



GLADSTONE
REGIONAL COUNCIL

**GENERAL MEETING NOTICE
AND AGENDA**

**TO BE HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS – CIVIC CENTRE
101 GOONDOON STREET, GLADSTONE**

On Tuesday 17 September 2024

Commencing at 9.00am

**Carly Quinn
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, Acting**

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G/1. MAYORAL STATEMENT OF CURRENT ISSUES

G/2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

G/2.1. CONFIRMATION OF GENERAL MEETING MINUTES FOR 3 SEPTEMBER 2024

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer

Prepared By: Executive Secretary

Council Meeting Date: 17 September 2024

File Ref: CM7.2

Purpose:

Confirmation of the minutes of the General Meeting held on 3 September 2024.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the minutes of the General Meeting of Council held on 3 September 2024 be confirmed.

Attachments:

1. Minutes of the General Meeting of Council held on 3 September 2024.

G/3. DEPUTATIONS

G/3.1. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND CLIMATE

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer

Prepared By: Executive Secretary

Council Meeting Date: 17 September 2024

File Ref: CM7.6

Purpose:

For the Department of Energy and Climate to provide an update on the Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) Readiness Assessments for Central Queensland.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the deputation from the Department of Energy and Climate be received.

Background:

Deputation details are as follows:

Time of Presentation	9:10am
Duration of Presentation (plus question time)	15 mins
Speakers to present	David Shankey, Deputy Director General, Energy Leanne Caelers, Executive Director, REZ and Transformation Josie Maule, Director, REZ Policy

Attachments:

1. Department of Energy and Climate Change Presentation

G/4. OFFICERS' REPORTS

G/4.1. ADOPTION OF OUR PLACE OUR PLAN GLADSTONE REGION PLANNING SCHEME REVIEW REPORT

Responsible Officer: General Manager Customer Experience

Prepared By: Principal Planning Lead

Council Meeting Date: 17 September 2024

File Ref: L6.7, PRJ-479

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to consider and adopt the Planning Scheme Review Report.

Officer's Recommendation:

That:

1. Council adopt the Our Place Our Plan 10 Year Planning Scheme Review;
2. The Chief Executive Officer prepares a scope of the amendments to the Planning Scheme as per the recommendations of the Our Place Our Plan 10 Year Planning Scheme Review; and
3. A further report be presented to Council to consider the commencement of a Major Amendment process.

Summary:

The Gladstone Regional Council Our Place Our Plan Planning Scheme (planning scheme) formally commenced on 12 October 2015. Legislative requirements under the Planning Act 2016 require Council to review its planning scheme within 10 years of it being made.

The review did not identify any fundamental deficiency in the planning scheme that would prevent it from continuing to be applied to the regulation of development. The review recommends that Council resolve to make multiple amendments to the current planning scheme rather than preparing a new planning scheme. This will ensure the current planning scheme can continue to be contemporary and responsive to local social, economic and environmental interests. As such, officers recommend that Council adopt the Planning Scheme Review Report and progress work on subsequent amendments. The amendments will be subject to a future Council meeting resolution.

Link to Corporate Plan:

Accountable Council - We are providing good stewardship built on a foundation of trust.
Resilient Economy - We play our part in supporting the success of our region.

Background:

The Gladstone Regional Council Our Place Our Plan Planning Scheme (planning scheme) formally commenced on 12 October 2015. Legislative requirements under the Planning Act 2016 require Council to review its planning scheme within 10 years of it being made.

The 10 Year Planning Scheme Review (the Review) examines the operation of the planning scheme and assesses whether it accords with current legislation, Council's vision for the Region and community expectations. It identifies key findings and information gaps and includes recommendations arising from the consideration of these findings.

The Planning Scheme Review is a recognised project as part of both the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 Operational Plans. The adoption of the report effectively completes this project and allows work to commence on amending the Planning Scheme.

Council engaged Reel Planning to undertake the Review Report in late 2023. The project plan included community engagement across several mediums and methods as well as state interest integration review, economic forecasting, gap analysis and consideration of the Local Government Infrastructure Plan (LGIP). This analysis and information was then used to develop the Planning Scheme Review Report as attached to this report.

Risk Management Summary:

Under section 25(1) of the Planning Act 2016, Council has a legislative obligation to undertake a review of the planning scheme within 10 years of that scheme being made (i.e. by October 2025). Furthermore, the local government must decide whether to 'do nothing', amend or replace the planning scheme at the culmination of the Review.

Options and Opportunity Analysis:

Council may choose the below options in considering the Our Place Our Plan 10 Year Planning Scheme Review:

1. Progress a series of Planning Scheme amendments.

This option allows for a more reactive process of amendments to the planning scheme over several years and discrete projects. Amendments can more quickly react to community and Council requirements and can be undertaken in a more resource efficient approach. This is the option recommended by the Planning Scheme Review and this report.

2. Retain the current Planning Scheme provisions.

While the planning scheme is technically useable in its current form, given the recommendations of the Review Report, this is unlikely to be supported by the State, the development industry or community.

3. Prepare a new Planning Scheme.

This option will require the commitment of significant resources and time to progress. The current Planning Scheme took many years of preparation and consideration. This would result in no practical changes to the Planning Scheme benchmarks for a significant period of time.

The Review Report includes 26 findings across several topic areas which are to inform the future amendments to the Planning Scheme. The elements below are to be considered to form part of the first Major Amendment, noting this work still needs to be refined and ultimately adopted at a separate future Council Meeting.

The First Major Amendment may include:

- Overlay Mapping updated with updated data (i.e. Flood hazard, Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy)
- Dwelling House
- Agnes Water and Seventeen Seventy
- Renewable Energy Facilities
- Relevant supporting studies (i.e. Housing needs)

Stakeholder Engagement:

Community and stakeholder engagement for the project was carried out between November 2023 to March 2024.

The first stage involved engagement with industry and business stakeholders, as well as identified public sector entities (industry stakeholders). The second stage involved engagement with the wider community (community stakeholders). The engagement process included a variety of communication and engagement activities facilitated through online, targeted and in-person platforms. Several communication tools were used to promote engagement activities including social media posts, Council's website and targeted emails. Engagement activities included:

- Interviews with identified stakeholders in late 2023.
- Drop-in sessions held at Calliope, Gladstone and Agnes Water in February 2024.
- A project briefing for industry stakeholders at GEEC in January 2024
- An online industry stakeholder survey
- A dedicated Conversations page on Council's website.
- Social media posts on Council's Facebook and LinkedIn pages.
- A community survey available from 25 January 2024 to 1 March 2024.

A total of **2,130** interactions were recorded against all engagement platforms. Full information on the stakeholder engagement and results are attached to this report.

Internal stakeholders within Council, who influence or are influenced by, and who interact with the planning scheme, were also asked to review those aspects of the planning scheme they currently work with to identify key issues which contributed to the Review Report.

Legal and Regulatory Implications:

The adoption of the Our Place Our Plan 10-Year Planning Scheme Review does not amend or change the current Planning Scheme benchmarks. However, by adopting the Review, Council is committing to progress amendments to the Scheme consistent with the recommendations identified within the Review. The Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works will be notified of Council's position and intent to commence amendments within a timely manner.

Financial and Resource Implications:

The Our Place Our Plan 10 Year Planning Scheme Review project is now complete.

Officers will now progress with the scoping of the first Major Amendment as detailed above. That piece of work is yet to be fully planned however it is estimated to take up to 18 months, with \$200,000 committed in the current financial year budget.

Anticipated Resolution Completion Date:

Should Council adopt the officer's recommendation, correspondence will be issued to the Minister advising of the adoption of the Review Report within 5 business days.

Officers anticipate the consideration of a Major Amendment will be presented to Council by late 2024.

Attachments:

1. Our Place Our Plan Gladstone Regional Council Planning Scheme – 10 Year Review Report
2. Our Place Our Plan Gladstone Regional Council Planning Scheme – 10 Year Review Report Appendices

G/4.2. DESTINATION FUND APPLICATION - COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

Responsible Officer: General Manager Community and Lifestyle

Prepared By: Community Leasing Specialist (Acting)

Council Meeting Date: 17 September 2024

File Ref: GS3.1

Purpose:

To consider the recommendation of the Community Investment Panel on applications received under the Destination Event fund.

