

# Message from the Mayor

In a tough economic climate, the tough just keep going! Fortunately here in Moreton Bay there's plenty to be optimistic about in this year's \$861 million budget.

Our focus has been to keep the rate rise as low as possible for everyone, because there's already enough pain in the economy. Despite the Consumer Price Index being over 7% and the cost of goods and materials required by Council projected to increase by 15% for 2023-24, we've managed to keep the minimum general rate rise at just 4.45% (total average increase 5.85%). This equates to a total average increase for an owner-occupied residential property of \$1.96 per week.

Proudly, this means Moreton Bay will continue to be one of the lowest rating Councils in South East Queensland (SEQ). This year's Budget commits \$264 million in capital works that will allow us to keep pace with demand without breaking the bank. Because we cannot afford to slow down on infrastructure investment as our population growth continues. Nor can we sacrifice our character to population growth or an uncertain economy, which I know many locals are worried about.

I'm proud to say we're increasing our commitment to free events, activities, and sports programs. Of the 52 festivals and events coming up this financial year 47 of them will be completely FREE. We are maintaining FREE tipping for eligible households, capped at three tonnes or 26 visits each financial year.

Did you know?

The average Australian pays almost \$20,000\* each year in income tax, while the average annual rate bill per person in Moreton Bay is only \$801#

\*Australian Taxation Office; Individuals average 2019-20 income year.

#2023-24 financial year.



And of course all our public spaces, playgrounds, libraries, galleries and sporting infrastructure remain FREE to use. We also provide the most competitive leasing arrangements in SEQ for local clubs and associations, as a measure to assist in keeping fees low.

We're excited to announce a \$75 rate rebate per annum for eligible self-funded retirees. It's a small way to help people who don't receive any other assistance. It builds on our commitment to supporting seniors in Moreton Bay. In 2020 we introduced a \$100 rate remission for part-pensioners. And before that we introduced the \$250 rate remission for full pensioners.

You'll also see we're separating our Infrastructure and Environment charges and we're increasing the environment charge to fund our green commitments and expand its purpose to allow some funding to be directed to supporting community groups involved in the protection of our native wildlife. We have heard very clearly how important it is to you to protect our natural environment.

This year's Budget is an investment in the soul of the city we will become - one that boasts a vibrant civic lifestyle, that cares for its older residents, focuses on local jobs creation, prioritises accessibility, and equity, and considers our natural environment in everything we do.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Flannery', with a long, sweeping underline that ends in a loop.

**Peter Flannery**  
Mayor  
Moreton Bay Regional Council