

Mayor's Report to the Community



General Rate

The Council at its meeting on 19 June passed an increase of 2% in general rate revenue for the 2017-2018 financial year. In setting the general rate, the Council has remained mindful of the cost of living pressures facing our community whilst also ensuring that we continue to provide core services at an affordable level. The challenge has once again been in balancing the competing priorities of services we must provide, services we would like to provide, the continuation of strategic actions, maintaining a sound financial position and keeping rate increases to an acceptable level.

The rates this year reflect changes in the operations of the Council and increases in costs from suppliers. The major areas of increase are in waste management, roads and parks. It is important to note that there are continuing pressures on the overheads of the Council, commonly referred to as the cost of doing business. Unless the Council maintains a realistic approach to the development of its Estimates and therefore the levying of its rates, then the overheads will start to bite into the level of works and services traditionally provided by the Council.

Service rates and charges

The Waste Management Service Charge has increased from \$193 to \$198 per tenement which reflects a 2.59% increase over last year. This \$5 increase is to cover the cost of the regional contracts for the provision of the household garbage collection and kerbside recycling services and is charged to each household that receives a kerbside recycling and garbage collection service. There is also an increase in the Fire Service Levy which is collected by the Council on behalf of the State Government.

Rating policies

The Council has agreed to continue with the 5% discount for early payment of rates, with payment to be made in full by 31 August 2017 for the discount to apply. The Council is also pleased to continue its practice of not charging penalties for late payment of rates. The Council will again offer the availability of approved regular instalments and offers rate remissions of \$35 for eligible pensioners who live alone.

Capital works

A total capital works program of \$20,886,000 is planned for this year which reflects a 38.9% increase over the previous year. The increase in works is primarily centred around the Dial Regional Sports Complex and the Council utilising the State Government's Accelerated Local Government Capital Program (ALGCP) to bring forward projects listed in our forward program over the next five years. The ALGCP will allow us to undertake five projects this year – Anzac Park toilet block, Creamery Road renewal, Nine Mile Road bridge, James/Grove/Gollan Street intersection and the Quadrant Carpark (Stage 2) – and pay back the money to the State Government in five years' time when the projects were originally scheduled for completion. Major capital works this year include \$2.435m. for urban roads; \$1.84m. for rural roads; \$250,000 for footpaths; \$570,000 for bridges; \$540,000 for car parks; \$317,000 for drainage; \$210,000 for waste management; \$1.146m. for parks and amenities; \$140,000 for aged-persons home unit

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refurbishments; \$131,000 for Ulverstone Wharf Precinct improvements; and \$605,000 for recreation ground and sports centre upgrades. The program is also supported by borrowings of \$1,000,000 towards the replacement of our street lights to LED lighting.

Strategic issues

Our Strategic Plan identifies Council's priorities for 2014-2024 and sets the future direction for the Council in determining how best to direct its resources and efforts to achieve the vision and aspirations of our local community. It summarises the key objectives, strategies and actions that the Council plans to pursue over the coming 10-year period and guides the Council's Annual Plan which details the initiatives and actions to be funded each year in order to achieve the long-term objectives.

Some of the major initiatives and actions in the Annual Plan for 2017-2018 are:

- Completion of the Dial Regional Sports Complex development
- Completion of Penguin Recreation Ground redevelopment concept and further investigation of funding/developer opportunities
- Review and update the Wharf Precinct Plan, including trial of pop-up food shops
- Continue to develop the Central Coast shared pathways network and Cycling Strategy
- Investigate feasibility of further development of the Leven Canyon Floor Walk as a major adventure tourism experience
- Investigate opportunities to make our central business districts attractive and vibrant community hubs for locals and visitors alike
- Completion of the Ulverstone History Museum/ Visitor Information Centre Precinct Plan and funding application process

- Progress the consolidation of equestrian activities to Batten Park
- Implementation of the Central Coast Dementia Friendly Community Framework
- Develop a Disability Access Strategy
- Redesign/construction of the Reibey Street/ Crescent Street/Kings Parade/Queen's Garden area
- Implement the Food Organic and Garden Organics (FOGO) program, if feasible
- Develop a Pump and Jump Bike/Learn to Ride Track in Fairway Park

Australian Masters Games

This year our region will host the Australian Masters Games from 21 to 28 October and welcome over 3000 participants and visitors to our Cradle Coast Region. Central Coast will host the Accreditation Centre at the Ulverstone Wharf Precinct where participants will come to register for the Games, and our local sporting venues will host sports such as athletics, softball, judo, weightlifting, basketball and more. The Council is looking forward to working with our business community to ensure all visitors are warmly welcomed and enjoy a positive experience during their stay. It will be a massive exercise to accommodate, host, entertain and provide food and services to so many visitors but also a wonderful opportunity to showcase our region. The challenge is one I am sure our community is ready to embrace.



Councillor Jan Bonde, Mayor

July 2017