



## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Preparations for our 2020-21 Budget have been like none before. As the world grapples with the health and economic impact of COVID-19, many families in Moreton Bay Region are doing it tough through no fault of their own.

As your newly elected Mayor, I'm firmly of the view that it's the responsibility of government to step up to the challenges this pandemic presents and stand by our community. We must drive our own economic recovery to be a source of certainty in uncertain times.

That's why in this year's Budget, Council is increasing its commitments across all areas of delivery, with a strategic focus on ways we can ensure more Council contracts are awarded to more local businesses. This is reinforced by our decision earlier this year to implement a 'Local Preference' policy to give weighted favour towards local companies.

We have dedicated \$32.9 million in funds specifically to deliver a comprehensive range of COVID-19 stimulus measures designed to get our region back on track. This comes in the form of everything from construction and maintenance projects to support local businesses employing local people, as well as increasing our investment into sports infrastructure.

In fact spending on sport and recreation will increase by more than 40 per cent, up from \$34.1 million in 2019-20 to \$49 million this financial year. If COVID-19 has taught us anything, it's the importance of outdoor spaces and recreation. I think it is essential to continually improve these facilities as our region grows, so that our lifestyle remains the envy of everyone in southeast Queensland.

We will ensure infrastructure keeps pace with population growth. Our investment into roads and transport networks is \$31.5 million more than last year. That includes funding a bridge at Youngs Crossing Road, a major \$8.5 million

intersection upgrade along Oakey Flat Road in Morayfield, \$5 million worth of flood mitigation at the intersection of Henry and Dohles Rocks Road in Griffin and \$4.5 million to renew a section of Old Gympie Road in Dakabin. We're also increasing our commitments to parks, libraries, arts, waste management, community grants, and the environment.

A hallmark of this Budget is the expansion of our Infrastructure Charge to specifically include the environment. This initiative will fund our environmental land buyback program so that Council can purchase strategic parcels of land, including for koala habitat, to ensure that we protect the homes of native animals as we deliver homes to accommodate our growing human population.

Part of our commitment to providing certainty in this budget is to have a laser focus on job creation. Federal Treasury is forecasting the unemployment rate to reach around 10 per cent, or 1.4 million people unemployed, in the June quarter. So MBRC will embark on a recruitment drive to employ around 130 new staff this financial year. Not only does this deliver on a recommendation in last year's organisational review, it will also provide essential local job opportunities. Ratepayers experiencing financial difficulty can apply for assistance and for the first time, we'll be giving part-pensioners a \$100 rates remission each year.

As a Council we're responsible for managing ratepayer dollars and I know ratepayers want to see their money backing local business, creating local jobs, building new local projects and improving our local lifestyle in ways that will get our economy back on track. Through these uncertain times, that will always be our commitment to you.

**Peter Flannery**

Mayor - Moreton Bay Regional Council