

# Agenda

**Ordinary Meeting**  
**Thursday, 26 March 2026**

**commencing at 9:00am**

Sunshine Coast City Hall Chamber, 54 First Avenue, Maroochydore

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**ORDINARY MEETING**

**NOTICE**

13 March 2026

Dear Councillors, Directors and relevant staff,

In accordance with Section 254C(2) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, I wish to advise that an Ordinary Meeting has been convened for

**26 March 2026**

**commencing at 9.00am.**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Baker".

**John Baker | Chief Executive Officer**

**Sunshine Coast Regional Council**  
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**1 DECLARATION OF OPENING**

On establishing there is a quorum, the Chair will declare the meeting open.

**2 WELCOME AND OPENING****3 RECORD OF ATTENDANCE AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE****4 RECEIPT AND CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 26 February 2026 be received and confirmed.

**5 MAYORAL MINUTE****6 INFORMING OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST****6.1 PRESCRIBED CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Pursuant to section 150EL of the *Local Government Act 2009* (the Act), a Councillor who has a prescribed conflict of interest in an issue to be considered at a meeting of the local government must –

- (a) immediately inform the meeting of the prescribed conflict of interest including the particulars stated in section 150EL(4) of the Act and
- (b) pursuant to section 150EM(2) of the Act must leave the place at which the meeting is being held, including any area set aside for the public, and stay away from the place while the matter is being discussed and voted on.

**6.2 DECLARABLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Pursuant to section 150EQ of the *Local Government Act 2009*, a Councillor who has a declarable conflict of interest in a matter to be considered at a meeting of the local government, must stop participating in the meeting and immediately inform the meeting of the declarable conflict of interest including the particulars stated in section 150EQ(4) of the Act.

If the Councillor with a declarable conflict of interest does not voluntarily decide not to participate in the decision, pursuant to section 150ES(3)(a) of the Act the eligible Councillors must, by resolution, decide

- (a) whether the Councillor may participate in the decision despite the Councillors conflict of interest or
- (b) that the Councillor must not participate in the decision and must leave the place at which the meeting is being held, including any area set aside for the public and stay away while the eligible Councillors discuss and vote on the matter.

The Councillor with the declarable conflict of interest must comply with any conditions the eligible Councillors impose per section 150ES(4) and (5) of the Act.

**7 PRESENTATIONS / COUNCILLOR REPORTS**



**8 REPORTS DIRECT TO COUNCIL**

**8.1 THRIVING FUTURES: SUNSHINE COAST YOUTH PLAN 2026-31**

|                     |                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>File No:</b>     | <b>Council Meetings</b>                                                                                          |
| <b>Author:</b>      | <b>Social Planner<br/>Community Strengthening</b>                                                                |
| <b>Appendices:</b>  | <b>App A - Thriving Futures: Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31 15</b> <a href="#">↓</a>                          |
| <b>Attachments:</b> | <b>Att 1 - Human Rights Assessment of Compatibility - Sunshine<br/>Coast Youth Plan.....59</b> <a href="#">↓</a> |

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement of the Thriving Futures: Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31 (Appendix A).

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The need to develop a youth plan was identified in 2023 during the project to refresh the Sunshine Coast Community Strategy 2019-41. At that time, community members highlighted the need for additional youth activities, spaces and initiatives in the region. An action to develop a youth plan was therefore included in the Community Strategy 2019-41 (2024 Refresh) (Action 3.1.c) and is included as an action in Council’s Operational Plan 2025-26 (Action 1.3.3).

During 2025, Council collaborated with members of the Young Leaders Academy and young people across the Sunshine Coast to develop the Thriving Futures: Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31 (Appendix A), aimed at improving the lives of young people aged 12-24 years.

The Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31 contains actions for Council to implement, alongside young people and community partners over the next five years, as well as ideas for potential community-led action.

The Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31 has been developed with extensive community input, particularly input from young people.

