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**2019/20**

**BUDGET SPEECH**

**Address to Council - 3 June 2019**

**ACTING MAYOR**

**MIKE CHARLTON**

We have known for a decade now that Moreton Bay region is one of the fastest growing regions in the country.

And we know that big growth requires big planning, because unlike many other councils Moreton Bay has dared to dream big for our community.

So it's with pride that I present the 2019-20 budget for the Moreton Bay Regional Council today.

This Budget is more than an outline of our plans for the year ahead - It is the culmination of many years of big-picture thinking, fiscal restraint and strategic investment.

And no project better illustrates this council's big-picture thinking than The Mill at Petrie, where USC's Moreton Bay campus will open early next year to its first academic cohort.

So from my perspective this a milestone Budget.  
A coming of age Budget.

Once the doors to that university open, a catalytic wave of change will wash across every corner of our region, bringing with it a new sense of optimism and opportunity.

This will be a hub for innovation, research and design that will generate a billion-dollars in future economic benefit and create an estimated 6,000 future jobs.

For local parents this represents the opportunity to give their kids a chance at higher education.

For students at high school right now, that means they can be skilled for the jobs of tomorrow.

And for a generation yet to be born, the work we are doing right now will literally redefine the way the world sees Moreton Bay Region.

In fact Mayor Allan Sutherland is currently in Philadelphia with the Queensland Government trade mission lobbying international leaders at the BIO International Convention to invest in the science, research, innovation and biomedical prospects coming to Moreton Bay as part of The Mill precinct.

This is a gamechanger that will transform the demographics of our communities - as more academics,

medical researchers, professors and countless other professionals relocate to our region for work.

It will create new business, investment and development opportunities to service the university community.

And people from across southeast Queensland will have easy access to these opportunities thanks to another of council's strategic investments - the Redcliffe Peninsula Railway Line.

The university is strategically located at the doorstep of Petrie Station, the interconnecting point of north-south and east-west rail travel in our region.

In fact, famed Australian demographer and futurist, Bernard Salt, has said this university site will be the most accessible by public transport in the country.

This will become an increasingly important piece of transport infrastructure, since more than 10,000 students are expected to be studying here in Moreton Bay by 2030.

As a result of financial and logistical barriers, not academic barriers, only 35% of Moreton Bay school-leavers go to university.

That's well below the Brisbane average of about 50%.

That's why this council has allocated \$768,000 for equity scholarships to help tear down the financial barriers holding back local kids from pursuing tertiary education.

\$64,000 of that \$768,000 funding pool will be available this financial year through cash bursaries worth \$8,000 per annum to recipients.

The fact is, our region's higher education rate is approximately half the national average.

So we're stepping-up as a local government to do something about that, by stepping outside the traditional council responsibilities for rates, roads and rubbish.

We're already working to redefine our region's future for ourselves, by delivering catalytic projects that will deliver a brighter future for generations to come.

Delivery is in the DNA of this Council.

So we deserve to boast that Moreton Bay is home to the first greenfield university campus in Australia in 20 years, because this remarkable achievement is no accident.

It is the fruition of many years of deliberate, purposeful and strategic decisions.

At the heart of that decision making has been our community and we are proud to deliver a ninth consecutive operational surplus for them.

Our balance sheet is the envy of councils right around this country and this council should be proud to be delivering the final budget for this term.

Actions speak louder than words and we have certainly walked the talk these past three years.

We have risen above every challenge thrown at us in recent memory to make the Moreton Bay Region one of the most prosperous and successful regions in Australia.

We've stared-down disasters, faced global financial crises, built back after several floods, merged three small councils into a major regional player.

And no matter the challenge, council has maintained its investment in infrastructure and services to keep pace with growth.

In the face of floods and ex-cyclone Oswald we still managed to construct Caboolture's State Equestrian Centre.

We built the Caboolture Hub.

We delivered the Redcliffe Seaside Village Rejuvenation project and Bee Gees Way.

We delivered the new North Lakes Library as well as the Corso at North Lakes - the first local government building in Australia to achieve a 6 star Green Star rating.

Then we delivered Plantation Road to connect North Lakes to Dakabin and funded the Francis Road Overpass

to make pedestrian and cycle access onto Gympie Road safer and more efficient.

We delivered the \$9 million AFL precinct at the South Pine Sports Complex at Brendale, part of a \$100 million master plan.

We delivered the first two soccer fields and tennis courts for the Samford Parklands, a precinct which we are continuing to expand over the course of the next financial year.

Then we transformed our region, when we delivered the Redcliffe Peninsula Railway Line in partnership with the Queensland and Australian Governments, delivering six new railway stations in:

- Kallangur
- Murrumba Downs
- Mango Hill
- Kinsellas Road
- Rothwell; and
- Kippa-Ring



Now we stand at the crossroads of history, as Moreton Bay embarks on its next generation of transformation with the opening of the region's very own uni.

Our remit was to make this region a better place for the community and we have certainly done that.

We should be proud of the progress we've made towards a more accessible and inclusive community.

The inclusive playground at CREEC and the new all-abilities playground being built this coming year at Leslie Patrick Park are just a couple of examples.

I note we are investing in wheelchair accessible beach matting for Woorim and Sutton's Beach in this year's budget as well.

I want to thank councillors for listening closely to their communities and translating that into action by council.

Community feedback is what's shaped this year's record \$655 million budget.

