

25 June 2015

Budget shapes Sunshine Coast's visionary future

Sunshine Coast Council, one of Queensland's most financially-sound local governments, has delivered a budget which will continue to grow the local economy and create better paying jobs, protect the region's environment and lifestyle and fund game-changing projects to benefit generations to come.

The council will also give money back to ratepayers in the form of a carbon tax rebate and has dropped some waste charges to help the environment.

The bottom line rate increase for the majority of ratepayers will be 1.5% - or just \$1.65 on the July rates notice.

Mayor Mark Jamieson said the \$588 million 2015-16 budget balanced delivering its important core responsibilities with implementing a visionary direction to shape the region's future.

"This is a budget that has the community of today and tomorrow at its very heart," Mayor Jamieson said.

"It is no secret we are on the cusp on one of the most important chapters in the region's history and today's budget sets us up to achieve our goal of becoming Australia's most sustainable region – vibrant, green, diverse.

"There is no other council in Australia delivering such game-changing projects such as the Sunshine Coast Solar Farm and the SunCentral Maroochydore City Centre – the only greenfield CBD in the nation at this time – which will significantly benefit future generations.

"Council is investing \$32 million to begin works at SunCentral Maroochydore City Centre which will create 10,000 jobs over the life of the project.

"And while game-changing projects are important, at the very core of this budget is a focus on delivering infrastructure and services to cater for our growing population.

"To achieve this, council has allocated \$98 million to maintain, renew and replace roads, pathways and stormwater.

"There's also more than \$40 million for economic initiatives including major events, airports and holiday parks and to help businesses already here and attract new ones.

"Our ongoing environmental work will continue with an allocation of \$74 million to protect our greatest assets – our beaches, our bushland and our way of life.

"There's \$58 million to maintain, renew and replace council's many parks and gardens and sporting facilities, and more than \$34 million for libraries, galleries and community facilities.

"Community programs and events will be allocated more than \$6 million, placing a premium on arts and sports and giving a helping hand to our groups, associations and clubs who help others."

Mayor Jamieson said the majority of ratepayers would pay the minimum general rate of \$1110 per annum.

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“A standard 240 litre wheelie bin will increase by \$6.90 per annum.

“We are keeping the early bird and pensioner discounts and the transport, environment and heritage levies are unchanged.”

Council will also refund more than \$2 million in carbon tax charges so ratepayers with a waste service will receive a \$17 rebate on their July rate notice.

Mayor Jamieson said after taking all changes into account, the majority of ratepayers would receive an increase of \$1.65 on their July rate notice compared to the same period last year.

The overall annual increase will be \$20.30 after discount.

“To achieve council’s vision to become Australia’s most sustainable region, council is committed to reducing waste going into our landfills and encouraging our residents to reduce, reuse and recycle wherever possible,” Mayor Jamieson said.

“Council will introduce a number of incentives to help our residents do just that.

“The garden waste bin charge has been reduced from \$70 to \$60 per annum to encourage more residents to make use of this service.

“You can now dispose of your unwanted mattress and non-degassed fridge for free.

“And clean timber loads and clean plasterboard loads have each been reduced from \$161 per tonne to \$50 per tonne.

“The Tourism and Major Events Levy has risen by 10% and will affect 10% of ratepayers,” he said.

“Council will invest \$1.4 million in major events this year which will benefit the whole economy.”

Deputy Mayor and Finance Portfolio Councillor Chris Thompson said the budget continued council’s investment in the region’s future.

“The game-changer projects such as the SunCentral Maroochydore, Sunshine Coast Solar Farm and the Sunshine Coast Airport expansion put us in the spotlight, ensuring our region takes centre stage,” Cr Thompson said.

“Watch this space as the foundations we have laid move us forward, benefitting generations to come, creating a strong and prosperous economy and the employment opportunities that come with that.

“Thanks to prudent financial management, Sunshine Coast Council is in great shape which enables us to invest in such significant projects.

“This council has received five consecutive unqualified audits. We have been awarded the second highest financial ranking by the Queensland Treasury Corporation - no other council is higher.

“This budget delivers council’s vision to protect and enhance the lifestyle residents know and love, including protecting the Sunshine Coast environment.

“It’s a budget that truly does shape our future.”

ENDS

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2015-16 budget highlights include:

- \$98 million to maintain, renew and replace roads, pathways and stormwater
- \$58 million to maintain, renew and replace council's many parks, gardens and sporting facilities
- More than \$40 million for economic initiatives including major events, airport and holiday parks
- \$74 million for the environment including beaches, foreshores and bushland conservation
- \$34 million for libraries and galleries and community facilities
- More than \$6 million for events and grants
- \$32 million to begin works at Maroochydore City Centre

Major infrastructure projects in 2015-16 financial year

- \$17 million road reseal program
- \$11.9 million for Evans St, Maroochydore upgrade (plus \$7.8 million in 2016-17)
- \$3.2 million for Sunshine Coast Aerospace Precinct
- \$2.7 million for Caloundra streetscaping – Bulcock St and surrounds (plus \$5.8 million over 10 years)
- \$2.6 million for Minyama to Mooloolaba cycleway
- \$2.4 million for Sippy Creek animal pound (a total of \$4.6 million over two years)
- \$2.3 million to upgrade North Arm-Yandina Creek Rd, North Arm (a total of \$3.2 million over two years)
- \$1.4 million to replace Eumundi Range Rd, Eumundi bridge
- \$1.2 million for Goshawk Blvd, Sippy Downs (link between Stringybark and Power Rds)
- \$1.2 million for Glenview Rd realignment and rehabilitation
- \$700,000 to replace Hodgens Rd, Bald Knob bridge
- \$900,000 David Low Way – pedestrian foot bridge over Eudlo Creek
- \$770,000 for Maroochy Junior rugby league facility – change rooms, carpark/road upgrade
- \$715,000 for improvements to the Eumundi Markets site
- \$695,000 to develop and implement Maroochy Beach foreshore development
- \$650,000 for Coolum Sport complex
- \$610,000 for the staged implementation of Nambour Showgrounds master plan
- \$600,000 to widen Storrs Rd, Peachester
- \$600,000 to seal part of Delicia Rd, Mapleton
- \$550,000 for Caloundra Headlands foreshore park (\$2.3 million over seven years)
- \$455,000 for Buderim Village Park landscaping
- \$403,000 Alexandra Headlands foreshore park – Stage 6

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Rate notice for a residential owner occupied property on the Minimum General Rate*

Annual Rates	2014/15	2015/16	Variation \$	Variation %
General Rates	\$1078.00	\$1110.00	\$32.00	3.0%
Environment Levy	\$60.00	\$60.00	Nil	Nil
Transport Levy	\$20.00	\$20.00	Nil	Nil
Heritage Levy	\$5.00	\$5.00	Nil	Nil
240 litre wheelie bin	\$264.50	\$271.40	\$6.90	2.6%
Carbon Tax refund	Nil	-\$17.00	-\$17.00	
Sub Total – Bottom Line	1427.50	1449.40	\$21.90	1.53%
Discount	-\$53.90	-\$55.50	-\$1.60	
Total	\$1373.60	\$1393.90	\$20.30	1.47%

NET July 2015 Rates Notice	\$686.80	\$688.45	\$1.65	0.2%
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*67% of ratepayers are on the minimum general rate.

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