



Affordability drives council budget

Council has eased the cost of living pressures on local households by delivering a modest rate increase in the 2011-12 Mackay Regional Council budget, to be handed down tomorrow.

Mackay Mayor Col Meng said the financial plan of this council is to set a platform which ensures the long term sustainability of the region, while keeping rates and charges as low as possible.

"We made a commitment to review what we do and how we do things and as a result, this budget helps manage the cost of living and provides for the long term future of our region," he said.

Council has allocated \$119.8 million to capital works, which includes \$34 million for improvements to roads and drainage infrastructure across the region.

A further \$118 million has been set aside to repair flood damaged road, thanks to funding from the State Government.

The "Rebuilding our Roads" initiative is the top priority for council and will generate jobs and significantly boost the local economy - Mayor Col Meng.

Finance portfolio councillor Darryl Camilleri said council had reshaped its 10 year Long Term Financial Plan, which provides

a blueprint of the estimated future financial position and maintains modest rate rises over the next decade.

Cr Camilleri said last year's ten year modelling to cope with significant loss of state subsidies foreshadowed annual rate rises in the vicinity of 10 per cent.

"It is now much lower than that by achieving operational efficiencies and a reprioritising our capital works program," he said.

>> For information on the budget, visit the council website.

Operating changes deliver savings

Changes have been made to weekend hours at the Memorial Swim Centre and Artspace as part of council's ongoing commitment to achieve operational efficiencies.

Artspace, which had averaged about 30 visitors on a Sunday, will now open Tuesday to Saturday as from July 1 - the hours are in line with the operation of Foodspace Cafe.

The facility will still be available for hire or special community functions.

From September, the Memorial Swim Centre will become a Monday to Friday operation.

"Usage on the weekends at the two Mackay swimming centres is relatively low and didn't justify the expense of penalty rates and overtime at the Memorial Swim Centre."
- Cr Paul Steindl.

The Pioneer Swim Centre will continue to open on weekends along with the Bluewater Lagoon.

New policy provides relief on water charges

Residents who use a home dialysis machine will now be able to claim some relief on water charges thanks to a new policy adopted by council.

The policy, titled Exceptional Circumstances, will provide financial relief to residents faced with exceptional circumstances beyond their control.

Water and wastewater portfolio councillor Deirdre Comerford said that council recognises that there are certain groups of residents that face exceptional circumstances and its council's obligation to provide some relief in these situations.

"Residents on dialysis machines have a need to use more water resulting in them having to bear a higher level of water

charges - this is where the new policy comes in," she said.

"Under the policy these residents are now exempt from tier two water charges, providing them with some financial relief."

To claim the financial relief, home dialysis users need to submit a certificate from their Doctor confirming their need for a home dialysis machine, the resident's name and residential address. This certificate along with a letter from the resident can be dropped into any of council's Customer Service Centres or mailed to council.

>> For further information on the details of the policy, contact council on 1300 MACKAY.

Only 2 days to go!
The 50 per cent discount on cat and dog registration ends this THURSDAY!!

Artspace

> Kids Holiday Art Workshops: Recycled Art

Come along and join the Artspace team for fun, creative art workshops for children aged 8 to 12 years.

Wednesday, July 6

10am to 12noon and 1pm to 3pm
Artspace Mackay Seminar Room

Thursday, July 7

10am to 12noon and 1pm to 3pm
Sarina Art Gallery, Field of Dreams Parkland

The workshops are \$20 per child (\$10 subsequent siblings).

>> Bookings are essential, please phone Artspace Mackay on 4961 9722.

Libraries

> Welcome to Winter Wizardry

Lots of fun and wizardry magic awaits these holidays at the libraries!

Kids will make a pencil broom, design their own marvellous wizard's hat and create a secret wizard box to hold their treasures.

WEEK ONE:

Wednesday, June 29

Gordon White Library from 10am to 11am

Thursday, June 30

Mackay City Library from 10am to 11am

Friday, July 1

Sarina Library from 10am to 11am

WEEK TWO:

During this week there will be a special visit at the libraries from Mr Magic!

If you have a special magic trick bring it along and perform after Mr Magic.

Wednesday, July 6

Gordon White Library from 10am to 11am

Thursday, July 7

Mackay City Library from 10am to 11am

These sessions are FREE and for children from Prep to Year 7 and parental supervision is required.

> Movie Night

For a FREE night out these school holidays, come along to the movie night at the **Gordon White Library, Mount Pleasant.**

Friday, July 1 from 6pm to 9pm

The end of an era is fast approaching with the last Harry Potter installment due in cinemas soon.

Therefore we will be showing **Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1.**

Dress up as your favourite character for your chance to win great prizes including movie tickets!

Movie munchies and pizza will be provided. This activity is suited to teenagers aged between 12 and 18 years.

>> Bookings are essential at each activity, phone 1300 MACKAY to secure your spot at your local library.

MECC

> Cartoon Network's Ben 10 Live Time Machine

For the first time, the three Cartoon Network series' Ben 10, Ben 10 Alien Force and Ben 10 Ultimate Alien are all featured in one live theatre event for the whole family.

Ben 10 Live: Time Machine stars Ben, his cousin Gwen and Grandpa Max in two adventure filled acts.

Tuesday, July 5 at 10am and 12.30pm
Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre (MECC) Auditorium, Alfred Street

Tickets - \$26.90 per person (all children over 12 months of age require a ticket)

>> To book your tickets phone the box office on 4961 9777 or visit www.mackaytix.com.au.

Sarina Sugar Shed

> Take the tour, taste the action!

Come visit Australia's only fully operational miniature sugar-processing mill and distillery and see how the grubby, pale sugar cane is transformed into the granules we pour into our morning tea.

Families are welcome to tour the factory and distillery, enjoy some tasty samples of our products and purchase gifts and T-shirts.

Opening times:
Monday to Saturday from 9am

Tour times:
9.30am, 11am, 12.30pm and 2pm

Entry prices:
Adult - \$18, Concession - \$15, Child over 5 - \$9 and Family Pass - \$42 (2 adults and 2 children).

>> For more information, log onto www.sarinasugarshed.com.au.

Orchid House

> Explore one of Mackay's hidden treasures!

The Ken Burgess Orchid House, commonly known as the Orchid House at Queens Park houses over 700 varieties of orchids on display, from flourishing Australian native orchids to exotic orchids from all around the world.

Kids will be able to see and smell the popular corsage type orchid, the rare tongue orchid and upside down orchids.

Opening Hours:
Monday to Friday from 10am to 11am, 2pm to 3pm & Sunday from 10am to 2pm

Entry into the Orchid House is FREE and it is located at Queens Park, Goldsmith Street, East Mackay.

>> For more information, log onto council's website or phone 1300 MACKAY.

Did you know?

You can register to receive regular news and updates from a variety of council facilities - simply log onto council's website and search for eNewsletters today!