Officer's Recommendation:

That Council:

1. Adopt the Community Investment Panel’s recommendation of funding for the applications received under the categories of funding as detailed in the table below (subject to successful annual acquittal):

Application ID	Applicant	Project	Requested Amount	Recommended Amount
DEST-MY01-24/26	Discovery Coast Tourism & Commerce	1770 Festival – Multiple Year Proposal	2024/25 - \$45,000	2024/25 - \$45,000
			2025/26 - \$44,000	2025/26 - \$44,000
			2026/27 - \$42,000	2026/27 - \$42,000
Total Funding			\$131,000	\$131,000

and

2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to finalise and execute funding agreements with the successful applicants detailing relevant entitlements and conditions.

Summary:

Council’s Community Investment Policy was amended in 2023 to allow for an Expression of Interest process to be undertaken for Impact, Destination and Signature event categories of the Community Investment Program. The change to process allows the Community Investment Panel to make recommendations based on community benefit and alignment to council objectives, not exclusively based on the application assessment score.

In 2024/25, Council invited multi-year applications for the Community Investment Program categories of Signature, Destination and Impact Events, in order to provide surety and reduce administrative burden for community organisations. Council has received one application for funding from its Community Investment Program under the Destination Event funding stream. The application has been assessed by a Panel of Council Officers in line with Council’s Community Investment Policy, with a recommendation presented for Council’s consideration.

Link to Corporate Plan:

Connecting Communities - We work with you and for you, supporting the success of our communities.
 Delivering Value - We work efficiently to deliver value for your rates.
 Resilient Economy - We play our part in supporting the success of our region.

Background:

Destination Event funding supports events well established, well designed, and clearly demonstrates return on investment through building community pride, return visitation, increase regional profile, and generate economic stimulus. Events attract over 5,000 participants, with 15% out-of-region visitor attendance. The following multi-year application has been received for consideration:

Application ID	Applicant	Project	Requested Amount
DEST-MY01-24/26	Discovery Coast Tourism & Commerce	1770 Festival – Multiple Year Proposal	2024/25 - \$45,000 2025/26 - \$44,000 2026/27 - \$42,000
Total Funding Requested			\$131,000

Risk Management Summary:

In accordance with the Community Investment Policy (P-2023-10) the eligible applications have been assessed by a Panel and each application is reviewed against a Key Selection Criteria (KSC) to determine an order of merit. Following individual panel assessments, a moderation process is followed.

The overall score (ranking) is used to inform the recommendation. The table below defines the KSC, weighting and definition of score applied in the assessment matrix:

RATING MATRIX
<p>GREEN = Score 75% and above Full Funding The application has <u>met or exceeded</u> all assessment criteria Applicants are offered 100% of funding requested</p>
<p>ORANGE = Score 65%-74% Partial Funding The application has <u>met most</u> assessment criteria Applicants are offered 85% of funding requested</p>
<p>YELLOW = Score 56%-64% Partial Funding The application <u>meets some</u> of all assessment criteria Applicants are offered 75% of funding requested</p>
<p>RED = Score 55% and below No Funding The application <u>does not meet</u> any assessment criteria Unsuccessful - no funding offered</p>

Options and Opportunity Analysis:

Individual panel member scores are captured within the Smarty Grants portal and collated in an assessment matrix. The panel recommendation is summarised within this table:

Applicant	Project	Project Location	Applicant Request	Panel Score	Recommendation
			Cash - Multiple Years		Cash - Multiple Years
Discovery Coast Tourism & Commerce	1770 Festival – Multiple Year Proposal	1770	2024/25 - \$45,000 2025/26 - \$44,000 2026/27 - \$42,000	87%	2024/25 - \$45,000 2025/26 - \$44,000 2026/27 - \$42,000
Total Funding Recommended					\$131,000

A brief overview and moderated commentary is provided below:

APPLICATION: DEST-MY01-24/26	
Organisation	Discovery Coast Tourism & Commerce Inc
Project Title	1770 Festival
Project Dates	2025, 2026 and 2027
Description	<p>The annual 1770 Festival, established in May 1992, commemorates Lt. Cook's landing and celebrates the local community. Held every May, it features Indigenous performances, live entertainment, fireworks, and a street parade. Gooreng Gooreng representatives contribute workshops and market stalls, enhancing the festival.</p> <p>Future events will continue to demonstrate the collaboration and unity that define the local community event, showcasing the diverse participants and partners that make it a celebration of the region's heritage and community spirit.</p>
Target Audience	<p>The target audience covers all markets and ages.</p> <p>As defined in the 5-year Plan for this event, the core audiences to communicate with are the locals, the wider central Qld locals and the winter domestic travelers.</p>
Total Project Cost	2024/25 - \$116,818 2025/26 - \$122,500 2026/27 - \$127,720
Total Amount Requested	2024/25 - \$45,000 2025/26 - \$44,000 2026/27 - \$42,000
Funding Used For	<p>The organisation has determined a decrease in funding over the multi-year proposal based on the strategic plan to become more self-sufficient over time.</p> <p>The funding is split between temporary equipment hire and marketing efforts.</p> <p>Equipment: Includes the rental and setup of essential items such as toilets, generators, marquees, lighting towers, chairs and tables. These items are crucial for creating a safe and comfortable festival environment for attendees.</p>

	Marketing: As part of the commitment to Tourism & Events Queensland, the festival must allocate a portion of its marketing budget to out-of-region promotion. However, Council funding allows flexibility to allocate marketing spend within the Gladstone region.
Previous Funding Received	21/22 - \$35,000 22/23 - \$30,000 23/24 - \$35,000
Panel Commentary	A strong application that demonstrated significant economic and social benefits for the region. The application provided solid historical evidence but also details new partnerships to enhance the reach and impact of the event. Efforts to collaborate are evidenced to extend length of stay.
Panel Recommendation	Application is successful for full funding. Funding will only be disbursed for 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 after successful annual acquittals have been processed.

Stakeholder Engagement:

As detailed within the Community Investment Corporate Standard, the delegated assessment panel were consulted.

Legal and Regulatory Implications:

The applications have been assessed against Council’s Community Investment Program Policy (P-2023-10).

On favourable adoption of the Panel’s recommendations detailed in this report, authorised officers will proceed to enter into a grant and/or funding agreement (detailing entitlements and conditions) with the successful applicant.

Financial and Resource Implications:

Within the 2024/2025 budget, Council allocated \$50,000 for the Destination Event fund.

Upon endorsement of the officer’s recommendation the Destination Event Fund 2024/2025 will be under budget by \$5,000. This amount may be allocated to other major event funds such as Impact or Signature events.

The recommended funding for the multi-year proposal is \$131,000. Funding will only be disbursed for 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 after successful annual acquittals have been processed and following annual budget allocation.

Anticipated Resolution Completion Date:

17 October 2024

Attachments:

1. CONFIDENTIAL – Destination Event Fund - Score Matrix - Application Overview
2. CONFIDENTIAL – Destination Event Fund - Scoring Report - Discovery Coast Tourism & Community

G/4.3. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL DELEGATIONS FOR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Responsible Officer: General Manager Finance Governance and Risk

Prepared By: Manager Governance and Risk

Council Meeting Date: 17 September 2024

File Ref: CM28.2

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to allow Council to consider an increase in the Chief Executive Officer's financial delegation.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the Chief Executive Office be granted the following financial delegation until 31 March 2025:

1. With respect to Operational Expenditure:
 - (a) \$5,000,000
2. In respect to credit card transactions:
 - (a) Transaction limit: \$5,000
 - (b) Monthly limit: \$20,000
3. With respect to Capital Expenditure:
 - (a) \$10,000,000 subject to the following conditions:
 - i. Limited to:
 - A. Contracts and orders relating to approved projects in the adopted capital budget;
 - B. Contracts and orders relating to Road Maintenance Performance Contracts; and
 - C. Contracts and orders associated with CEO declared emergencies.
 - ii. This delegation includes:
 - A. Financial responsibility to formally approve any budget for mitigating risks associated with a natural disaster and/or extraordinary emergent event that has been declared in the local government area; and
 - B. Financial responsibility to authorise variations for project contingency within the adopted project budget.

