

# Mayor's Report to the Community



## General Rate

The Council at its meeting on 21 June 2021 passed a 3% increase in general rate revenue for the 2021-2022 financial year. In setting the General Rate, the Council has been mindful of the cost of living pressures facing our community and ensuring that we continue to provide core services at an affordable level. The rates this year reflect changes in the operations and continuing pressures on the overheads of the Council with the major areas of increase being in waste management and parks. The Council have endeavoured to once again deliver a responsible budget which balances the competing priorities of services we must provide, services we would like to provide and the continuation of strategic actions whilst also maintaining a sound financial position.

## Service rates and charges

The Waste Management Service Charge has increased from \$263 to \$270 per tenement and is charged to each household that receives a kerbside recycling, FOGO and waste collection service. There is also a small 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. Payment is to be made in full by 31 August 2021 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.

## Conservation Covenant Rate Rebate

The Council has adopted a Conservation Covenant Rate Rebate Policy, whereby a rate rebate is to be provided to ratepayers that have registered conservation covenants within the municipal area of Central Coast under either the Private Forest Reserves Program or the Private Land Conservation Program. The rebate is set at \$5 per hectare per annum with a minimum of \$50 and a maximum of \$500 per annum. You will need to apply for the rebate on an annual basis.

## Capital works

A total capital works program of \$26.9m is planned for this year. This is a large program for the Council due to major strategic works that are planned to happen over the year. Major capital works this year include \$3.3m to complete the HIVE, \$3.5m for Stage B - Penguin Foreshore and \$6.48m for the Coastal Pathway. Other capital works include \$1.28m for urban roads, \$2.03m for rural roads; \$446,000 for footpaths; \$3.02m for bridges; \$28,000 for car parks; \$406,000 for drainage; \$362,000 for waste management; \$1.17m for parks; \$173,000 for aged-persons home refurbishments and \$1.55m for recreation ground and sports centre upgrades. The program is also supported by borrowings of \$5.2m to contribute to the HIVE and the Coastal Pathway.

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## Strategic issues

Our Strategic Plan identifies the 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 ten-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 2021-2022 are:

- Completion of the HIVE (Visitor Centre, Museum, Art Gallery, Science Centre and Planetarium).
- Completion of Stage B of the Penguin Foreshore remediation and protection project from Lions Park down to Watcombe Beach.
- Progress outcomes from the Complete Streets report on the Penguin Town Centre including the former Penguin Recreation Ground.
- Continue with the development of a shared pathway/cycle plan along our coast. Including the construction of both the Turners Beach to Leith and the Heybridge to Penguin sections of the plan over the next two years.

- Commence consultation phase of the Disability and Inclusion Action Plan.
- Complete the Fairway Park Master Plan.
- Undertake a comprehensive review of the Arts and Culture Strategy, including creative arts.
- Undertake a survey of all coastal foreshore areas to identify areas of erosion and potential mitigation measures, including a review of existing walls and structural integrity.
- Develop a Central Coast Waste Strategy.



*Councillor Jan Bonde, Mayor*

July 2021