

BUDGET SPEECH
Mayor Peter Flannery
17 June 2022

Introduction

Council is the closest level of Government to the community, so we know better than anyone that “all politics is local politics”.

2022 has certainly reminded us of that.

A war in Europe has sent our petrol and power prices soaring.

A global pandemic has caused local supply chain shortages.

Costs of goods and materials for Council will increase by 14% this year.

Our world is more complex than ever.

And Moreton Bay is not immune... But I'm proud to say that we have also never been better prepared for the challenges ahead.

That's because the people in this room have the courage to make the tough decisions needed to thrive in difficult times.

I won't beat around the bush.

Rate Rise

Budget 2022-23 will see a 4.8% rise in the minimum general rate for owner occupied houses, this equates to 98 cents per week.

The average total rates rise for owner-occupied homes across Moreton Bay is 5.6%, or \$1.71 per week.

Historically, Moreton Bay has always been one of the lowest rating Councils in SEQ and that remains.

We made the unusual decision to tell our community about a likely rate rise in advance of today's Budget, because we know the importance of transparency and trust in government.

We want our community to have faith in us to tell the truth.

I believe we should be open and honest in explaining how tough decisions are being made.

It means Moreton Bay will have the resources to continue to forge ahead.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

We will deliver a record \$259 million capital works program without having to cut a single project... And also increase our service standards to our community.

We are refocussing our priorities around what the community wants. With greater investment in:

- the environment,
- stormwater, waterways and coastal areas; and
- waste management.

There is an extra 12% being invested into the environment and local parks, because our community told us that is their number one concern.

There's a 22% increase for stormwater infrastructure and management of our waterways and coastal areas.

This is critical - not only to build better flood mitigation, but as an important investment in the health of our aquatic ecosystems for generations to come.

FOGO

People have asked us what we are doing and why we don't have green bins in Moreton Bay. This is going to change, and we have a plan to deliver this by late 2025.

We are increasing our sustainable waste management Budget by 4%.

And importantly, we are investing \$400,000 to finalise a feasibility study for our own Moreton Bay Food Organics and Garden Organics waste management program, as well as, commencing planning and initial design upon this important future facility.

This will be an ambitious and expensive undertaking to build and operate a facility that will process food and garden waste. It is important we do this right.

This is about making tough decisions at the right time. This won't be a trial and we won't be wasting your money on plastic trinket bins for people's kitchens. We want to roll out a proper full scale program for the entire region from day one.

COVID RESPONSE

If you cast your mind back to 2020-21 when we were heading into the COVID pandemic, we took the decision to increase rates by only 2% because no one knew what the future held.

Council immediately set a course for community recovery, injecting more than \$50 million into the local economy

We fast-tracked millions of dollars in infrastructure projects thanks to the state and federal governments additional investment, to keep our local economy humming.

We made some changes to support affordability.

Then we introduced a \$100 remission for part-pensioners in addition to the \$250 remission for full pensioners.

This will continue in 2022-23 and supports some of the 26,500 properties owned by pensioners.

We have maintained rate capping, so regardless of how much your home value increases there is generally an upper limit cap at 9%.

CAPITAL SPENDING

This year is a record \$816 million budget with \$259 million capital works program.

So, to demonstrate the breadth of work we're delivering this year I'd like to touch on some of the key projects.

These projects also highlight how we're tailoring Council's programs to the diverse needs of the communities to make up Moreton Bay.

1. On Bribie Island you'll see a focus on lifestyle investment, with \$1.4 million for park upgrades at Cosmos Park at Banksia Beach which is including funding from the federal government in and another \$1.1 million to upgrade Brennan Park in Bongaree.
2. The Moreton Bay Central Sports Complex in Burpengary will receive \$6.5 million over two years to deliver Stage 2 of our soccer facilities - with help from the Federal Government.

3. We're keeping Caboolture and Morayfield trucking with millions of dollars for a range of road upgrades including at Bellmere Road, Lynfield Drive, William Berry Drive, and the intersection of Torrens Road with River Drive.
4. I'm excited to say we are soon opening the brand new \$14 million Griffin Sports complex.
5. We're investing in our kids' futures in Deception Bay, where we're building a \$2.3 million environmental centre, providing a \$1.4 million overhaul of the local skate park, as well as upgrading local parks and playgrounds.
6. In Redcliffe we're investing \$1.5 million to commence building a homelessness support hub with funding from the state government. Because our local statistics are already well above the state average. We have also allocated \$2.2 million towards restoring or rebuilding the Sutton's Beach Pavilion.
7. We have taken congestion out of the 'too hard basket' to give locals some traffic relief. So, expect to see a lot of works along Old Gympie Road in the coming years - with an incredible \$82.4 million slated over successive projects.
8. The region's biggest infrastructure project - the construction of a bridge over Youngs Crossing will see \$30 million invested this year and construction get underway.

This year's rains have proven how crippling it is to our entire road network when the road goes under.

When it closes it forced 20,000 vehicles to find an alternative route every day.

And nowhere is there a better example of our commitment to working in partnership with other levels of government than with the federal government on this project.

9. In the koala cradle of Moreton Bay around Lake Samsonvale, we are again focussed on providing more trees, more habitat, and more environment to provide better wildlife linkages through our suburbs and into the hinterlands.

We will increase tree plantings by 30% across the region this year in direct response to your feedback about needing to prioritise our environment – which is the essence of our mantra:

“Going Green - As We Grow”.

Expect major works at the South Pine Sports Complex on projects big and small, like \$16.6 million for new sporting fields, a clubhouse, and stormwater drainage... as well as a safe pathway access at the entrance of the complex for pedestrians.

