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Annual Report 2008 - 2009

# Welcome to Mackay Regional Council's 2008 - 2009 Annual Report

This report incorporates audited financial statements for the period March 15, 2008 to June 30, 2009. (Please note that all data compiled for this report that relates to previous years is inclusive of the entire region.)

The information in this report demonstrates accountability to stakeholders, who include residents and ratepayers, staff, councillors, investors, community groups, government departments and other interested parties.

## > Copies of the Annual Report

Copies of both the 2009 - 2014 Corporate Plan and this Annual Report are available free of charge electronically on council's website - visit [www.mackay.qld.gov.au](http://www.mackay.qld.gov.au).

## > Feedback

Mackay Regional Council aims to make this Annual Report transparent and easy to read. Council welcomes your feedback and suggestions for improvement.

If you have comments you wish to share, please direct them to council's corporate communications department by phoning 1300 MACKAY (1300 622 529) or emailing [council@mackay.qld.gov.au](mailto:council@mackay.qld.gov.au).

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Mackay Marina

## Corporate objectives

### > Vision

The Mackay region: prosperous, sustainable and vibrant.

### > Mission

Our mission is to deliver the vision for the Mackay region in partnership with our community and to strive for excellence in planning, delivering and managing community services and facilities.

## Our region

The Mackay Regional Council area is one of the fastest growing regions in Queensland. Covering the areas of the former Sarina and Mirani shires and Mackay city, it extends 7261 square kilometres.

With a population of around 110,000 (as at June 2008) and a projected annual growth rate of 2.1 per cent, the region's estimated population in 2031 is about 173,000 people.

Its coastal location is complemented by its spectacular natural environment. This includes 31 beautiful beaches, a picturesque blue river and a pristine rainforest hinterland.

Only an hour's flight from Brisbane, the Mackay region boasts an enviable lifestyle and a buoyant economy with the benefits of a fast-growing coastal area. As the gateway to the rich coal deposits in the Bowen basin, it is the largest sugar-producing region in Australia. Nearly a third of Queensland's export goods originate from the Mackay region.

There are about 25 different nationalities represented in the region, including people from Malta, South Africa, The Netherlands and Germany. The region also boasts the largest Australian South Sea Islander population.



## Mayor's overview



Looking back on the past 16 months we should all, as a council and as a community, be immensely proud of how far we have come. Following amalgamation in March, 2008, much work has gone into merging the former Sarina, Mirani and Mackay councils into a single operating entity.

Throughout this process we've celebrated some important achievements along the way, both internally and externally. For starters, we've made electronic advancements. We've merged our computer networks and programs to form a single operating system, devised a new-look website featuring YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, our emergency management strategies were improved with the installation of the Guardian computer system, and we activated our 1300 MACKAY phone number to direct callers to their nearest customer service centre.

On the environmental front, council proudly earned Reef Guardian status, continued our Land for Wildlife program, produced Coastal Management Guidelines, celebrated World Environment Day and installed new technology designed to reduce operational greenhouse gas emissions.

From March 15, 2008 to June 30, 2009, we invested more than \$180 million on capital works projects such as bridge replacements, water and wastewater infrastructure and trunk roads.

This certainly reflects council's commitment to providing and maintaining vital infrastructure for our growing vibrant region. All of the above represents the success we as a council have achieved by pooling our resources and working as one to achieve our vision of creating a prosperous, sustainable and vibrant region for all to enjoy and be proud of.

I look forward to the coming year and all that we will achieve together.

Mayor Col Meng

## CEO's overview



The 2008-09 year saw the creation of our new organisation following the State Government's Local Government reform process. The three former councils of Mirani, Sarina and Mackay merged in March 2008 to form the new Mackay Regional Council. The council itself made a conscious decision not to look back at the past but to concentrate on the future; this ethos has been embraced by the organisation and as a result I believe the community has been well served.

The amalgamation presented enormous challenges, however, I believe we can all be proud with the way these have been addressed by the councillors and council staff. The Local Transition Committee and the councillors and staff of the three former councils worked hard on the preparation for amalgamation and provided a solid base for the new organisation and I'd like to acknowledge their sterling efforts.

As a result of their hard work and the subsequent efforts of councillors and staff of the new organisation, I am proud to say that the issues arising out of amalgamation have been largely dealt with.

The range of achievements identified in this Annual Report is a credit to everyone and certainly puts our region in the enviable position of being well placed for the future. Council has had a focus on improving its levels of customer service and service delivery over the past year and our recent survey indicates that the community acknowledges the improvements that have been made.

Despite the uncertainty of the global economic downturn, we have witnessed increased growth across the region and council has continued to implement key strategic steps to meet this challenge. The adoption of the 2009-2014 Corporate Plan provides direction for the elected members and staff as we strive to deliver the necessary infrastructure and services to the community. This plan forms the basis of council's operational plans and provides the necessary framework for reporting our achievements to other levels of government and, more importantly, the community.

One of the key achievements was the delivery of the 2008-09 budget – the first for Mackay Regional Council. This \$277 million budget was applied with a whole-of-region approach, providing significant projects to all areas from Sarina, Calen, the Pioneer Valley and Mackay. It was no easy feat and resulted in long hours by many staff to deliver a united budget for the region. The challenge of deciding on the range and level of services we deliver is, and always will be, a difficult balancing act, as the demand for these always exceed

the availability of money to fund them. This has now been made even more difficult with the cessation of the State's water and sewerage grant funding which has traditionally funded 40 per cent of new capital works in these areas.

Looking ahead into next year, the organisation will continue to be faced with a range of challenges posed by the region's continued growth, however, I would like to assure the community that the organisation will continue to serve you with the dedication and commitment it has shown over the past 16 months. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the Mayor and councillors who have worked tirelessly to serve the community to ensure they represent the entire community and provide the leadership required to see our region continue to prosper.

