



SOUTH BURNETT
REGIONAL COUNCIL

SOUTH BURNETT REGIONAL COUNCIL

BUDGET 2020-21

MEDIA PACK





BUDGET 2020-21 OVERVIEW

Council has adopted its 2020-21 Budget, featuring an investment of \$28.5M into renewing community infrastructure and an operational budget of \$67M to deliver vital services for residents.



**OPERATIONAL
BUDGET**
\$67M

To provide services to our
32,555 residents



**CAPITAL
EXPENDITURE
BUDGET**
\$38.2M

Funding vital infrastructure



**TOTAL INCREASE IN
DEPRECIATION**
\$1.99M

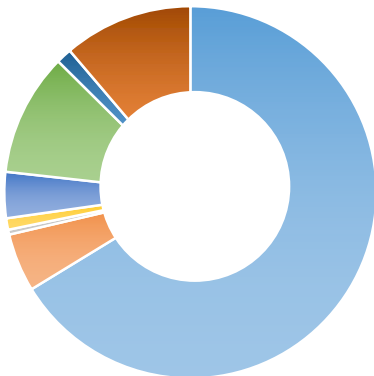
Largely due to building assets



**TOTAL CHANGE IN
RATES & CHARGES**
1.79%

Compared to rates and
charges levied in 2019/20

Where the money comes from...

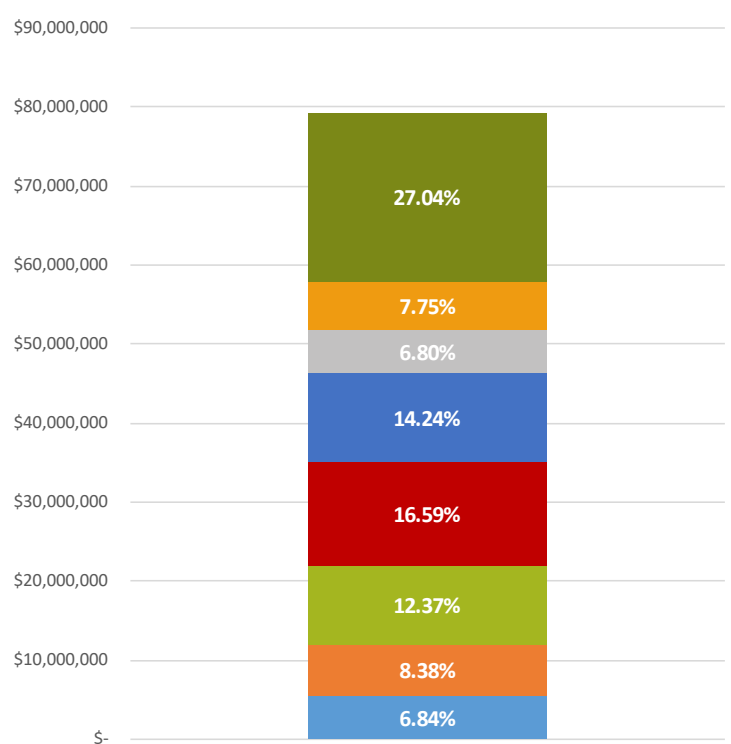


- Net Rates & Charges 66.29%
- Fees & Charges 5.07%
- Rental Income 0.42%
- Other Recurrent Income 0.99%
- Sales Revenue 4%
- Operational - Grants, Contributions & Donations 10.66%
- Interest Received 1.34%
- Fleet Recoveries 11.23%



Did you know?
Eligible South Burnett pensioners can receive up to \$400 per annum off their annual rate fees.

Where the money goes...



- Asset Depreciation
- Fleet Operations
- Waste
- Utilities - Water & Sewerage
- Infrastructure Operations & Road Maintenance
- General Operations, Planning & Economic Development
- NRM, Parks & Recreation
- Environment Health, Community Services & Facilities

What is Depreciation?

Depreciation is an accounting measure which estimates the usage of South Burnett Regional Council's property, infrastructure, plant and equipment assets over the estimated useful life of an asset.

