

NEWS from your Local Councillor



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Dear resident

Council budget

This newsletter is focused on giving you information on the last Council budget and how it affects you and the local area.

In framing this year's budget, Council began with the premise that it wanted to maintain a large capital works program and thus stimulate the local economy and support jobs but still try to keep the general rates increase to a minimum. This has been a difficult job considering Council has been adversely impacted by a decline in development fees and the state government water reform process. This has meant many hours of meetings and a strong drive towards 'belt tightening' on the operational, behind-the-scenes activities of Council.

Consequently, Council has delivered one of the lowest general rates increases in Queensland – 5.3%. The sewerage charge – our second largest revenue source – has increased this year by only 2.4%. The waste and recycling charge is our fourth largest revenue source, and it has increased by just 3.9%. Unfortunately the cost of buying water off the state government has increased by 26%. The impact of the water reform on Council's finances is still unknown, so Council has taken a conservative approach to debt.

Council funding in our local area

Key funding allocations in Cleveland include:

- a review of the master plan for the Norm Price Park - Redland Showgrounds for the purpose of achieving the museum's 10 year strategic plan and future event management of the site
- repainting of the Cleveland Memorial Hall to enhance its appearance, increase its longevity and attract prospective hirers

- replacing concrete concourses at the Cleveland Aquatic Centre 50m pool
- the long term conservation of the Cleveland Lighthouse - including termite prevention, structural repairs, replacement of damaged weatherboards, repainting and waterproofing etc
- improvements at the Donald Simpson Centre in Cleveland this year
- completion of a master plan for the Cleveland CBD
- resealing the Cleveland Pool car park.

Other important news

As part of the state government's changes to animal management legislation, we – along with all Queensland councils – introduced **cat registration** in the city on 1 July 2009. The good news is that we're giving people the first year to get their pet registered before fees apply.

And, the good news for **pensioners** is that we've increased our concession by 8%, from \$300 to \$324 for full pensioners. Those on a half pension will also receive the same percentage of increase, and will now receive a \$162 concession. Under this budget, war widows will also receive the same concession as full pensioners.

Another thing worth noting for those who say Council is preoccupied with environmental matters, is that the spend on 'essential services' and 'community health and wellbeing' is \$214.5 million and dwarfs the environmental budget at \$18.4 million.

And, starting this financial year, Council has a new system for community grants. Gone is the old system where Councillors had a discretionary fund. Now there is a centralised system offering an additional \$270,000. Under the new arrangements \$640,000 will be available across five funding categories. A copy of the grants information kit and application forms can be obtained by phoning 3829 8911 or via Council's website www.redland.qld.gov.au.



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