

**BUDGET SPEECH**  
**Mayor Peter Flannery**  
**18 June 2021**

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Councillors, Moreton Bay is bouncing back!

After a year like no other, this year's Budget sets out to ensure our region recovers like no other.

Today Council has approved a \$743 million plan to reinvent our economy with a record capital spend of \$245 million.

That's \$25 million more than what was adopted in our 2020-21 Budget last year.

But before we reinvent our economy, we need to reinvent ourselves.

Changes starts at home, which is why we are going to change our governance structures to better serve our community into the future.

I can announce that we will be changing Council's corporate values and establishing a new Corporate Plan for this coming financial year.

That's because I want to ensure our operations are aligned with the needs and priorities of our community.

This change has come about thanks to the fierce advocacy of people in this room.

While each of the Divisions you represent is unique, there are two common themes in the projects you've all fought for this year:

The first is the need for better planning - you are determined to satisfy the expectations of your communities.

The second is to keep greening our region as our population grows.

Councillors, make no mistake, properly managing population growth will be the single greatest challenge we face in the years ahead.

To address these communities' concerns about how we will do this, we will undertake a top-to-toe overhaul of our planning scheme to address issues like neighbourhood planning, carparking ratios, growth management and a review of building heights in areas of concern.

I am pleased to announce that Kallangur and Dakabin will be the first suburbs to undergo neighbourhood planning, and consultation on that will start shortly.

This is thanks to the strong support of Deputy Mayor Denise Sims.

She is not only passionate about restoring a sense of community in the suburbs she represents, she is determined to protect their lifestyle as more and more people move to our region.

That is essentially the central theme of this year's Budget - Protecting our region as the population grows.

So you will see that the second biggest allocation of funds this year is for our parks and environment, with an impressive \$61 million spend.

This is in direct response to understandable local concerns about the impacts of development.

To mitigate this, not only will we be planting 148,000 trees this financial year, we will also be ramping our efforts to purchase and protect vulnerable environments and wildlife habitat from private development.

So we have increased the regional infrastructure environment charge from \$84 to \$90 per property this year.

This means that Council will have \$2.9 million available for land acquisitions, green infrastructure maintenance and renewal.

I want every decision and every action of this Council to be viewed through the prism of community service.

And I thank you for your support in this.

## **Fiscal Arrangements**

Now before I go on to talk about the fiscal settings of this Budget, the challenges of Covid-19 must be acknowledged.

Fortunately, Moreton Bay Region has been at the forefront of this fight from the start.

I want to commend the Queensland Government for being the first in our Commonwealth to declare a public health emergency back in January 2020.

And I'm proud to say Moreton Bay Region acted immediately after that to get millions of dollars in financial assistance to our residents and businesses in March.

This Council invested almost \$40 million to stimulate our economy through every mechanism available to us.

We provided two years of rates relief, we waived licensing fees for hospitality businesses, and invested in community infrastructure grants to support local clubs and organisations.

Twelve months on, the economy is in a very strong position and we have seen growth particularly, in the housing and property sector.

On that point, I also want to acknowledge the Federal Government for their economic response.

The housing boom we are enjoying is thanks to their intervention which saved jobs and kept our economy strong - like Job Keeper, Job Seeker and of course the HomeBuilder initiative.

## **Rates**

Against the backdrop of these complicated pressures, the hardest thing to balance this financial year has been keeping rates low while also spending enough to keep our resurgent economy charging.

In Moreton Bay region, rates account for 50% of our revenue.

We do not take this lightly, in fact it was the most important consideration with regards to the increase in required revenue.

So I would like to express my thanks to Council staff and Councillors for the significant amount of effort that has gone into this budget.

We will be increasing the average total rates bill by \$1.20 per week, that's 3.9%

I'm proud to say that not only have we minimised the rate rise, we've also retained all of the rebates that are paid to pensioners.

That includes the \$250 rebate for full pensioners and \$100 rebate for part-pensioners that we introduced in the last year.

While Councillor Brooke Savige represents Division 1, the entire region can thank her for the continued advocacy on this issue.

She had been campaigning for part-pensioner rebates since being elected in 2016.