The depreciation reflects the current valuations and is distributed as follows:

Asset Class	2020-21	2021/2022	2022/23
Buildings	\$3,628,314	\$3,664,597	\$3,701,243
Plant and ICT	\$2,500,000	\$2,550,000	\$2,601,000
Roads	\$10,452,159	\$10,556,681	\$10,662,248
Water	\$2,612,985	\$2,794,871	\$2,845,184
Waste Water (Sewerage)	\$1,691,120	\$1,755,190	\$1,852,540
Waste Management	\$115,267	\$128,609	\$138,822
Intangibles	\$393,603	\$413,283	\$417,416
Right-of-Use	\$36,039	\$36,039	\$36,039
Total	\$21,429,487	\$21,899,270	\$22,254,492

Each year Council reviews the asset registers for key asset classes, in the table above either via a comprehensive or desktop review. The key elements of the registers are the asset value, useful life and condition.

The key elements of the asset registers are also the key elements used in calculating the depreciation. Without complicating the issue it is simply the Asset Value divided by the Useful Life.

In 2019-20 Council carried out a comprehensive valuation of the Water, Sewerage, Land and Building Asset Classes. For the Building Assets a Building Condition Assessment was undertaken which provides Council with a greater understanding of current and future maintenance requirements. Water and Sewerage Assets involved the use of a camera to assess the condition of the underground assets. This process on average increased asset costs and shortened useful lives, which resulted in an increase in depreciation expense of **\$1.99M**.

That expense has largely influenced the predicted operating deficit in the 2020-21 budget of **\$3.67M**.



For more detailed information about Council's 2020-21 Budget please go to www.southburnett.qld.gov.au/budget.



BUDGET 2020-21 AT A GLANCE

An Achievable and Affordable Budget:

- Operational Budget - \$67 million
- Total change in rates and charges - 1.79% compared to rates and charges levied in 2019/20
- Differential Rating Categories have been set to increase by 0%
- Water Access Charge increase – 2%
- Water Consumption Charge increase – 2.1%
- Sewerage Charge increase – 2%
- Domestic Refuse Collection increase – 2%
- Commercial Refuse Collection increase – 0%
- Community Rescue and Evacuation Levy – Increased from \$4 to \$5
- Rural Fire Levy – no change
- Waste Management Levy – an increase of \$12
- Capital Expenditure totals \$38.2 million
- No new borrowings
- Projected overall deficit \$3.6 million moving to surplus in 2026/27
- Council's maximum \$200 pensioner rebate remains, matched by the \$200 maximum State Government pensioner subsidy



PROMPT RATE PAYMENT DISCOUNT:

10% OFF

General Rates, Water Access,
Wastewater (Sewerage) and Wheelie
Bin Collection charges.





Capital Expenditure Program:

- \$5.825M allocated for Building Assets
- \$2.315M allocated for Plant and Fleet
- \$480K allocated for Information Technology
- \$22.524M allocated for Road and Drainage
- \$3M allocated for Water Supply
- \$3.735M allocated for Wastewater
- \$350K allocated for Waste

INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS INCLUDE:

- \$11.3M Kingaroy Transformation Project - funded by \$4.5M of Capital Grant
- \$4.07M Gravel Resheeting Program
- \$4.1M Niagara Road
- \$1.6M Bitumen Reseal Program
- \$300K Regional Upgrade to Wastewater Scada
- \$317K for various upgrades at Boondooma Dam
- \$191K New Amenities at Yallakool Tourist Park
- \$175K Portable Grandstands at Wondai Showgrounds
- \$100K Coronation Park Wondai Drainage Works
- \$1.1M Water Main Revitalisation, Kingaroy
- \$160K Air Condition the Nanango Cultural Centre
- \$410K Playground/Softfall Renewals across region
- \$3.4M Emergent Works on Sewer Lines
- \$200K Replace Plant Room at Murgon Swimming Pool
- \$100K Water Meter Replacement Program
- \$500K Murgon CBD Footpath Stages 3
- \$180K Taromeo Pedestrian Bridge
- \$80K Durong Public Amenities Bore
- \$80K Blackbutt Skate Park Shade Shelter
- \$150K Park Furniture across region
- \$450K Water Storage Upgrades across region

Other Significant Operational and Maintenance Expenditure excluding depreciation:

- \$2.369M allocated to Property Maintenance
- \$1.057M allocated to Pools and Halls
- \$1.286M for Tourist Parks, VICs, Galleries and Museums
- \$6.867M allocated to Environment and Waste
- \$803K towards Natural Resource Management, Pest Management, Dips and Sale Yards
- \$368K allocated to Cemeteries
- \$1.058M allocated to Libraries
- \$7.535M allocated to Water Supplies
- \$3.747M for Wastewater Supplies
- \$1.580M for ICT
- \$4.576M Rural Services, Parks & Gardens & Public Conveniences

Wondai and Murgon Waste Facilities

Following feedback from the community, Council has extended the operating hours for the Murgon and Wondai Waste Management Facilities.