Summary:

Financial delegations for the Chief Executive Officer are set by Council.

It is prudent for the Council to regularly review the Chief Executive Officer's financial delegations to ensure that they meet Council's strategic intent and the requirements of the business. An increase in delegation from \$500,000 to \$5,000,000 for operational expenditure is proposed along with an increase in delegation from \$5,000,000 to \$10,000,000 for capital expenditure.

Under the Officer's Recommendation, the financial delegation would review back to \$500,000 and \$5,000,000 respectively on 1 April 2025 unless Council resolves otherwise.

Link to Corporate Plan:

Accountable Council - We are providing good stewardship built on a foundation of trust.
Delivering Value - We work efficiently to deliver value for your rates.

Background:

From 19 July 2022, the Chief Executive Officer's financial delegation has been as follows:

1. With respect to **Operational Expenditure:**
 - (a) **\$500,000**
2. In respect to credit card transactions:
 - (a) Transaction limit: \$5,000
 - (b) Monthly limit: \$20,000
3. With respect to **Capital Expenditure:**
 - (a) **\$5,000,000** subject to the following conditions:
 - i. Limited to:
 - A. Contracts and orders relating to approved projects in the adopted capital budget;
 - B. Contracts and orders relating to Road Maintenance Performance Contracts; and
 - C. Contracts and orders associated with CEO declared emergencies.
 - ii. This delegation includes:
 - A. Financial responsibility to formally approve any budget for mitigating risks associated with a natural disaster and/or extraordinary emergent event that has been declared in the local government area; and
 - B. Financial responsibility to authorise variations for project contingency within the adopted project budget.

In addition to financial delegations, the purchasing practices of Council are regulated by:

- The Local Government Act 2009 (LGA) and Local Government Regulation 2012 (LGR) – statutory restrictions on procurement in local governments. The LGR requires Council to use quotes and tenders and requires Council resolution for sole/specialised suppliers;
- The budget adopted by Council each financial year;
- Council's Procurement Policy - represents Council's strategic intent with respect to Council's procurement activities; and
- Council's code of conduct – establishes a standard of conduct to which employees must adhere to in the discharge of their duties.

Council also has a robust audit and assurance program including oversight by the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee.

With the continuing supply chain interruptions and escalating costs, it is essential that the business has delegations that allow the business to transact effectively, efficiently and to undertake strategic purchases.

Risk Management Summary:

Council has established a moderate appetite for both financial and service delivery risks. This means that in this area, Council takes a balanced approach to taking risk. The proposed increase to the Chief Executive Officer's delegation is consistent with Council's risk appetite.

Options and Opportunity Analysis:

There are three options available to Council:

1. Adopt the Officer's Recommendation and increase the Chief Executive Officer's financial delegation;
2. Amend the Chief Executive Officer's delegation to an amount other than the Officer's Recommendation; or
3. Resolve to make no changes to the Chief Executive Officer's financial delegation.

Option 1 – Officer's Recommendation

The Officer's Recommendation is that Council increase the Chief Executive Officer's Delegation to \$5,000,000 for operational expenditure and \$10,000,000 for capital expenditure.

The increase in the Chief Executive Officer's delegation would continue to allow officers to realise efficiencies in procurement activities. Officers can save an average of 3 to 4 weeks in the procurement process when purchases can be made without a Council resolution.

Following a review of contracts that have recently been presented to Council for decision due to the price exceeding the Chief Executive Officer's delegation, the proposed increase would have allowed the Chief Executive Office to authorise the following expenditure:

- Software systems including Redeye, Technology One
- Uniform supply contract
- Waste grinding services
- Tyres and associated services
- Recycling processing services
- Recycling transport services
- Maintenance documentation
- A range of tenders and prequalified suppliers
- Gladstone Waste Water Treatment Plant Inlet Distribution Structure Upgrade
- Construction of Concrete Bridges Miriam Vale and Lowmead
- Dawson Highway Drynan Drive Intersection Signalisation

Contracts that would have remained outside of the Chief Executives authority include:

- Waste and Recyclables Roadside Collection Service (\$3.2m per annum in 2021 over three years plus options)
- Wet & Dry Hire Services RPQS
- Mowing Contract (\$1.9million per annum in 2021 over two years plus options)

Officers would be able to refer a matter to Council for decision if prudent.

Option 2 – Amend the CEO's delegation to a lesser amount than proposed

Council may wish to consider an increase to the Chief Executive Officer's financial delegation of an amount less than the Officer's Recommendation.

It is proposed that to see any notable increase in efficiency for procurement activities, a minimum increase to \$2,000,000 for operational expenditure and \$8,000,000 for capital expenditure would be necessary.

Council might also consider placing additional restrictions on the exercise of the delegation such as the delegation not applying to tenders for Prequalified Suppliers or Preferred Suppliers.

Option 3 – No change to the Chief Executive Officer's Delegation

Council may be satisfied with the Chief Executive Officer's current level of delegation and choose not to increase the delegation. In that instance an appropriate motion would be:

"That no change be made to the Chief Executive Officer's financial delegation".

This option would not realise any additional efficiencies in the procurement process.

Stakeholder Engagement:

There has been no stakeholder engagement undertaken in the preparation of this report.

Legal and Regulatory Implications:

The financial delegations to the Chief Executive Officer set by Council and captured in the Financial Delegations Register which is maintained by the Governance and Risk Team.

Council is able to review the Chief Executive Officer's financial delegations at any point in time should Council not be satisfied with the exercise of the delegation.

Council's Procurement Policy is presented to Council for review on an annual basis (as required by legislation) and Council has robust procedures and protocols that meet the requirements of the LGA and the LGR and compliment Council's Procurement Policy.

The ability for officers to undertake tender evaluations and awards outside of General Meetings, which are open to the public, also enhances probity and confidentiality throughout the tender process.

Financial and Resource Implications:

An increase in financial delegation for the Chief Executive Officer also allows the business greater flexibility to achieve strategic outcomes which may result in financial savings for Council. Less tender award reports will need to be prepared for presentation to Council realising efficiencies within the tender process for those tenders that are currently being presented to Council. This will have flow on effects for both the delivery of essential services and the management of capital projects and allow for more expedient delivery.

Anticipated Resolution Completion Date:

The implementation of the Chief Executive Officer's delegation will take effect immediately upon the passing of a resolution.

Attachments:

Nil

G/4.4. MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31 AUGUST 2024

Responsible Officer: General Manager Finance Governance and Risk

Prepared By: Management Accounting Specialist

Council Meeting Date: 17 September 2024

File Ref: FM15.1

Purpose:

This report seeks Council adoption of the Monthly Financial Statements for the year 2024-25 to date, for the period ended 31 August 2024

Officer's Recommendation:

That Council adopt the Monthly Financial Statements attached to the officer's report for the 2024-25 year to date, for the period ended 31 August 2024 as required under Section 204 Local Government Regulation 2012.

Summary:

N/A

Link to Corporate Plan:

Accountable Council - We are providing good stewardship built on a foundation of trust.

Background:

The 2024-25 budget was adopted on 16 July 2024, with a projected operating surplus of \$3.0m.

Comparatives in both the Statement of Income & Expenditure and Statement of Financial Position are reflecting 30 June 2023. These figures will be updated to reflect 30 June 2024 upon completion of the end of year audit and sign-off of the annual Financial Statements in October 2024.

To allow for greater transparency and scrutiny of Councils operating position throughout the year, annual rating revenue and service charges have been applied across the year rather than in the period of the rates generation.

The percentage of year passed (pro-rata rate) as at 31 August 2024 is 16.99%

Major movements and variances from budget are as follows:

Statement of Income and Expenditure**Income**Recurrent Revenue

Total recurrent revenue	2024-25	Actual as %
Actual	\$47.8m	
Budget	\$246.1m	19.43%
Forecast	\$246.1m	19.43%

Of note:

Net rates and utility charges	2024-25	Actual as %
Actual	\$32.4m	
Budget	\$194.5m	16.66%
Forecast	\$194.5m	16.66%

Council's primary source of recurrent revenue is the generation of annual rates, along with access charges for water, sewerage and waste. This generation was completed in July, with notices issued to ratepayers in August. These charges have been split across the course of the year, to align with the delivery of these services.

