

Rate Update

Where do my rates go?

Townsville's population is growing quickly at a rate of about three per cent each year, taking the current number of residents to more than 175,000.

Council needs to keep up with this rapid growth by providing essential services including roads, water, sewerage, drainage and town planning as well as community services such as parks, events and sporting facilities.

We must also meet the considerable challenge of upgrading old infrastructure as it gradually reaches its use by date, while balancing the need to maintain a responsible and financially sound budget.

The collection of rates from residents and businesses allows the Townsville City Council to provide these essential capital works and local services.

This year, the council has a budget of \$684.9 million. Of our operating revenue, 35 per cent will be collected from residents and business rates and 41.6 per cent for water and waste charges.

The remaining amount is largely derived from other sources such as State and Federal Government grants.

Top five projects

1. Water and Wastewater Upgrades — \$180.5 million this year
2. Roads, Traffic & Transportation — \$110.4 million this year
3. Flinders Street Redevelopment — \$32.1 million this year, total project cost \$56.6 million
4. Townsville International Sports Centre (Murray Sports Complex) — \$13.65 million this year
5. Civic Theatre Extensions — \$11.8 million this year, total project cost \$12.73

Expenditure highlights

Numerous other projects and programs are not only vital in meeting the basic needs of our community, but ensuring we have a vibrant city that places importance on its social, economic and environmental needs.

Parks and gardens	\$45.3m
Waste services and recycling	\$17.29m
Drainage projects	\$10m
Events	\$1.8m
Youth activities	\$236,000
Pensioner Transport Subsidy Scheme and rates discount	\$4.74m
Community grants	\$2m
Performing arts	\$5.66m
Environmental activities	\$10.5m

Experiencing hardship?

Direct debit may be a great option.

Did you know there's an easy way to pay your Townsville City Council rates? Direct debit is simple to set up and you can choose between weekly, fortnightly or monthly payments.

Payment by an agreed arrangement may also be accepted in circumstances where ratepayers are having financial difficulty. An arrangement will reduce interest charges if regular payments are made.

Customers can apply for an agreed arrangement and, if the criteria set is met, arrangements will be confirmed in writing.

For more information phone 4727 9000, email enquiries@townsville.qld.gov.au or visit www.townsville.qld.gov.au.



Rate payment is made easy with online services and a direct debit option.

Airlift for Castle Hill safety work

Crews working on Castle Hill were given much needed help from the sky while carrying out a project to protect homes against rockslides.

A helicopter was enlisted to airlift fencing, cables and fencing posts to a site behind Stanton Terrace, where crews used the materials to build a 110 metre long catch fence.

The work is part of a joint \$1.33 million project between the council and the Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management to stabilise risk areas on Crown Land on Castle Hill.

Community Safety and Health Committee chairman, Cr Dale Last, said the catch fence is made from a specialised type of netting designed in Switzerland.

"This is certainly no ordinary fence, with the netting being specifically designed to act as a barrier that can absorb the energy impact of a rockfall," Cr Last said.

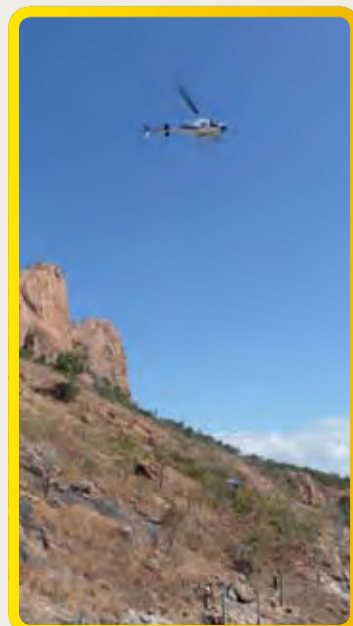
"This provides very valuable protection for homes below."

The safety project has taken

place over the past three years in the Castle Hill Nature Reserve behind West End, North Ward and Townsville City.

It is expected to be completed by early next year.

A helicopter delivers heavy materials airlifted being installed to better protect homes against rockslides.



Sarah Mirfin with sons Braydan, 2, and Zachary, 4, and cat Shade, of Bushland Beach.

State's moggie management trial targets Maggie

Magnetic Island residents are currently trialling the State Government's new cat laws, which require all cats to be registered and microchipped.

The initiative is part of the State Government's Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008 which will apply to all of Townsville and the rest of the state from next year.

Community Health and Safety Committee chairman, Cr Dale Last, said the legislation was being introduced to provide a consistent approach to animal management.

"Ultimately, the law will aim to

reduce the number of animals that are unable to be returned to their owners and are consequently euthanased," Cr Last said.

"There have been issues with stray and feral cats for many years and this animal management program is a major milestone in solving these problems.

"We chose Magnetic Island for the trial because the island is self-contained, which makes it easy to monitor and evaluate.

"We'll be looking at how best to operate and monitor cat registrations, microchipping,

complaint resolution, public education, public opinion and allocating resources."

Cr Last said island residents were being offered a great deal, with free council-supplied microchips and discounted implantation by Magnetic Island Vet.

Further, Dr Alison Bee of Magnetic Island Vet is offering free implantation when cat owners opt to have their cat desexed at the same time.

The legislation will be implemented across wider Townsville in the near future.