The 2020-21 Waste Management Levy increase of \$12 incorporates a \$2.50 cost to provide this additional service to the community.

HOURS	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
8am to 12noon	MUR	MUR	MUR	MUR	MUR	MUR	MUR
1pm to 5 pm	WON	WON	WON	WON	WON	WON	WON



MAYOR'S SPEECH

Budget 2020-21



MAYOR BRETT OTTO

2020-21 Budget – the first step in moving forward together:

Fellow councillors, staff, media and most importantly, the people of the South Burnett, it is with a great sense of responsibility that I table the South Burnett Regional Council's 2020-21 budget. To the people of our region, this is your money, this is your budget, this is your freshly elected Council's first strategic initiative in starting the process of re-building our economy and providing you with a brighter future.

At the recent election, you the people made clear your expectations of Council, reasonable expectations of better value for money for ratepayers, improved service standards, enhanced facilities for youth, families, the disabled and the elderly as well as a commitment from Council to create an environment that encourages investment in our region, promotes economic prosperity and population growth and most importantly, supports the sustainable development of all communities across our rural towns and villages, irrespective of size or location.

I can say with hand on heart, that as your new Mayor, I have left no stone unturned in working through the budget line by line and with my fellow Councillors, our CEO and staff have made every effort to deliver a budget that provides a responsible and compassionate response to the economic challenges facing the people of our region in these unprecedented times. Having said that, this budget is far from perfect, indeed it is very much a work-in-progress and I acknowledge that we have much more work to do. It is however, an important first step and reflects the priorities outlined in Council's Operational Plan for the 2020-21 financial year, priorities that constitute the early stages of creating more

prosperous and liveable communities.

It is a \$108 million plan to kick start the process of building a stronger South Burnett through partnerships with higher levels of government and by working together through stronger connection to and better engagement with community.

In delivering this budget, Council remains conscious of the financial, social and emotional burden endured by our region's residents through the cumulative impact of the ongoing drought and Covid-19 pandemic.

To the people of the South Burnett, those whose small businesses are suffering, who have had their hours cut or lost their jobs, farmers who are still battling the drought, families who are facing rising costs of living, pensioners and retirees who are struggling to make ends meet, we understand that you are doing it tough and that there is much uncertainty on the horizon.

In response to such, Council has been careful to formulate a considered and measured response to supporting the community through these challenging times. A response that provides short-term relief without compromising the ability of Council to sustain a sound financial position and asset management strategy for future generations. As such, this budget response includes:

- the first 0% general rate rise in the history of the South Burnett Regional Council, achieved through savings of approximately \$1.4 million to Council's proposed operating budget. These savings will be delivered alongside a long overdue pay increase of 2.5% for staff and absorbing an expected CPI increase to the cost of materials and services of around 2%;
- a 0% increase to Council controlled fees and charges;
- a 0% increase to the commercial wheelie bin charge in support of small business;
- an amnesty on outstanding debt recovery during the COVID-19 period;
- miscellaneous case by case deferral or relief of service charges for local not-for-profit community organisations;
- refunding all prepaid Council facility reservations; and
- a commitment to supporting local small business through reforms to Council's procurement policy.

While Council will receive no additional income from general rates due to the capping of such, it is important to note that some ratepayers general rates will increase, while others will decrease. This is due to the phased in valuation of their land. Council adopted 3-year valuation averaging as a means of smoothing or phasing in the large land valuation increases caused by the land revaluation undertaken by the Department of Natural Resources Mines & Energy as at 1 July 2019.

MAYOR'S SPEECH

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As part of Council's engagement policy, I will be holding community forums across the region throughout the first week of August to provide further community information on rates and charges.

An operating budget of \$70 million will support the delivery of key community services and facilities maintenance programs. Within this \$70 million, \$28 million has been set aside for asset renewals, underpinning Council's strong commitment to sustainable infrastructure across our extensive road network, water, wastewater, and community buildings and parks and gardens assets. In doing so, Council is ensuring existing assets are available for the benefit of future generations.

