

Sunshine Coast Council Transport Levy Annual Report 2016-2017



Your Transport Levy
Your Transport Future

Council Link



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Acknowledgements

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September 2017

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Message from the Mayor Your Transport Levy in action



One of the greatest opportunities that can support our aspiration to be Australia's most sustainable region - healthy, smart, creative - is how we connect with each other.

The annual Transport Levy is playing a key role in improving our connectivity to work, recreation and each other.

Importantly, it is also helping us plan for the future transport needs of one of Australia's fastest growing regions.

Our ratepayers can be assured that their Transport Levy contribution is working for them today as well as for the benefit of future generations.

While the Queensland Government is responsible for the public transport network and solutions in the region, the Transport Levy helps us continue to advocate to the State and Federal governments for much-needed investment in our region – for better public transport and improved road and rail infrastructure.

In the past 12 months, we have witnessed some great examples of the Transport Levy in action with council-led initiatives across our region.

For the benefit of our Hinterland residents, the levy funded the Conondale to Maleny (via Witta) and Peachester to Beerwah Flexilink services, providing better access to service centres for residents.

The Transport Levy is also helping many of our older and less mobile residents to remain connected with their communities and access services via Council Link, which undertook over 12,000 passenger trips in 2016-2017.

We have continued to see progress with council's game-changing Sunshine Coast Light Rail Project.

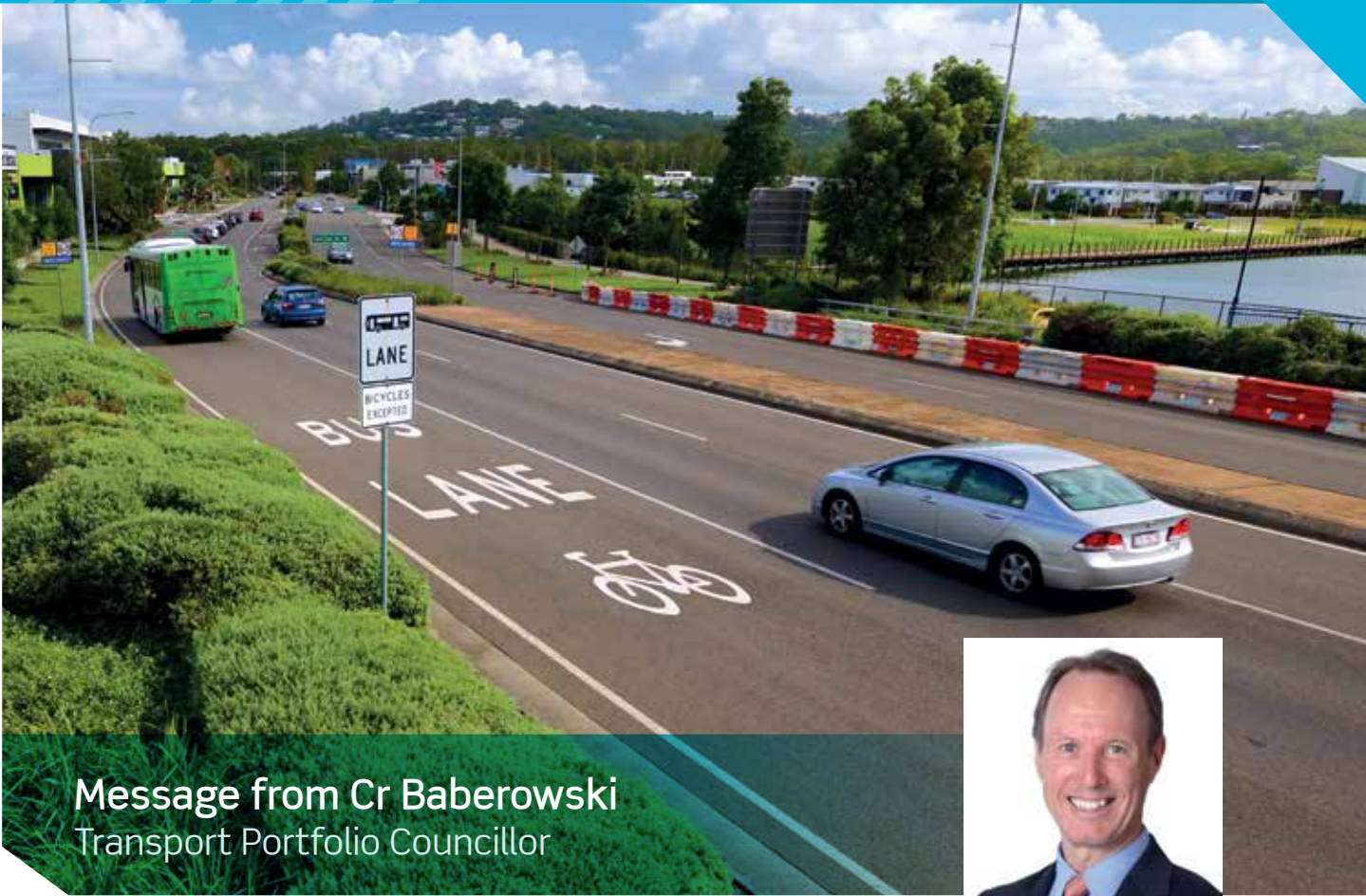
The draft SEQ Regional Plan acknowledges the need for a passenger transport trunk corridor from Maroochydore to Caloundra and on to Beerwah, a corridor that reflects council's proposed Light Rail route between Maroochydore and Caloundra.