## **Environment**

Now everyone in this room is passionate about the spectacular beauty of our region and we know how important it is for Councils to protect their local ecosystems.

This year we will go further than ever before with new initiatives to protect the homes of native wildlife, as we build new homes to accommodate our growing population.

I can announce today that we currently have 4 hectares of land under contract in Caboolture, to protect an ecosystem used by vulnerable species like koalas and the Wallum Frog.

This will be the second purchase under our new land buyback scheme, following the 4.1 hectares of land we secured in Clear Mountain to link local parks and reserves into a green corridor.

I want to acknowledge the passionate persistence of Councillor Cath Tonks for the success of this program.

Anyone who knows her, knows her determination to green our region as we grow especially in Division 9 - we are connected between some of our most popular suburbs to the Hinterland belt, which provides habitat for countless wildlife like koalas.

Now Koalas get a lot of attention and while I'm thrilled as Mayor to be able to boast that we are the home to the most successful koala breeding program in the country, I want to stress that we haven't forgotten our marine ecosystems.

We will spend \$1 million rehabilitating and revegetating our waterways and we will spend \$105,000 installing turtle sensitive lighting in areas like Bribie Island and Redcliffe.

This will ensure baby turtles follow the light of the moon out to the ocean, rather than being disoriented by street lights or houses.

I love it when smart technologies can deliver smart outcomes like this, and in Division 6 Councillor Karl Winchester is taking sustainable urban design a step further.

Thanks to his advocacy the Redcliffe Peninsula will re-think road planning to use trees and landscaping as part of these designs, like along Woodcliffe Crescent in Woody Point.

And we're going to experiment with native reeds and aquatic plants in our stormwater designs to improve the quality of water going out into Bramble Bay.

I know our project teams are excited to try some new ideas and I certainly hope these innovations prove successful so that they can be rolled out right across Moreton Bay Region.

Because as we watch the impact of COVID-19 virus around the world, and as people have been forced to spend more time at home, the importance of Council's work and the use of Council facilities has increased significantly.

Families are spending more time in local parks, they want more activities closer to where they live, they want more playgrounds, nature and trees.

## **Sport & Outdoor Recreation**

So there's never been a more important time to invest in grassroots sport, in community facilities, and in activities.

One of the biggest areas for sports and community investment this year is in Division 5, where Councillor Sandra Ruck has secured millions of dollars to help get locals active in their communities.

There's the new Community Hall and the new Environmental Centre in Deception Bay, upgrades to Talobilla Park Softball and of course the incredible Nathan Road sports ground which we opened last year.

In recent years we've seen record investment in sports infrastructure and we're not taking our foot off the pedal.

This year's Budget commits \$8 million to invest in sports complexes and a further \$2 million in various park upgrades.

This is serious spending, but by looking to the future of recreation now we are making a generational investment - which Cr Matt Constance is always reminding us of.

His vision to reimagine what a community hub can be, like at Leslie Patrick Park and now 303 Dawson Parade in Arana Hills... is exactly what we need to push the boundaries of what Council can do.

This is in addition to \$100,000 for feasibility studies for water play facilities and off the back of the huge success of the water park at The Mill.

We are also working to increase active transport options in our region to get people out on foot, bikes, scooters, wheelchairs, skateboards, whatever!

We will invest an extra \$7 million into footpaths, construct an extra 23 kilometres of sidewalks.

Much of this will be built in Division 12, where Councillor Tony Latter has been urging us to complete the 'missing links' in pathways out west.

I think we can all agree he's done an exceptional job investing in lifestyle infrastructure for locals, before we get Caboolture West underway.

Cr Latter has also fought to rename suburbs of the Caboolture West development to not forget the local history of that area, and I can announce that today we are going out for public consultation on this proposal.

I urge everybody to have their say, as we start the important work of planning where roads and sports fields and community infrastructure goes... in an area that will eventually have 30,000 homes for around 70,000 people.

## **Economic Development**

The Federal Budget projects that Queensland will see a net interstate migration of 86,000 over the next four years.

That's roughly equivalent to the net number of interstate migrants who will leave New South Wales, Western Australia and South Australia during that time.

When these people get to Queensland, they will want a job and they'll want somewhere to live.