10. We want families in the Hills District to be able to spend more time enjoying the outdoors closer to home. So, \$2 million will be invested expanding the soccer facilities at James Drysdale Reserve and another \$1.33 million to revamp Albany Creek's skate park.
11. We will invest \$1.3 million for streetscaping in Samford, a whopping \$6 million fixing the intersection of Young Road and

Oakey Flat Road in Narangba and we'll soon complete construction works on the new community Hall and playground at Mount Glorious.

12. We will invest \$500,000 in 2022-23 to improve flood mitigation and drainage along Mathew Crescent in Burpengary and \$544,000 to repair and improve the netball courts at Woodford Showgrounds.

Last year I thanked each Councillor for your leadership in a particular area that helped to shape the 2021-22 Budget.

And I thank you for continuing that important work.

But this year we agreed to seek input straight from the source.

By asking locals to tell us their thoughts via the Moreton Says survey.

Which is uniquely reflected in the Budget priorities different to anything in the past.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

I'd like to touch on some of the key feedback from locals that's helped guide our direction and our decision making in this Budget.

A Samford resident told us:

I would like to see a greater focus on overall environmental improvement - energy use reduction, waste reduction, habitat management and weed control

Here are just a few examples of how we are addressing your concerns this year:

- We've purchased two new battery powered ride-on lawn mowers
- We've bought an electric vehicle and installed a charging station in Strathpine and that's a trial that is currently underway.
- We have fitted solar panels on 16 community buildings; and
- We're even in discussions with Tesla to install a megapack at our Bunya Waste site

To the Banksia Beach resident who said:

Protecting environment is critical in developments. The council needs to take a stronger role in protecting and enhancing environment and wildlife habitat

You're right. We have listened, and we are acting.

This year the environmental component of the Regional Infrastructure and Environment Charge will increase to \$22, that's a \$6 boost from last year.

It will fund more green initiatives - like an expanded land buyback program, to prevent more wildlife habitat from construction or development.

We've locked up 83 hectares of land for wildlife since we launched this program in 2020, and we're not slowing down.

This year we will also increase tree plantings by 30%.

In addition to the 160,000 trees we planted this financial year, there are over 210,000 to be planted in 2022-23.

To The Albany Creek resident who said:

Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport over car trips would go a long way. Currently our region is designed for cars, at the expense of more sustainable options

We hear you. That's why there are 148 footpath projects either planned or underway around our region.

Especially where there is a 'missing links' in the network to connect these footpaths up.

I would encourage you to speak to your local Councillor if you are missing links in your area so we can add them to our priority list.

Because we want to enable more people to travel by foot or bike or other zero-emission and active transport options.

That's just some of the headline feedback from the initial Moreton Says Survey. So, rest assured if you missed participating you can still get involved - there will be more surveys coming to let us know your thoughts on what Council should be prioritising.

ARTS, FESTIVALS, EVENTS

Something I'm personally passionate about is seeing more arts and events here in Moreton Bay.

So, I'm proud to say we're bringing events back in a big way, and we're bringing them to your neighbourhoods.

So you don't to have to travel far to celebrate.

We're adding 20 FREE community events onto our existing social calendar, as well as retaining signature events like Moreton Bay Food & Wine Festival, Kite Fest, and Jetty-2-Jetty.

All up, we are delivering in partnership with MBRIT 53 events and festivals right across the region including 43 free events which means there'll be a celebration somewhere in Moreton Bay almost every week of the year.

Things to look forward to include:

- 'Jazz and Shiraz' on Bribie Island
- A 'Pooches in the Park' event in Kallangur
- A Street Fair through Margate.

- An Under 8s Splash and Play at our award-winning water park at The Mill in Petrie.
- And of course the family favourites like 'Music in the Park' and 'Movie in the Park' across the region, in Burpengary, Albany Creek, Sandstone Point, Griffin and many more.

Over \$20 million will be invested in libraries, arts and community facilities.

And I know that Healthy Active Moreton is a hit with locals, and I am pleased to announce that the increased funding will continue again this year towards this valuable program.

I can confirm we will be upgrading the Albany Creek, Woodford, Bribie Island and Strathpine libraries.

We are also going to include a welcome statement from our First Nations people at the entrance to each library, to celebrate the unique languages of our region.

And events like Anywhere Festival and Park Jam will be back by popular demand.

If you haven't been to your local library or gallery recently, you're really missing out.

DEBT

Our debt will remain extremely manageable over the coming years.

The total assets currently owned by Council on behalf of our communities are valued at about \$8 billion, while the debt on these assets is only around \$313 million.

To put this into perspective, this is the equivalent of owning a house today at a value of at \$800,000 and having a mortgage of only \$31,000. So, we are doing okay.

Compared to other local governments, Moreton Bay still has a low level of debt thanks to fourteen years of good financial management. Because we don't have to service as much debt as other councils, your rates are going into infrastructure and services that you value and not just paying back interest.

CONCLUSION

This Council is not shirking in its ambitions in facing the challenges ahead.

You have told us to get ahead of population growth.

You have told us to go green.

You told us to increase community services...

And that's exactly what Budget 2022-23 does.

Years of good financial management have allowed us to prepare for a rainy day. From a cost and inflation perspective that day has arrived so good financial management allows us to provide stability for our residents.

We will not cut maintenance; we will increase it.

We will not cut projects; we will deliver more.

Not only is this important for liveability but also local employment and the local economy.

This budget will continue to support and improve our amazing places and our natural spaces throughout our region.

I commend this budget to you all and thank my colleagues for your support. Thank you.