



Budget 2018-19 speech
Conducted by Mayor Matt Burnett
Tuesday, July 24, 2018, 9am
Gladstone Regional Council Boardroom
101 Goondoon Street, Gladstone

Good morning my fellow Councillors, Council staff, ladies and gentlemen,

I am proud to present Gladstone Regional Council's Budget 2018-19, this Council's third of the electoral term.

This budget will build upon the significant steps already taken to achieve the priority goals I outlined ahead of my election as Mayor in 2016, and the organisational restructure provides the tools with which these goals can be realised in a time and cost-efficient manner.

It does this by enabling Council to establish clear strategies that direct its investments in its assets and community services while keeping customers at the centre of its actions.

My election promises were to:

- Ensure the Gladstone Region received its fair share of state and federal government funding;
- Increase financial and in-kind support for community and sporting groups; and
- Encourage and promote new and existing business development through fair infrastructure charges to create more jobs across the region.

In keeping with my election promises, Council welcomes capital projects funding of \$18.1 million from the Federal and State governments via various programs including Works for Queensland, Building our Regions, and Roads to Recovery.

Federal and State funding will also be utilised to build better roads for our residents with \$15.3 million of Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements and related Betterment funds to be spent on works to improve the flood immunity of vulnerable floodways and causeway crossings, and repair impacted road assets throughout the region.

In addition, Council will spend almost \$5.5 million on bitumen reseals and more than \$2.7 million on gravel re-sheeting for the region's roads as part of its ongoing road maintenance program.

Smart utilisation of Federal and State Government assistance will also ensure reliable water and sewerage services, and improved community infrastructure and recreation opportunities for the region's residents.

Council will continue to lobby and work with all levels of government to obtain much needed support for community projects and the injection of funds into the Gladstone Region.

Among the major projects attracting significant funding in 2018-19 are:

- \$14.2 million in flood damage repair works;
- \$1.7 million for reconstruction of Red Rover Road between the Power Station Bridge and Jeff Ringland Drive;
- \$1.06 million for Kirkwood Road/Lavender Boulevard intersection improvements;
- \$3.75 million on footpaths including \$2.6 million on renewals and \$700,000 for the Seventeen Seventy Marina to Seventeen Seventy SES Grounds;
- \$900,000 for the Bray Park pump track, Boyne Island;
- \$8.9 million on Gladstone Waste Water Treatment Plant biosolids treatment;
- \$7.9 million on Reservoir works, including \$4.5 million for completion of the Kirkwood Road and Paterson Street reservoirs.

Council thanks the Federal and State governments for the continued co-operation in working towards the widening of Philip Street into four lanes and the parallel development of the first stage of the Philip Street Communities and Families Precinct.

The 2018-19 budget also features increased assistance of \$1.2 million to community and sporting groups via its Community Support Programmes, which represents a four-fold increase during this electoral term.

This assistance comes in such forms as:

- Subsidies for community and school events at the Gladstone Entertainment Convention Centre;
- Waiving of waste fees for community groups such as Red Cross and St Vincent de Paul;
- Water allocation of 5000 kilolitres per hectare for sports clubs and organisations;
- Subsidies for development and building fees for community groups;
- Subsidies for additional sewerage connections at sporting facilities; and
- Support for reduced lane hire fees for pensioners and community groups at Gladstone Aquatic Centre.

The vision for this Budget 2018-19 - 'Connect Innovate Diversify' - is a simple way to encapsulate what the document is about.

By 'Connect', we are referring to the vision of supporting an engaged, involved and proud Gladstone Region community.

We will achieve this through Council's continued support of performing arts and entertainment, arts and heritage, library services and sport and recreation – the cultural fabric upon which a thriving, connected community is established.

Notable projects in Budget 2018-19 that will enhance the sense of community connectivity are:

- New pumptrack and skate park replacement at Boyne Island's Bray Park (\$885k)
- Boyne Tannum Pool feasibility study and concept design (\$250k)
- New dog park facilities at Bororen and Calliope (\$100k)
- New and upgraded facilities for five community clubs (\$1.5m)
- New boat ramp and access at Flat Rock Picnic Grounds, Baffle Creek (\$420k)
- New fitness equipment at Ubobo Recreational Grounds (\$25k)

Construction of the Community and Families Precinct on Philip Street will continue, with \$1.06 million to be spent in 2018-19.

This project will provide the region with a centrally-located community hub of health and social service providers and a 200-unit retirement village, capitalising on the site's convenient access to shopping, services and public transport.