And finally, I would like to record my sincere appreciation to the staff who have embraced the challenge of building a new organisation dedicated to serving this region's community. This year has been exceptionally rewarding for me as the CEO and I feel council staff can be justifiably proud of how well and how quickly issues have been dealt with throughout the year.

CEO Peter Franks

## Elected representatives



### Mayor Col Meng

Councillor Col Meng is the region's inaugural Mayor of Mackay Regional Council. Cr Meng was educated in Mackay and is an active member of Rotary. He started Meng Tyre Sales in 1982, building it up to employ 55 staff before selling the business in 2007.

He's been a past president of the Mackay Chamber of Commerce, Mackay Golf Club and was chairman of the Mackay Regional Area Consultative Committee for seven years.



### Deputy Mayor Darryl Camilleri

#### Finance/Technology portfolio

Councillor Camilleri, a chartered accountant, is in his first term of council. Appointed Deputy Mayor for the first two years of the new council, Darryl has served as chairman for a number of community organisations. These include the Mackay Whitsunday Regional Economic Development Corporation (MWREDC), Mackay Chamber of Commerce and Mackay and District Health Council. He has had a long association with basketball and golf.



### Cr Wendy Cameron

#### Rural Communities/Engagement portfolio

Councillor Cameron has more than 34 years experience as a secondary school teacher, who has been predominantly based at Pioneer High School during her career. As a past president of the Pioneer High P&C Association, she initiated the Pioneer Debutante Ball. A 4WD and camping enthusiast, Cr Cameron enjoys taking in the wonderful attributes of the region as regularly as she can.



### Cr Kevin Casey

#### Roads and Infrastructure portfolio

Councillor Casey has lived in Mackay his entire life and this is his second term at council. Cr Casey brings experience in running a small electrical business and is an active member of sporting, cultural and church groups. Cr Casey is a life member of the Mackay Hockey Association and Mackay Surf Life Saving Club.



### Cr George Christensen

#### Community Services and Facilities portfolio

Councillor Christensen previously served on the Mackay City Council. A fourth generation local, Cr Christensen hails from the rural parish of Te Kowai. An active member of the community, Cr Christensen was the foundation chairman of the Walkerston Community Kindergarten Association Inc and is a former chairman of HACC Transport Mackay Inc. Cr Christensen is an experienced journalist who previously owned and was editor of the Walkerston and Valley Advertiser and the Northern Beaches Advertiser newspapers.



### Cr Deirdre Comerford

#### Water and Wastewater portfolio

Councillor Comerford spent 10 years in Local Government before she retired as the Deputy Mayor of the previous Mackay City Council in 2004. Cr Comerford was state president of the Australian Local Government Women's Association and served 12 years on the state and national executives. Cr Comerford is a life member of Mackay Tourism and was instrumental in the establishment of the 10-bed Drug and Alcohol Residential Facility for the Mackay region.



### Cr Diane Hatfield

#### Planning and Development portfolio

Councillor Hatfield is a lifetime resident of Mackay who has had a strong involvement in the Port of Mackay Rotary Club and as chair of the Mackay Flagon and Dragon Club, which raises funds for children's wards at Mackay Base and Mater hospitals. Cr Hatfield is on the board at Whitsunday Anglican School and has been chair of the school's foundation since 2000.



**Cr Karen May**  
Parks and Environment portfolio

Councillor May has eight years previous Local Government experience as a councillor, Deputy Mayor and Mayor at Sarina Shire Council. She is a member of the Mackay Whitsunday Ministerial Forum, president of Sartour (Sarina Tourism) and the vice chair of the Mackay Whitsunday Natural Resource Management Group. Cr May holds a number of positions within various community organisations and is a patron of the Sarina Historical Centre and Scope Club of Sarina.



**Cr David Perkins**  
Tourism and Economic Development portfolio

This is Councillor Perkins' second term on council. He has more than 37 years experience in the media industry and operated his own advertising company for 15 years. Cr Perkins is a member of Mackay Tourism and is an adviser to or member of various community/service groups.



**Cr Paul Steindl**  
Health, Sport and Recreation portfolio

Councillor Steindl has lived in Sarina his entire life and has eight years Local Government experience. He's been a member of the State Emergency Service for more than three decades and a member of the Counter Disaster Committee. Cr Steindl is a board member of the North Queensland Sports Foundation and the Mackay Whitsunday Coastal Management Plan.



**Cr Greg Thomsen**  
Waste Services portfolio

Councillor Greg Thomsen has eight years Local Government experience and is chairman of the Pioneer Employment Service and ChancesR recycling organisation. He is the current secretary of the AMWU in Mackay. Cr Thomsen is a member of the Health Community Council, chair of the Pine Islet Lighthouse Preservation Society Inc, and member of council's Sustainability Committee. He is also the Local Authority Waste Management Advisory Committee chairman, is a member of the Local Government Environmental Health Reference Group and is on the executive of the North Queensland Local Government Association.

## Mackay Regional Council corporate structure



## Communication links in the community and council partnership

The dialogue between council and the community is open, transparent and on-going. It is exercised through four-yearly Local Government elections, deputations, correspondence, public meetings and planned consultation on projects and initiatives.

More informally, the community's views are submitted through regular meetings and community engagement opportunities, surveys, polls, community participation opportunities at council meetings and contact with councillors.

A formally adopted Community Engagement Policy ensures that all groups - council, community and other spheres of government - are clear about the principles that guide council's efforts to involve the community in the planning and evaluation of council's activities.

# Strategic planning framework



## Communication links in the community and council partnership

- >> **Vision** > Corporate Plan 2009-2014
- >> **Strategy** > 10-year Strategic Financial Plan  
> Asset Management Plan
- >> **Direction** > Operational plans, annual budgets, weekly council meetings
- >> **Monitoring** > Quarterly budget reviews, monthly financial and performance reports
- >> **Inform our community** > Annual Report  
> Independent Annual Audit  
> Internal Audit Committee  
> Public access to audit reports and council minutes

# Performance at a glance

## Strategic priorities

The 2009-2014 Corporate Plan is the highest order document within council and, as such, directs and informs all other plans, activities, budgets and policies of council.