The current year budget is projected to result in a \$2.2 million cash surplus, with an overall operating deficit of \$3.6 million after depreciation. A significant contributing factor is an increase in depreciation of almost \$2 million, largely due to the recent revaluation of building assets.

At 30 June 2021, Council's current assets are projected to be \$49.2 million dollars, including \$43 million in cash at bank. Current liabilities are projected to be \$14.8 million.

Total assets are projected to be \$951 million, with total liabilities at \$61 million, of which Council borrowings are projected to reduce to \$33.6 million. Council has adopted a debt policy of no new borrowings for the 2020-21 financial year.

Total community equity is projected to increase to \$890 million by 30 June 2021.

As highlighted, this budget position reflects the first stage in the budgetary process. Council will be embarking on a series of further financial reviews during the course of the year with the objective of balancing Council's financial position against economic conditions, such will include, but not be limited to:

- a comprehensive study into rating categories to create improved equity in Council rates;
- an independent audit of the roads and building assets valuation reports;
- further review of asset management plans as to priorities for buildings and parks & gardens;
- a detailed review of Council's motor vehicle fleet; and if necessary,
- a mid-year review of 2020-21 rates and charges in response to COVID-19.

In addition to the operating budget, asset management planning has facilitated the development of a \$38 million capital investment program to be shared across all communities, encompassing:

- \$22.5 million on roads, drains and bridges;
- \$5.8 million on buildings, parks & gardens;

- \$3 million on water infrastructure;
- \$3.7 million on sewerage and wastewater infrastructure;
- \$2.3 million on plant;
- \$350,000 on waste assets;
- \$480,000 on information technology systems.

Providing secure and reliable water and sewerage services are a significant responsibility for Councils. Our local water and sewerage network is under increasing stress due to ageing infrastructure. Long-term financial forecasts indicate that additional cash reserves will be required to fund significant capital expenditure associated with the replacement and upgrading of essential water and sewerage assets. In order to accumulate the required cash reserves, Council has adopted a measured and responsible approach to increasing water and sewerage charges so as to smooth the impact on users over consecutive years.

As such, to provide for sustainable management of these critical assets, water and sewerage user charges will increase as follows for the 2020-21 financial year:

- the water access charge for urban residential users will increase by 2% from \$611.50 per annum to \$624 per annum (an increase of \$12.50 per annum);
- water consumption charges will increase by 2.1% from \$1.54 to \$1.57 (3 cents per kilolitre) on tier 1 consumption and by 2.1% on tiers 2 and 3 (an annual increase of \$1.56 per annum for a household consuming 52 kilolitres per annum);
- the wastewater (sewerage) charge will increase by 2% from \$724.70 to \$739 per annum (an increase of \$14.30 per annum);
- Overall, most urban residential ratepayers will pay an additional \$28.36 per annum for water and sewerage services.

The current water feasibility study funded by the Commonwealth Government's National Water Infrastructure Development Fund will be crucial to identifying future solutions for water security and will provide a platform upon which Council will actively pursue government investment in our region's water infrastructure needs.

Council cannot rely solely upon ratepayers to fund our aged and deteriorating water and waste water

MAYOR'S SPEECH

Budget 2020-21

network and as such will need to lobby State and Federal governments to recognise and support this critical infrastructure for our rural communities.

Council is compelled by State legislation to make provision for future landfill costs. Long-term financial forecasts indicate that additional cash reserves will be required to fund significant capital expenditure associated with future landfill. In order to accumulate the required cash reserves, Council has again adopted a measured and responsible approach to increasing waste charges so as to smooth the impact on users over consecutive years.

As such, waste user charges will increase as follows for the 2020-21 financial year:

- the waste management levy will increase by 8% from \$150.50 to \$162.50 per annum (an increase of \$12.00 per annum), including a \$2.50 charge to maintain the current opening hours at all tips and to increase the opening hours at the Murgon and Wondai tips to seven half days per week;
- domestic wheelie bin charge will increase by 2% from \$165 to \$168 per annum (an increase of \$3.00 per annum);
- there will be no increase to the commercial wheelie bin charge, remaining at \$243 per annum.

Overall, most urban residential ratepayers will pay an additional \$15.00 per annum for waste collection and disposal services.