The first stage of community engagement took place over a six-week period during June and July 2025. The purpose of the engagement was to hear from young people about what they like about living on the Sunshine Coast and what needs to change. Various engagement methods were used, including online and face-to-face activities. These methods were chosen to facilitate input from young people located across the region. Members of the Young Leaders Academy 2025 helped to co-create the engagement program and co-facilitate activities.

In total, up to 1100 young people aged 12-24 years contributed their views about what is important to them and how to make the Sunshine Coast a better place to live.

Based on the engagement findings, a draft youth plan was carefully developed to ensure it:

- Responds to the priorities identified by young people during the engagement activities.

- Reflects actions that are Council's responsibility (remit), while acknowledging that many of the most significant priorities identified by young people were beyond Council's sole responsibility (housing affordability, cost of living, transport, education options, etc.).
- Calibrates delivery of actions across the next five years to balance available resources (budget and staff time).

The second stage of engagement took place during November 2025 to gather feedback on the draft youth plan, including the Council-led actions.

Based on this community feedback, as well as feedback from internal Council teams and a review of existing Council budgets and resources, refinements were made to the Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31.

The Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31 has been informed by significant community engagement, predominantly with young people. It gives voice to the priorities of young people of the Sunshine Coast; the things they value and the challenges they are experiencing. It has clear, achievable actions that will help direct Council initiatives over the next five years. Implementation of the Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31 will contribute to the quality of life of our young residents.

## OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

**That Council:**

- receive and note the report titled "Thriving Futures: Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31" and**
- endorse the Thriving Futures: Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-2031 (Appendix A).**

## FINANCE AND RESOURCING

There are 15 actions in the Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31 that are achievable within existing budget allocations. Overarching delivery of the Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31 is resourced by one full-time Council officer.

There are three actions within the Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31 that would require additional budget allocation to be implemented. These actions are identified as being subject to additional funding. These actions are included so that they may be progressed should funding become available, either from Council or elsewhere.

Additional budget would also be beneficial to maximise the number of young people that can benefit from the various initiatives and elevate potential for success.

Any additional budget requests would be considered through Council's annual budget process.

## CORPORATE PLAN

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Corporate Plan Goal:</b>  | <b><i>Strong community</i></b>                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Strategic Pathway:</b>    | 1.3 - Inclusive communities                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Operational Activity:</b> | 1.3.3 - Develop a Youth Action Plan for youth led initiatives as part of the Young Leaders Academy Program that fosters civic engagement and participatory leadership practices. |

## CONSULTATION

### Councillor Consultation

Councillors were consulted on the draft Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31, community engagement activities undertaken and community feedback received to inform the plan.

### Internal Consultation

Council teams who engage, connect and collaborate with young people, and who will have leading roles in the delivery of youth plan actions were consulted:

- Community Strengthening Department- Community Development; Arts, Heritage and Libraries, Sport and Community Venues
- Business Transformation and Performance Department - People and Culture; Communications
- Infrastructure and Natural Assets Department - Environmental Operations; Transport Network Management
- Sustainable Growth and Planning Department - Economic Development; Environment and Sustainability Policy.

### External Consultation

External consultation is outlined in the Community Engagement section of this report.

### Community Engagement

Significant engagement was undertaken with young people during the first stage of the project to help inform development of the draft Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31.

#### Young Leaders Academy

The Young Leaders Academy is an annual youth leadership program focused on participatory leadership that is supported by Council.

Members of the Young Leaders Academy in 2025 were heavily involved in planning, facilitating and co-hosting a youth forum. They also facilitated discussions at pop-up events and provided input into the online engagement hub and survey.

Further, the Young Leaders were consulted in the illustration process and finalisation of the design concept and elements to be included in the final plan, along with providing direction and input into the key theme areas and actions of the plan.

