

MAYOR'S SPEECH BUDGET 2019/20

A smarter, faster, better Council

Please check against delivery

Townsville

TOWNSVILLE CITY COUNCIL

103 WALKER STREET, TOWNSVILLE QLD 4810 , PO BOX 1268, TOWNSVILLE QLD 4810

13 48 10 | enquiries@townsville.qld.gov.au | townsville.qld.gov.au

Today I rise to present Townsville City Council's 2019/2020 Budget.

It is a budget of delivering; delivering on the commitments we gave the people of Townsville 3 and half years ago.

This budget will create jobs for our community, but most importantly, this budget is about building for our future.

How have we arrived at the strong position we are now in?

In bringing down this budget it is fitting to reflect on the essential and deliberate approaches taken in previous yearly budgets.

Those strategies were focused on organisational reform and operating as a smarter, faster and better council.

The fact that Council again has a balanced budget and can report a surplus speaks volumes to this as a success.

Townsville City Council has saved \$38 million in operational expenditure over four financial years.

These reforms have taken a lot of work, but they are starting to pay significant dividends to our community and will continue to do so for years to come.

Over the last four years council allocated in excess of \$1.2bn for vital infrastructure, while continuing to manage our debt.

While the capital works program did experience some delays following the monsoon – however, we have still delivered this year's infrastructure spend.

Council's 2019-20 Budget will continue to drive job creation and infrastructure investment to build for our future while keeping our rate rise to a modest 2% across the board.

Council will invest more than \$429 million in delivering our normal services to the community such as libraries, planning services, environmental health

officers, disaster management, infrastructure maintenance, wastewater treatment, dam management, and animal management,

In this budget Council delivers major job-creating economic development projects, with \$409.1 million to be invested in our capital works plan.

Building for our future.

In the creation of this Budget we have focused on the needs of the community and the needs of the individual- and I'd now like to talk about what we have created in this budget for the ratepayers.

For the ratepayers

This \$838.1 million Budget is the third consecutive balanced Budget to be delivered by this Council. Council costs have risen including a 30% increase in insurance, and more than \$800,000 in electricity.

But we have delivered a modest rise of only 2% for rates and utilities.

This year's rate increase of 2% will be only \$1.24 for the average household each week. This is equivalent to 55 cents for general rate and 69 cents for combined water, rubbish and wastewater per week.

We will retain the 10% general rates discount for early payments which is taken up by over 90% of Townsville ratepayers and equates to \$15.9 million in foregone revenue so we can put money back in the pockets of ratepayers.

The unprecedented monsoonal event has affected or touched every person in this room. It brought heartache and despair which is why council continues to support locals who were directly impacted by this event by further increasing the 3-month extension for rates payments for the next two six monthly rates notices.

Concessions

Council will continue with its generous pensioner discount, with eligible homeowners able to receive an 85% rebate up to \$800 off their rates bills annually.

Our seniors make a significant contribution to our community and as such we are thrilled to continue with our pensioner transport subsidy, which equates to \$370,000 for the next financial year.

Eligible pensioners can also benefit from our complimentary lawn mowing services, which I am proud to say will receive \$120,000 in funding for the next year.

Pensioners are also now able to register two cats for free if they are de-sexed and microchipped – this is an extension of a previous budget commitment allowing pensioners to register their first de-sexed dog for free.

We appreciate our seniors, so these concessions are about giving back to the generations who have worked so hard to contribute to the creation of the community and the city that we see today.

Capital Works

As the largest city in Northern Australia, Council is focused on building the infrastructure our city and suburbs need.

Council's \$409.1 million infrastructure and capital spend in the 2019/20 Budget will deliver another major infrastructure and building program for our city

This includes -

- \$16 million on waste landfills across the city
- \$26 million on our water network including major upgrades to the Douglas Water Treatment plant
- \$13.7 million for Drains and Stormwater management including pump stations tide gates and the underground network.
- Southern Suburbs Rising Main: \$24.5 million
- NQ Stadium Precinct \$19.6 million
- Belgian Gardens Cemetery \$1.7 million
- Tobruk Pool \$11.3 million

Tobruk Pool - I would like to note - is truly a precious historical asset.

The \$11.3 million spend for this financial year will do this great local asset wonderful justice, and ensure it is cherished and respected for generations to come.

We are investing more than \$89 million in road and transport infrastructure which includes -

- \$8.7 million for footpaths and walkways around our city
- \$1.5 million to seal roads in rural areas
- \$2.5 million for 19 road renewals across the city

Water Projects

We are well on our way to delivering water security for the people of Townsville with \$139.9 million to be invested in our 3-point water program.