That's why we recruited a team of experts in Economic Development, tasked with the ambitious goal of creating a \$40 billion economy with 16,000 new businesses and 100,000 new jobs.

That's something Councillor Adam Hain has been advocating for since he was elected.

Caboolture may not have a Chamber of Commerce, but they do have Councillor Hain consistently reminding us all that when business succeeds we succeed.

We have a duty of care to local businesses, just as we have a duty to local residents.

And if we're going to realise the 'Bigger, Bolder, Brighter' targets of our REDS, then we must heed the advice of our business community.

The fact is our region is proudly home to 29,000 businesses

So if we want our economy to rebound, we need to give the private sector the confidence to invest, employ, and grow here in the Moreton Bay Region.

That's why we recently signed up to become a Small Business Friendly Council.

This Council also understands the importance of contract expediency which is why we've increased the design fund that we commenced last year by adding another \$1.5 million to this important resource, bringing its total funding up to \$2.5 million.

This has ensured we were able to deliver projects quickly, particularly when we can seek investments from other levels of Government, developers and third parties.

We will remain ahead of other Councils in our ability to ensure projects are "shovel ready" - as governments likes to say - and our Local Preference Policy means more of those contracts are going to local companies.

## **The Mill**

I've previously stated that the sleeping giant of our region's economy is The Mill precinct, and this year we awaken that beast.

This is an opportunity for jobs, education, and the future of our children.



It is an opportunity for self-containment so locals can live, work, and play closer to home - which will take significant pressure off our road network.

I am pleased to advise that enrolments at the Petrie Campus have eclipsed 3,000 students with 42% of those students the first in their family to attend university.

That means we have started a generational change that will fundamentally change the aspirations and demographics of our region.

These students come from every corner of our region - from Woodford to Bribie Island - from Samford to Redcliffe - and everywhere in between.

No other Council in Australia has an investment precinct the size of The Mill that's in such close proximity to a capital city, airport and international shipping port.

It's a unique opportunity to unlock numerous other opportunities like advanced manufacturing, to ensure we have smart jobs close to home.

And as the age old saying goes, "a high tide lifts all boats".

The Mill is a game changer for our entire region, and an opportunity for everybody who lives here.

That's why we are unrelenting in our push for the \$125 million Knowledge and Innovation Centre at The Mill, to be part of the South East Queensland City Deal.

This will be a major stimulant at this site and I know both the State and Federal Governments are keen to invest in smarter technologies and skills training for the jobs of tomorrow.

I know they won't miss this opportunity to include the Knowledge and Innovation Centre in the City Deal.

## **State & Federal Relations**

The strength of our rebounding economy is thanks in no small part to our partners in the Federal and State Governments.

We have made it our priority since being elected to work extremely closely with both levels of Government.

Never before in the history of Moreton Bay Region have all 27 elected representatives from all three levels of government in this region been in the same room to tackle the big issues.

So we made history this year, putting politics aside to drive a regional agenda as Team Moreton Bay.

I sincerely commend the Morrison and the Palaszczuk Governments for their investment in Local Government.

They have invested significantly in us, and we have rewarded their trust in Council by being a proven delivery partner.

We are able to quickly deliver the infrastructure communities need, and we have worked with the State and Commonwealth Governments to deliver more than \$100 million in projects.

Local Government raises only 3% of all national taxation revenue and manages \$150 billion in community assets in Queensland, yet Councils are responsible for one-third of the nation's infrastructure.

I would strongly encourage both levels of Government to retain the allocative models of funding that have worked through COVID.

It would be remiss of me not to highlight the Youngs Crossing Road Project.

With the strong support of the Federal Member for Dickson, Minister Peter Dutton and an additional \$25 million to ensure we can deliver this project.

While this is important in its own right and an essential piece of infrastructure for our region, the additional funding represents 10% of last year's Capital Expenditure and enables us to deliver more projects to the community.

I am pleased to advise that the detailed design will be completed in September this year and construction will commence in early 2022.

## **Transport and Roads**

However there's no denying that our road networks are already congested and need significant investment before developments like Caboolture West come online.

That's why we have continued to work with the State and Federal Governments on projects like Young's Crossing Road, the Moreton Connector and the alignment of the West Moreton Arterial, ensuring we plan for the future.