Council's strategic priorities are those major opportunities and challenges that our community believes need to be addressed in the Mackay region. The key strategic priorities and their corresponding corporate objectives identified in the corporate plan are:

- Community and Lifestyle** ▶ To build safe, strong and self-reliant communities with access to a diverse range of community services and facilities aimed at providing opportunities for participation in community life.
- Economic Development** ▶ To promote a strong, competitive and diverse economy throughout the region by supporting and investing in sustainable business development and local employment opportunities.
- Environmental Sustainability** ▶ To enhance and protect the environmental assets of the region, ensuring a protected/preserved natural environment for future generations.
- Strategic Planning** ▶ To take an active approach to integrated regional planning to reflect the aspirations and lifestyle of our community.
- Infrastructure Services** ▶ To effectively plan, deliver and maintain physical services and infrastructure networks for our community's current and future needs.
- Commercial Services** ▶ To provide and manage high-quality water and waste programs on a commercial basis that meet social and environmental objectives.
- Organisational Excellence and Governance** ▶ To pursue excellence as an organisation which embraces exceptional customer service, values its staff and promotes ethical standards of practice supported by clear policies and strategies responsive to the needs of the community.

# Our values

Through the annual cycle of accountability that is the Annual Report, council strives to demonstrate its commitment to stakeholders. Council is responsible for meeting tangible outcomes that are achievable in an appropriate workplace culture and environment. In support of this, the organisation will embrace the following guiding principles:



### Quality services and outcomes

- > Recognising that service to our community is our reason for being
- > encouraging an innovative and professional customer service focus.

### Integrity with accountability and responsibility

- > Acting in an honest, impartial and trustworthy manner and engendering a confidence both within our community and our organisation that this is the case.

### Customer satisfaction

- > Respecting internal and external customers
- > developing services and service levels that meet customer expectations
- > monitoring service delivery.

### Commitment to the region

- > Ensuring our actions serve the people of the Mackay region and their long-term interests.

### Value

- > Providing services and facilities that offer value for the community in terms of cost, quality and reliability and that are economically and ecologically sustainable.

### Teamwork and collaboration

- > Effective and efficient teamwork ensuring the principles of good governance are applied to achieve the best value outcomes for the community.

### Participation and community engagement

- > Providing genuine opportunities for informed community involvement in decision-making in a framework of local democracy.



## Highlights for the period March 15, 2008 - June 30, 2008

### Amalgamation of Mackay Regional Council

On March 15, 2008, Mackay Regional Council was formed as part of the Queensland Government's Local Government Reform process (local governments in Queensland were reduced from 156 to 72).

The existing local governments in Mackay, Sarina and Mirani were abolished, resulting in the formation of a new council covering an area of 7621 square kilometres and serving a population of about 110,000 residents.

The new boundaries came into effect on March 15 as that date coincided with the 2008 Local Government elections. At those elections, a Mayor and 10 councillors were elected to Mackay Regional Council.

As with any new organisation, there were significant challenges faced, including the development of new policies, staff retention, merging technology, ensuring the ongoing delivery of customer service and the adoption of the 2008-09 budget.

Since the election, councillors, staff and management have worked hard to address the many significant requirements associated with forming a new council to ensure the needs of residents are met. There have been many achievements whilst maintaining a good level of service to the community.





### 1300 MACKAY

In March, 2008, council introduced a 1300 telephone service – 1300 MACKAY (1300 622 529). This meant customers had only one number to dial to access council's services at any time of the day or night. Mackay Regional Council's call centres are located at Mackay, Sarina and Mirani with calls spread across the three sites.

The new telephone service automatically directs callers to their nearest call centre, so that staff with local knowledge can deal with enquiries that are closer to home.

To gain an understanding of the inner workings of a call centre and to get a feel for the type of customer enquiries council receives, Mayor Col Meng spent time in the Mackay call centre throughout the year listening to and taking phone calls from the general public.

### Sarina Art Gallery

Sarina Art Gallery, located in the Field of Dreams Parkland, opened its doors in March, 2008. This facility complements council's popular art gallery, Artspace Mackay, by providing another forum to reflect the region's talent.

### Mackay Active Parks

Supported by council, Sport and Recreation Queensland and Queensland Health, this three-week initiative in March, 2008, encouraged community participation in physical activities using local parks.

Featuring pram-walking sessions, self defence classes, Tai Chi classes and 5000 Steps walks, Mackay Active Parks promoted the importance of being active in small ways throughout the day to improve long-term health.

### Multi-storey development approved

In April, 2008, council approved a Material Change of Use for the construction of a medical centre and multi-storey unit complex to ease the region's housing problems. To be constructed on Bridge Road, opposite Mackay Base Hospital, this development will house a medical centre, café, dental surgery, chemist and residential accommodation.

### Business Water Efficiency Program (BWEP)

Mackay Regional Council encouraged businesses to save water by taking advantage of the Queensland Government's Business Water Efficiency Program in April, 2008. Businesses participating in the program were able to save money on their water bills and boost their community profiles as water champions, courtesy of the State Government's \$1.5 million incentive. BWEP offered rebates and subsidies for water-saving projects implemented on or before March 30, 2009.

### Looking Back and Moving Forward

In May, 2008, council produced the historically significant publication: Looking Back and Moving Forward. From settlement and industry cultivation to infrastructure milestones, the development of local authority and finally 2008's council amalgamation, the publication celebrated the history of Mackay Regional Council. Content was collated by Mackay historian Berenice Wright and council's library services history co-ordinator Lara Clarke.



### Seaforth swimming enclosure

The swimming enclosure at Seaforth was replaced in June 2008. The new structure's innovative design featured a suspended net hung from timber piles set in concrete pipes and anchored to the sand with concrete weights and cables. The new enclosure is a great asset to the area which has also served to reduce council's annual maintenance costs.



