

Glenorchy City Council approves 2021/22 budget with an eye on safety, sustainability, and growth

Glenorchy City Council voted unanimously to adopt its proposed 2021/22 budget, with a strong focus on safety, sustainability, and growth, at last night's Special Council Meeting.

Due to the ongoing economic impacts of COVID-19, the budget forecasts a deficit of \$1.3 million for the next financial year.

In the upcoming budget, Council proposes to increase its rates by 2.5%.

In its 2020/21 budget, Council provided \$1.9 million in relief to ratepayers through the COVID-19 Rates Relief Rebate.

This ensured residents did not pay any increase in rates, fees and charges on their 2020 rates bill, by rebating the 2.5% rates increase and other fee increases.

Now that the initial uncertainty around the COVID-19 pandemic has eased, this year's rate increase will be in addition to last year's 2.5% increase, which was rebated as part of the Community Assistance Package.

There will also be increases in Council's waste collection fees of between \$12.00 and \$17.00 for most households (depending on the waste services being provided), to cover the increasing cost of waste management and also absorb the Tasmanian Government's proposed \$20 per tonne waste levy.

As with rates, this year's waste charge increases will be in addition to last year's increases, which were rebated as part of the COVID-19 assistance measures.

Acting Mayor, Bec Thomas, said the budget was developed to ensure our community can continue its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and set the city up to thrive in the long-term.

"In developing the proposed 2021/22 budget, our focus has been on safety, sustainability, and growth," Acting Mayor Thomas said.

"This proposed budget is about improving Council's financial stability, identifying savings measures and investing in economic growth initiatives to capitalise on the unprecedented levels of development and investment in our city," she said.

"The COVID-19 Community Assistance Package we passed last year did not come without cost. Despite the steps we took to limit the fallout from COVID, and signs of growth in our economy, it will still take ongoing discipline and careful financial management to get our operating budget back in the black.

“We have meticulously worked through our finances, to ensure we continue to support our community, and can deliver on our promise to limit this year’s rates increase to 2.5%.”

With \$1.9 billion in development currently proposed for Glenorchy over the coming years, and unprecedented levels of development and investment in the city, a record \$25m capital works program is proposed for 2021-22.

The capital works program includes a range of projects to maintain and upgrade Glenorchy’s important infrastructure to cope with increased demands now and into the future, while continuing to stimulate the economy to promote growth.

It also increases Council’s investment in flood mitigation and bushfire safety measures.

Key projects and programs include:

- \$8.4m for a range of road and transport projects, including patching and reconstruction, \$3m for road resurfacing and \$2.2m on improving the condition of our footpaths with a focus on fixing trip hazards throughout the city.
- \$4.7m for new sport and recreation facilities funded by Australian Government grants, including:
 - new destination playgrounds at the Montrose Foreshore and Giblins Reserve
 - upgraded soccer facilities at KGV
 - a new amenities building at the Eady Street Cricket Ground.
- \$3.5m to constructing a new cell at the Jackson Street landfill to extend its life by up to ten years.
- \$1.5m for a range of projects under Council’s Economic Recovery Program including:
 - \$135,000 to begin the implementing the Greater Glenorchy Plan, including activities to stimulate growth in the three CBD precincts in the city.
 - \$460,000 to fund the relocation of the Southern City BMX track from the Berriedale Peninsula to Tolosa Park.
 - \$200,000 to fund capital works to support the implementation of the Marine and Innovation Master Plan for Prince of Wales Bay.
- \$1.3m on flood mitigation projects and extending Council’s stormwater network to unserved areas.

- \$350,000 for the upgrade of public toilets at Giblyns Reserve.
- \$280,000 to upgrade the footpath linking the Intercity Cycleway through to MONA.
- \$150,000 to improve tracks and trails in our reserves, including upgrading Lutana Woodlands' paths and the fire and mountain bike trail network in Wellington Park.

Council voted on its proposed 2021/22 budget at a Special Council Meeting on 21 June 2021 at 6:00 pm, which was live streamed on its Facebook page.

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