Council's own Capital Program for 2021-22 invests \$124 million or almost 50% into transport projects.

This includes investments in Old Gympie Road - of almost \$20 million.

We will also commence construction on Henry Road in the coming months to ensure that we will increase its flood immunity and allow people to get home from work quicker.

I want to acknowledge Division 4 Councillor Jodie Shipway for standing up and fighting to address historical problems in this area.

We all know that if you don't fix congestion problems now, they can only get worse.

And I don't think you can drive anywhere in North Lakes without seeing some road works that Cr Shipway has fought for.

We will be finalising the intersection upgrade of Boardman and Klingner Roads and will be completing almost \$5 million in road rehabilitation, intersection upgrade at Beeville Road Petrie.

I am pleased to see that we will again increase funding for the gravel-to-seal program for those people in our region who still drive on roads that aren't sealed.

This financial year we will invest another \$1.3 million to complete a further 5.2 kilometres.

Division 11 Councillor Darren Grimwade knows better than most how unsealed roads can damage vehicles and deter tourists.

So I want to acknowledge his commitment to bringing an important standard of infrastructure to country areas like Samford and Dayboro, while fighting to protect their rural lifestyles.

Across the entire region we will be using 40,000 tonnes of asphalt to get all the roads resurfacing done.

### **Responding to our Community**

The fact is, in a region our size it's impossible to take a one size fits all approach to every single program.

For example, while road resurfacing is essential in areas like Mount Mee, residents of Griffin would probably prefer fewer roads and more parks.

That's why we acted on calls to increase our staffing to provide a better standard of community service, commensurate with the expectations of residents.

I am pleased that we now compare both favourably with other Councils both when it comes to the services we deliver, and the number of people that we have to deliver those services.

This is in no small part thanks to our longest serving Councillor, Mick Gillam.

He has been a strong voice about the need for Council to improve its level of service to our community, recognising Councils are now responsible for so much more than just 'Roads, Rates and Rubbish'.

We are also acting on the critical community feedback received through our landmark Moreton Says survey, about the need to better explain planning.

So to ensure locals can stay up-to-the-minute on every single development, plan, and strategy that impacts their property and our region, I can announce that we are developing an interactive region-wide planning map to be launched this year.

This is an unprecedented commitment to transparency and community engagement, which Councillor Mark Booth has argued strongly for since coming to office.

In fact one of the reasons why we're livestreaming this right now, to ensure everyone online can see everything we do in this Chamber.

## **Conclusion**

Councillors, it takes a brave group of people to embark on such sweeping changes across almost every facet of Council.

So I want to say that I'm proud to lead a team that doesn't shirk the hard decisions.

Yes, we are delivering a record capital budget - and that is essential to ensuring our region bounces back in uncertain economic times.

But this year's Budget is about so much more than that.

We are improving our service delivery with more frontline staff.

We are drawing a line in the sand on planning issues, and committing to doing better for our community.

We have renewed our commitment to community engagement and transparency.

We are ramping-up our environmental protections, with real action to protect native habitats from development and plant more trees.

We are standing up to the single greatest challenge facing our region - managing population growth - to ensure locals will still recognise the Moreton Bay Region they love today in 20 years' time.

In fact, the vast majority of infrastructure funding is dedicated to projects that make a tangible difference to the liveability of our region.

COVID has been a strong reminder of just how important good local recreation facilities are, especially things like footpaths and playgrounds.

But most important is to ensure people have work in our region, which is why we introduced our new Local Procurement Policy.

I'm thrilled to say almost 30% of the total spend is to local suppliers and that 47% of orders raised by Council were with local suppliers.

Finally, I want to thank everyone in our finance team for compiling this excellent document in incredibly difficult circumstances.

Increasing our services and increasing our infrastructure investment while working to minimise the rate rise, as instructed by us Councillors is a difficult task.

So to Donna Gregory, Tony Martini, Denis Crowe, Jason Linsdell, Jackie Frost and everyone who has worked around the clock on this document. Thank you!

It's thanks to you that we're able to maintain good fiscal discipline while investing in the infrastructure, projects and programs our community wants.

Councillors, I commend this Budget to all of you and look forward to working with the community to deliver these exciting projects.