Seaforth swimming enclosure



## » Community financial report

A community financial report contains a summary and analysis of a Local Government's financial performance and position for the financial year. This report makes it easier for readers to understand council's financial management and performance.

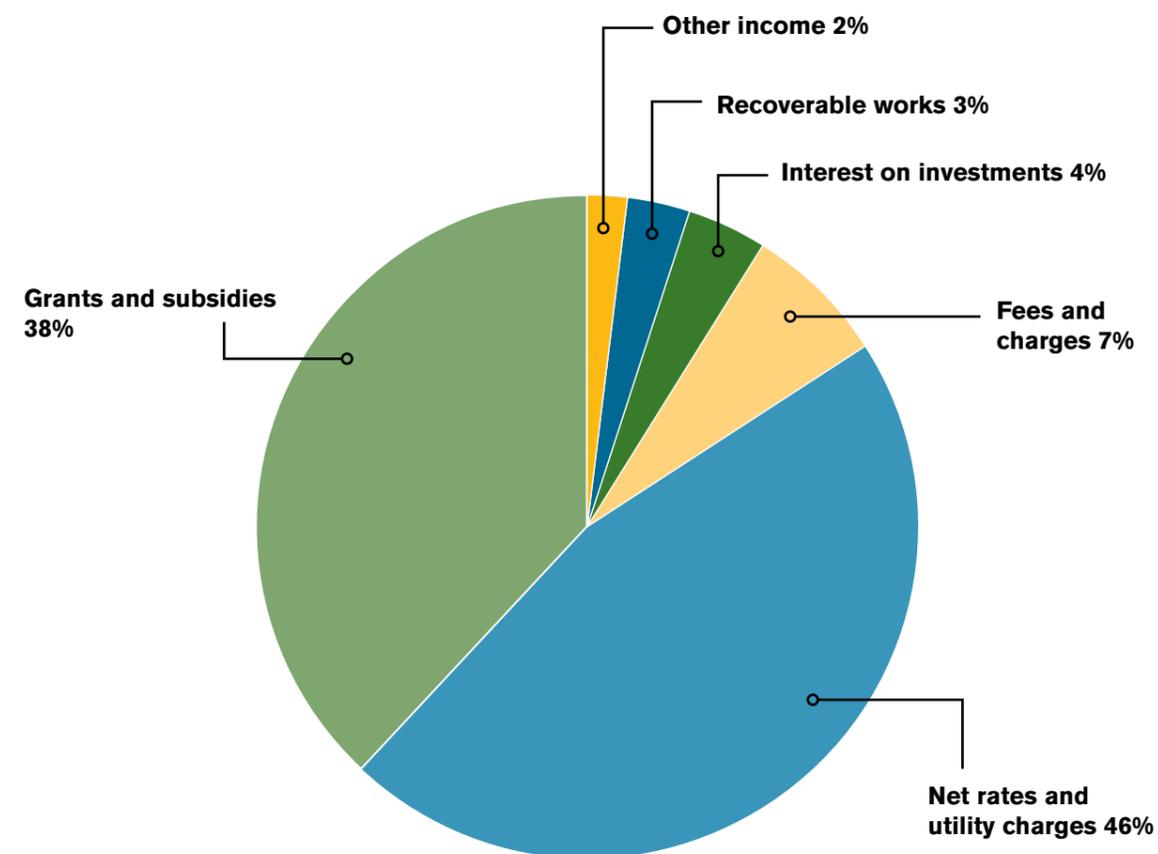
### Operating result

Mackay Regional Council has recorded an operating surplus of \$1,269,080,562 as at June 30, 2009. This surplus represents the 15-month period from March 15, 2008, to June 30, 2009, for the newly amalgamated council. It is important to note that this figure is significantly inflated due to the requirement of recognising all of the assets and liabilities of the previous amalgamated councils (\$1,213,708,330) as revenue.

### Sources of revenue – where our money comes from

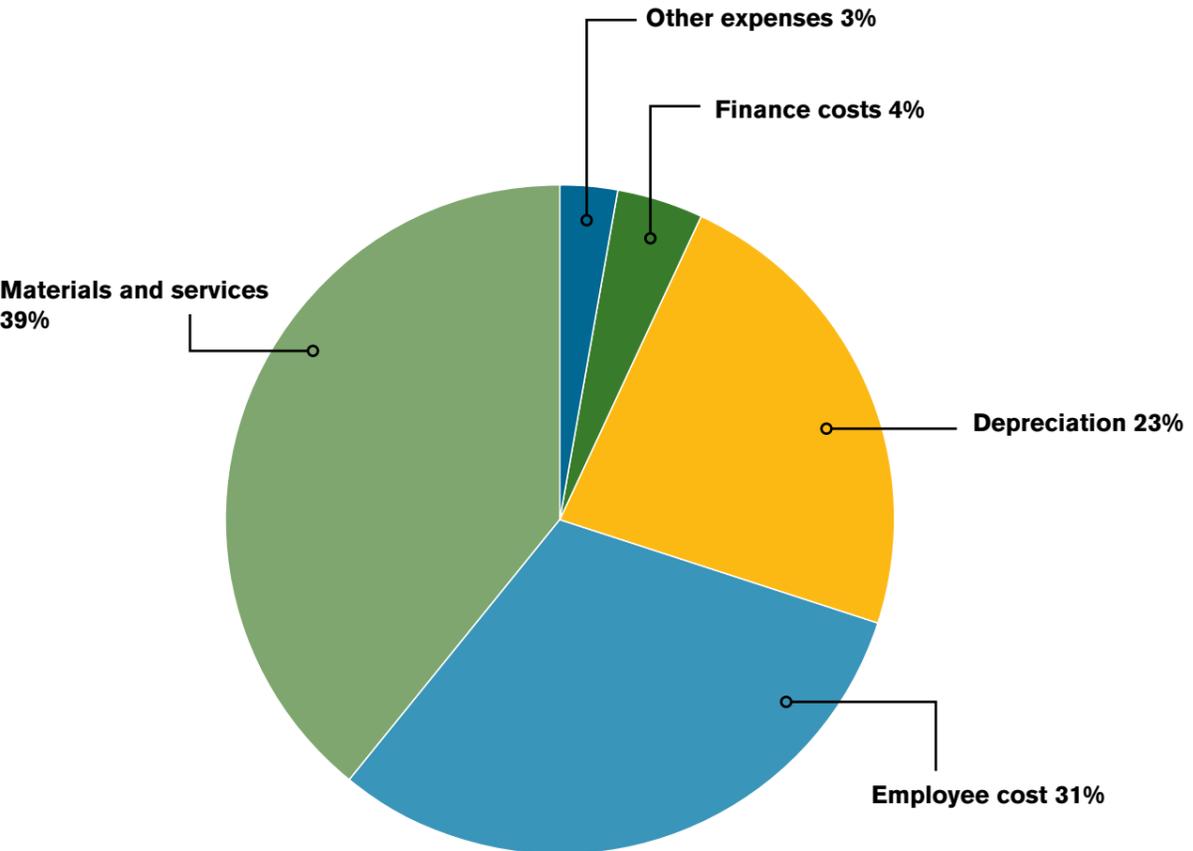
Total revenue of \$1,504,009,035 was recognised during the period March 15, 2008, to June 30, 2009, and consists of operating revenue (including rates and charges) of \$204,039,801 and capital revenue (including grants and contributions) of \$86,260,904. Through the amalgamation process it also includes recognising the assets and liabilities of the abolished councils, being \$1,213,708,330.