To date discounts of \$1.6m have been granted in 2024-25 for payments received by the due date.

Total interest revenue	2024-25	Actual as %
Actual	\$1.3m	
Budget	\$6.8m	18.99%
Forecast	\$6.8m	18.99%

Interest revenue at a rate of 5.19% has been received from Queensland Treasury Corporation for the month of August and current term deposit rates are yielding up to a 4.95% return to Council.

Sales revenue	2024-25	Actual as %
Actual	\$0.8m	
Budget	\$3.8m	21.95%
Forecast	\$3.8m	21.95%

To date \$0.7m has been claimed for Road Maintenance Performance Contract (RMPC) recoverable works compared to the budgeted amount of \$2.7m. Revenue will be offset by the associated operating expenditure relating to recoverable work activities.

GLADSTONE REGIONAL COUNCIL GENERAL MEETING AGENDA - 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

General purpose grant	2024-25	Actual as %
Actual	\$8.7m	
Budget	\$10.3m	84.60 %
Forecast	\$10.3m	84.60%

Council received a payment of \$8.3 million from the Department of Local Government on 2 July 2024 for the 2024-25 Financial Assistance Grant. This amount represents circa 85% of the 2024-25 allocation. An additional first quarterly payment of \$0.4m was received in August 2024.

Capital Revenue

Capital revenue	2024-25	Actual as %
Actual	\$4.2m	
Budget	\$50.1m	8.28%
Forecast	\$50.1m	8.28%

Capital revenue includes capital grants funding and developer contributions.

Capital grants revenue is recognised as project milestones are met. Therefore, the revenue recognised on the Statement of Income and Expenditure does not necessarily reflect the funding received during the year. Where milestones are still to be achieved, revenue is recognised as a contract liability on the Statement of Financial Position.

Capital grants revenue budgeted, forecast and recognised for significant projects is detailed below along with the corresponding expenses for these funded projects.

Project	Revenue Budget	Revenue YTD Actual	Expense YTD Actual
State Government Grants & Subsidies			
TBG - Bonsai House Utility Services	\$1.3m	\$0.2m	\$0.4m
Captain Cook Drive, Agnes Water - Relocate sewer main	\$0.5m	\$0.0m	\$0.0m
Stage 2 - GWWTP Inlet Distribution Structure Replacement	\$7.4m	\$0.0m	\$0.0m
REPA Projects (see REPA breakdown) Joint Federal/ State funded	\$21.7m	\$2.6m	\$2.6m
Other State Government Funding	\$1.3m	\$0.5m	\$0.9m
TOTAL State Government Funding	\$32.3m	\$3.3m	\$3.9m

GLADSTONE REGIONAL COUNCIL GENERAL MEETING AGENDA - 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

Project	Revenue Budget	Revenue YTD Actual	Expense YTD Actual
Federal Government Grants & Subsidies			
Glenlyon/Tank - traffic calming scheme	\$1.3m	\$0.0m	\$0.0m
Lowmead Road Safety and Sealing Upgrade	\$10.0m	\$0.8m	\$1.0m
Gravel Road Resheeting	\$2.5m	\$0.0m	\$0.0m
Agnes Water Skate Park	\$1.0m	\$0.0m	\$0.0m
Turtleway - Pedestrian bridge replacements	\$1.6m	\$0.0m	\$0.0m
Round Hill 2 Reservoir	\$0.6m	\$0.0m	\$0.0m
Other Federal Government Funding	\$0.7m	\$0.0m	\$0.0m
TOTAL Federal Government Funding	\$17.7m	\$0.8m	\$1.0m
TOTAL State and Federal Funding	\$50.0m	\$4.1m	\$5.0m

Expenditure

Recurrent expenditure

Total recurrent expenditure	2024-25	Actual as %
Actual	\$36.6m	
Budget	\$243.1m	15.04%
Forecast	\$243.1m	15.04%

Of note:

Employee benefits	2024-25	Actual as %
Actual	\$12.4m	
Budget	\$77.5m	16.05%
Forecast	\$77.5m	16.05%

Employee benefits are the largest component of Councils recurrent expenditure. A vacancy rate of 7.5% has been factored into the 2024-25 budget. The average YTD vacancy rate is 7.5%.

Consultants	2024-25	Actual as %
Actual	\$0.4m	
Budget	\$6.2m	6.54%
Forecast	\$6.2m	6.54%

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Consultant spend has been minimal year to date. Significant consultant budgets include:

- Asset management - \$1.4m, spend \$0.2m
- Strategic Information and Technology - \$0.6m, spend \$0.0m
- Transformation - \$1.6m, spend \$0.0m
- Environment - \$0.4m, spend \$0.0m
- Finance - \$0.4, spend \$0.0m

Contractors	2024-25	Actual as %
Actual	\$3.1m	
Budget	\$26.6m	11.65%
Forecast	\$26.6m	11.65%

Activities with significant contractor forecasts include:

- Water & Sewerage - \$7.7m, spend \$0.7m
- Waste - \$7.0m, spend \$0.7m
- Parks & Cemeteries - \$3.3m, spend \$0.4m
- Roads, Bridges, Stormwater - \$2.3m, spend \$0.3m
- Recoverable Works - \$1.0m, spend \$0.3m
- Entertainment and Events - \$1.6m, spend \$0.1m
- Corporate and Community Buildings maintenance - \$0.5m, spend \$0.6m

Donations and Sponsorships	2024-25	Actual as %
Actual	\$0.9m	
Budget	\$3.3m	21.16%
Forecast	\$3.3m	21.16%

Traditionally donations and sponsorships are high in the first quarter of the year due to the timing of sporting body concessions for water and sewerage access charges, with discounts of \$0.6m being granted to date.

Other Community Investments program donations total \$0.2m year to date.

Finance Costs	2024-25	Actual as %
Actual	\$0.4m	
Budget	\$1.1m	29.92%
Forecast	\$1.1m	29.92%

The Gladstone Airport Corporation makes quarterly contributions to cover the interest on the runway loan held by Council. These payments are received at the end of each quarter and will reduce the actual cost to be in line with pro-rata.

Statement of Financial Position

	Current Value	Budget	Variance (Actual to Budget)	Forecast	Variance (Actual to Forecast)
Year-to-date Assets	\$3.1b	\$2.9b	5.09%	\$2.9b	5.09%
Year-to-date Liabilities	\$345.0m	\$179.7m	92.00%	\$179.7m	92.00%
Year-to-date Liabilities (excl. unearned rates revenue)	\$186.3m	\$179.7m	3.69%	\$179.9m	3.69%

Liabilities have been presented both including and excluding unearned rates revenue. The two will converge and be the same by June 2025, as all rates revenue is recognised on the profit and loss.

The budget for assets and liabilities reflects the expected positions at 30 June 2025.

Significant balance sheet movement is still expected to occur throughout the year:

- Cash to decrease as expenses are incurred and loan repayments are made.
- Receivables to decrease as rates are paid.
- Property, plant and equipment balances to move based on in year capital additions and disposals.
- Unearned rates revenue to decrease as recognised on the profit and loss each month.
- Borrowings to decrease as loan repayments are made.

Capital Expenditure

Regular forecasting is undertaken by the project delivery team. The current estimate of capital expenditure for the 2024-25 year is \$101.0m.

Past trends indicate that this estimate will reduce throughout the year as timelines are refined for projects planned at the end of the financial year.

An updated forecast will be provided throughout the tables and graphs below when the Q1 forecast is endorsed in circa November.