The community rescue and evacuation levy will increase from \$4 per annum to \$5 per annum, with all funds going directly to Lifeflight.

The state emergency management levy, also known as the rural fire levy will not increase, remaining at \$130.20 per annum.

This means that most residential ratepayers will have an increase of \$44 a year, or 85 cents a week, with the total change in rates and utility charges of 1.79% compared to rates and utility charges levied in 2019-20.

Rural ratepayers without water, sewerage and bin collection services are not subject to these charges.

Council's maximum \$200 pensioner rebate remains, matched by the \$200 maximum State Government pensioner subsidy.

I will continue to advocate strongly to State and Federal Governments on behalf of the people of the South Burnett for a more equitable share of funding. Insufficient funding from government for Council operations has repeatedly compromised our capacity to deliver essential services and infrastructure and to minimise the burden on ratepayers.

Private sector investment is a key strategic priority for council, our ability to grow our population and provide improved living standards for our people is significantly dependant on long-term job creation. Fostering greater diversity in our regional economy is a key factor in building increased resilience and economic security.

Council will work to engage much more productively with private companies and public sector agencies to foster industry growth across our region in sectors such as agricultural production, food processing, freight distribution,

manufacturing, the Arts and tourism.

Mental health issues across the State of Queensland have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. I am confident that our region can provide a healthy option for people seeking a more balanced and authentic lifestyle post COVID-19 and as such lead to a renewed period of tree change inspired population growth.

By working together we can position our region to achieve its potential. A potential for enhanced liveability and economic prosperity that is underpinned by our enviable country lifestyle, welcoming communities, an abundance of rich and diverse natural resources, close proximity to burgeoning coastal and urban populations and emerging export hubs, including Toowoomba's Wellcamp Airport.

I wish to acknowledge and thank my fellow Councillors, our CEO, Mark Pitt, Council staff and in particular our General Manager Finance and Corporate Services, Susan Jarvis and her staff for their concerted efforts in bringing the 2020-21 budget to fruition. I have a strong sense that the current decade will provide a renewed period of regional prosperity.

Mayor Brett Otto
South Burnett Regional Council



MEDIA RELEASES BUDGET 2020-21



MEDIA RELEASES Budget 2020-21

Council's Operational Budget provides essential services to our community

During today's Special Budget Council Meeting, Mayor Brett Otto announced that the South Burnett Regional Council's Operational Expenditure Budget for 2020-21 is \$67M.

The South Burnett Regional Council have given consideration to a number of impacts on the community, not least the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing drought conditions. As such, the South Burnett Regional Council have committed to a 0% Differential Rate Rise recognizing the difficulties facing the region.

As with any entity the South Burnett Regional Council have adopted a budget that ensures that services will not be impacted while taking a balanced view of the budget. South Burnett Regional Council have taken decisions understanding that the recovery for the region - not just in terms of agricultural activities, but also the tourism and hospitality sectors - will take time to effect.

A snapshot of the rates overview shows the many ways Council continues to work toward the ongoing sustainability of the region, while offering opportunities and lifestyle options for our residents.

During the meeting, the following rates and charges were set:

- Differential General Rates increased - 0% increase
- Water Access Charge – no change
- Water Consumption Charge increased by 2.1% (compared to 1.5% last year)
- Sewerage Charge increased by 2% (compared to 6% last year)
- Domestic Refuse Collection increased by 2%, compared to 2.5% last year
- Commercial 240L Wheelie Bin Refuse Kerbside Collection increased by 0%
- Community Rescue and Evacuation Levy - Increase from \$4 to \$5
- Rural Fire Levy - no change
- Waste management Levy - an increase of \$12

Council's total rates and utility charges revenue is projected to increase by 1.79% in 2020-21 compared with the total rates and utility charges levied in 2019-20.

This increase in the differential general rates will not translate evenly across all properties in the South Burnett. Land valuations undertaken by the Department of Natural Resources Mines & Energy in 2019 are averaged across three years as a means of phasing in the large land valuation increases.

Mayor Brett Otto said, "The budget will require regular monitoring to continue to adjust for the impacts of COVID-19 with Council aware of the possible need for a mid-year review."

ENDS

MEDIA RELEASES Budget 2020-21

Council's 2020-21 Infrastructure Program supports local community, lifestyle and economy

South Burnett Regional Council is committed to supporting communities, whether local or regional to enjoy a quality of life with the benefits of a small community feel. In order to achieve this, South Burnett has in place a strong asset management strategy supporting social and economic enhancements.