Where our money comes from, excluding the amalgamation “gain on restructure”, is depicted in the graph below:



### Operating expenditure – where our money is spent

The components of operating expenditure for the 15-month period to June 30, 2009, are shown in the graph below:



### Capital Works Program

Capital works of more than \$181.5 million were undertaken during the period March 15, 2008, to June 30, 2009. Significant projects included the Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre (\$22.5 million), the Mackay Water Recycling Project (\$36 million), Bluewater Quay (\$10.2 million), Bluewater Lagoon (\$4.8 million), water infrastructure (\$17.7 million), wastewater infrastructure (\$11.9 million), bridge replacements (\$4 million), trunk drainage (\$6.8 million), pavement improvements (\$3.1 million), trunk roads (\$8.7 million), and parks and recreation (\$3.8 million).

### Financial position as at June 30, 2009

Our community's net worth (what we own less what we owe) at the end of the period to June 30, 2009, was \$2,268,938,534. Community equity is represented by council's total assets of \$2,434,079,855 less its total liabilities of \$165,141,321.

### Key financial ratios

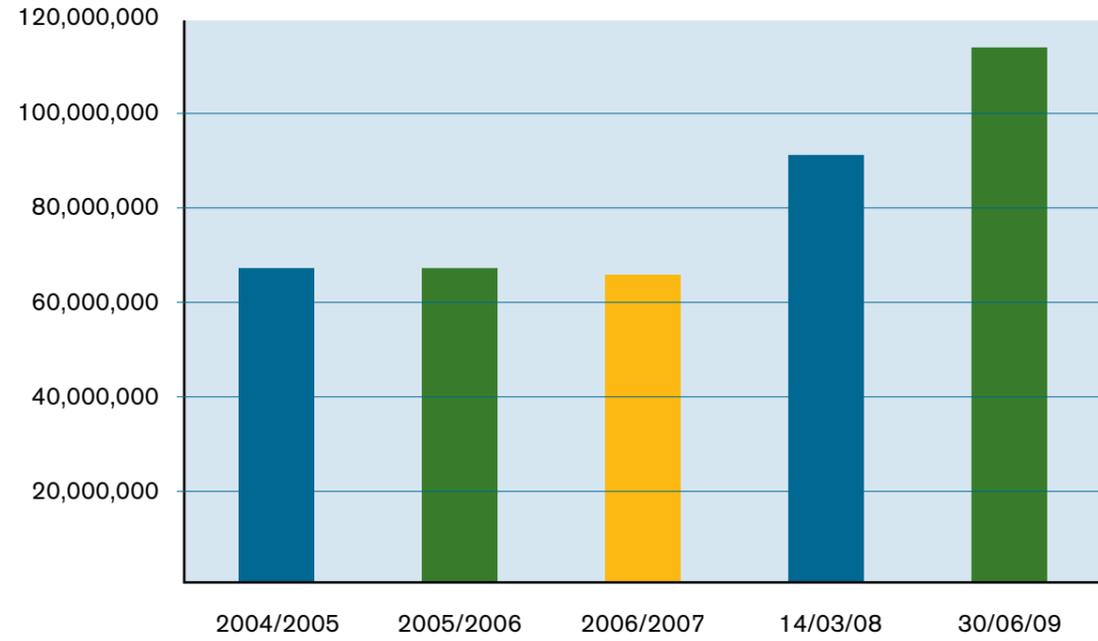
There are no specific requirements under the Finance Standards or Local Government Act to report financial ratios in the financial statements, however, council considers the ratios mentioned below relevant for disclosure. A financial statement ratio is calculated by dividing the dollar amount of one item reported in the financial statements by the dollar amount of another. This expresses a relationship between two relevant items that is easy to interpret.

Ratio	Period to June 30, 2009
Revenue ratio shows the percentage of council's recurrent revenue that is provided from rates and charges. This ratio shows council's reliance on rates is high compared to other sources of income such as fees and charges.	65.9%
Rates arrears ratio shows the percentage of rates outstanding and illustrates the effectiveness of council's debt collection processes.	5.8%
Debt servicing ratio shows the percentage of net rates and utility charges used to service council's interest and redemption payment on loans.	13.1%
Working capital ratio represents council's ability to service current debt from current assets. The ratio indicates an ample ability to meet short-term commitments as a result of sound cash flow management.	4.1%

### Debt position

Mackay Regional Council's outstanding debt as at June 30, 2009, was \$113,462,010. The graph below shows the combined borrowings of the amalgamated councils over the past five years.