And I can assure residents that this year's \$227.4 million capital works program will deliver on the standard of roads, waste services, sport and recreation facilities, stormwater infrastructure and community programs and facilities expected from a strong and sustainable council.

In fact, we've allocated almost \$112 million to investing in our region's road and transport network.

This includes:

- \$3 million to overhaul Oakey Flat Road and Walkers Road intersection in both directions, from Morayfield Road to Koala Drive and Jonkers Court to Ashbrook Drive (Division 3);
- \$700,000 for road improvements in Toorbul (Division 1);
- \$2.4 million to upgrade Aerodrome Road intersection in Caboolture (Division 2);
- \$1.8 million for road rehabilitation and street scaping works along Archer Street in Woodford (Division 12);
- \$1.75 million for initial road reconstruction works at Henry Road and the intersection with Dohles Rocks Road in Griffin (Division 4), which has also just secured additional funding thanks to the Australian Government;

- \$214,000 for stage 1 of street scaping works at Landsborough Avenue in Scarborough (Division 5),
- \$2.82 million for drainage upgrades in the Cox Street catchment including at Duffield Road, Cox Street, Oxley Avenue, Mabel Street and Margate Parade (Division 6).
- Thanks to Black Spot Funding from the Australian Government, \$1.6 million will go towards delivering a much-needed safety upgrade to the intersection of Narangba Road and Torrens Road at Kurwongbah in the heart of the region (Division 7).
- Road rehabilitation is a top priority towards the south, with council securing \$510,000 for Bells Pocket Road in Lawnton (Division 8) and \$1 million a section of Saraband Drive, between the intersections with Felicia Place and Queen Elizabeth Drive (Division 9).
- And in the region's iconic Hills district and hinterland area, road resurfacing projects alone will total around \$7.8 million, smoothing the drive for locals and tourists alike (Divisions 10 and 11).
- And the list goes on and on.

But what makes this Budget interesting, is that one of our biggest investments after roads and transport is on the environment.

We know locals want to see infrastructure investment that keeps pace with the growth of our region.

We also know that locals don't want to sacrifice their lifestyle in the face of regional growth.

Which is why investing in our environment is one of our single biggest spends.

This year a massive \$54.3 million will be spent on our parks, native habitats and environment.

To give you some great examples:

- \$800,000 to stabilise a 575m section of the Welsby Parade seawall (Division 1);
- \$60,000 for rehabilitation and revegetation works at Burpengary Creek (Division 2);
- \$310,000 for fauna crossing infrastructure at Pumicestone Road (Division 3);
- \$200,000 towards site planning costs for a wetland at Fern Parade Park to improve water quality in the lower Pine River catchment (Division 4);

- \$1.55 million to stabilise Scarborough's iconic red cliffs against encroaching erosion from Mother Nature (Division 5);
- \$800,000 for wetland development in the Bells Creek Catchment to improve water quality running into Moreton Bay (Division 6);
- \$1.49 million for the expansion of Blatchford Sporting and Recreational Reserve, including the construction of a new playground (Division 7);
- \$370,000 for heritage interpretation works at Leis Park (Division 8);
- \$750,000 for riverbank stabilisation at Pine Rivers Park (Division 9);
- \$305,000 for a fauna crossing at Jinker Track (Division 10);
- \$110,000 for rehabilitation and revegetation at Greenwood Crescent Park (Division 11);
- \$100,000 for riparian rehabilitation at various locations in the Upper Stanley River Catchment (Division 12);
- And that's just the beginning.

This underscores our commitment to getting the balance right between new and improved infrastructure, while protecting our natural spaces and local lifestyle.

I'd like to thank the councillors for their focus and determination during budget deliberations.

Thanks also to the CEO and directors for working with councillors to deliver today's exceptional outcomes and continuing to build on our record of successfully delivering services and infrastructure.

In particular I'd like to thank the finance team for their skill and expertise in presenting the financial models and information that have guided council's decision making - Keith Pattinson, Denis Crowe and Jason Linsdell.

I also acknowledge the work of Tony Martini and his team in engineering, construction and maintenance including Andrew Ryan, Bart Bartley, and Angelika Hesse in helping Councillors shape the capital works program.

Our community expects us to work collaboratively with all levels of government to deliver the best outcomes for our region.

Which is why I'd like to make a special mention of the Australian and Queensland Governments financial support for our region.

It's thanks to funding from the Australian Government that we'll be able to deliver a range of projects across the Moreton Bay Region, including much-needed upgrades to:

- the Narangba Road and Torrens Road intersection in Kurwongbah; and
- the Henry Road and Dohles Rocks Road intersection in Griffin.

The community is at the heart of this budget which is why I would also like to extend our gratitude towards the Queensland Government for its ongoing support of community programs like the Regional Arts Development Fund and contributions towards local sporting infrastructure like the recently opened Moreton Bay Central Sports Complex Football Precinct.

Unashamedly we will continue to lobby both levels of government for our fair share of taxation dollars and never forget what we deliver as a council from only 3 cents in every dollar of taxes raised in Australia.

I believe that with a strong balance sheet like this and continued collaboration with all levels of government, we can continue to deliver the region-building projects the people of Moreton Bay expect.

Council Spokesperson for Corporate Services, Councillor Matt Constance, will outline those details shortly, demonstrating how we have balanced the budget with low borrowings and an operating surplus.

But before he takes the floor, I'd also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the great work Matt has done working closely with councillors to prepare this Budget.

Thank you.