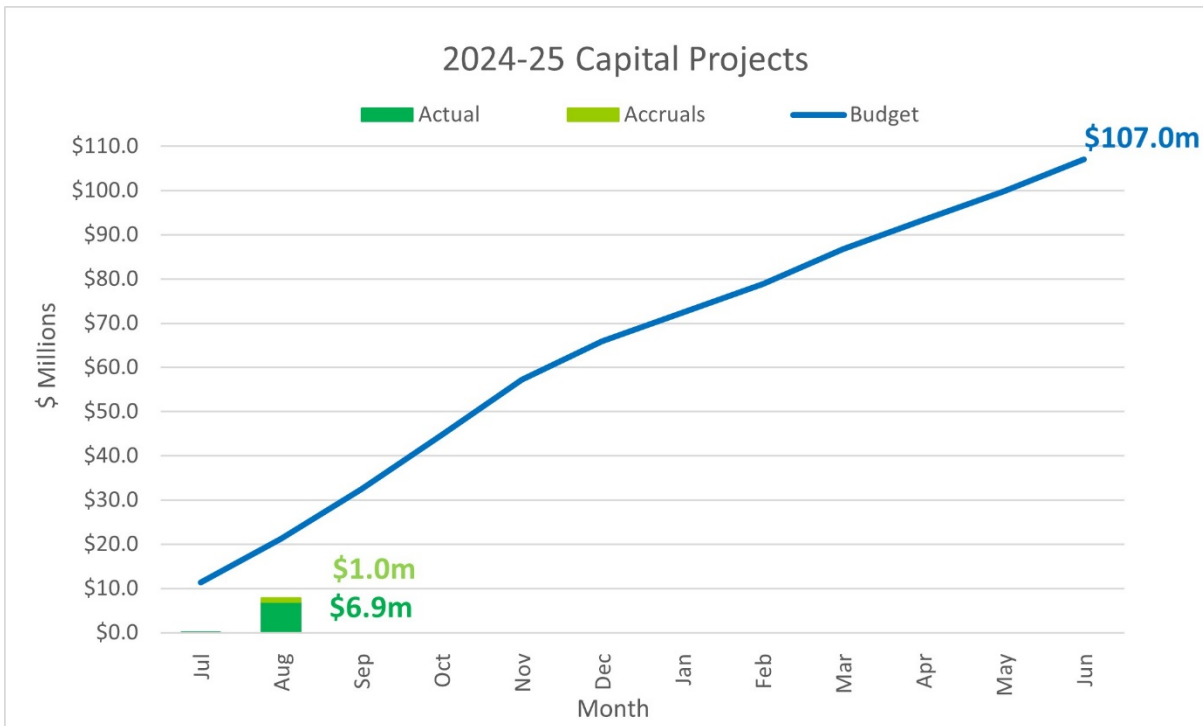
	Actual	Budget	Actual as % of Budget	Forecast	Actual as % of Forecast
Year to date capital expenditure	\$7.9m	\$107.0m	7.34%	\$107.0m	7.34%

GLADSTONE REGIONAL COUNCIL GENERAL MEETING AGENDA - 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

Capital expenditure against groups with significant capital expenditure budgets are shown in the table below:

Group	YTD Actual	Budget	Actual as % of Budget	Forecast	Actual as % of Forecast
Roads	\$2.0m	\$29.9m	7%	\$29.9m	7%
Roads REPA	\$2.6m	\$21.7m	12%	\$21.7m	12%
Sewerage	\$1.7m	\$25.9m	7%	\$25.9m	7%
Delivery Support and Performance	\$0.2m	\$6.1m	3%	\$6.1m	3%
Property Assets	\$0.4m	\$1.3m	30%	\$1.3m	30%
Asset Governance	\$0.0m	\$3.3m	0%	\$3.3m	-
Waste	\$0.3m	\$3.8m	7%	\$3.8m	7%
Parks	\$0.2m	\$3.3m	5%	\$3.3m	5%
Community & Lifestyle	\$0.0m	\$0.8m	0%	\$0.8m	0%
Water	\$0.3m	\$7.5m	4%	\$7.5m	4%
Strategic Projects	\$0.0m	\$2.1m	1%	\$2.1m	1%
Other	\$0.2m	\$1.3m	13%	\$1.3m	13%
Total	\$7.9m	\$107.0m	7.34%	\$107.0m	7.34%

Accrual estimates of \$1.0m have been included in the actuals, to account for major claims relating to August work.



Reconstruction of Essential Public Assets (REPA)

REPA projects in progress are detailed below (capital and operating):

Submission	Approved Funding amount	YTD Expenditure	YTD Claims Received	YTD work yet to be claimed	Percent complete
South	\$6.2.m	\$1.4m	\$1.4m	\$0.0m	21.92%
Central	\$0.2m	\$0.0m	\$0.0m	\$0.0m	9.49%
Western	\$8.9m	\$0.7m	\$0.7m	\$0.0m	7.49%
Sealed Roads	\$1.5m	\$0.0m	\$0.0m	\$0.0m	1.51%
Granite Creek	\$4.9m	\$0.5m	\$0.5m	\$0.0m	10.12%
REPA Admin	-	\$0.0m	-	\$0.0m	-
TOTAL	\$21.7m	\$2.6m	\$2.6m	\$0.0m	