#### Youth Forum

The Youth Forum, co-hosted by Council and members of the Young Leaders Academy, was held on 28 May 2025 at Venue 114. Young people aged 12-24 years from across the region were able to attend, with a focus on attendance from high school students.

In total, 85 young people attended, including representatives from 14 schools.

The Youth Forum used a variety of participatory engagement methods to ensure young people felt safe and able to participate. The day-long program included a lived-experience panel with members of the Young Leaders Academy, discussions about the young people's

vision for the future and what needs to change to achieve the vision, and conversations around potential actions.

#### Youth survey

582 young people completed the online survey during the six-week engagement period, including 458 young people aged 12-17 years and 117 young adults aged 18-24 years.

#### Pop-up events

The pop-up activities were an important part of the engagement program as they helped engage with young people where they were at - out shopping, playing community sport, enjoying the weekend or at TAFE/university.

The pop-up activities focused on a discussion of what is good about the Sunshine Coast and what could be improved.

In total, 450 young people participated at 12 pop-up events.

#### Youth sector survey

Older adults who work closely with young people were able to complete a separate online survey. 35 responses were received from workers providing services such as:

- Accommodation and transition support
- Mental health, education and employment support
- Community development
- Youth programs.

#### **Feedback on draft youth plan**

Further engagement was undertaken with young people during the second stage of the project to gather feedback on the draft youth plan.

#### Young Leaders Academy members

Members of the Young Leaders Academy provided input and feedback into the plan's draft actions before they were made available for community feedback.

#### Online survey

The survey asked for feedback on the draft actions. 54 people completed the online survey, including 34 young people.

#### Workshops

Five workshops were held with 54 young people to gather feedback on the draft actions.

### **PROPOSAL**

There are around 50,000 young people aged 12-24 years living on the Sunshine Coast, and this could reach 70,000 young people by 2041. This is a significant population group that is often hard to communicate and engage with when it comes to local government programs and services. They are the future of our community, but also leaders now. Council needs to:

- Ensure their voices are heard in our projects
- Make sure our services and programs are relevant to this group
- Maximise opportunities for young people in our economy
- Encourage their involvement in our community, contributing to connection, resilience and cohesion.

The Thriving Futures: Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31 (Appendix A) was developed with significant input from members of Council's Young Leaders Academy in 2025, young people of the Sunshine Coast, the local youth services sector, and Council team members. Older residents were also able to have their say and provide feedback on the draft youth plan.

Most young people agreed that the Sunshine Coast is a great place to live, primarily due to their friends and family, and access to the natural environment. However, mental health, housing affordability, more opportunities for connection, and safety were raised as challenges. Young people also shared many valuable ideas for collaborative actions.

Overall, young people identified the following priorities:

- **Cost of living and housing:** Affordability of housing and cost of living creating uncertain financial future for young people
- **Family and community connections:** Friends and family are valued, want more opportunities to connect in person
- **Not feeling heard, included and valued:** Feeling stereotyped and misunderstood, discrimination and stigma
- **More things to do and safe places:** More affordable events, activities, safe places to hang out
- **Difficulty getting around:** Inadequate public transport, safety of e-bikes/scooters
- **Education and career opportunities:** More education and career opportunities need to stay/afford to stay on the Sunshine Coast
- **Environment and climate change:** Access to natural environment valued, pollution, habitat loss, urban sprawl, climate change
- **Crime and safety:** Physical safety in neighbourhoods, perceptions of youth crime, online safety
- **Mental health challenges:** Mental illness as well as self-confidence, body image, school/work stress.

Feedback on the draft youth plan was largely positive with young people supporting the actions related to additional youth spaces, more activities for young people, life skills workshops and advocacy on significant issues. Young people had mixed views about the proposed ideas to communicate and engage with young people (youth-focused website, youth connectors program, conversation circles, etc.), however there were no ideas for alternative actions.

The Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31 contains actions for Council to implement with young people and community partners over the next five years. Aligning with the principles, methods and priorities outlined in the Community Strategy, the plan prioritises collaboration and partnership to achieve desired outcomes. It also highlights actions that the community

can take, including young people themselves, to contribute to better outcomes for young people.

The 18 Council-led actions in the Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31 are grouped into three priority areas:

1. We belong here
2. We are valued
3. We have opportunities.

### **Legal**

There are no legal implications relevant to this report.

The Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31 complies with, and supports the objectives of the following legislation:

- *Local Government Act 2009 (QLD)*
- *Human Rights Act 2019 (QLD)*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (QLD)*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)*

The Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31 supports human rights such as recognition and equality before the law, peaceful assembly and freedom of association, taking part in public life, freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief and cultural rights (see Human Rights Assessment of Compatibility at Attachment 1).

### **Policy**

The Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31 aligns with:

- Sunshine Coast Council Corporate Plan 2025-2030
- Sunshine Coast Community Strategy 2019-2041 (2023 Refresh).

### **Risk**

If the Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31 is not adopted, the following risks may arise:

- The health and wellbeing of young Sunshine Coast residents could decline, adversely impacting their quality of life and overall community cohesion.
- Council will lack a coordinated and evidence-based response to youth priorities, increasing the likelihood of fragmented and reactive approaches to challenges.
- The decision may signal to young people that their voices and concerns are of low importance to Council, potentially undermining trust in Council, reducing civic participation and reinforcing feelings of being undervalued.

- Council's capacity to attract external funding, form strategic partnerships and advocate effectively on youth priorities may be diminished.

**Previous Council Resolution**

There are no previous Council resolutions relevant to this report.

**Related Documentation**

There is no related documentation relevant to this report.

**Critical Dates**

Youth Week (11 April to 19 April 2026) presents an opportunity to launch and promote the Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31 during this week of celebration of young people.

**Implementation**

Should the recommendation be accepted by Council, the Chief Executive Officer will oversee finalisation of the Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31 and make it publicly available on Council's website, including an accessible text-only version.



# Thriving Futures: Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31



March 2026

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#### Acknowledgements

Council wishes to thank all contributors  
and stakeholders involved in the  
development  
of this document.

#### Reference document

This document should  
be cited as follows:  
Thriving Futures: Sunshine Coast Youth  
Plan 2026-31.

#### Disclaimer

To the extent this document contains  
future plans, activities, policies  
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#### Cover image and all illustration

Oddish: Carmen Spencer

## Traditional acknowledgement

Sunshine Coast Council acknowledges the Sunshine Coast Country,  
home of the Kabi Kabi peoples and the Jinibara peoples, the Traditional  
Custodians, whose lands and waters we all now share.

We recognise that these have always been places of cultural, spiritual,  
social and economic significance. The Traditional Custodians' unique  
values, and ancient and enduring cultures, deepen and enrich the life of  
our community.

