2018/19

BUDGET SPEECH

Address to Council

1 June, 2018

Councillor Matt Constance

Corporate Services Spokesperson
A record budget for Moreton Bay

Mr Mayor, 2017/18 was a record year for our council, community and local economy.

Over the 12-month period, the value of Moreton Bay’s gross regional product increased an incredible 24 per cent from just under $14 billion to $17.31 billion.

We watched our region’s population grow to more than 448,000, job numbers skyrocket to 118,000 and active residential developments hit 29, the most out of any region in South East Queensland.

So what does 2018/19 hold for Moreton Bay, Mr Mayor?

Well, I’m pleased to announce that the 2018/19 budget is the largest in our region’s history.

A $622 million budget that will deliver the vital infrastructure projects, jobs and services for our community, while also remaining fiscally responsible to ensure our region’s eighth consecutive operating surplus.

Mr Mayor, Moreton Bay Regional Council’s budget for 2018/19 ensures that we don’t let our foot off the pedal and that our communities, businesses and lifestyle continue to thrive but that we also provide an important hand on the wheel to guide growth responsibly and ensure that we live within our means.

This package will see vital funding allocated to major projects like the new regional soccer precinct at Burpengary, a $109 million package for roads and transport and, for the very first time, a dedicated accessibility infrastructure program.

Importantly, it also includes key measures to deliver a fairer rating system based on feedback given by the community.

This is in addition to continuing the pensioner remission of $250 for almost 16,000 pensioners in Moreton Bay and no increase in the waste management utility charge.

A record investment in infrastructure

We live in a thriving region that stretches more than 2,000km2 - from foreshore to hinterland, from Bribie Island and the peninsula in the east to Dayboro and Woodford in the west, and from thriving business precincts to coastal and rural communities.

And more and more people are choosing our enviable lifestyle. Moreton Bay’s population over the next two decades will reach 630,000; that’s a population greater than the current population of the state of Tasmania.

In fact, Queensland’s five millionth resident was last month born to a family right here in the region.

The number of registered businesses also continues to grow and today numbers 25,000; the sixth most out of any local government in the country.

As a council we must ensure we continue to value and protect this enviable lifestyle, but we also must meet the needs of our community as it continues to grow.

That’s why council is today handing down a budget that delivers record investment in infrastructure for our region, including a $230 million capital expenditure program.

I’m pleased to announce that this budget will establish Moreton Bay Regional Council’s Accessibility Upgrades Program.
A dedicated program to deliver accessible infrastructure for our region’s community and public facilities.

This package will see accessibility upgrades rolled out across a number of high-need facilities in our region, as recognised during the development of our region’s Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

This program will complement council’s policy to deliver accessible infrastructure on all new construction projects and upgrades.

We want to continue to put the pedal to the metal and deliver future-proof infrastructure for everyone in our growing community, and today’s record budget ensures that we take the strong, responsible route there.

**Fairer rating**

Mr Mayor, the community talked and we listened.

I’m pleased to announce that as part of this year’s budget, council has amended its rating categories to ensure they are fairer for our community.

Families who live in a single household but have a granny flat will no longer be rated as multi-residential, while trust-owned properties where tenants are the sole beneficiaries of a trust created especially because they require assistance to look after their finances or have a disability will be no longer be rated as non-owner occupiers.

On top of that, this year’s budget will continue the pensioner remission of $250 for almost 16,000 pensioners in Moreton Bay.

It’s a record budget, but a fairer budget too.

**Our eighth consecutive operating surplus**

Mr Mayor, as you have already noted, this year’s record budget will also deliver council’s eighth consecutive operating surplus.

This financial year will see council return an operating surplus of $106 million in 2018/19.

This will be reinvested directly back into our community and into vital infrastructure.

The total average rate increase for owner-occupied residential properties will be 2.89 per cent, or $0.85 extra per week, and there will be no increase to the regional infrastructure separate charge and the waste management utility charge.

Council’s debt remains low at $379 million which, when offset against council’s assets of $6.8 billion, demonstrates that council is not only in a strong financial position, but is also managing its budget responsibly.

It means 94.5 per cent of assets are owned outright with only 5.5 per cent supported by debt.

**Conclusion**

Mr Mayor, as I mentioned at the start of my speech, the last 12 months has been a record year for our community.

And with the largest-ever budget in Moreton Bay’s history, the next 12 months is set to be no different.

Today’s budget will deliver the vital infrastructure projects, jobs and services for our growing region and its 448,000 residents, 25,000 businesses and hundreds of community organisations.
As a council, we’ve worked hard to make sure we are delivering the infrastructure and services of one of Australia’s fastest growing urban areas while keeping rates and charges as low as possible.

It’s a fairer budget for our community and one that demonstrates council’s strong track record of financial responsibility with the region’s eighth consecutive operating surplus.

I’d like to take this opportunity to thank all councillors for their hard work in helping to deliver this record budget.

Day in, day out, as councillors we know just how diverse our growing region is. And delivering a budget that caters to such a diverse area is no mean feat. You should be proud of what you have been able to achieve for your divisions and the entire region.

I’d also like to thank council staff for their tireless efforts and dedication to preparing what is a responsible budget and to the council staff who will help to deliver the services and infrastructure for our community over the upcoming financial year.

It’s a budget the council, the community and the region can be proud of, and one I’m honoured to present today.

Ends.