



Sunshine Coast Council
Transport Levy Annual Report
2019/20

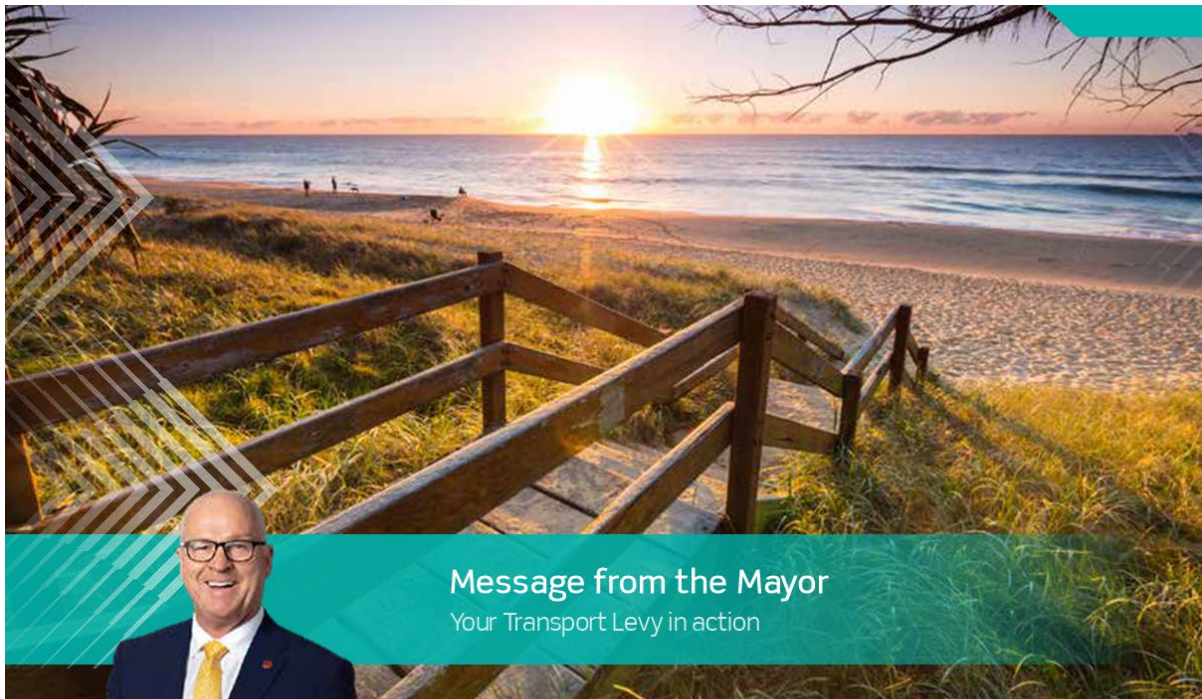






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Sunshine Coast Council's Transport Levy, which is contributed by all ratepayers, is an important investment in pursuing improved transport solutions for our region.

The responsibility for the public transport network on the Sunshine Coast rests with the Queensland Government. However, our Council recognises it has an important role to play on behalf of our community to advocate for new and improved infrastructure and service levels to improve the liveability and productivity of our region as it continues to grow. In particular, our Council recognises the importance of helping to influence behavioural change to encourage more people to get out of their private vehicle and utilise the public transport options available.

Your Transport Levy is an important element in enabling this work to occur.

Consistent with our approach in previous years, Council has taken a balanced approach with the proceeds from the Levy, by funding local projects that support residents moving around efficiently.

For example, Council's Flexilink transport services provide affordable, reliable and accessible transport services to some of our hinterland residents. Our Council Link services help hundreds of passengers every week to stay connected with their communities. The Levy is also helping to support access to services for the Kenilworth community through the Kenilworth Community Transport Service Trial.