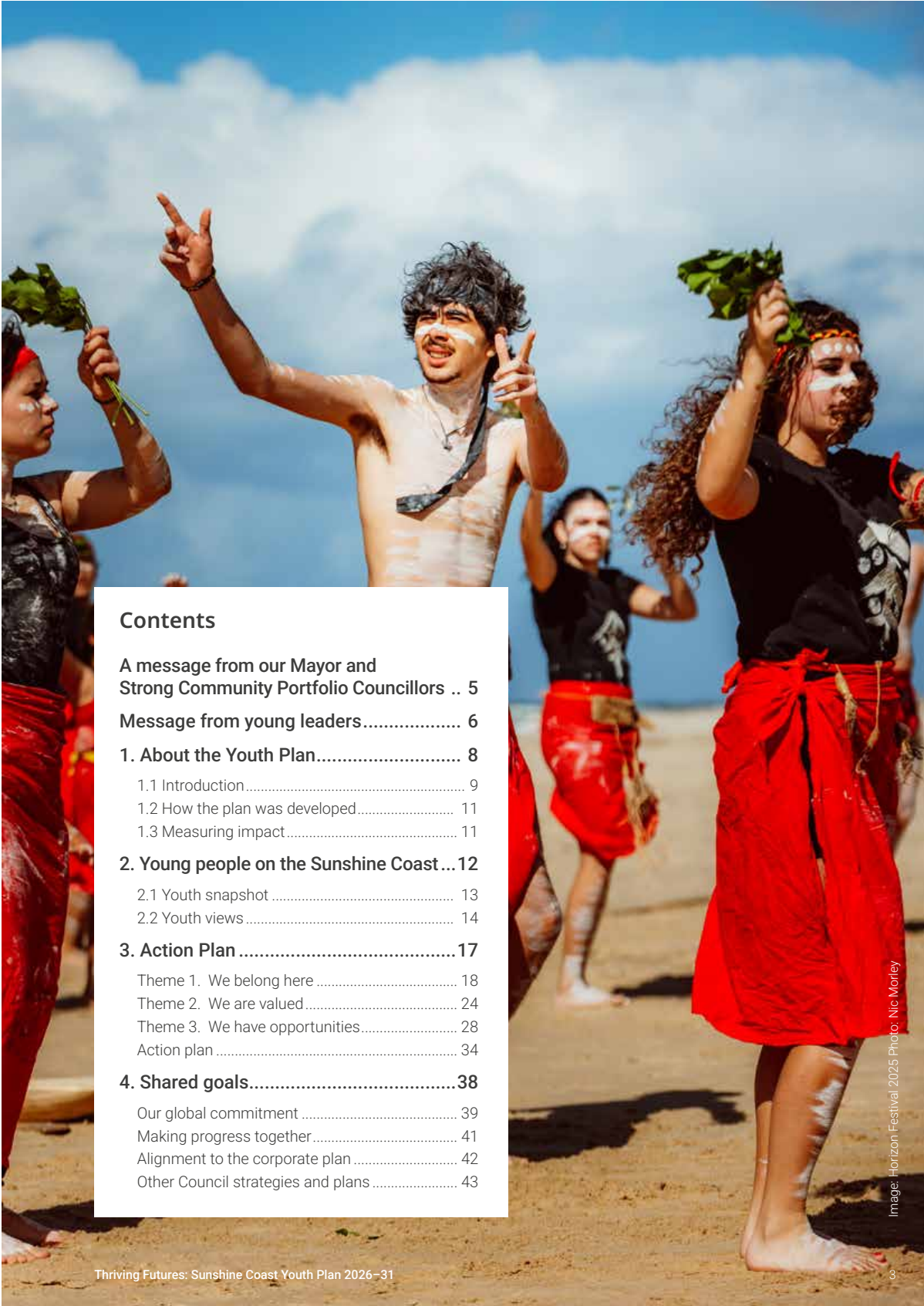
We commit to working in partnership with the Traditional Custodians  
and the broader First Nations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)  
communities to support self-determination through economic and  
community development.

Truth telling is a significant part of our journey. We are committed to  
better understanding the collective histories of the Sunshine Coast and  
the experiences of First Nations peoples. Legacy issues resulting from  
colonisation are still experienced by Traditional Custodians and First  
Nations peoples.

We recognise our shared history and will continue to work in partnership  
to provide a foundation for building a shared future with the Kabi Kabi  
peoples and the Jinibara peoples.

We wish to pay respect to their Elders – past, present and emerging, and  
acknowledge the important role First Nations peoples continue to play  
within the Sunshine Coast community.

Together, we are all stronger.