A healthy environment is integral to creating a healthy community and Council will implement a \$5.3 million footpath construction, renewals and upgrades across the region to encourage personal activity and transport.

Our major healthy environment projects include \$5 million in upgrades to our sewerage pump stations in Gladstone, incorporating innovations to allow their capacity to drop 80 per cent when flow rates are low, saving considerable amounts of energy.

Council will also spend \$1 million on an upgrade to the Agnes Water Waste Transfer Station to enable it to cater for more recyclable materials including dedicated areas for batteries, cardboard, oil, green waste, scrap steel and e-waste.

Other healthy environment initiatives included in Budget 2018-19 are:

- Contribution to installation of 5000 solar panels and electric car charging station at Benaraby Landfill (\$20k)
- Installation of LED lighting to save \$50,000 worth of electricity and \$6000 maintenance costs per year (\$110k)
- Floating solar panels on wastewater treatment plant lagoons to offset high energy use and reduce the amount of chemicals needed to control algae growth (\$100k)
- Seventeen Seventy Foreshore erosion control (\$400k)
- Investigation of smart water metering to assist residents to track water use and detect leaks (\$140k)

Council's new organisational structure will also benefit our customers, the Gladstone Region's residents, as it will enable us to:

- Centralise our customer interactions, enhance service staff capability and minimise customer effort;
- Introduce digital innovations to improve customer experience and convenience while reducing the cost to serve; and
- Dedicate resources to consolidating, analysing and using feedback from customers to improve service proactivity.

By 'Innovate', we are referring to the vision of providing smart asset management and operational excellence.

This can be achieved by investigating methods to improve asset management and governance processes with a view to gain ISO accreditation.

Our new structure will enable Council to do this by dedicating resources to:

- Work with the community to determine acceptable service levels that balance affordability and needs;
- Improve how we capture data related to our assets and analyse that data to maximise the use and lifecycle of our asset portfolio and identify opportunities to reduce costs;
- Develop decision-making tools to effectively balance whole-of-life costs, future replacement legacies, service standards and environmental impacts;
- Centralise scheduling of Council's wide range of works deliveries to maximise the efficiency of our workforce, equipment and other resources, with safety and the needs of our customers at the forefront; and
- Improve focus on tactical procurement and contract management to tightly control overheads.

By 'Diversify', we are referring to the vision of growing our region via smart investment in its economic development,

A major factor in achieving this vision is the organisational restructure to be finalised by August.

It involves major shifts in the way Council operates, including a bigger focus on how we manage our \$2.3 billion worth of assets, plan our works and use technology to improve our service while reducing costs.

The restructure provides the platform on which Council can invest in the economic development of our region via several exciting projects including:

- Marley Brown Oval redevelopment master plan (\$100k);
- Gladstone Harbour Arbour feasibility study and design (\$200k);
- Infrastructure Charge Economic Development Incentive Scheme (\$100k);
- Seventeen Seventy Marina Precinct preliminary design (\$230k);
- Gladstone City Plaza Forecourt Upgrade (\$1 million – loan to be repaid to Council);

- GAPDL funding to help promote the Gladstone Region as a tourism destination (\$430k);
- Funding contribution to cruise ship welcomes, including the Feast on East markets (\$48k);
- Contribution to Gladstone Development Board to attract large-scale economic development opportunities (\$300k);
- Smart Cities plan development – using technology to improve lives, reduce resource use and accelerate the delivery of strategic priorities (\$200k with federal support from Smart Cities and Suburbs funding);
- Reconstruction of Red Rover Road and improvements to Kirkwood Road and Lavender Boulevard intersection in Gladstone (\$2.7 million with federal support from Black Spot funding); and
- Sewerage processing – our biosolids equipment has reached the end of its useful life but Council has investigated how refurbishment can improve the marketability of biosolids as an agricultural fertiliser and the potential for use of fats for future gas recovery and power (\$8.9 million).

Councillors and Council staff throughout the organisation are dedicated to contributing to our 'Connect Innovate Diversify' vision and I congratulate all who helped create a budget which reflects that vision and provides the pathway to attain it.

Council will use this document as the framework upon which to build additional improvements to the services we provide to the Gladstone Region community and will remain vigilant to identifying new opportunities and capitalising upon them as they arise.

I look forward to working with my fellow Councillors and Council officers to serve the Gladstone Region community in 2018-19 and commend Budget 2018-19 to you all.