



MediaRelease



Mayor's Budget speech

I am proud today to hand down the Budget for 2016 / 17.

Although my first budget as Mayor, it is also the first budget for three of my newly appointed colleagues at the table.

I am conscious that the budget is always referred to as the Mayor's Budget. I would like to say this is not true.

This budget, is the budget of Lockyer Valley Regional Council, it is not my budget....

Each and every councillor, and many of our officers within this organisation, have contributed greatly...and for that I say thank you.

The 2016/17 Budget is focused on planning for the future.

It is about setting the foundations for the long term sustainability of our region. We can no longer live in the now; to not make changes in the way we do business, would be irresponsible.

During the election campaign the spotlight was cast on finances. There is no doubt this is a tough budget and some hard decisions have been made.

To achieve long term sustainability, we have had to increase our general rate which for the majority of ratepayers, will be \$120 a year or less....but have also significantly reduced expenditure to deliver a fair and balanced budget, with a small planned operating surplus.

This in itself is refreshing, as Council has previously been operating in a deficit; or put simply...spending more money than it has been earning.

Therefore, the Gatton Showgrounds will not be moving in this financial year. There will be no Sydney Royal Easter Show in 2017, rather Council has decided to seek out alternate opportunities and work smarter in this area.

As for GWIZ, given we were not successful for the State funding, we will continue to converse with our investors and be innovative and seek out partnerships. We will invest time and energies in community conversations and assist the community to seek out alternate funding for their own sustainability.

Council will be more savvy in our media/ corporate conversations.

It is vital that we as a Council continue to provide infrastructure for a growing region.

That is why, in this Budget we will remain true to deliver on the Laidley Library and the children's play pool at the Lockyer Valley Sports and Aquatic Centre.

There will also be lighting upgrades to LED at the Laidley Rec Reserve; savings of up to 60% are expected from this change alone in efficiency.

- Council remains invested to the community by way of sporting and community grants, fee waivers and assistance to a total of \$682 000
- \$337 000 for environmental programs, including flying fox management, healthy waterway projects, pest management and landholder assistance
- \$10.2 million for roads and drainage capital works
- \$353 000 for parks and open spaces
- We will be investing in public safety, our cemeteries, seeking to improve information technology, whilst working hard to revitalise our town centres to attract business, pride and activity.

Waste Management fees will increase by \$10 per year, and the collection charge increase by \$9.85 for domestic and \$16.80 for commercial for the year...

Emergency preparedness has no change, the rural fire levy sees no change, pensioner rebates remain and are also unchanged and the discount for payment by due dates remains unchanged.

What has changed is our direction.

Councillors are united.

Councillors are committed to ensuring the Lockyer is strong and sustainable into the future.

Councillors believe it is vital we are equipped to live within our means and that the action of today will eliminate future rate shocks, thus providing certainty for families and business.