This Budget includes \$117.9 million in funding from the Queensland Government to be spent on completing the city's new water pipeline.

As I'm sure you're all aware, this has been a major priority for my Council, and I am proud that we will deliver this for the people of Townsville.

Other water security projects such as the Water Smart Package and Reuse Water Scheme will also be delivered through this budget.

The Reuse Water Scheme will make it cheaper for water to be used on sporting fields, such as the new Townsville stadium, public spaces as well as for industrial use.

These projects are not only about creating water security for our region but creating and instilling confidence for our local community for the future, while keeping Townsville green.

2020 Projects

The Townsville 2020 Masterplan provides a clear vision for our city and this Budget is about delivering on that vision, with almost \$15 million to be spent delivering major projects.

I am pleased to announce this budget will include an allocation to construct the The Riverway Splash Water Park \$3.6 million.

This will be built in the lower lagoon damaged by the recent floods.

Mount Louisa Open Space Masterplan, Central Park, Castle Hill Concept Plan and Flinders Lane will all receive funding this financial year.

These projects are community-based projects, from Riverway in Kirwan to the Strand.

They will deliver world-class experiences, created by locals for locals - and to be put on show for our visitors to enjoy.

Townsville 2020 is about setting our city up for the future and that's why we are investing in these projects now.

Importantly, public consultation has been a major part of the design of these projects.

We have had a terrific response from the community regarding the Mount Louisa Masterplan, and we have made commitment to those involved that we will listen and amend our projects prior to commencing works.

While we have allocated funding in this budget for Mount Louisa, we will be going back to the community with revised plans before we deliver this project.

We will make sure the residents are happy with our revised plans, before we proceed.

Jobs creation

By delivering significant capital spending each year, Council plays an important role in supporting economic and jobs growth.

By delivering the infrastructure and capital projects in this Budget, we are forecasting the creation of 2831 direct and indirect jobs locally.

Council's dedication to deliver significant infrastructure and capital spending each year plays an important role in supporting local jobs and small business growth.

As previously mentioned, our Council has allocated more than \$1.2 billion to infrastructure and capital projects in the four budgets of this term of Council.

This Budget will benefit our whole city, with funding allocated towards projects across the width of our region, not just in our CBD.

Community Safety

Council is committing more than \$13.3 million into our resident's safety.

This includes -

- CCTV Operation \$1.4 million
- Community Safety Programs \$1.0 million
- Community Response Vehicle and staff \$0.9 million
- Infrastructure investment (including camera replacements) \$8.7 million

Councils all around this country are increasingly having to pick up more of the work that should be done by state and federal agencies.

Mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, child neglect and abuse these are the real issues for community and council does not have the funds or the police powers to deal with these matters.

Arts & Culture

At Council we understand the importance of arts and culture to our community as well as introducing major events to our city.

Which is why in this Budget we are investing \$15 million on delivering major events and supporting arts and culture in our community.

We're delivering on our promises, with the launch of the inaugural North Australian Festival of Arts (NAFA), continuing the successful Townsville Eats, Carols by Candlelight just to name a few.

Townsville is cementing our city's reputation as the events, arts and cultural capital of Northern Australia.

Hosting these major events – whether its NAFA or the Supercars – brings people and economic stimulus into our city, providing a boost to businesses and creates jobs for locals

Conclusion

The 2019-20 Budget is one that I am extremely proud of, and together my Councillors and I will continue to work hard to create jobs.

This budget is both practical and fiscally responsible.

This budget is a balancing act between rebuilding our community after the unprecedented monsoon event, keeping cost increases modest while delivering major infrastructure and building program for our city. Delivering 2800 direct and indirect jobs are predicted to be created from Townsville City Council's \$409.1 million infrastructure and capital spend this year.

A budget that is **building for our future**

We are still committed to our promise to maintain long-term financial stability.

The budget focus on long-term financial sustainability means that borrowings are kept at a minimum while maintaining Council's citywide commitment to the highest possible levels of service delivery

Fellow Councillors, as you are aware, this budget is the culmination of a collaborative process between yourselves, the senior management team and key departmental officers.

Thank you to all.

This is a City-shaping Budget that will invest funding to deliver on projects that will fundamentally change Townsville for the better.

This Budget is about delivering on our commitments to the community. It sets up our city for future prosperity by investing in infrastructure to create jobs now.

This budget is **building for our future.**