Outstanding debt balance





### Basic statistics

Rates	Period to June 30, 2009
Number of rateable assessments	45, 721
Average rates and charges per residential property	\$1964
Level of rate arrears (millions)	\$8.321 million

### Snapshot of the region's assets

The table below illustrates Mackay Regional Council's assets as at June 30, 2009.

Assets	Total asset value	Written down value as at June 30, 2009
Land	\$245,784,637	\$245,774,447
Buildings	\$125,755,727	\$110,787,834
Site improvements	\$31,809,484	\$31,809,484
Heritage and cultural assets	\$514,924	\$514,924
Plant and equipment	\$32,525,456	\$25,792,530
Roads, bridges and drainage	\$1,243,723,106	\$1,092,679,724
Water	\$466,792,977	\$287,499,130
Sewerage	\$511,203,387	\$366,049,817
Waste infrastructure	\$21,113,760	\$21,113,760
Intangibles	\$3,478,714	\$1,658,224
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,699,486,981</b>	<b>\$2,186,061,170</b>

### Reserves and controlled roads

Mackay Regional Council has control of about 3645 hectares of reserves with about 155 hectares leased to various bodies and about 2454 kilometres of council-controlled roads plus about 680 kilometres of State-controlled roads.

### Funding agreements

The Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) program is an entry level tool for emerging creative artists to enhance their grant writing and project development skills. It also provides assistance to migrant groups and other minority groups to participate and share culturally in our community. The program is also an important source of funding for professionals to lead arts and cultural projects that help our community to raise the bar in our local arts and cultural sector.

Mackay Regional Council recognises the support of Arts Queensland as a partner in the RADF to support local artists to deliver arts and cultural projects. Council also acknowledges the Queensland Government Department of Communities' contribution to Mackay Regional Council's community development and youth development programs.

The total amount allocated to the RADF program for the 2008/09 financial year was \$137,154 made up of co-contributions between council and Arts Queensland as represented in the table below:

Where RADF funding came from:	Amount received
Arts Queensland base contribution	\$71,640
Required council contribution	\$55,318
Additional council contribution	\$4196
Arts Queensland incentive allocation	\$3000
Council incentive allocation	\$3000



Jill Chism's *Preserve/Conserve - an invocation*, (detail) 2008, was made with sea salt and PVC pipe as part of the Water's Edge Project at Cape Hillsborough National Park with assistance from an RADF grant. (Photo courtesy of Jim Cullen.)



## » Summary of expenditure

### Grants program supporting economic development

Grants over \$4000 for the financial year ended June 30, 2009, year are listed below (other smaller grants totalled \$166,400).

Name of organisation	Amount	Purpose
Central Queensland Helicopter	\$50,000	Support and sponsor RACQ-CQ Rescue
Mackay Gymnastics Inc	\$6700	Assistance with Development Application and quantity survey fees to help establish a new building for gymnastics
Community Radio Association	\$5000	Development of training program and production of new program
Pioneer Valley Cricket Association Inc	\$6786	Installation of light poles at Lions Park to create a multi-purpose area
River Rock to Mountain Top Community Festival	\$6500	Contribution to entertainment and expenses associated with festival
Sarina Arts Council Inc	\$4138	Hall hire and equipment for the Sarina Art Extravaganza
Yalboroo Community Hall Association Inc	\$9180	Purchase and installation of weatherproof awning for the hall's outdoor area
Mackay Childminding Association Inc	\$5000	Contribution to repaint the interior of Mackay Childcare Centre
Mackay City Band Inc	\$10,000	Contribution to replace stumps at the band's hall
Lions Club of Mackay Host	\$10,000	Assistance to establish a shed to house the club's catering van
Mackay Canegrowers Ltd	\$5000	Support for a community celebration as part of the Mackay Sugar Festival
Mackay Regional Council for Social Development	\$10,000	Contribution towards the operating costs of the organisation
National Day of Thanksgiving	\$5500	Contribution to the annual Day of Thanksgiving
Pioneer Valley Agricultural Show Society Inc	\$5000	Contribution to the costs of extra seating at the Finch Hatton Showgrounds
Rotary District Conference Committee	\$5000	Contribution to the Rotary District 9570 Conference
Sarina Show Society Inc	\$9900	Purchase and installation of a walk-in cold room
Valley Retirement Centre	\$4000	One-off contribution to assist with their sewerage service charges



### Summary of expenditure for consultancies, advertising and entertainment/hospitality services

As per section 24 of the Local Government Finance Standard 2005 (LGFS), please find below expenditure pertaining to consulting, advertising and entertaining or hospitality for the period from March 15, 2008, to June 30, 2009.

Department	Consulting	Advertising	Entertainment/hospitality
Community Services	\$78,536.09	\$301,928.67	\$127,237.36
Corporate Services	\$361,875.76	\$334,301.81	\$113,471.19
Engineering Services	\$718,463.49	\$76,836.81	\$22,557.61
Commercial Services	\$410,255.34	\$51,490.03	\$5062.58
Development Services	\$564,626.44	\$28,321.78	\$6099.36
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,133,757.12</b>	<b>\$792,879.10</b>	<b>\$274,428.10</b>

### Overseas travel

Community Development co-ordinator Robert Ryan attended and presented a paper at the International Safe Communities Conference in Christchurch, New Zealand, in October 2008 at a cost of about \$3000.





Bluewater Lagoon

## » The 2008-09 financial year's highlights

### Trunk roads/urban arterial

The highest allocation of council expenditure under its Capital Works Program is the Urban Arterial Program. More than \$8.850 million was allocated to upgrading the region's urban arterial roads, trunk roads and intersections.

