



# Media Release

Tuesday June 27, 2017

## Mayor's Executive Summary

LIVINGSTONE Shire Council's 2017-18 Budget is the culmination of months of meticulous and collaborative deliberations by Councillors, Council's Senior Management Team and Department Heads to deliver a budget that continues to lay a solid foundation for the long-term financial sustainability of our Shire.

Creating jobs and the investment opportunities that will underpin future prosperity, the 2017-18 Budget also reflects Council's ongoing commitment to optimise service delivery while maintaining the highest possible standard of amenity for residents and ratepayers. Council's success in proactively securing more than **\$40.2M** in State and Federal Government funding toward the budget will allow Council to deliver a record **\$97.4M** in key projects and capital works across Livingstone Shire.

These vital projects are not only an investment in our future, they are also creating immediate local jobs and facilitating long-term economic recovery following the challenges presented by natural disasters and continuing downturns in the resource, construction and tourism sectors.

Major job-creating projects funded in the budget include the completion of the next stages of the Yeppoon and Emu Park Foreshore and Town Centre Revitalisations along with Stage 1 of the Yeppoon Homemaker Centre. Combined, these three projects are forecast to create more than 200 fulltime jobs during the construction phase alone.

Council's Strategic Rural and Urban Road Networks will see a combined investment of **\$36.6M** over the next Financial Year including **\$10M** for maintenance works and **\$26.6M** in capital works across the Shire.

Construction projects will include the completion of Panorama Drive and the Statue Bay reconstruction, full construction and bitumen sealing of 2.6 kilometres of Coowonga Road and completion of sealing works on Sleipner Road, and the upgrading and widening of St Christopher's Chapel Road to facilitate Type 1 road-train traffic to the meatworks. Council will also continue to roll-out our floodway upgrade and replacement program with projects on Anglewood, Lake Mary, Coorumburra, and Leaholme Roads with the assistance of funding secured through the State Government's Works For Queensland Program, along with Stage 1 upgrading of the existing low-level floodway on Taranganba Road to two-lanes including a shared-pathway culvert crossing.

Supporting our youth, sports activities and encouraging healthier lifestyles in our community has been a major focus of every Livingstone Budget. In the 2017-18 budget, Council will continue that focus and commitment with major investments in sport and recreation including **\$3.87M** toward the next Stage of the Emu Park Multi-Sports Complex at Hartley Street. This project will be delivered in partnership with the State and Federal Governments contributing **\$2.0M** in funding. Another partnership with the State Government will see a further **\$970,080** investment in the on-going construction of the Shire's shared-pathway network.



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Other infrastructure funded as part of the 2017-18 Budget to service and support our growing Shire includes key investments in water, sewerage and waste infrastructure to create a sustainable future. Major projects include a **\$15M** upgrade of the Yeppoon Sewage Treatment Plant, **\$1.2M** toward the Water Main Replacement Reticulation Program and **\$1.1M** for a major trunk-main replacement to renew the critical link to the southern end of the Capricorn Coast at Causeway Lake.

Importantly the 2017-18 Budget also makes provision for the establishment of a new Capricorn Coast Cemetery to meet community needs for the next 50 years and beyond. The **\$4M** allocated in the budget will make a substantive start delivering Stage 1 of this much-needed project.

In response to the growing number of natural disasters impacting on our region, Livingstone Shire Council has secured funding and partnered with the State Government to establish a **\$6.25M** 'state-of-the-art' Local Disaster Coordination Centre and Community Resilience Hub. The State's contribution of **\$3.35M** toward the project has come from the jointly funded State and Federal 'Natural Disaster Resilience Program'. This is not only a calculated investment in keeping our community safe, but will also provide our region with the opportunity to also become a renowned centre of excellence to significantly expand tertiary study options and training, as well as research in the fields of disaster management and community resilience.

In addition to the raft of major economic stimulus projects, business development and support has also increased in the 2017-18 budget through a range of funded initiatives including business networking and development events, business E-newsletter, "For Business and Investment" Council website, digital economy investment, supporting local start-up businesses and entrepreneurs, Capricorn Coast Joblink and economic modelling services. These initiatives complement the on-going support Council provides in the areas of tourism promotion and economic development through its funding commitments to Capricorn Enterprise, the Regional Tourism Organisation. Council will also finalise and deliver a comprehensive Economic Development Plan in consultation with local business and industry sectors as well as a place-making strategy that includes a \$500K allocation for implementation.

In our Budget deliberations, Council has been mindful of the challenges ratepayers and businesses have had to face with general cost increases and in dealing with the long-term impacts of natural disasters, as well as the prolonged economic downturn in the resource, construction and tourism sectors. Accordingly, Council has contained increases in General Rate, utility service charges, road levy and environmental levy to 3.9%.

To partially offset rate increases for eligible pensioners on fixed incomes, a rebate of \$280 will once again apply, which is on top of the \$200 available from the State Government for eligible concession card holders.

Recognising the need for intergenerational equity, borrowings will be increased from \$79.5 million to \$95.4 million in this Budget to more fairly spread the cost of building major long-term infrastructure needed to provide for future population growth.



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Few Councils have had to face the level of challenges that Livingstone has been presented with over the past three-and-a-half years, from re-establishing our Shire following de-amalgamation in 2014 to dealing with the impacts of five natural disaster events.

Through those times, Council has stayed focussed and, with the support of a capable senior management team, has progressively built a solid foundation for the future prosperity and long-term sustainability of the Shire.

Looking forward, the 10 year forecast period will see the total value of the community's net assets steadily increase from a current value of \$905.8 million to approximately \$1.19 billion by 2027. The forecasts also reflect Council's strategies to progressively scale back future capital works programs as the current raft of major infrastructure and economic development projects reach completion.

In future budgets these strategies will, in turn, allow Council to refocus on the long-term goal of progressively reducing debt, this will see a forecast reduction of approximately 48% to \$49.9 million by 2025-26.

In commending the 2017-18 Budget for adoption, it is important to acknowledge the excellent efforts of our Chief Financial Officer, Finance Department, CEO and Directors in assisting Council deliver both a responsible budget and Long-term Financial Management Plan needed to underpin and reinvigorate strong economic growth and sustainability in our region.

**Bill Ludwig**  
**Mayor**  
**Livingstone Shire Council**

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***For interviews, please contact Mayor Bill Ludwig on 0428 791 792***