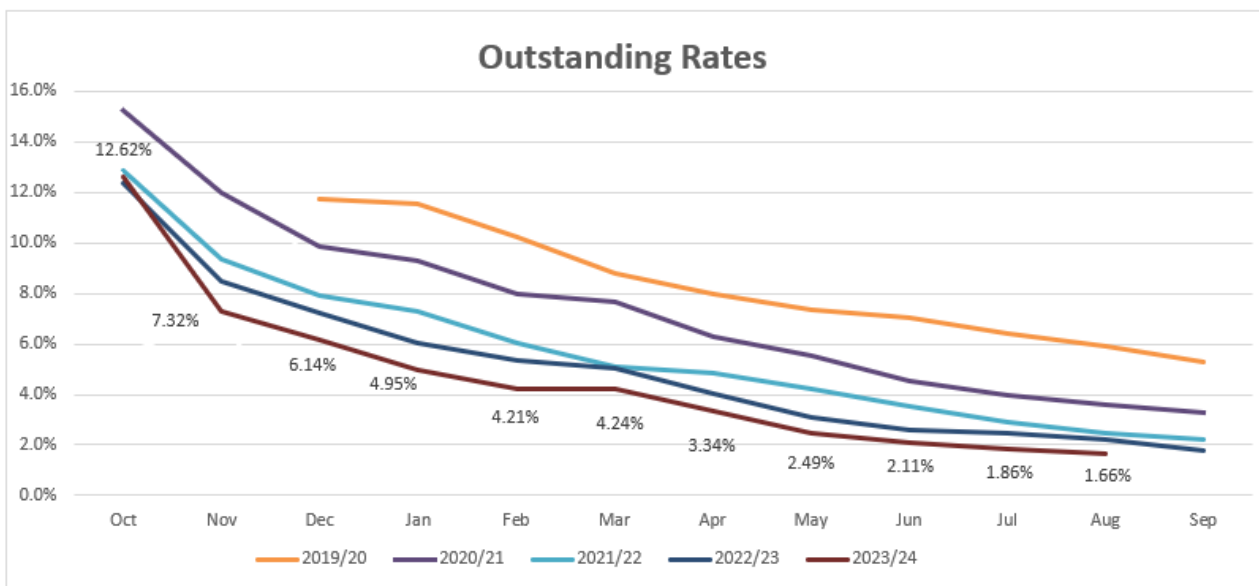
Outstanding Rates

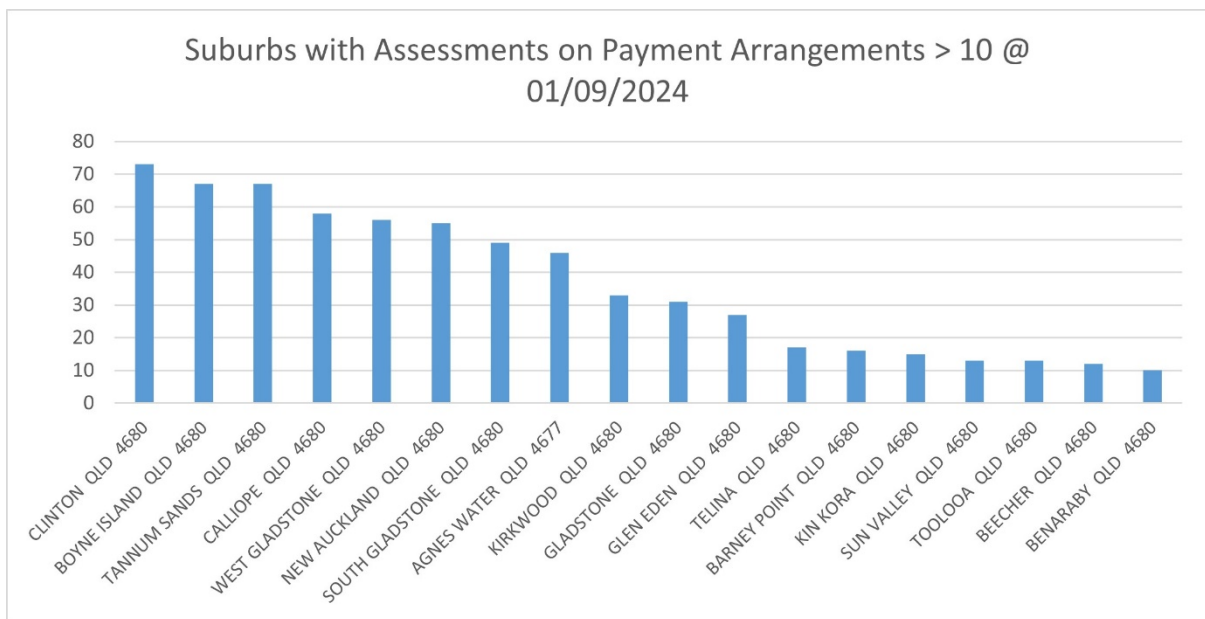
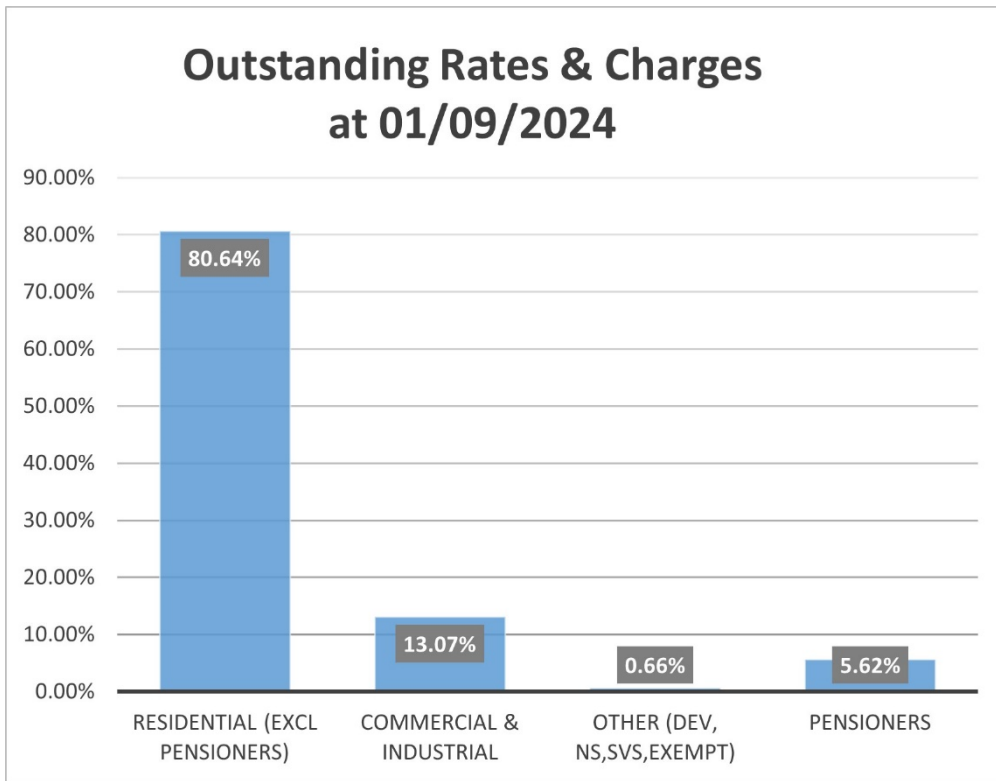
Outstanding rates, as a percentage of gross rates levied 2023-24, and collectible, is at 1.66% at the end of August 2024, compared to 2.21% for the same period last year 2022-23. Rates are levied in July for the 24-25 financial year but are not due until 16 October 2024.

Of the \$3.5m of outstanding rates 13.07% relates to commercial/ industrial assessments and 86.93% represents residential assessments.

These figures include \$2.52m of rates that are currently being repaid under an authorised payment plan, for which there were 19 commercial/industrial assessments and 677 residential assessments. A total of 696 assessments, which is an increase from 73 assessments in July 2024 (this movement is a result of new arrangements entered into since 2024-25 rates notices were issued).

There were 1166 ratepayers who had paid their rates in advance, totalling \$1.5m.





Suburb's Residential >3% Outstanding	Amt Outstanding	% Outstanding	Count o/s balance >\$50
CLINTON	\$327,875.64	9.38%	230
NEW AUCKLAND	\$231,845.77	6.63%	204
WEST GLADSTONE	\$231,423.38	6.62%	210
TANNUM SANDS	\$224,162.51	6.41%	158
CALLIOPE	\$205,901.66	5.89%	158
GLEN EDEN	\$189,641.72	5.43%	141
SOUTH GLADSTONE	\$188,311.50	5.39%	158
BOYNE ISLAND	\$179,476.08	5.13%	158
AGNES WATER	\$154,353.99	4.42%	128
KIN KORA	\$109,147.45	3.12%	109

Sustainability Ratios

Financial ratios provide a useful snapshot of Council's financial status and emerging trends. Individual ratios do not provide enough information to form a comprehensive opinion of Council's financial position and performance, but when the right mix of ratios are considered together, they become a valuable tool in analysing Council's overall financial performance.

In recognition of the diversity of local governments throughout Queensland a new Financial Management (Sustainability) Guideline 2024 has been released.

Eight of the nine new ratio measures will be reported in 2024-25, with the ninth measure to be introduced in the 2025-26 annual statutory financial reporting period.