A key project under this program was the intersection reconstruction at Connors Road and Farrellys Road (formerly Farrellys Lane). This project included increasing the depth of pavement materials to cater for anticipated heavy traffic loads, installing traffic lights and boom gates at the adjacent Queensland Rail line to improve safety, and the intersection was widened to suit the four lanes from Farrellys Road.

Another significant project under this program included the intersection reconstruction at Grasstree Beach Road and Grasstree Road. About 1.5 kilometres of Grasstree Beach Road was also reconstructed to improve the vertical alignment.

### Mackay Region Festival of Arts 2008

The 2008 Festival of Arts kicked off in July 2008 with a dance extravaganza by Urban Wonderland. This celebration marked the 21st anniversary of this festival, which can be described as a vibrant, sensory feast of arts and culture encompassing music, theatre, dance, literature, film, fashion, visual art and comedy. In response to tremendous community support for this annual festival, the G&S Engineering Wine and Food Day was held at the new venue of Queens Park. Festival highlights included Cycology (a talented musician who transformed an ordinary bike into a range of instruments), the Palm Avenue Longtable Dinner (catered for by Mackay chef Adrian Connors), the Hahn Super Dry Comedy Club and the G&S Engineering Festival Club. This event was sponsored by 4MK FM, Seven Local News, ABC and The Daily Mercury.

### The Bluewater Lagoon

More than 9000 people took part in the "Splashtacular" opening of the \$12 million Bluewater Lagoon on August 10, 2008. This project is the result of five years of planning and an 11,000 signature petition from the community.

This three-tiered lagoon caters for all ages and abilities and features interactive children's water play equipment and a slide. The anticipated attendance figures of 205,000 per year were significantly exceeded, with Surf Lifesaving statistics recording more than 370,000 visitors to the lagoon in the first 11 months of operation.

### Q150 celebrations

Mackay Regional Council organised a series of events during 2009 to celebrate Queensland's 150th anniversary. About 700 community members enjoyed day trips on the Q150 Steam Train which was welcomed to town in May by an eager crowd of 1000 people at Mackay Railway Station. The Q150 Woolshed was equally well supported, Artspace Mackay conducted a Q150 mosaic design competition and preparations were in full swing for the opening of Mackay's Q150 legacy project – the Bluewater Quay.

### Switch IT Over

On June 22, 2009, council was recognised for its commitment to addressing climate change with the Switch IT Over project, Australia. This innovative campaign assisted local governments with their reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by helping them to implement energy and cost-saving office and IT equipment.

In a bid to reduce operational greenhouse gas emissions, Mackay Regional Council replaced 55 older computers and six local servers at Mirani and Sarina council offices with "thin clients" and "blades". The energy consumption for these computers dropped from 1.11 kWh a day to 0.74kWh, which is a saving of 6700kWh of electricity, more than six tonnes of CO2-e and around \$1200 worth of energy costs a year.

### Reef Guardian program

In 2008/09, Mackay Regional Council was one of only six local governments that made a formal pledge to save the Great Barrier Reef by becoming a Reef Guardian.

The Reef Guardian program, developed by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), was created to recognise and support local councils and their communities with their environmental initiatives and the management of natural resources.

A working group was also established by council to oversee the development and implementation of council's Environmental Action Plan which details current and future community capacity, water, land and waste management actions.



Brampton Island



## » Corporate governance

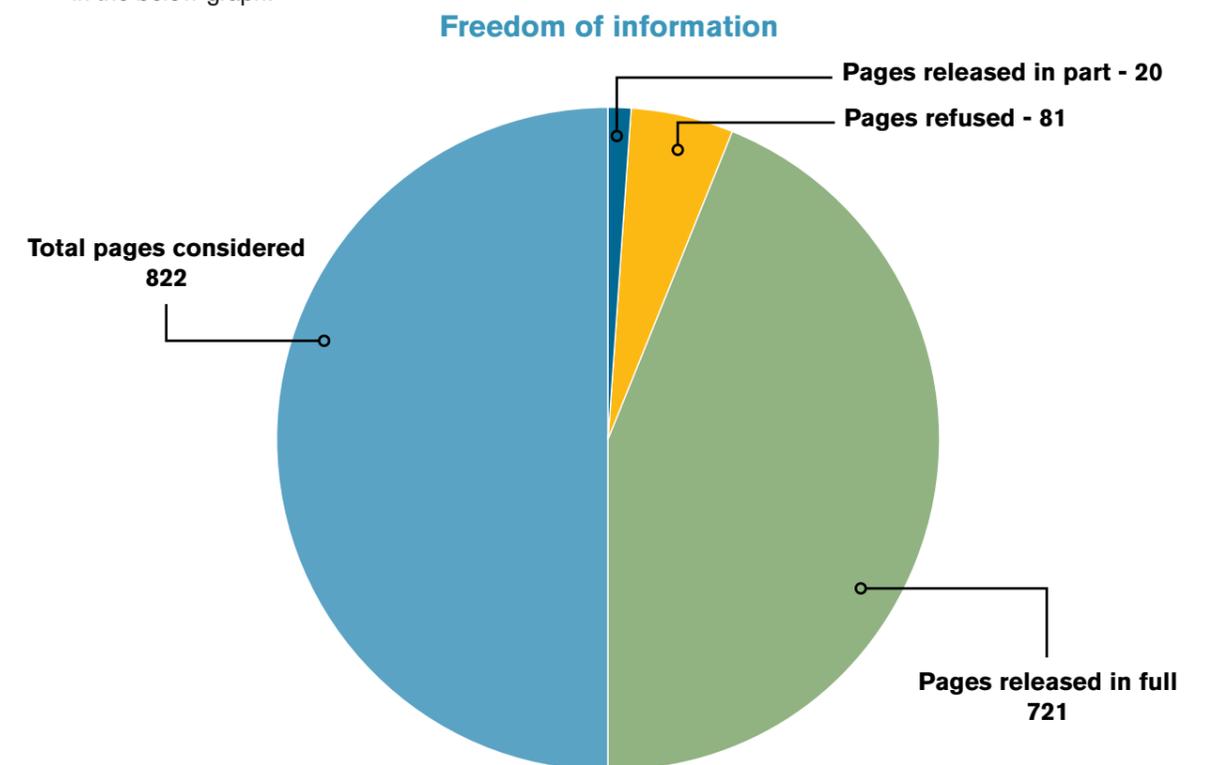
Corporate governance refers to the rules, processes and behaviours that affect the way in which power or authority is exercised. Good governance is about being accountable, participatory, transparent, effective and efficient and following the rule of law. The corporate governance framework is there to encourage the efficient use of resources and to align as close as possible the interests of individuals, the organisation and the community.