During the COVID-19 lockdown it became clear that many businesses, communities and individuals in our region have suffered hardship and will continue to do so, in the months to come as well as during the economic and social recovery from the pandemic.

In the 2020-21 Budget today, Council has focussed on strengthening infrastructure, commencing in the current financial year. The renewal of rural and urban transport assets, and substantial water mains and sewer relining program are among the key activities for 2020-21. Specific projects scheduled for works this year include:

- **\$4M** for the rural roads resheet program, Council's major renewal strategy for its network of unsealed roads
- **\$1.7M** is allocated to the annual reseal program, which rejuvenates and extends the life of roads and streets in the region. Typically the useful life of a bitumen seal is 10 to 15 years, which is considered during the annual review process each year
- **\$500K** for stage 3 of the Lamb Street, Murgon footpath rehabilitation project, a continuation of previous works undertaken in the Murgon CBD area
- **\$580K** is allocated to stage 1 of the footpath rehabilitation project in Coulson Street Blackbutt, between Hart and Muir Streets on the northern side, and Hart and John Streets on the southern side
- **\$11.3M** is allocated to the Kingaroy Transformation Project, which is being delivered in financial partnership with the Australian Government. Improvements include upgrades to water mains, stormwater,

pavement, kerb and channel, footpaths, road surfacing and landscaping (over 2 financial years)

- **\$1M** will be spent on the Bunya Highway median and roundabout landscaping project. This project continues the next stage of landscaping upgrades that have been previously been implemented across the region, including locations in Kingaroy and Wondai
- **\$3.5M** for major sewer relining program for sewer lines and trunk infrastructure in Nanango and Kingaroy
- **\$180K** for the Nanango State School pedestrian bridge project
- **\$180K** for the Blackbutt pedestrian bridge project
- **\$210K** to upgrade guardrails on bridges across the region
- Other key transport projects, including:
 - * Alford Street, between First Avenue and Thorn Street, Kingaroy **\$275K**
 - * Nanango Butter Factory Park disabled parking upgrade **\$50K**
 - * Blackbutt CBD disabled parking bays **\$30K**
 - * Dingo Creek (Wondai) carpark upgrade **\$75K**
 - * Rural Road (Nanango) missing link seas upgrade **\$375K**
 - * Williams Road (Benarkin) missing link sea upgrade **\$450K**
 - * Cobb Street (Murgon) kerb replacement and rehabilitation **\$120K**
 - * Wheatlands School and Murgon School safety upgrades **\$225K**
 - * Bunya Avenue (Bunya Mountains) footpath and parking upgrade **\$150K**

Mayor Brett Otto today, reaffirmed the commitment to strengthening Council's core business assets. "By ensuring a strong infrastructure program and bringing Capital Works forward, Council is able to stimulate the local economy."

ENDS

MEDIA RELEASES Budget 2020-21

Council's 2020-21 Community Infrastructure Program supports liveability

Community infrastructure will receive a substantial boost in the 2020-21 budget with a significant injection of funds into community infrastructure and liveability projects that will enhance the South Burnett as a great place to live.

Mayor Otto said, "A \$3.31M Works for Queensland grant in response to COVID-19 will fund significant improvements in community infrastructure across the region whilst assisting in stimulating the local economy through delivery of such a large works program. This will be supplemented with an additional \$1 million in funding under the Federal Government's Drought Communities Programme "

Key areas funded in the South Burnett Regional Council's 2020-21 budget include:

- **\$1,810,000** for community building upgrades and maintenance including re-roofing, floor coverings, external painting and security improvements on community buildings including Customer Contact Centres and Libraries at Kingaroy, Wondai, Murgon and Nanango; Wondai Grandstand; Murgon Squash Courts; Public Amenities at Durong & Kingaroy, various Halls and SES Buildings.
- **\$770,000** to supply and install playground and park equipment (including shade sails, shelters, softfall and playground equipment) at various locations in Nanango, Kingaroy, Wondai and Proston.
- \$695,000 for the upgrade of identified recreational and open space areas including tree plantings, seating, bins, signage, bollards and community art located at parks and rail trails across the South Burnett region.
- **\$475,000** to improve tourism destinations through facility upgrades to enhance visitor experiences at the following locations: Yallakool Tourist Park - boat ramp upgrade & tennis court resurfacing; Lake Boondooma - improvements to bunk house accommodation; Wondai Heritage Museum - footpath construction; Wondai Parklands - earthwork and drainage improvements to camp area; Boondooma Heritage Homestead - irrigation for heritage gardens.
- **\$50,000** to upgrade existing runway lighting at Wondai Aerodrome to increase safety for night operations by essential services such as RFDS.