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Sunshine Coast Council

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## Message from the Mayor and Strong Community Portfolio Councillors

**Our Sunshine Coast is at its best when young people help shape decisions, when they feel they belong in every neighbourhood, and when they can see a bright future here. Thriving Futures: Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31 sets a shared direction for how we will listen, act and partner with young people so our region remains connected, liveable and thriving for everyone.**

Over the past year, we invited young people to speak up, and we sought to meet them where they are. They took part online, at the Youth Forum and at pop-up events across the region. More than 1,000 young people told us what matters most to them: from housing and the cost of living to transport, mental health, opportunities to connect and how we care for our environment. Their insights shaped the priorities and actions in this plan and will continue to guide our work into the future.

We also want to recognise the members of the 2025 Young Leaders Academy. Their leadership helped us reach hundreds of young people. They co-created and co-facilitated the Youth Forum, advised us on the best ways to engage their peers and spoke with young people across the region. Their contribution has been invaluable, and they have shown how youth leadership can produce real impact.

This Youth Plan does not claim to solve every challenge. Instead, it gives clear voice to the priorities and challenges being experienced by young people and sets achievable actions we can take together. It also introduces simple, meaningful ways for young people to contribute to the Sunshine Coast they want to see.

Thank you to every young person, parent, carer, teacher and youth worker who took part in the engagement process to create this plan. Together, we can build a Sunshine Coast where every young person belongs, is heard, and has opportunities to learn, work, contribute and thrive.



Thriving Futures: Sunshine Coast Youth Plan 2026-31























































































**8.2 ESTABLISHING A PROPOSED SUNSHINE COAST DARK SKY RESERVE**

|                     |                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>File No:</b>     | <b>Council Meetings</b>                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Author:</b>      | <b>Senior Policy &amp; Research Officer<br/>Sustainable Growth and Planning</b>                                                                               |
| <b>Appendices:</b>  | <b>App A - Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve Lighting Management Plan 2026 ..... 5/187<br/>App B - Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve Application ..... 35/187</b> |
| <b>Attachments:</b> | <b>Att 1 - Proposed Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve Map . 187/187</b>                                                                                         |

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to present the outcomes of phase two of the Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve Project and propose a draft application to establish a Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve for Council’s consideration.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Sunshine Coast Council is delivering actions that improve our liveability and protect our natural environment as part of our strategic approach for a sustainable future.

Building on the Sunshine Coast’s international UNESCO Biosphere Reserve designation in 2022, Council has been progressing a proposal to establish a Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve under the International Dark Sky Places Program to protect the region’s night skies from light pollution.

The proposed reserve (**Attachment 1**) is located in the western part of the region, around Obi Obi, Maleny, Conondale, Mapleton and Kenilworth, where the Blackall Range naturally shields this area from coastal skyglow.

Maintaining dark skies through reducing light pollution is integral to the Sunshine Coast’s landscape and character and delivers many benefits, including improved health and wellbeing, support for nocturnal wildlife, reduced emissions and opportunities for recreation and astro-tourism.

In November 2023, Council resolved (OM23/135) to undertake a phased community engagement process to seek feedback on the proposal and to prepare the required technical documentation to support the project as part of phase two.

Key outcomes of phase two of the project included:

- completion of extensive stakeholder engagement to build understanding and secure support for the proposal
- completion of two formal community consultation stages to confirm support for the proposal and to seek feedback on a required Lighting Management Plan
- preparation of technical documentation including, a lighting management plan, lighting inventories and night sky quality measurements

- targeted lighting upgrades at key stargazing sites and as part of LED Streetlight Replacement Project
- development of draft planning scheme provisions to minimise light pollution in new developments, and
- preparation of an application to seek an International Dark Sky Reserve designation.

The Lighting Management Plan is a requirement for an International Dark Sky Reserve designation and has been developed in alignment with DarkSky International's guidance. The plan shapes the selection, placement, installation and operation of all new, replacement or retrofitted lighting in the proposed Dark Sky Reserve. It applies mandatory requirements for Council-controlled lighting and encourages best-practice standards for other stakeholders, including Energex, State agencies, and the community.