### Code of conduct

Council's code of conduct is designed to encourage high standards of official conduct and encourages effective disciplinary action if staff members behave unethically. The code describes appropriate behaviour towards colleagues, supervisors, councillors and the public. In order to avoid potential conflict, it is highly desirable that there be mutual agreement about appropriate behaviour in each of these relationships.

### Freedom of information

Freedom of information (FOI) requests can be made by contacting council on 1300 MACKAY (1300 622 529). During the period from 15 March 2008 to June 30, 2009, 22 FOI applications were received. A total of 822 pages were considered and 88 per cent of these were released in part or full. The remainder had sections of privileged information withheld as per the respective provisions of the Freedom of Information Act. The applications released pertained to matters such as planning, access to complaints information, and general information held by council. Requests received are represented in the below graph:



## Audit committee

Council maintained an Audit Committee and an internal audit function during the reporting period. While the majority of the internal audit function activities were provided by an external contractor, council moved to an in-house service from April, 2009. The Audit Committee met seven times during the reporting period to consider reports presented by internal and external auditors.

## Our commitment to consultation and participation

Mackay Regional Council has clear Community Engagement Guidelines to ensure that as many people as possible who are affected by council's actions have the opportunity to be consulted about their needs and concerns prior to decisions being made.

Extensive community engagement was undertaken in the development of council's 2009-2014 Corporate Plan. This included a public awareness campaign, the publication of a questionnaire via print media and council's website and six community meetings were held to enable close consultation with the community. Other community engagement activities were conducted throughout the year to address projects within council's operational areas. These actions demonstrate council's commitment to providing genuine opportunities for informed community involvement in decision-making within the framework of local democracy.

## Delegation register changes

Council's delegation register, which records the delegated levels of authority and instruments of authority held by all council officers, is regularly updated. The current delegations have provided council with the ability to conduct its day-to-day operations in a more efficient and effective manner.

## Equal employment opportunity

Council's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) annual plan states all staff members have an equal opportunity to increase their skills to meet work demands, attend training courses, act in higher duties and apply for available jobs. This policy aims to ensure fair practices are conducted in the workplace, management decisions are made without bias, respect is shown for the social and cultural backgrounds of all staff and customers and the workforce reflects the diversity of the region it serves.

This will also serve to improve productivity by guaranteeing that the best person is recruited and/or promoted, skilled staff are retained, training and development are linked to the needs of employees and customers and the workplace is efficient and free of harassment and discrimination.

## Council meetings

Council meetings are held on Wednesdays at 10am. All meetings are open to the public and conclude with an invitation for public participation. This allows members of the public to raise issues or ask questions directly of the full council. Council also receives community deputations which are arranged through the office of the CEO.

## Councillor support

Every endeavour is made to keep councillors abreast of issues by providing them with current information through a daily media monitoring service, individual laptops and Blackberries as well as access to all media releases issued by council.



Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre

## Managed business units

Council operated a number of business enterprises on a commercial and semi-commercial basis during the financial year. Those enterprises were: Mackay Water (Type 2 business), Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre, Complete Approval Service, Aquatic Facilities, Cleansing, Plant/Workshop, Cemeteries, Roads and the Main Roads contract (Type 3 businesses).

The annual statement of operations of each of these significant business activities is presented in this report.

### *Type 2 commercial business activity*

Section 547 of the Act requires council to conduct an annual review of business activities while section 548 requires us to notify the Minister of any new Type 2 business activities. Mackay Water is a Type 2 commercial business unit of Mackay Regional Council's Mackay Water and Waste Services (formerly Commercial Services) department. A snapshot of their business activities has been included in this report.

### *Type 3 commercial business activity*

Section 768 of the Act requires us to provide "a list of its activities during the financial year and a statement of whether the code was applied to each of the activities and, if not, the reason it was not applied". In accordance with section 766 (1), an annual review of each of council's Type 3 business activities was conducted. Mackay Regional Council's entertainment and convention centre, Complete Approval Service (CAS), Aquatic Facilities, Cleansing, Plant/Workshop, Cemeteries, Roads and the Main Roads contract are Type 3 businesses.

### *Complete Approval Service*

Section 763A (2) requires council to provide information on council's building certification business activity during the financial year. After 10 years of operation, Complete Approval Services (CAS) ceased operating as a business unit on January 31, 2009, however, processing of applications continued for the remainder of the year.



The construction of Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre

The decision to wind-up the business took serious consideration. Council was able to identify that the technical skills of the staff could be better used in council's development compliance and governance section and consequently released the certification business to the local private industry.

In the seven months prior to closure, CAS received and accessed 15 per cent of all applications in the region. Significant projects included the recent extensions to the Mater Hospital, internal fit-out works for council's Wellington Street offices, and finalisation of the Autocorner redevelopment works.

The redeployment of former CAS staff to development compliance was successful and resulted in an increased ability for council to investigate and finalise complaints and conduct building and governance activities (as indicated below).

Complaints	2007/08	2008/09
Number of complaints investigated	418	746
Number of complaints finalised	412	830