The Levy also plays an important role in enabling Council to progress projects that are focused on securing

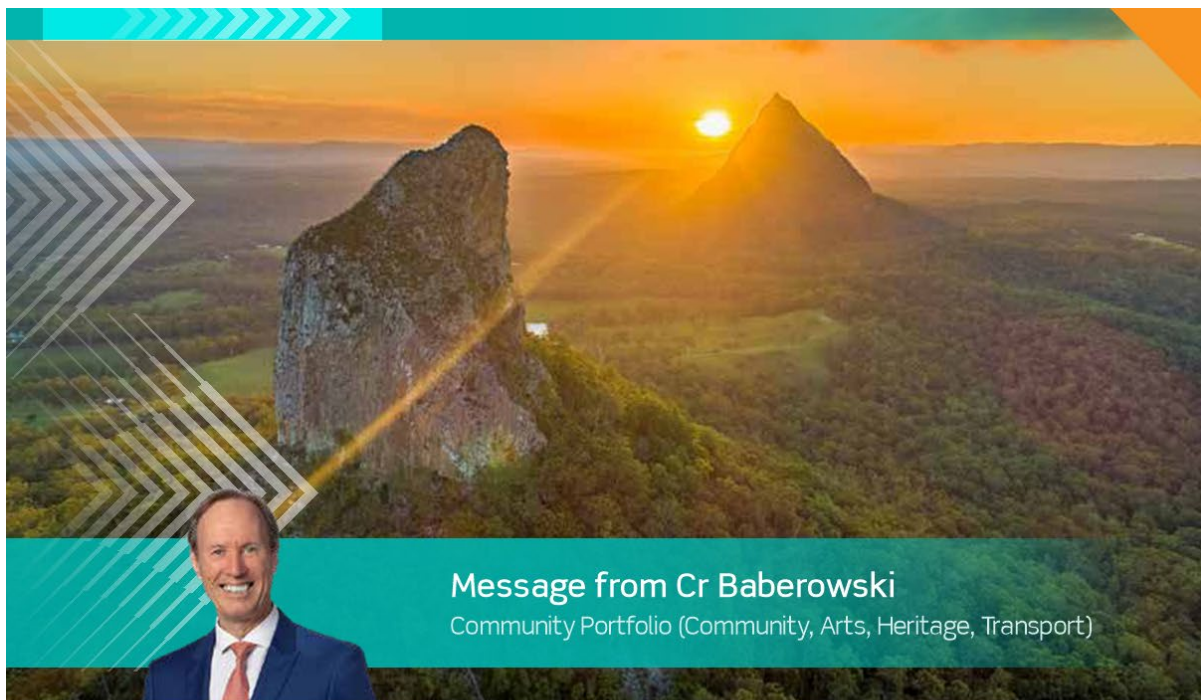
investment by the other tiers of government in the major transport needs of our region. Council recognises the Sunshine Coast's population continues to grow at around 2.3 per cent per annum – one of the highest rates of growth in regional Queensland. This means we need an efficient, viable and accessible public transport system if the region's liveability is not to be compromised by increasing congestion and continuous urban sprawl.

To this end, Council has been progressing the Options Analysis that forms part of the business case development process for a mass transit system to cater for the public transport needs of the region's major growth corridor from Maroochydore to Caloundra. Subject to completion and acceptance of the Options Analysis, this will inform the development of a detailed business case led by the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads in order to position this important project for investment by the other tiers of government.

Council sees an accessible, viable and efficient mass transit solution as a key contributor to achieving our vision for the Sunshine Coast to be Australia's most sustainable region – Healthy. Smart. Creative in that if delivered, it will connect our residents from where they live to where they work, go to school, participate in recreational activities and where they access services.

Our residents can be assured the Transport Levy is helping to improve our connectivity today and achieve better transport outcomes for our region in the future.

Mayor Mark Jamieson



Message from Cr Baberowski

Community Portfolio (Community, Arts, Heritage, Transport)

As a growing community of communities, being well connected is more vital than ever. An effective transport network is essential and achieving this goal is embedded into Council's vision for the region to be *Australia's most sustainable region – Healthy. Smart. Creative.* In line with this aspirational vision, in December 2018 Council adopted the *Sunshine Coast Council Integrated Transport Strategy*, which outlines the future transport direction critically required for the Sunshine Coast to meet expected growth and maintain the Coast's remarkable lifestyle.

Council is forging ahead to deliver on its roles and responsibilities in relation to the transport system and continues to advocate to other stakeholders to participate, in particular the State Government, in the provision of improved public transport. Council continues to be a catalyst for sustainable improvement and innovation whenever it can contribute towards enhancing the connectivity of the region.

The annual Transport Levy provides the Sunshine Coast community with the financial resources to do this. Through the Levy, Council invests in valuable planning, service improvements, infrastructure assets and perhaps most importantly, to be an effective advocate and partner with the State Government.

In 2019/20, the Transport Levy was set at \$44 per rateable property, raising just over \$6.3 million. This has assisted Council to trial transport services such as Flexilink, Council Link and the community-led Kenilworth Community Transport Service.

It has provided the resources for:

- the initial stages of Council's ambitious travel behaviour change program
- the progression of the Options Analysis for Sunshine Coast Mass Transit
- the continued building of the Transport Futures Fund.

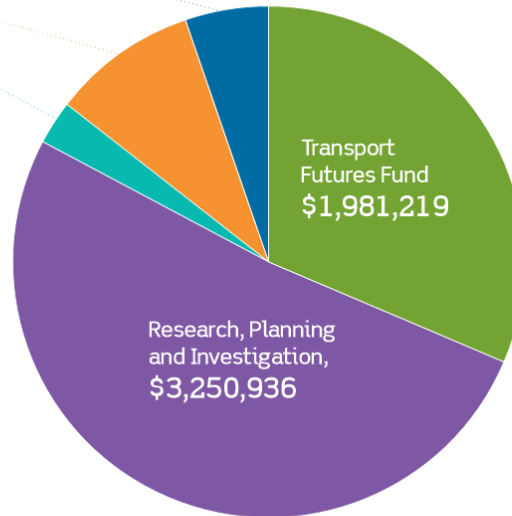
The Sunshine Coast's transport future is a challenging but exciting one. With the release of the 2019/20 Transport Levy Annual Report, I encourage all to get behind Council's long history of advocacy and strategic achievements. This will ensure the community gets the best integrated transport network possible for our region to remain as remarkable as it is.

Cr Baberowski
Community Portfolio
(Community, Arts, Heritage, Transport)



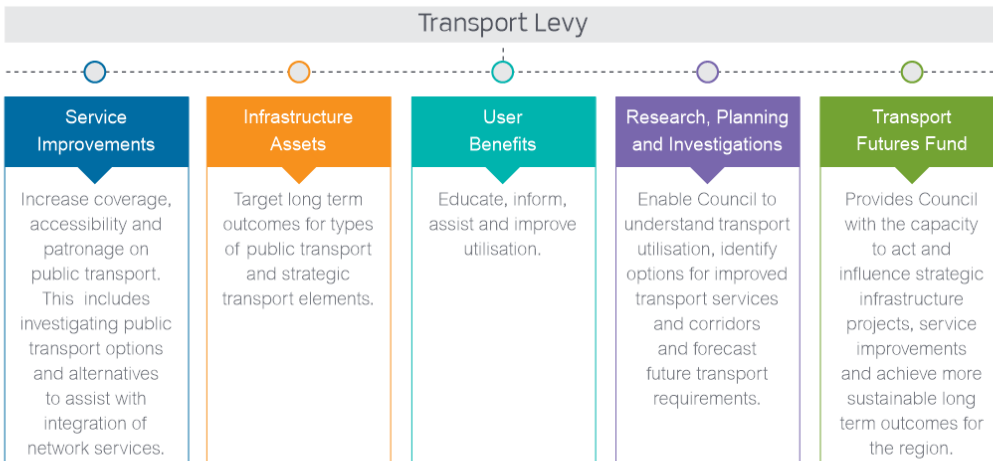
Transport Levy in 2019/20:
\$44 per annum
 per rateable property
 Total revenue 2019/20:
\$6,304,535

\$320,081
 Service Improvements
\$579,665
 Infrastructure Assets
\$172,634
 User Benefits



The Transport Levy helps Council meet its responsibilities for the future transport needs of the Sunshine Coast. The Levy funds projects that play a key role in supporting strategic transport outcomes across the Sunshine Coast for today, and for the future.

In 2019/20 the Transport Levy continued to direct funding to the five key areas aimed at improving connecting our communities.





Transport Levy 2019/20
 Program snapshot

Service improvements

In 2019/20, the Transport Levy continued to fund transport trials in some community areas not currently serviced by public transport. These trial services deliver transport connections to members of the community who don't have access to public transport services and help Council establish the extent of demand that exists for these services.

Council Link

Council Link provides an affordable (\$2 per trip), door-to-door transport service for people aged 60 and over and for people with disabilities or mobility impairment. This service, which is currently contracted to Be: (formerly ComLink), collects people from their homes and takes them to and from their local shopping centre. The service also plays an important role in improving community connectedness and reducing social isolation. Its continuance during COVID -19 with a modified service involving passenger trips and welfare phone calls ensured registered customers were receiving required food and medicine, staying connected and combating social isolation. Although public health

directions have impacted on the service post Easter 2020, there have been less cancellations as registered customers became familiar with social distancing and the continuing extra sanitation of vehicles.

Pre COVID-19, the average number of passengers per week was 292 with 11,042 passenger trips averaging 2.25 passengers per trip across 59 suburbs. This changed to an average of 162 passengers per week utilising the service with 1,594 passenger trips across 50 suburbs. Additionally an average of 60 vulnerable person calls each week were made during COVID-19.

'Thank you for calling me, I still need the shopping fortnightly and I love the service' N POTTS

'Thank you for all the calls as I'm home all week. I'm now ready to go back to weekly shopping' K WILKINSON

'I'm very happy with the service and the calls because it makes me feel like there is someone that cares about me' L KITCHENER

PRE- COVID-19

59 suburbs serviced
 36 new customers for service
 60,518km were travelled by Council Link
 Council Link transported an average of 292 passengers each week

DURING COVID-19

Average 162 passengers per week
 Average 60 vulnerable person calls per week

Council Link
 Supported by Sunshine Coast Council



Flexilink trial services

In 2019/20 the Transport Levy continued to deliver two trial Flexilink transport services to the Sunshine Coast Hinterland region; the Peachester to Beerwah Flexilink service and the Conondale to Maleny Flexilink service. Flexilink services are pre-booked scheduled transport services that operate in these two areas of the Sunshine Coast with no access to public transport. Each Flexilink service offers six one-way trips that can be booked daily, Monday to Saturday. The Flexilink services operate on the basis that they only run if a booking has been made and bookings must be made at least two hours in advance of the service run.

In 2019/20 the Flexilink services delivered over 3,600 passenger trips and travelled over 37,800km across the two services

The Conondale to Maleny service continued to achieve strong passenger numbers with the service averaging 321 passenger trips per month (pre-COVID-19). In January 2020 the Conondale to Maleny service saw the largest number of passenger trips since inception of the service trial, with 368 passenger trips being undertaken.

COVID-19 restrictions resulted in a 36% (average) decline in Conondale to Maleny Service passenger numbers throughout March to June 2020, and a 7% decline in average trip numbers. Maleny Taxis continued to operate the service whilst maintaining driver and passenger safety and following directives from the Department of Transport

and Main Roads. Drivers were supplied with gloves, hand sanitiser and cleaning products for all vehicles to ensure the ongoing safety of passengers.

The Peachester to Beerwah service yields lower patronage numbers with an average of 19 passenger trips being taken each month (pre-COVID-19). COVID-19 restrictions did not have a noticeable impact on utilisation of the Peachester to Beerwah Service.

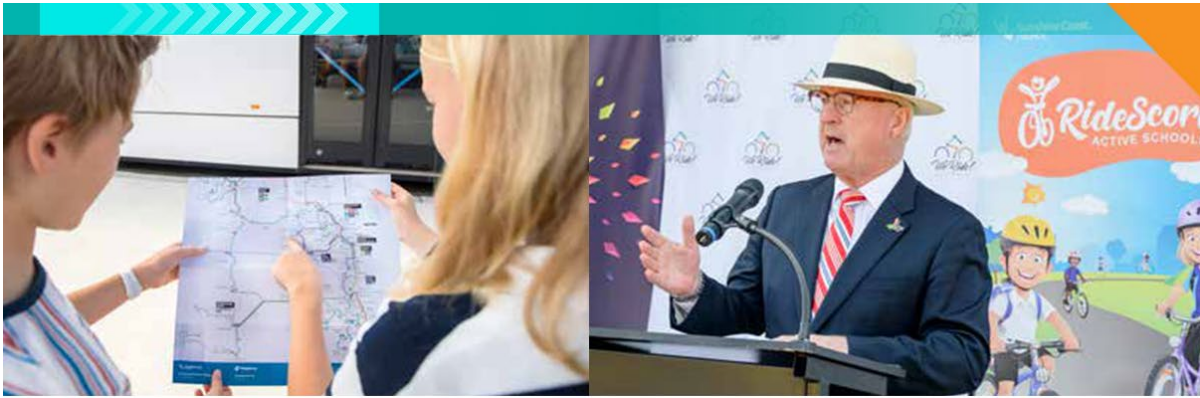
The contract for continued operation of the Flexilink services was tendered between March and April 2020. The contract has been awarded to Suncoast Cabs for a period of 12 months, with options to extend.

Kenilworth Community Transport Service Trial

Utilising funding from the Transport Levy, in June 2019, Council and the Kenilworth community, together with support from the Department of Transport and Main Roads, established the Kenilworth Community Transport Service trial. This is a community-led service trial for a community which is beyond contracted bus and taxi service areas. Volunteer drivers provide a regular service to Nambour, Maleny, Mapleton and Eumundi for residents to access critical services such as medical appointments, at a low flat fee of \$8 per person per return trip.

Council, through the Transport Levy, provided the Kenilworth community with a vehicle for the transport trial and also provided assistance with some costs. Prior to the service being suspended due to COVID-19, 110 residents





had registered to use the service, which was averaging 11 trips per month, with an average of 1.5 passengers per trip, providing a valued transport option for the relatively isolated community of Kenilworth.

User benefits

Public Transport User Guide

Council's Public Transport Guide continues to be distributed across the region and is well received by residents and visitors alike. The Guide provides a quick overview about public transport choices on the Sunshine Coast, including a detailed map, trip-planning options, guided fare information and travel tips promoting exploration of the Sunshine Coast region. Funding from the Transport Levy is utilised to produce and distribute this Public Transport User Guide.

RideScore Active Schools Program

Council, in partnership with We Ride Australia, has developed a tailored RideScore program, including establishment of a digital platform to encourage school families to choose active modes of transport to travel to school.

The RideScore app utilises personal sensors that send real-time notifications to parents on the arrival and departure of students riding and scooting to and from school, providing parents with peace of mind knowing their child has arrived at school or left school. Individual trips are recorded and rewarded at certain milestones.

Nine Sunshine Coast schools were selected for the initial program launch for the 2020 school year, with an anticipated participation number of 1,500 children. Due to the school closures as a result of COVID-19, the program launch was delayed.

In addition to funding from the Transport Levy, this program has been made possible with Federal grant funding from the Move It AUS Program, Queensland Government and Stockland.

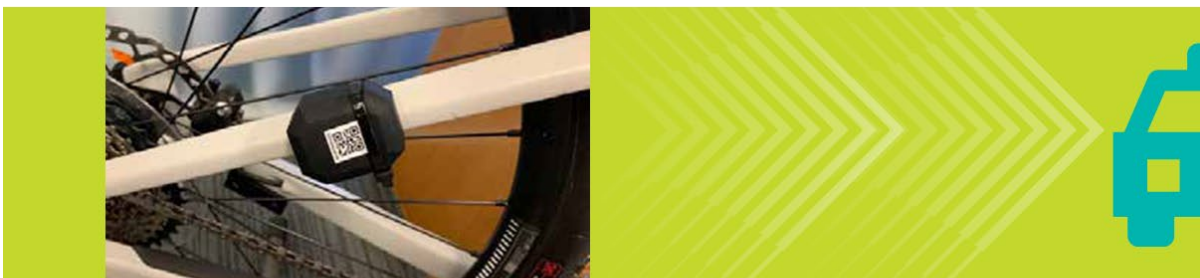
Travel Planning Awareness Campaign

From January 2020 through to June 2020, the Transport Levy provided funding to deliver a Seniors Transport Awareness Campaign.

The program included the delivery of six RACQ 'Years Ahead' presentations at Sunshine Coast Libraries to 133 participants. The sessions focused on keeping locals, particularly those aged over 60, on the road safely.

Additional information sessions were scheduled to be held at pathway pop-ups, shopping centres, Sunshine Coast Libraries and RSL Clubs throughout March – June 2020, but were unfortunately postponed due to the onset of the COVID-19 restrictions.

The program was designed to assist Seniors transition from the motor vehicle safely, providing them with all of their alternative transport options.





Caloundra Road Bus Stop, before



Caloundra Road Little Mountain – upgraded bus stop with shelter

Infrastructure Assets

In 2019/20, \$579,665 from the Transport Levy was utilised to upgrade 23 bus stops across the Sunshine Coast.

These upgrades will benefit all users but also ensure Council continues to deliver bus stop infrastructure that is compliant with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The bus stop upgrades that occurred in 2019/20 resulted in approximately 97% of Council's bus stops achieving compliance. This level of compliance is well ahead of the legislated schedule of full compliance by December 2022.

The upgrade works to meet compliance included:

- Concrete bus stop pads and signage
- Tactile ground surface indicators
- Upgraded pathway connections to the bus stop locations.

The Transport Levy fully funded the upgrade works at these 23 bus stop locations. Separately, Council did receive a significant amount of grant funding from TransLink for a further 40 bus stop upgrades across the Sunshine Coast.



Landsborough Parade Golden Beach, before



Landsborough Parade Golden Beach – upgraded bus stop with shelter



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Research, planning and investigations Sunshine Coast Mass Transit Business Case Process

Council continued to progress the business case process for the Sunshine Coast Mass Transit Project, with funding coming from the Transport Levy. The business case process for Sunshine Coast Mass Transit comprises three stages – a Strategic Business Case, an Options Analysis* and a Detailed Business Case.

The 2019/20 financial year has been focussed on undertaking the second phase – the Options Analysis.

Consultant Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) was appointed to coordinate the production of the Options Analysis and to undertake the required economic and financial analyses based on inputs by other key consultants, including AECOM, Veitch Lister Consulting and a consortium that comprised of

JLL Strategic Consulting, Cox Architects, Place Design and LUTI Consulting.

In January 2020, Council received and noted an Interim Findings Report for Sunshine Coast Mass Transit.

The Options Analysis for Sunshine Coast Mass Transit continues to be progressed and refined.

The Transport Levy provides the funding for this significant investment in the business case development process, which is essential for Council to advocate effectively for Mass Transit investment by the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments.

* The second phase, previously known as the Preliminary Business Case is now known as the Options Analysis.





Travel Behaviour Change Activities

In 2019/20, Council initiated the Travel Behaviour Change Project, a priority action in the *Sunshine Coast Council Integrated Transport Strategy*. With nine out of ten people agreeing travel behaviour change is critical on the Sunshine Coast, there is a timely opportunity to develop a coordinated program of activities that works towards achieving Council's desired 70% car, 20% active transport and 10% public transport mode share targets, ultimately meeting the community's expectations.

The intention is to develop for delivery over a five year period, a progressive and coordinated Travel Behaviour Change Program, that leads to a change in resident and visitor travel choices, habits and sustained mode shift.

The Travel Behaviour Change Project will help to protect and enhance the Sunshine Coast character, amenity and lifestyle and work towards Council's vision to be *Australia's most sustainable region – Healthy. Smart. Creative.*

Unfortunately the project has been interrupted by COVID-19 and will extend across two financial years.

Integrated Transport Strategy Attitude Survey

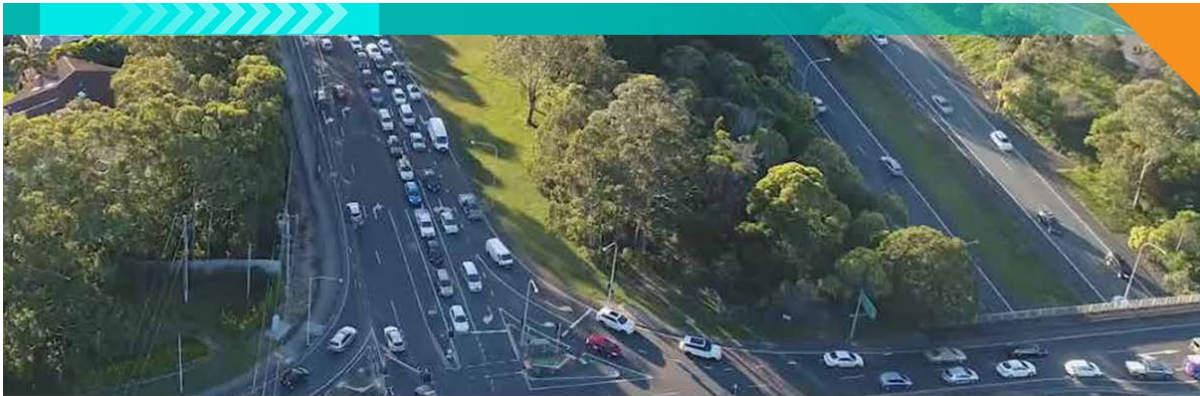
Council is keen to establish a baseline dataset to monitor community attitudes towards transport and measure changes in the behaviours that the *Integrated Transport Strategy* sets out to address. A review of possible survey methods was undertaken by an expert consultant to assist Council determine a preferred approach as a base for future years.

Results derived from consistent monitoring of community transport attitudes and behaviours will help to:

- inform future transport planning policy and delivery of appropriate interventions
- provide input to Council's Travel Behaviour Change Program
- monitor citizen sentiment (mood/perception) towards actions and/or interventions implemented
- supply supporting evidence for Council to perform an advocacy role within Council and to other levels of government to secure investment in much needed transport infrastructure and services.

The Transport Levy will continue to be applied in line with the *Transport Levy Policy* to progress *Integrated Transport Strategy* actions.





Modelling partnership with the Department of Transport and Main Roads

In 2019/20 Council has continued to develop both region wide and local area computer models to assist with transport planning and forecasting of trips across the Sunshine Coast. This model development has been undertaken in conjunction with the Department of Transport and Main Roads and is partially funded by the Transport Levy.

Transport modelling enables Council to analyse the existing and future performance of the transport network. The outputs from these models are used to assist Council in:

- optimising traffic signals to reduce vehicle queuing and improve coordination between signals
- identifying future travel demand in the region
- determining the best solutions to addressing current bottlenecks and treatments to service future travel demand in the region
- prioritising future transport works to ensure best use of community money
- determining the required sequencing of projects.

This project will lead to improved transport models jointly owned by Council and the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

Transport Futures Fund

The Transport Futures Fund continues to be a critical element of the Transport Levy structure as it supports Council's efforts to plan for and secure investment by the other tiers of government in the critical strategic transport outcomes that our region needs.

The Transport Futures Fund is not intended to replace the funding of projects that can realistically be delivered through the timely and effective use of existing capital programs, revenues and mechanisms for effective land use planning.

In 2019/20 the Transport Futures Fund increased by \$1,981,219, reflecting Council's budget allocation and end-of-financial year reconciliation of Transport Levy expenditure. The Transport Futures Fund balance as at 30 June 2020 is \$14,324,295.

The Transport Futures Fund, as the name suggests, was created to strengthen Council's ability to support major public transport investments by State and Federal Governments, at a future time.

Council is building the futures fund by allocating a significant component of the Transport Levy to this endeavour.

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