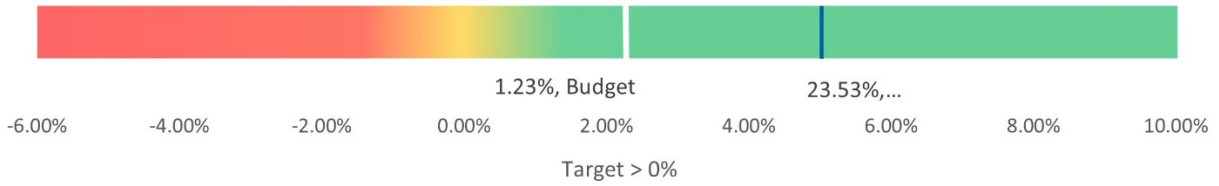
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Ratio Explanation	Target	2024 -25 Budget	Current YTD		5 Year Average		Commentary
Financial Capacity							
<p>Council Controlled Revenue Ratio: Council controlled revenue is an indicator of councils financial flexibility, ability to influence its operating income, and capacity to respond to unexpected financial shocks.</p> <p>A higher council-controlled ratio indicates a stronger ability to generate revenue without relying on external sources. Councils with a high ratio generally have a healthy rate base and are better able to respond to unexpected financial obligations such as natural disaster recovery. A lower council-controlled revenue ration indicates that a council has limited capacity to influence its operating revenue and that it is more reliant on external (and usually less reliable) sources of income such as grant finding, sales and recoverable works contracts and rental income.</p> <p>This ratio is contextual only therefore has no target measure</p>		86.62%	75.52%		82.46%		Although there is no target for this ratio, the high 5 year average and current YTD indicates Council's strong position to generate revenue without heavy reliance on other external sources.
<p>Population Growth Ratio: Population growth is an annual measure and is a key driver of councils operating income, service needs and infrastructure requirements into the future.</p> <p>A growing council indicates a greater capacity to source its own revenue through rates and statutory charges. Population growth also puts additional pressure on councils to invest in new community infrastructure to support service needs</p> <p>This ratio is contextual only therefore has no target measure Ratio is measured annually</p>		2.35%	2.35%		1.98%		<p>The population growth ratio for Gladstone will significantly impact the council's financial sustainability, especially as the region faces periods of both rapid growth and stagnation. During growth phases, increased demand for infrastructure and services will provide opportunities for revenue growth and possibly also strain the council's financial resources, requiring careful management to avoid overextension. Conversely, in periods of slower growth or population decline, maintaining existing infrastructure and service levels can become a financial burden without corresponding increases in revenue.</p> <p>Emphasis on the population growth ratio is on a rolling 5-year average thus will help the council smooth out the financial impacts of any fluctuations, providing a clearer picture of long-term sustainability.</p> <p>Overall, for Gladstone, maintaining financial sustainability amidst its unique population growth patterns will require a balanced approach, integrating both proactive infrastructure investment and cautious financial management.</p>
Operating Performance							
<p>Operating Surplus Ratio: The operating surplus ratio is an indicator of the extent to which operating revenues generated cover operational expenses. Any operating surplus would be available for capital funding or other purposes.</p> <p>An operating surplus ratio below 0% is an indication that a councils operating expenses exceed its revenue. An operation deficit in any one year is not a cause for concern if, over the long term, a council achieves a balanced operating result or small surplus.</p> <p>Target measured over a five-year average</p>	> 0%	1.23%	23.53%	●	-0.38%	●	<p>The negative 5 year average is primarily due to the QTC loan restructure and recognition of a deferred liability for bulk water purchases in 2020-21.</p> <p>The YTD ratio result is showing a positive operating surplus above budget for 2024-25 due to the payment of the Financial Assistant Grant in July 2024.</p>
<p>Operating Cash Ratio: The operating cash ratio is a measure of a councils ability to cover its core operational expenses and generate a cash surplus excluding depreciation, amortisation and finance costs.</p> <p>A positive operating surplus indicates that a council is generating surplus cash from its core operations, which suggests that council has the ability to self-fund expenditure requirements. A negative operating cash ratio is a significant indicator of financial sustainability challenges and potential future liquidity issues as , all other things being equal, a negative result means that a councils cash position is declining and revenue are not offsetting the cost of core operational requirements</p> <p>Target measured over a five-year average</p>	> 0%	25.15%	42.76%	●	26.87%	●	Both the YTD and 5 year average result of this ratio reflects the continuing strong cash position of Council proportional to operating costs.

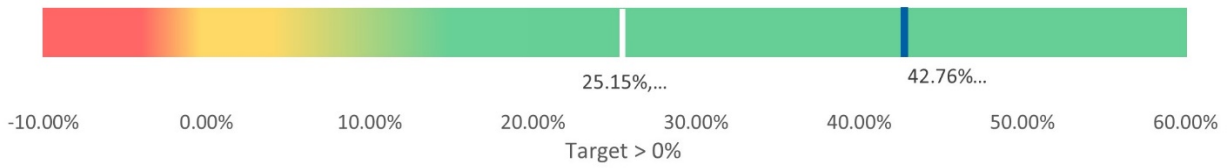
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Liquidity							
<p>Unrestricted Cash Expense Cover Ratio: The unrestricted cash expense cover ratio is an indicator of the unconstrained liquidity available to a council to meet ongoing and emergent financial demands, which is a key component to solvency. It represents the number of months a council can continue operating based on current monthly expenses</p> <p>A higher unrestricted cash expense cover ratio indicates that a council has sufficient free cash available to contribute to the cost of future planned and unplanned expenditure such as infrastructure investment or disaster recovery. An excessively high ratio may be indicative of hoarding, poor cash management or large upcoming capital investment requirements.</p> <p>A low ratio suggests limited unconstrained liquidity available to council to use for capital investment or in an emergency. For councils with efficient cash management practices or strong borrowing capacity this is not a concern. Where council also has a negative operating cash ratio a very low or negative unrestricted cash expense cover ratio is an indicator of potential solvency concerns.</p> <p>Target measured over a single-year</p>	> 3 mths	5.31	9.42	●	NA	NA	<p>The high budget and YTD result of this ratio shows council is in a strong cash position to cover planned and unplanned expenditure into the future.</p> <p>The payment of the Financial Assistant Grant in July 2024 has resulted in the higher YTD ratio. The results are expected to trend closer to the budget as the year progresses, and expenses are realised.</p>
Asset Management							
<p>Asset Sustainability Ratio: The asset sustainability ratio approximates the extent to which the infrastructure assets managed by council are being replaced as they reach the end of their useful lives</p> <p>An asset sustainability ratio close to 100% suggests that a council is spending enough on the renewal of its assets to compensate for the deterioration in its asset base as loosely proxied by its reported depreciation, with outcomes too far below this level being potentially indicative of underspending against capital replacement requirements</p> <p>Target measured over a five-year average</p>	> 80%	108.42%	46.81%	●	71.75%	●	<p>Infrastructure renewals have accounted for 53.90% of capital expenditure YTD with the balance on new and upgrade projects.</p> <p>It is typical for capital spending to be lower in the first quarter of the year. As capital spending progresses the ratio is expected to trend closer to budget.</p> <p>Councils capital program has increased in 2024-25, as indicated by the budgeted ratio result.</p>
<p>Asset Consumption Ratio: The asset consumption ratio approximates the extent to which councils infrastructure assets have been consumed compared to what it would cost to build a new asset with the same benefit to the community.</p> <p>The minimum target of 60% indicates that a councils assets are being broadly consumed in line with their estimated useful lives.</p> <p>Councils with lower than target ratio will need to invest more in those assets (in terms of replacement or maintenance) to ensure they are maintained at a standard that will meet the needs of the community. On the other hand if the ratio is much higher than the target ratio, councils may need to revisit their asset management plans to assess their current service levels or whether their estimates of the assets' useful lives are appropriate</p> <p>Target measured over a five-year average</p>	> 60%	69.41%	68.69%	●	67.78%	●	<p>Both the YTD and Budgeted ratio results indicates that Councils assets are being broadly consumed in line with their estimated useful lives.</p> <p>This is a new ratio in 24-25, with the 5 year average still to be calculated</p>
Debt Servicing Capacity							
<p>Leverage Ratio: The leverage ratio is an indicator of a councils ability to repay its existing debt. It measures the relative size of the councils debt to its operating performance.</p> <p>A higher leverage ratio indicates an increasingly limited capacity to support additional borrowings due to already high debt levels and/or decreasing operational performance, while a lower ratio indicates the opposite.</p> <p>Target measured over a five-year average</p>	0-3 times	0.78	0.69	●	0.29	●	<p>Both the YTD and 5 year average result of this ratio reflect Councils ongoing ability to manage its debt.</p> <p>This position is reinforced with each year that no new borrowings are undertaken.</p>

Operating Surplus Ratio



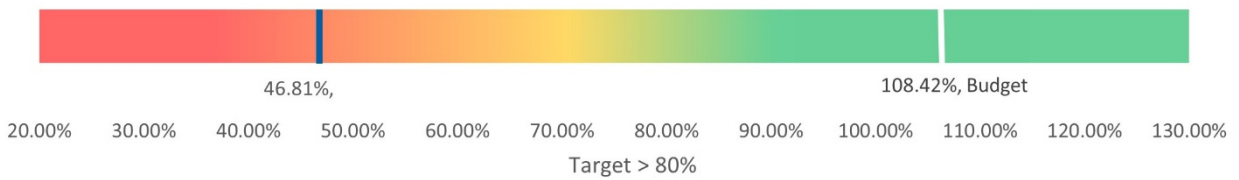
Operating Cash Ratio



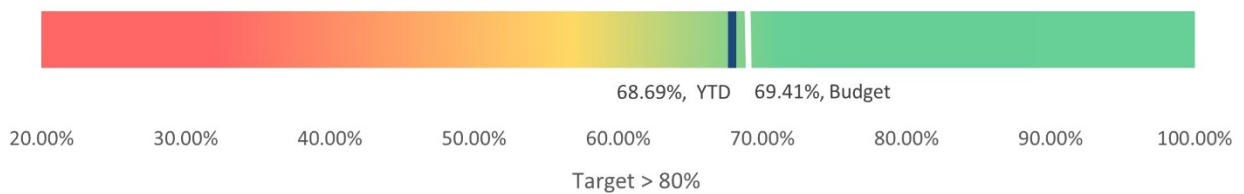
Unrestricted Cash Expense Cover Ratio



Asset Sustainability Ratio



Asset Consumption Ratio



Leverage Ratio



Stakeholder Engagement:

This report seeks specialist input from relevant internal sources.

