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Delivering for the whole region

Sunshine Coast Council's responsible financial management has delivered a budget with record spending on roads, bridges, parks and community facilities.

Financial Management and Business Portfolio Councillor Chris Thompson said the \$189 million for capital works was achieved while keeping the rate increase below inflation.

"This \$638 million budget delivers for the whole region with record investment in infrastructure," Cr Thompson said.

The investment will deliver better roads and bridges, well cared for parks and improved community facilities, including:

- \$14.5 million for roads reseal and rehabilitation program
- \$7.3 million for Nambour Landfill expansion
- \$9.1 million for public realm projects (streetscapes/beautification/public amenity)
- \$3.2 million for Inner Cooroy bypass construction
- \$1 million for Maleny Community Project

"We have great communities – that's why we're funding new programs to enhance their 'look and feel' and make them even better places to live, work and invest.

"The public realm projects will improve the amenity in our town centres which will encourage investment, create jobs, and strengthen our economy. The council's funding of public realm projects is part of a \$40 million funding program over ten years. This is a significant investment to drive jobs growth and the development of our urban centres," Cr Thompson said.

In this budget, council has also turned its focus to the delivery and implementation of a series of strategies developed in the past two years, with more than \$15 million in 2011/12 allocated as follows:

- \$5.2 million for Open Space
- \$3.6 million for Sport & Active Recreation
- \$2.3 million for Waste Minimisation
- \$1.6 million for Waterways & Coastal Management

"Cr Thompson said the 2011/12 budget was one aimed at providing a balance between delivery and affordability.

"We know people are doing it tough which is why we've tried to keep the rates rise as low as possible," Cr Thompson said.

"At 3.5% the rate rise is below inflation – with ratepayers on the minimum general rate (70%) the bottom line increase is 80 cents a week.

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“However, an increase in contractor costs and the need for landfill expansions have seen the waste charge increase by 4.9% – which works out to be \$9.80 a year.

“This unavoidable increase is despite our recycling activity improving by 9% since our Waste Strategy began 18 month ago. We, as a community, still have a long way to go to help keep costs associated with waste to a minimum.

Things that will stay the same include:

- pension remissions will continue (\$3.9 million)
- early payment discounts will stay (\$8.3 million)
- key levies will remain unchanged (environment, public transport, tourism and heritage)

“This budget is about maintaining and enhancing assets and services while at the same time ensuring council’s long-term financial future,” Cr Thompson said.

“With the exception of the asset sustainability rate, council will meet or better Local Government Financial Sustainability Targets.

“And not just for this year, but the subsequent nine years, laying solid foundations for the organisation’s financial future for the next decade.”

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