Mayor Otto said "Whilst an unprecedented level of investment will be made into community infrastructure, Council has been very prudent in concentrating on renewal of and enhancement of existing community infrastructure to ensure our community liveable is enriched without placing unreasonable demand on future generations to fund ongoing maintenance of new community infrastructure."

For further information contact Council on 4189 9100 or email info@southburnett.qld.gov.au.

ENDS

MEDIA RELEASES Budget 2020-21

External grants and funding supports capital expenditure

“Capital expenditure of \$38.2M for the 2020-21 financial year has been supported by a range of capital grants and contributions from external sources,” South Burnett Regional Council Mayor Brett Otto said today.

Council held its 2020-21 Budget meeting today, delivering a capital expenditure program that focuses on infrastructure to support the region’s economic, social and lifestyle needs.

External grants account for approximately 50% of Council’s Capital funding sources, including the following capital grants from State and Federal governments:

- TIDS (Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme)
- School Transport Infrastructure Program
- Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program
- Drought Communities Program
- Building Better Regions
- Roads to Recovery
- Works for Queensland

These contributions allow Council to maximise their spending on funding-specific capital projects, particularly in essential services such as roads, drainage, water infrastructure and wastewater.

Other sources of funding for capital works this financial year include proceeds from sale of assets, funded depreciation, operating surplus and restricted cash.

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MEDIA RELEASES Budget 2020-21

South Burnett Regional Council offers assistance to residents impacted by COVID-19

While the South Burnett to date has only registered two residents diagnosed with COVID-19, we recognise the financial impost this has had on the region, along with job losses and businesses suffering fiscal stresses.

As part of Council's response to COVID-19, a number of financial relief measures have been put in place. The following relaxations will remain current until the dates indicated, or will be further reviewed as conditions change:

- 0% General Rate Rise* (to be reviewed in December 2020)
- 0% Increase to a majority of Council Controlled Fees and Charges (to be reviewed in December 2020)
- Amnesty on outstanding debt recovery for the COVID-19 state lockdown period during the March to June 2020 period
- Miscellaneous case by case deferral or relief of service charges for local not-for-profit community organisations
- Refund of prepaid Council facility reservations where COVID-19 restrictions forced cancellations

**Some ratepayers may find their general rates have increased due to the impact of the 3-year valuation averaging and rate capping introduced in July 2019 which limited rate increases in the previous financial year.*

Council encourages affected individuals and organisations to visit Council's website www.southburnett.qld.gov.au COVID-19 page for information on available government assistance.

For further information regarding this media release please contact Council on 4189 9100 or email info@southburnett.qld.gov.au.

ENDS

MEDIA RELEASES Budget 2020-21

Council establishes online marketplace for local suppliers

The South Burnett Regional Council is constantly considering ways to open dialogue and to increase the business opportunities for local businesses in a way that allows them to enter the market process with ease.

Local businesses interested in supplying goods or services to South Burnett Regional Council for can now register their details on a dedicated online system.

Felix Marketplace is an online procurement system which allows Council officers to easily search, nominate and invite local suppliers to quote. Suppliers will in turn receive an email notification to log into Felix to locate the details and to upload their quote.

Businesses interested in supplying goods or services to Council can register on Council's Local Marketplace for free. The marketplace is designed to capture goods and services that are not otherwise contracted, or fall under low-risk, ad-hoc supply arrangements.

Examples of the categories included on the Marketplace are catering, stationery, hardware, horticulture, trade services, IT hardware, clothing and PPE and many others. To view the full list of categories and obtain registration instructions, head to Council's website <https://www.southburnett.qld.gov.au/about-council/tenders-supply>.

Felix Marketplace provides local business owners in the South Burnett region with a simple way of having their goods and services seen by a new audience. The registration process does not mean that you automatically become a supplier to Council, and should you be engaged for goods or services you may be required to provide additional documentation.

