



MEDIA RELEASE

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Huon Valley Council Budgeting for our Future

The Huon Valley Council has worked collaboratively to deliver a balanced budget for the coming year. The council passed its 2019/20 budget at this week's special council meeting.

The budget at a glance:

- **An average rate increase of \$1.15 per week for a property with a capital value of \$300,000 and the continuation of Council's average rateable valuation as the third lowest in the state.**
- **A commitment to the development of new strategies for Climate Change and Waste Management.**
- **Continued work to implement the Health and Wellbeing, Arts and Culture Strategies and the Community Engagement Framework.**
- **A broad spread on capital infrastructure.**

Council endorsed an average general rate increase of \$1.15 per week per property valued at \$300,000 which equates to a 5.95% rate rise.

Mayor Bec Enders said "Independent analysis from the Auditor-General's office shows Huon Valley Council's average rateable valuation is the third lowest in the state. This is a solid achievement for a Council that delivers a many services as the Huon Valley Council does".

"We have worked collaboratively to provide a balanced budget for the coming year which recognises strategic priorities and spending on capital infrastructure."

Mayor Bec Enders said "Long term financial sustainability and planning for the future was the Council's focus in preparing this year's budget along with maintaining all current services which are broad and diverse."

Council has allocated \$25.9 million for the day-to-day operations of Council. This includes funding to develop strategies that plan for the future in areas such as a Climate Change, Waste Management and an Economic and Workforce Planning Strategy for the Huon Valley.

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We will continue to work with the community to implement other Council strategies including the Health and Wellbeing, Arts and Culture Strategies and the Community Engagement Framework.

“It is important for Council to continue to support the Health and Wellbeing of our community. This is something we are all very passionate about” said Mayor Enders.

The Huon Beings Project will continue in 2019/20 with funding allocated to carry on with the Huon Valley digital story telling journey.

Cr Enders said “Our businesses and community will benefit from the new strategies, socially, environmentally and economically. Whilst the Waste and Climate Change strategies are self-explanatory, the Economic and Workforce Planning Strategy will ensure that as the Huon Valley grows, so do job opportunities and training. The Strategy will give us an understanding of our areas:

- Economic and social profile;
- Education and job support profile;
- Current and future state of our workforce;
- Strategies to address the gaps in workforce and skill level;

As the Strategies are completed, they will be made available to the public on our website to help businesses, schools and individuals plan for now and the future.

These strategies will also provide the necessary data, statistics and recommendations to strengthen Councils influence and negotiations with Federal and State Governments when seeking additional services and funding for the Huon Valley.

Council will also complete the Huon Valley Recreation Strategy, the Mountain Bike Trail Feasibility and the Huonville to Franklin Shared Pathway Feasibility Studies in 2019/20 to pave the way forward for recreation in the Huon Valley.

“We are also committed to funding 100 per cent of depreciation of our assets. This ensures that we will continue putting aside enough money each year to cover the cost of maintaining and renewing community assets such as halls, roads, parks, and public toilets as they reach their end of life.”

We have committed to meeting the priorities of our roads and footpaths renewal program. During 2019/20, Stride Street, Walton Street, Lucaston Link Road, Jetty Road Cygnet, Palmers Road and Esperance Coast Road will undergo renewal.

Funding has also been allocated to upgrade recreation spaces across the Valley with public toilets located in Randalls Bay and Shipwrights Point to undergo a facelift. Playgrounds in Dover and Huonville will also be upgraded. Funding has also been

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allocated to commence planning for a Southport recreation space that will incorporate new and long awaited public amenities in the design.

In addition to developing a climate change strategy, council has also committed to replacing a current petrol vehicle that is due for replacement with an electric vehicle and the completion of the of solar panel installations on Council office buildings. This budget will also provide for a Customer Satisfaction Survey to be undertaken.

Mayor Enders said “it is important for Council to be able to measure its community satisfaction levels to ensure we are delivering services that are of value to our community whilst meeting the service standards outlined in our Customer Service Charter”. The feedback we receive from our community will help us review our Customer Service Charter standards and to allocate funds where they will have the greatest positive impact for our community, environment and council resources.

Public and employee safety has also been a highlight of this year’s budget. Joint funding is allocated to the removal of the hedge located within the Huonville Recreation Ground to improve community safety. Funding has also been allocated to investigate weed management products as a possible replacement for glyphosate and a fertilizer and grass spreader to support the parks and reserves unit and improve efficiencies.

We will purchase body cameras for some of our frontline staff such as compliance officer’s and inspectors. Body cameras can help improve transparency and public trust and can reduce complaints.

“The safety of our staff and our community are important to us as Councillors and the commitment of funding to improve their safety was crucial when determining this budget” Mayor Enders said.

The Council will continue to seek funding for projects not included in this year’s budget, and will pursue grants as they are available.

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