The project has been delivered in collaboration with key stakeholders including State Government agencies and Energex, and the community. Dr Ken Wishaw, recipient of the 2025 Sunshine Coast Biosphere Community Award for Senior Citizen of the Year has been a driving force and passionate project champion, offering invaluable technical expertise, guidance, and community education throughout its implementation.

As a result of strong support demonstrated through both consultation stages and key stakeholder engagement, a draft application to seek formal designation through the International Dark Sky Places Program has been prepared for Council's consideration.

This report seeks Council adoption of the Lighting Management Plan (**Appendix A**) for the proposed Dark Sky Reserve and endorsement of the DarkSky International application (**Appendix B**).

## OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

### That Council:

- receive and note the report titled "Establishing a proposed Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve"**
- adopt the Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve Lighting Management Plan 2026 (Appendix A)**
- endorse the Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve Application (Appendix B) for submission to DarkSky International and**
- delegate to the Chief Executive Officer the authority to make minor changes to the Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve Application to address any feedback received during the DarkSky International assessment process.**

## FINANCE AND RESOURCING

### *Phase two delivery*

Phase two of the project, delivered between 2023 and 2025, was undertaken for a cost of \$85,000, which included two rounds of community consultation, preparation of technical documentation including a lighting management plan, the capture of seasonal night sky

quality data throughout the proposed reserve, lighting upgrades at Maleny and Kenilworth demonstration sites, determination of stargazing sites and the preparation of a draft application. Phase two was funded through the endorsed operating budget.

### ***Designation management***

Ongoing costs to maintain a Dark Sky Reserve designation (if approved) are expected to include a budget of approximately \$5,000-\$10,000 annually to support ongoing night sky quality monitoring/compliance, community education and engagement initiatives, and associated officer time to manage the designation. If successful, a sign indicating the designation along a roadway entrance to the reserve must be erected and maintained. Subject to location and size of the sign, the estimated cost to design and install a sign is between \$2,000 and \$5,000. Costs associated with priority lighting upgrades on Council-owned assets within the reserve would need to be incorporated into associated asset management planning and delivery.

Any project allocation would be subject to Council's annual budget and operational planning processes.

Energex is progressing the deployment of LED luminaires, replacing remaining conventional streetlights across its network, including within the proposed Dark Sky Reserve area which will support ongoing lighting compliance.

### ***Cost savings***

Ongoing public lighting upgrades across the proposed Dark Sky Reserve also present an opportunity for long-term financial savings. Based on current Council and Energex owned lighting assets requiring transition to dark sky compliant lighting (approximately 450 lights), annual savings of up to \$25,000 are projected once upgrades are implemented.

Dark sky compliant lighting reduces costs by eliminating wasted light, improving energy efficiency, and extending the operational life of assets. Fully shielded fixtures, appropriate lighting levels, and modern energy-efficient technologies ensure light is directed only where it is needed. This reduces electricity consumption, lowers maintenance and replacement costs, and enhances overall asset performance.

### ***Partnerships and community engagement***

Local community groups would continue to play an active and complementary role in implementation through education and engagement. Additional funding sources and partnership opportunities beyond Council's budget is intended to be actively explored.

## **CORPORATE PLAN**

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Corporate Plan Goal:</b>  | <b><i>Environment and liveability</i></b>                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Strategic Pathway:</b>    | 2.4 - Well-planned infrastructure                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Operational Activity:</b> | 2.4.1 - Partner with the community to deliver initiatives that raise community awareness and understanding of the Sunshine Coast Biosphere and how they can play a role. |

## CONSULTATION

### Councillor Consultation

Councillors were actively engaged throughout phase two of the project via regular updates and briefings.

- Councillor M Suarez and Councillor T Burns – Environment and Liveability Portfolio Councillors.
- Councillor W Johnston – Division 5 Councillor.
- Councillor D Law – Division 10 Councillor.

In addition, all Councillors received project updates during this phase to ensure they remained informed and involved in the progress of the Dark Sky Reserve proposal.

