

# MEDIA STATEMENT



Wednesday, 20 April 2016

## **Infrastructure an integral part of City's financial future**

A dedicated slice of rates revenue over the next five years will be reserved exclusively for the maintenance and renewal of infrastructure after Bunbury City Council last night made a range of sweeping decisions related to the City's 15-year Integrated Financial Plan.

If adopted by Council in the 2016/17 Budget later this year, rates in the City of Bunbury will increase by a total of 4.5%, which includes a one per cent general rate directed specifically at infrastructure.

That one per cent will continue to be placed on top of the general rate figure for the following four years, a move that is expected to generate an additional \$1.8 million in revenue by the end of the fifth year.

Bunbury Mayor Gary Brennan said the City needed to make sure maintenance of the City's considerable assets continued.

"I am confident the community will welcome the council's commitment to maintaining our infrastructure through a dedicated source," Mr Brennan said.

"Infrastructure is what makes our City tick and we need to ensure it is addressed efficiently and with economic maturity. We also need to do it in a way the community can afford and this strategy does just that."

Mr Brennan said a proposed rate increase of 4.5 per cent in 2016/17 was responsible and affordable.

"This is a modest rate increase that will be at the centre of a Budget that ensures core council services continue and new capital and operating projects are delivered in the 2016/17 financial year," Mr Brennan said.

As part of the Integrated Financial Plan, the Council also voted on a number of items as part of the draft 2016/17 Budget on Tuesday night.

This included removing the Councillor Discretionary Fund of \$75,000 and allocating the funding to community grants and events; allocating \$50,000 for improvements to Bicentennial Square; including \$150,000 in both the 2016/17 and 2017/18 financial years to the Withers Local Area Plan; provide \$10,000 to the School Chaplaincy Program; and \$387,300 funding to Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre.

Mr Brennan said the decisions gave Council a clear direction to the City's financial future. "We are enjoying an exciting period in our City's development and growth as we continue to build on the solid work of previous generations to provide more opportunities for current and future generations," Mr Brennan said.

The Council Budget will be formally adopted in July.

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