For further information on how you can do business with Council, please contact Council's Strategic Procurement coordinator on 4189 9100 or email info@southburnett.qld.gov.au.

ENDS

MEDIA RELEASES Budget 2020-21

Council rates and charges concessions for eligible pensioners

Eligible pensioners in the South Burnett region will continue to be able to access up to \$400 in concessions on their annual rates and charges, following Council's Budget meeting today.

The 2020-21 South Burnett Regional Council Budget maintains concessions for eligible pensioners, including Council's subsidy of 20% of eligible rates and charges (maximum \$200 per annum), matching the Queensland State Government subsidy of 20% (maximum \$200 per annum).

Mayor Brett Otto said, "By matching the Queensland State Government Pensioner Subsidy scheme, Council hopes to relieve a degree of financial burden on some of the region's residents."

Council's Pensioner concessions and the assists pensioner property owners to remain in their own homes by reducing the financial burden of rates and charges levied."

Customers who wish to take advantage of the Pensioner Concessions must hold a current Centrelink Queensland Pensioner Concession Card or a Veteran's Affairs Gold Card. Additionally, the property they are claiming on must be their principal place of residence.

For new applications, Council can only apply the subsidy to the current six-monthly rating period. No backdating of pensioner subsidy has been authorised by the State Government.

Application forms for the rebate must be lodged by June 30th each year. These forms are available from Council's Customer Service Centres or may be downloaded from www.southburnett.qld.gov.au.

MEDIA RELEASES Budget 2020-21

South Burnett Regional Council Budget preparations for the 2020-21 financial year

Preparations for the 2020-21 Financial Year Budget commenced in late November 2019, and included a series of workshops designed to assist the Councillors in the process of building a balanced and sustainable budget. This has included a range of expert consultants together with staff and Councillor input.

With three new Councillors, including Mayor Brett Otto, elected during local government elections in March, the first priority was onboarding the newly formed Council and progressed with a series of intensive workshops designed to inform the new Councillors of regulatory and legislative guidelines.

During the lead up to the 2020 budget meeting, 22 workshops were held to debate all aspects of the budget including:

- Regulative and legislative obligations of Council
- Revenue requirements for General Operations, Water & Wastewater programs and Waste program
- Grant funding
- Reviewing operational expenditure
- Long Term financial planning
- Rates - Reviewing the outputs and implications of Rate Models
- Reviewing the effects of new Land Valuations and Differential Rating Categories
- Reviewing the key influencers of Council's budget – External Funding and Borrowings
- Program
- Depreciation
- Capital and Operational expenditure (CapEx & OpEx)
- Reviewing the Queensland Treasury Corporation's Revenue Models
- Review of Asset Management Plans

2020 has been unprecedented with a range of factors impacting on the budget of the South Burnett Regional Council including the COVID-19 Pandemic and the ongoing drought conditions.

Mayor Brett Otto explained, "In line with COVID-19 and the current economic climate, this is a responsible budget which address funding issues whilst balancing fiscal stability."

"This budget continues to balance funding essential infrastructure with community aspirations," he added.

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No new borrowings for Council in 2020-21

South Burnett Regional Council today announced as part of the 2020-21 Budget process that there will be no borrowing increase this fiscal year. Further, Council has reviewed its forward borrowings and has placed downward pressure on borrowing levels. This is a great result for the region as it will continue to ensure that the Council will only borrow for essential infrastructure and will not be crippled by debt.

Mayor Brett Otto explained, "Generally, Council will only borrow funds for the purpose of acquiring assets, improving facilities or infrastructure and/or substantially extending the useful life of income generating assets (e.g. water, sewerage, waste)."

"Council restricts borrowings to expenditure on identified capital projects that are considered by Council to be of the highest priority, and which cannot be funded from other sources of revenue. In no circumstances should Council borrow funds to finance recurrent expenditure or the operational activities of Council," Mayor Otto said.

Total assets are projected to be \$951 million, with total liabilities at \$61 million, of which Council borrowings are projected to reduce to \$33.6 million.

Mayor Brett Otto welcomed this decision and noted that, "South Burnett Regional Council has opted for a responsible path for the third year running, in choosing to self-fund its works, without reliance on outside loans."

For further information regarding the 2020-21 Budget please contact Council on 4189 9100 or email info@southburnett.qld.gov.au.

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