



## Balanced budget sees region back on track

Bundaberg Regional Council has delivered a balanced budget that meets community expectations and gets the region back on track after a difficult COVID-impacted year.

Council adopted its 2021-22 budget with an increase in the general rate of 1.9 per cent, close to CPI.

Finance portfolio spokesperson Cr Steve Cooper said despite the region taking a financial hit during the pandemic, the budget had delivered modest increases for residents.

“Council lost millions of dollars in revenue at the height of the COVID outbreak and is still experiencing the ongoing economic implications,” Cr Cooper said.

“Despite this, in the last 12 months Council delivered more than \$2 million in COVID-related support for our community.

“Council has worked hard to keep this year’s rate increase close to CPI while ensuring we maintain our capacity to deliver the services and projects our community expects.”

He said Council had achieved cost savings wherever possible, but not at the expense of progress.

“We’re taking advantage of our sound financial position and current low interest rates to borrow funds for projects like the regional aquatic facility which will leave a generational legacy.

“This ensures we can maintain momentum while minimising the financial impacts felt during these difficult times.”

Financial support has been offered where it is most needed within the community, including critical community services.

“More than 10,000 Bundaberg Region ratepayers are receiving the pensioner discount, at a total cost of \$1.7 million.

“A new \$100 Community Wellbeing and Environment Charge will replace the two separate Community and Environment and Rural Fire Levy charges to provide funding surety to public safety, emergency management and community projects.

# #BRCbudget21



“This will help to ensure our local organisations can continue to provide vital services despite a State Government funding shortfall.

“Organisations like Surf Life Saving Queensland, SES, LifeFlight, Rural Fire Service and RFDS wouldn’t survive at current service levels without Council support.”

Projects like the Washpool Creek restoration, an upgrade to the lights at Salter Oval and continued investment in CCTV security cameras are also covered by the Community Wellbeing and Environment Charge.

“We want to be transparent with residents about our ability to provide funding support and important community projects while continuing to deliver services like water, sewerage and waste with ever increasing costs.”

Cr Cooper said, for the average urban residential ratepayer this year’s increases would equate to about \$2.25 per week. This excludes any individual water consumption charges.

A full list of programs, projects and services funded through the Community Wellbeing and Environment Charge are detailed in the budget statement.