There remains, however, much more to be done and achieving Queensland and Federal government support for a sustainable, accessible and well-connected public transport solution remains one of our Council's highest priorities.

With this in mind, the additional funding that was generated from the Transport Levy in 2016-2017 was directed to the Transport Futures Fund to help us continue with our Light Rail project and advocate for commitments from the State and Federal Governments.

I encourage you to read more about all of these initiatives, and others provided by the Transport Levy, in this annual report.

Mayor Mark Jamieson



Message from Cr Baberowski Transport Portfolio Councillor



The annual Transport Levy allows the Sunshine Coast to pursue a transport strategy that preserves and enhances our region's enviable lifestyle.

As we focus on delivering Australia's leading healthy, smart and creative region – for today and for generations to come - our big challenge is going to be focusing on strategic transport network improvements including securing an effective, integrated public transport solution for the region.

Through the levy, we are investing in projects that wouldn't otherwise be possible.

In 2016-2017 the annual Transport Levy increased to \$27, raising an estimated \$3.6 million, building the Transport Futures Fund to an estimated \$5.5 million.

The \$7 increase went directly towards building the Transport Futures Fund with an initial focus on the Sunshine Coast Light Rail Project.

Advancing investigations to bring forward beneficial public transport outcomes on the Sunshine Coast is a key focus for the levy.

The Transport Levy also has many everyday benefits, including:

- Helping to adapt policies into actions to fund trial service improvements;
- Providing bus stop upgrades to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act;
- Undertaking research, planning and investigations;
- Regularly informing the community of public transport services; and
- Advocating strongly, with the right evidence to the State Government on important public transport issues such as effective hinterland services.

Increasing travel choice and reducing our overwhelming reliance on the private car are the keys to achieving a more sustainable transport network in the future.

The Transport Levy program is working toward the goals identified in council's Sustainable Transport Strategy 2011-2031, which positions us to take advantage of new approaches and technologies to find the solutions we need to meet the challenges of a growing region.

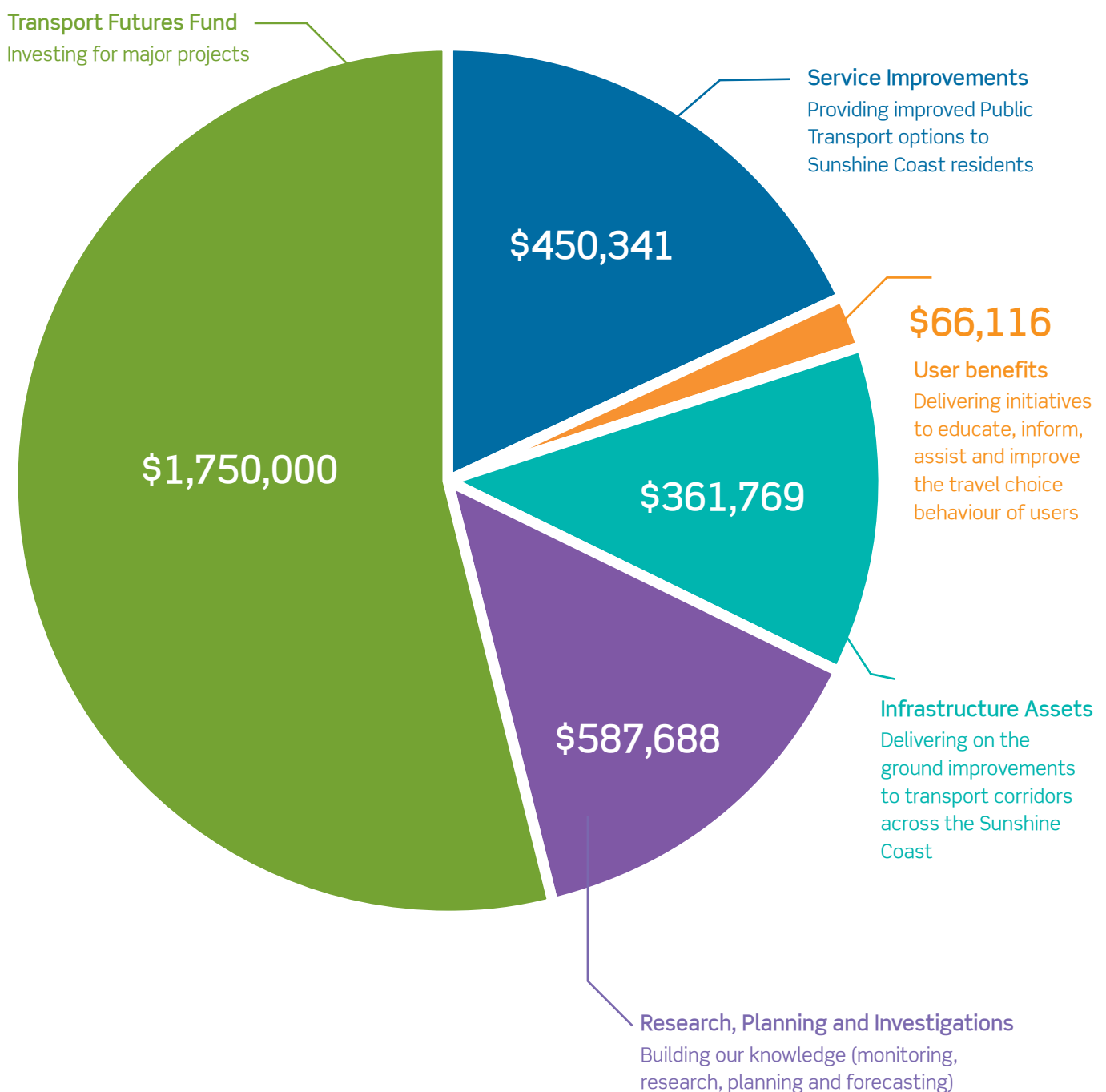
Cr Baberowski
Transport Portfolio Councillor

Where did your Transport Levy go in 2016-2017?

Transport Levy in 2016-2017:
\$27 per annum
per rateable property

Total revenue 2016-2017:
\$3,609,587
(plus \$234,454 in external grants)

Total expenditure 2016-2017:
\$3,215,914





Transport Levy 2016-2017 Program snapshot

Service improvements

While the responsibility of providing urban public transport services to the Sunshine Coast is not a local government responsibility but rather one that rests with the State Government, council continues to advocate to the State Government to increase investment in the Sunshine Coast to ensure that public transport is a viable travel choice for residents and visitors. The Transport Levy has historically been utilised to bring forward service improvements to TransLink services across the Sunshine Coast. The Transport Levy also funds transport services to connect communities in areas that are not currently serviced by public transport (Flexilink trial services) and to members of the community who are often not able to readily access public transport services (Council Link).

In 2016-2017 the Transport Levy funds contributed \$169,695 to TransLink to jointly fund the Maleny-Landsborough-Beerwah bus service delivering an improved public transport service to the Hinterland region. This trial service, which commenced in March 2010, was reviewed by TransLink in 2016-2017. The service review has successfully resulted in TransLink adopting some aspects of the trial service as part of the improved permanent service. The Landsborough to Beerwah section of the service has been discontinued due to lack of patronage. However, between Landsborough and Maleny, an increased number of permanent services will be run as a result of the successful trial. The new permanent service is now 7 days a week.

During the 2016-2017 financial year, council successfully advocated to TransLink for the introduction of new bus services and service enhancements prior to the opening of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. Council also advocated and assisted TransLink with the restructuring of the Nambour service to deliver a better local service for residents and visitors.

Flexilink Trial Services

In 2016-2017 the Transport Levy funded the Conondale to Maleny (via Witta) Flexilink service and the Peachester to Beerwah Flexilink service. The trial services are pre-booked scheduled trips, delivered by Suncoast Cabs, operating six days per week and offer three return services per day. They provide an affordable, reliable and accessible public transport option for people with limited public transport options. The flexilink trial services operate in areas with limited public transport and aim to reduce the need for single passenger car use.

Council will continue to investigate service requests outside of the current TransLink bus contract area to trial additional and/or new services based on knowledge gained.



3,837

passenger trips taken on
Flexilink services

35,883km

travelled on Flexilink services

1,964

Flexilink trips undertaken





Council Link

The Council Link program provides an important service by improving community connectedness and reducing social isolation. The program fills an important gap in the community transport network for people who are ineligible for assisted transport schemes (e.g. HACC Services and similar) but also find traditional public transport services difficult to access.

The service currently:

- transports people door to door from eligible suburbs across the region;
- transports eligible passengers to their nearest identified shopping precinct or library; and
- services different suburbs one day per week, Tuesday to Thursday.

Eligible passengers include people aged 60 and over, people with a disability or mobility impairment (DSP concession card holders) and carers and minors accompanying eligible people (carers card or companion card holders).

The Council Link program has been a huge success for the Sunshine Coast and for the Transport Levy. In the 2017 Customer Satisfaction Survey that Comlink conducted on the Council Link service, 98% of respondents said that they would recommend Council Link to others.

In 2016-2017 the Council Link program was delivered by ComLink. Council Link serviced 39 suburbs and undertook 12,019 passenger trips in 2016-2017.

User benefits

In 2016-2017 the Transport Levy funds were used to update and distribute the Public Transport Guide, benefiting residents and visitors across the Sunshine Coast. The guide provides a quick overview of the public transport choices available on the Sunshine Coast, including a detailed map, trip-planning options, guided fare information and travel tips promoting exploration of the Sunshine Coast region. The Sunshine Coast Public Transport Guide aims to reduce single-occupancy motor vehicle trips and will help residents and visitors navigate around the Sunshine Coast using public transport.



Council Link

Supported by Sunshine Coast Council

12,019

passenger trips
on Council Link

were undertaken in 2016-2017

In 2016-2017, Council Link serviced

39

suburbs across
the Sunshine Coast

Council Link transported
an average of

231

passengers
each week



129,000km

were travelled on the
Council Link program





Program snapshot

Research, planning and investigations

In 2016-2017 Transport Levy funds were used to collect traffic count data at over 100 locations across the Sunshine Coast to coincide with the 2016 Census period. This data will enable council to correlate census population and activity data against travel data, which will assist council in identifying travel patterns and areas of improvement for the transport network and infrastructure.

Sunshine Coast Light Rail Project

In 2016-2017, the Transport Levy continued to support the Sunshine Coast Light Rail Project. At the Sunshine Coast University Hospital's open day, held in March 2017, a Light Rail Project information stand was on display and was inundated with positive feedback and repeated endorsement of the mid to long-term benefits that will be delivered by the light rail project.

In 2016-2017 council prepared the Urban Transformation Directions Paper as part of its submission to the draft SEQ Regional Plan.

The preparation of this paper was a key component of the advocacy undertaken by the light rail project team during the past year and contributed to the inclusion of the passenger transport trunk corridor (consistent with council's light rail corridor alignment) being included in the draft SEQ Regional Plan.

The paper responds to some of the key challenges identified in the draft SEQ Regional Plan, including meeting the plan's infill targets which light rail can assist to achieve. The paper will inform ongoing discussions and planning for the region.

It sets out some important choices we face in accommodating growth, establishing clear directions for the desired settlement pattern for the Sunshine Coast, and identifying high level parameters to guide future planning for growth.



Transport Futures Fund

The Transport Futures Fund enables council to fund strategically beneficial transport outcomes for the Sunshine Coast, where such funding would not otherwise be available. The Transport Futures Fund is not intended to replace the funding of projects, which can realistically be delivered through the use of existing capital programs, revenues and mechanisms for effective land use planning. The Transport Futures Fund is focussed on achieving major, long-term, multi-modal infrastructure outcomes and strategies.

The initial focus of the Transport Futures Fund is the Sunshine Coast Light Rail Project. The current focus of the fund is to build the Transport Futures Fund to a level whereby council can be a co-contributor to the provision of the Light Rail Project thereby enhancing council's credentials in strongly advocating for light rail.

This funding would allow council to enter into an arrangement with the State Government (similar to the Gold Coast) in order to bring forward the Light Rail Project.

In 2016-2017 the \$7 increase in the Transport Levy was directed towards building the Transport Futures Fund.

Transport Levy Branding

The Transport Levy allows council to make direct improvements to transport infrastructure on an annual basis, it builds the Transport Futures Fund for strategically beneficial transport outcomes and it assists in improving public transport for the Sunshine Coast.



When Transport Levy funds are utilised, council wants the community to be able to clearly recognise where their levy is being spent.

To assist in creating greater community awareness and understanding about the Transport Levy and to ensure that Transport Levy projects are recognisable, council has developed a brand that is specific to the Transport Levy.





Program snapshot

Infrastructure assets

In 2016-2017 the Transport Levy funds continued to contribute to a number of bus stop infrastructure upgrades across the Sunshine Coast. These bus stop upgrades will benefit all users, ensuring compliance with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and meeting Federal Government targets. The public transport network is an integral part of the Sunshine Coast's strategic transport network and its effectiveness is imperative in order to achieve a modal shift away from the private vehicle.

In 2016-2017 the Transport Levy contributed \$361,769 and attracted an additional \$234,454 in external funding to the bus stop infrastructure upgrade program. The upgrade works were undertaken at 15 locations across the Sunshine Coast and included:

- installation of tactile ground surface indicators;
- upgraded footpath connections to bus stop locations; and
- new bus shelters at 13 bus stop locations.



Before



After





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