist destination and attract major events," Cr O'Pray said.

"It is estimated that every dollar spent on advertising and promotion through the Tourism and Major Events Levy generates \$18 in economic benefit.

"The Tourism and Major Events Levy – paid by 10% of ratepayers – has increased by 4.6% in line with our projected program, but the dividend for local business and the community is significant.

"In this 2017-2018 financial year, we will welcome the Queensland Garden Expo, Velothon Sunshine Coast, 7 Sunshine Coast Marathon & Community Run Festival, IRONMAN 70.3 Sunshine Coast, Wanderlust Sunshine Coast, Queensland Oztag Junior & Senior State Cups, Mooloolaba Triathlon Festival and Maleny Wood Expo.

"We are continuing to roll out the welcome mat to our guests to create great memories and encourage them to return to enjoy everything the Sunshine Coast has to offer – from our fabulous hinterland to our beautiful beaches and everywhere in between," Cr O'Pray said.

### **Valuing our heritage**

Transport, The Arts and Heritage Portfolio Councillor Rick Baberowski said conserving and showcasing Sunshine Coast's heritage was an integral part of shaping the fabric of the community of the future.

Council's Heritage Levy, which will increase by \$3 to \$11 and raise \$1.5 million, enables council to work with the community to realise the five key outcomes in the region's Heritage Plan – knowledge, conservation, support, communication and advocacy.

"The proceeds from the Heritage Levy will be invested in interpreting and promoting the region's cultural heritage profile by also making it accessible through heritage walks and trails, short films and interpretive experiences at heritage sites," Cr Baberowski said.

"It will also continue to support the region's network of volunteer heritage organisations such as community museums and historical societies, support the conservation of the region's cultural heritage assets such as the Mary Grigor Centre, Bankfoot House and the collections they house, and deliver projects identified by the region's Traditional Owners.

"This is not only an investment in preserving our past, it is also about ensuring we have an enduring cultural legacy for our residents today and into the future."

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### **Transport Levy to plan a better connected future**

Transport Portfolio Councillor Rick Baberowski said the \$15 increase in the annual Transport Levy would go directly towards building a Transport Futures Fund to focus on the Sunshine Coast Light Rail Project.

“This year the Transport Levy will move to \$42, raising an estimated \$5.7 million, taking the Transport Futures Fund to an estimated \$9 million,” Cr Baberowski said.

The Transport Levy also supports bus stop upgrades so they comply with the Disability Discrimination Act; regularly informing the community of public transport services; and advocating strongly to the State Government on important public transport issues such as improving hinterland services.

The levy will also be invested in modelling and research to promote travel behaviour change and to influence better transport outcomes and investment.

In partnership with ComLink, council will continue to fund the popular Council Link transport service for eligible residents.

Council Link is an affordable service for residents aged 60 and over, people with a disability or mobility impairment, carers and minors accompanying eligible people. The fixed fare of just \$2 each way provides passengers easy transport between their home and their local shopping centre.

### **Waste incentives encourage residents to go green**

Local Infrastructure Portfolio Councillor Greg Rogerson said council had committed to reducing waste going into landfills by continuing a range of incentives.

“Residents will continue to be able to discard up to three mattresses each year at no charge at council’s waste management and resource recovery facilities,” Cr Rogerson said.

“They can also dispose of unwanted fridges, gas bottles, e-waste, scrap metals, including whitegoods, domestic oil, pesticides and other recyclables, at no cost.”

Cr Rogerson said the incentives were designed to encourage the community to reduce, reuse and recycle wherever possible.

#### **At a glance:**

#### **Council’s \$722 million budget includes:**

- \$106 million to maintain, renew and replace roads, pathways and stormwater assets
- \$70 million to maintain, renew and replace council’s many parks, gardens and sporting facilities

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- \$37 million for libraries, galleries and community facilities
- \$30 million for economic initiatives, including major events and holiday parks
- \$32 million for preserving and enhancing the region's environmental assets, including beach, foreshore and bushland conservation projects and clean energy projects

**\$237 million capital works program**

- \$59 million on transportation and stormwater projects
- \$17 million on waste management infrastructure
- \$12 million on community and sporting facilities
- \$9 million on parks and gardens, cemeteries and beach accesses
- \$3 million on environmental assets and coast, canals and waterways
- \$2 million on aerodrome and holiday parks

**2017/18 Budget – Rate Notice for a residential owner occupied property on the  
 Minimum General Rate\***

<b>Annual rates</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>Variation \$</b>
General Rates	\$1138	\$1166	\$28
240 litre wheelie bin	\$276	\$280	\$4
Sub total	\$1414	\$1446	\$32
Environment Levy	\$70	\$72	\$2
Transport Levy	\$27	\$42	\$15
Heritage Levy	\$8	\$11	\$3
<b>Total Rates and Charges</b>	<b>\$1519</b>	<b>\$1571</b>	<b>\$52</b>
Discount	(\$56.90)	(\$58.30)	(\$1.40)
<b>NET PAYABLE</b>	<b>\$1462.10</b>	<b>\$1512.70</b>	<b>\$50.60</b>

\*66% of ratepayers are on the minimum general rate

**ENDS**

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