

# MEDIA STATEMENT



Wednesday, 27 July 2016

## **Budget focus on service, growth and partnerships**

Looking to the future and keeping an eye on affordability for the community are key components of the City of Bunbury's 2016/17 Budget, which was adopted by Council tonight.

A rate increase of 4.5 per cent is at the centre of the Budget, which caters for the provision of services, growth and continuing partnerships with our community, government and other stakeholders such as the Bunbury Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

The rate rise is based on an extra 2.5 per cent to pay for operating expenditure increases, one per cent for growth and a one per cent contribution to asset upgrades and renewal.

Key capital projects include the \$5.1m upgrade of Koombana Drive, which is already under way; \$2.5m for the purchase of a new city depot site; \$4.6m for the first stage of the Koombana Bay foreshore upgrade; and \$1m contribution towards a water playground.

Bunbury Mayor Gary Brennan said it was important the Budget was affordable for the community while continuing to focus on service, providing for growth and continuing essential partnerships with stakeholders to secure ongoing benefits and improvements.

"A rate increase of 4.5 per cent is responsible while also providing for growth, future expenditure and achieving Council's strategic objectives," Mr Brennan said.

"It is important to note that waste charges will not increase and other fees and charges increases have been kept at a modest level."

Mr Brennan said the one per cent rates levy, which is included in the overall 4.5 per cent rate increase, will be used for the upgrade and renewal of assets, such as buildings, roads, stormwater infrastructure and the city's path network.

"A recent asset management plan identified the key priorities for our City and this levy is a responsible way of addressing our ageing infrastructure," he said.

Mr Brennan said it was an exciting time for the City with current and future development enhancing the social and economic fabric of Bunbury.

"We are now seeing the benefits of hard work and planning as large-scale developments, including shopping centres, the Department of Parks and Wildlife headquarters and Koombana foreshore upgrade, get under way," he said.

Other key points of the 2016/17 Budget include:

Jamie Tatham, Communications Officer

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- Total budgeted expenditure is \$80 million (\$30.1m capital works, \$2.2m debt reduction, \$47.7m operating expenditure);
- Sources of revenue to fund expenditure include general rates (\$35.6m); operating revenues from grants, fees and charges etc (\$18.4m); capital grants (\$12.3m); new loan borrowings (\$1); and disposal of assets (\$5.5m);
- Carried forward cash surplus of \$736,000.

Mr Brennan said the City was in a very healthy financial position overall with cash reserves for future expenditure expected to be \$19m by June 2017.

“Increased competition from our suppliers and the professionalism and commitment from the City’s officers has played a significant part in our current financial position,” Mr Brennan said.

“It is also appropriate to commend external stakeholders, such as the State Government and private developers, who have shown faith in Bunbury and continue to invest in projects that bring social and economic benefits.”

**ENDS**

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