Legal and Regulatory Implications:

Council is required to receive an update at least monthly relative to its financial position, Section 204 Local Government Regulation 2012.

Anticipated Resolution Completion Date:

N/A

Attachments:

1. Monthly Financial Statements for the period ending 31 August 2024
2. Operating Statements for the month end 31 August 2024

G/4.5. REGIONAL MEETING - MOUNT LARCOM TUESDAY 1 OCTOBER 2024

Responsible Officer: General Manager Finance Governance and Risk

Prepared By: Manager Governance and Risk

Council Meeting Date: 17 September 2024

File Ref: CM7.2

Purpose:

To consider a regional meeting location for the General Meeting scheduled for Tuesday 1 October 2024.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the General Meeting scheduled for Tuesday 1 October 2024 be held at the Mount Larcom Community Hall commencing at 10am.

Summary:

The schedule for Council's General Meetings are set each year with Council adopting the 2024 Council General Meeting schedule at the Post Election Meeting on Tuesday 2 April 2024 (*Resolution PE/24/5175*). General Meetings of Council are held in Council's Gladstone Administration Centre, Council Chambers, 101 Goondoon Street, Gladstone. Council may consider moving a General Meeting to regional location which is required to be determined by resolution of Council.

Link to Corporate Plan:

Connecting Communities - We work with you and for you, supporting the success of our communities.

Background:

Section 257(3) of the *Local Government Regulation* (LGR) states that all meetings of a local government are to be held (a) at one of the local government's public offices; or (b) for a particular meeting – at another place fixed by the local government, by resolution, for the meeting.

Council is scheduled to hold a Community Forum at the Mount Larcom Hall, 47 Raglan Street, Mount Larcom on Tuesday 1 October 2024 providing an opportunity to hold the General Meeting scheduled for Tuesday 1 October 2024 at the same venue. It would be anticipated that the Community Forum would commence following the conclusion of the General Meeting.

It should be noted that live streaming of the General Meeting will not be available should the meeting be held outside of the Council Chambers. The meeting will be recorded, with the video recording to be uploaded for viewing as soon as practicable following the conclusion of the meeting.

Risk Management Summary:

There is no risk for Council in holding a General Meeting at a Regional location.

Options and Opportunity Analysis:

Option 1 – Hold a regional meeting at Mount Larcom on Tuesday 1 October 2024 commencing at 10am (Officer’s Recommendation).

It is recommended to hold a regional meeting at Mount Larcom on Tuesday 1 October 2024 with the meeting to commence at 10am to allow for the additional travel time required to the meeting venue.

Option 2 – Not hold a regional meeting.

There is no obligation to hold a meeting outside of the regular meeting place at 101 Goondoon Street, Gladstone.

Stakeholder Engagement:

Consultation has been undertaken with the relevant internal stakeholders.

Legal and Regulatory Implications:

Under Section 257(3) of the LGR, meetings of a local government are to be held (a) at one of the local government’s public offices; or (b) for a particular meeting – at another place fixed by the local government, by resolution, for the meeting.

Under Section 254B(4) of the LGR a local government must, as soon as practicable, notify any change to the days and times in the same way as the days and times were previously notified. As such, the public notice displayed on the noticeboard at 101 Goondoon Street and the 2024 Council Meetings on Council’s website will be required to be updated to reflect the change of location.

Financial and Resource Implications:

It is anticipated that there are no additional financial or resource implications should the General Meeting be moved to the Mount Larcom Community Hall.

Anticipated Resolution Completion Date:

Meeting notifications will be updated by Friday 20 September 2024.

Attachments:

Nil.

G/5. COUNCILLORS REPORT

G/5.1. AN EVENING IN THE JAPANESE TEA GARDEN - CELEBRATING 28 YEARS OF SISTER CITY FRIENDSHIP WITH SAIKI CITY

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer

Prepared By: Cr Leanne Patrick and Cr Simon McClintock

Council Meeting Date: 17 September 2024

File Ref: CM17.5

Purpose:

Councillor Leanne Patrick and Councillor Simon McClintock submit the following report 'An Evening in the Japanese Tea Garden – Celebrating 28 Years of Sister City Friendship with Saiki City'.

Councillor's Recommendation:

That the report from Cr Patrick and Cr McClintock be received.

Background:

On a memorable evening, our community gathered at the Japanese Tea Garden in the Tondoon Botanic Gardens to celebrate 28 years of sister city friendship with Saiki City, Japan. The event, which commenced at 4:00 PM, brought together community members and invited guests for a rich experience of Japanese culture and friendship.

Cultural Experiences

Guests were treated to an array of activities designed to immerse them in Japanese traditions, including:

- Calligraphy
- Origami
- Fan Art
- Kimono Experience
- Bonsai Display
- Saiki Committee Display
- Traditional Tea Tasting

The atmosphere was alive with the energy of these cultural experiences, each highlighting the deep bond between our two cities.

Evening Program

As the sun began to set, we moved to the lawn behind the Japanese Tea Garden for a series of special guest speeches and captivating performances. Among the key moments were:

1. **Consul-General's Address:** The Consul-General of Japan in Brisbane, Mr. Gomakubo, shared a heartfelt speech emphasizing the importance of our cultural ties and expressing his eagerness for future collaborations between our communities.
2. **Wendy Marsh's Speech:** Wendy Marsh gave a moving reflection on the shared history and the vibrant relationship that has blossomed between our cities over the past 28 years.

The entertainment truly showcased Japanese tradition, featuring a serene Koto performance by David Shield and a dynamic Taiko drum performance by Toko-ton Taiko, which encouraged audience participation. Despite a brief shower, the rain enhanced the atmosphere, bringing a unique charm to the event.

Community Engagement and Cultural Exchange

In the weeks leading up to this celebration, the Taiko drummers engaged with our community through three special learning sessions, teaching participants the art of Taiko drumming. This hands-on exchange helped deepen cultural appreciation and foster a shared sense of joy. David Shield also performed at Toolooa and Tannum Sands State High Schools, providing students with a unique introduction to traditional Japanese music.

Looking Ahead: Bonsai House Opening

Excitement is growing for the upcoming opening of the Bonsai House, a project that has captured the interest of the community and the Japanese Consul-General, who expressed his intention to attend. This new addition promises to further strengthen our connection with Saiki City while adding another layer of beauty to the Tondoon Botanic Gardens.

Special Acknowledgements

This evening would not have been possible without the dedicated work of the Saiki City Volunteer Committee and various contributors. I'd like to extend special thanks to:

- **Rebecca Creedy, Jaclyn Iwasaka, and Kylie Lee** from the Community and Lifestyle Team.
- **Barry Meiring and his team** from the Tondoon Botanic Gardens, whose meticulous efforts made the space truly extraordinary. From the flowing fountains and clean ponds to the new feature by the entrance, their attention to detail created an enchanting atmosphere that many may have overlooked but which made a profound difference in the event's success.

Invitation to the Public

We invite the community to visit the Japanese Tea Garden and take in the space's tranquil beauty. The gardens are in prime condition—fountains are flowing, the ponds are pristine, and the new entrance feature adds a welcoming touch. It's the perfect time to enjoy this stunning location, whether for quiet reflection or cultural appreciation.

This evening was a testament to the power of cross-cultural friendship and the vibrant spirit of our community. We look forward to many more events that continue to build on this strong foundation.

Attachments:

Nil

G/6. URGENT BUSINESS

G/7. NOTICE OF MOTION

G/8. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS