

Media Release

28 June 2023

CASSOWARY COAST 2023-2024 BUDGET FOCUSED ON OUR FUTURE

Cassowary Coast Regional Council's 2023-2024 Budget was handed down at a Special (Budget) Meeting on Wednesday 28 June 2023.

Mayor Mark Nolan presented the budget noting that through our budget deliberations, Council looked to develop a budget that balances the current financial pressures against delivering value for our community.

"Council, like our residents and businesses, is facing rising cost pressures from global and domestic factors and this has flow-on effects across Council's operations.

"The 2023-2024 budget aims to balance the cost-of-living pressures, which we are all experiencing, with the investment needed to continue to maintain and upgrade our existing services and facilities as well as grow our economy.

"This year's Budget is focused on our future, and investing in the people, places and spaces which make the Cassowary Coast great," said Mayor Nolan.

The 2023-2024 budget provides for a total operating revenue of \$93.05 million and operating expenditure of \$93.2 million, resulting in an operating deficit of \$149,000 which is an improved position when compared to the 2022-2023 Budget.

Council plans to deliver a record \$67.4 million Capital Works Program for the Cassowary Coast community.

The 2023-2024 budget is underpinned by a general rate increase of 4.75 per cent. This increase in general rates represents an average increase of \$4.43 per week for the majority of residents. It has been a significant focus of Council to ensure that this increase is below the annual CPI increase of 7.4 per cent, as seen in Brisbane for the March quarter 2023. Council will continue to offer a 5 per cent discount on general rates paid by the due date.

Councillor Nolan said expenditure in Council's Capital Works Budget for 2023-2024 invests heavily in rehabilitating and improving our essential infrastructure - our roads, drainage, water and sewerage.

Highlights from this program include:

- \$1.6 million for Recreation and Natural Areas including:
 - \$780,000 for Warrina Lakes Nature Play Space
 - \$380,000 for Banyan Park, Tully; and
 - \$408,000 for Recreation areas across the region
- \$5.3 million towards road improvement programs, including:
 - \$1.8 million for 50 kilometres of road reseals across the region;
 - \$300,000 for Bowen Street Upgrade Project, Cardwell;
 - \$350,000 for Flynn Road, Mourilyan;

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- \$1.2 million for Blackman Road, Warrami; and
- \$1 million for unsealed road renewals.
- \$1.5 million for Pathway renewals and upgrades including:
 - \$1 million for renewal of kerb and footpath along Mourilyan Road; and
 - \$280,000 for new shared path at Wongaling Beach
- \$5.5 million towards bridge and culvert renewals.
- Increased investment of \$5.2 million from \$3.6 million in 2022-2023 into water main renewals across the region.

In addition to focusing on renewals, Council will begin the delivery of three major projects, some of which are delivered over several years:

- \$10.5 million for all stages of the Mission Beach CBD Upgrade
- \$18.1 million for Stage One of the Cardwell Sewerage Treatment Plant and Normalisation Program
- \$8.8 million for the Hyatt Street Water Reservoir in Tully

Council thanks the Queensland and Australian Governments for the contributions made through funding allocations provided to Council to deliver key projects.

For those in hardship or just looking to manage household budgets, a wide range of payment arrangements remain available. Through this budget Council continues to support community and sporting groups as well as those more vulnerable.

Council will retain the \$300 Pensioner Rebate and interest-free payment arrangements. The Pensioner Rate rebate equates to over \$720,000 in foregone revenue by Council.

Eligible community organisations will continue to receive a Rating Concession of 100 per cent which equates to a value of over \$200,000. These concessions allow our community organisations, sporting groups and not-for-profits to reinvest back into the great work they do for our community.

“In closing, I’m extremely proud to lead a team that has developed a budget that balances the current financial pressures against delivering value for our community.

“Leading our region is a significant responsibility. It is not one this Council takes lightly. We are focused on meeting our challenges and harnessing opportunities to provide long-term inclusive and sustainable outcomes.

“This year’s Budget is firmly focused on our future, investing in the people, places and spaces which make the Cassowary Coast great – One Coast: Cassowary Coast.

“I am proud to present the 2023-2024 Cassowary Coast Regional Council Budget,” said Mayor Nolan.

For more information about the 2023-2024 Budget visit cassowarycoast.qld.gov.au/publications-and-media/budget