

MEDIA RELEASE

Dalby Town Council
10th August 2005



2005/06 MAYORAL BUDGET STATEMENT

Welcome to Dalby Town Council's 2005/2006 Budget announcement this afternoon, and thank you for your interest.

This is the 21st budget that I've been associated with and it still gives me great satisfaction to see how our town develops each year.

The next five to ten years will be an exciting period of growth for Dalby and as stated in our 2005 - 2009 Corporate Plan, Council will continue to attract new people, business and industry to town while preserving the quality lifestyle we all enjoy.

Council shares our community's ambition to see Dalby become a leading regional centre. With this clear direction to move toward, this year's budget sets the scene for Dalby's future growth.

Resulting from the strategic areas identified in the corporate planning process undertaken in consultation with the community, Council's operational plan recognises key service priorities to receive funding under the 2005/2006 budget.

Of Council's \$19 million budget, \$5.75 million (30%) will be invested in the area of built environment. Residents can expect to see 10 roads reconstructed to include kerb and channelling, with all other roads receiving on-going maintenance and repairs.

Council has budgeted to complete another four sections of its extensive footpath and bikeway network, including a section of pathway lighting.

Over half a million dollars worth of funding has been targeted to assist Council improve the town's street network.

Dalby's urban environment will receive beautification works to improve visual appeal and increase levels of community safety. In the area of parks, gardens and recreation, a half basketball court will be constructed at Diplock Park and entrances to town will be aesthetically improved.

Stage five of Dalby's central business district revitalisation project will be completed this year, including a \$180,000 extension to the security camera network.

\$5.36 million (28%) will be invested in utility services to provide and maintain reliable, cost efficient water, wastewater and gas services. Residents can expect long-term improvements to water distribution due to the \$1 million replacement of the raising main project.

Council will invest another \$1 million into capital works and improvements of the sewerage treatment plant and the sewerage pipe network. The preliminary planning of a recycled water network will also be undertaken this year.

Council will invest \$5 million (26%) in the area of community wellbeing with the majority going towards the development of new community amenities.

Residents can expect to have a totally renovated 360-seat pavilion and see construction commence on the new covered arena and exhibition centre at the showgrounds. The covered arena will be partly funded by the \$2 million grant pledged last year from the Federal Government.

Among a range of master planning of town facilities, Council is investigating a new aquatic centre facility to boost Dalby's liveability and prepare for an expected population increase.

In the area of social, cultural and sporting development, Council has allocated \$100,000 to a major grants loan scheme to support local clubs and associations improve facilities. As well as \$30,000 to a minor grants scheme to support community groups as well as reward individuals and teams who represent Dalby in social, cultural and sporting activities.

Just over \$1 million will be invested in planning and liveability to ensure Council maintains Dalby's quality lifestyle through appropriate planning and environmental management. A key priority this year will be the investigation of the future development of a transfer waste facility.

Funding towards business growth and tourism has significantly increased in an effort to facilitate sustainable economic growth. Council will continue to work in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce to develop the Dalby Information Centre and encourage new businesses to town.

And lastly in the final key result area of our organisation, Council has a strategic focus to ensure we operate in a way that balances our commitment to delivering exceptional service with our financial accountability. In short, Dalby Town Council aspires to be a highly accountable organisation that responds to the needs and aspirations of our community.

In total Council has secured an estimated \$4.4 million in funding contributions, including government grants and subsidies, to assist in the above stated outcomes.

To fund Council's remaining strategic investment in the above key result areas, the total general rate will rise by 3.1%.

To combat an average 87% increase in unimproved land valuations from the Department of Natural Resources this year, our rate in the dollar over all three rating categories has significantly reduced.

Council has also carefully considered the issue of equity in relation to services received across all rating categories and has set the minimum general rate at \$550 per annum. This is the minimum contribution from Dalby town residents required to fund a base level of Council services.

Council has identified that our sewerage pipe infrastructure is approaching 50 years of age and requires a major overhaul. This process has already begun with \$780,000 being invested in relining over 6,000 metres of sewerage pipe. To fund this project and expected future works Council has increased its sewerage charge from \$245 to \$280 per annum.

Planning is underway to improve the condition of the town's refuse disposal facility and therefore the cleansing charge will increase from \$150 to \$160 per annum.

Council has also introduced a special waste management charge of \$80 per annum that will be levied on all rateable and non-rateable properties that do not currently receive a cleansing service. The waste management levy will ensure that all ratepayers contribute to the operation and maintenance of the town's refuse disposal facility.

There is no increase to the access water charge; this has been constant since 2001 at \$198 per annum. However, as a result of our region's serious water deficit, and to reinforce the benefit of WaterWise practices, volumetric charges have increased slightly.

In summary, this year's budget will mean an overall increase of \$72.00 for the average residential property with a valuation of \$35,800. This equates to an increase of less than \$1.40 per week.

Residents can look forward to benefiting from Council's \$19 million investment in the community, including:

- Community amenities, cultural, social and sporting development
- Street networks, urban environment and drainage management
- Water, wastewater and gas
- Environmental health, natural environment and development management
- Business growth, tourism, transport linkages and government assistance
- Organisational leadership, our people, business performance and our assets

I believe this is a responsible budget that balances community needs and wants with Council's financial capacity, taking into consideration the wealth of development occurring on our doorstep. The 2005/2006 Budget also demonstrates Council's commitment to work in partnership with the community to build a better Dalby.