### Internal Consultation

Internal consultation was undertaken through phase two to support the development of technical documentation and community engagement programs:

- Transport Network Management Branch
- Environmental Operations Branch
- Coordinator Commercial Analysis, Business and Innovation Branch
- Project Delivery Branch
- Tourism Lead, Economic Development Branch
- Strategic Planning Branch
- Communications Officer, Communications Branch
- Community Planning and Engagement Team, Community Development Branch.

### External Consultation

External consultation and stakeholder briefings were a critical component of this phase, designed to keep stakeholders informed about the project, gather feedback, and collaborate on implementing requirements for achieving a Dark Sky Reserve designation. These engagements also aimed to secure stakeholder project support to support the project's success.

This included:

- Engagement with Dr Ken Wishaw: Dark Sky Reserve community advocate and advisor on the project.
- Engagement with DarkSky International - To guide the designation process to ensure outcomes met program requirements.
- Key stakeholder briefings with:
  - Energex
  - Department of Environment Science, Tourism and Innovation
    - Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships

- Tourism
  - Department of Transport and Main Roads
  - Department of Housing and Public Works
  - Visit Sunshine Coast
  - Community groups including environment, business, residents.
  - Adjoining local government areas.

Correspondence on the project was also sent to State Government Ministers, Local Members and First Nations Groups.

Throughout the process, letters of support and formal acknowledgements were received demonstrating support from all levels of government, community organisations, First Nations representatives, and the tourism sector.

Dr Ken Wishaw has also provided a letter of nomination for the draft application, a requirement of the International Dark Sky Places Program process.

### **Community Engagement**

Two stages of community consultation were delivered:

#### Stage one

Stage one occurred in May/June 2024 and sought feedback from the community on the proposal to establish a Dark Sky Reserve in the Sunshine Coast hinterland.

Community feedback was received through online surveys, community conversations at drop-in sessions and local events, community information sessions and presentations as well as individual submissions. Over 1,200 surveys were received during this stage. The majority of feedback received through the engagement process, including 95% of survey respondents, expressed support for the protection of our night sky for future generations.

#### Stage two

Stage two was delivered in June/July 2025 to provide an update on the project and seek feedback on the Draft Lighting Management Plan.

Engagement methods used were an online survey, community and key stakeholder meetings, community and key stakeholder correspondence/communications, individual submissions/feedback. Close to 550 survey responses were received with over 90% supporting the Draft Lighting Management Plan's purpose and objectives.

### **PROPOSAL**

Through the implementation of the Environment and Liveability Strategy, Council has been working to identify and apply initiatives that enhance liveability across the region while achieving national and international recognition for our natural assets and environmental leadership.

Our designation as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2022 is one example of this approach, highlighting our commitment to living, working, and playing sustainably. To complement this achievement, Council has been exploring opportunities to recognise and protect the unique values of our night skies.

A dark sky refers to the natural night sky free from human-caused light pollution. It is an important feature of the Sunshine Coast's landscape and character, and its protection aligns with our strategic direction to preserve distinctive and diverse environments. Light pollution, the excessive use of artificial light, is expected to increase as the region grows.

Planning for the management of our night skies by reducing light pollution can deliver significant benefits, including improved health and wellbeing, reduced emissions, support wildlife that move and feed at night, and provide opportunities for recreation and astro-tourism.

In November 2023, Council resolved (OM23/135) to undertake a phased community engagement process to seek feedback on the proposal to establish a Dark Sky Reserve designation in the identified area under the International Dark Sky Places Program and prepare the required technical documentation to support the project as part of Phase two of the project.

The proposed Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve (the Reserve) is in the western part of the local government area in the vicinity of Obi Obi, Maleny, Conondale, Mapleton and Kenilworth. The area is 873 km<sup>2</sup> and is primarily made up of the Mary River catchment boundary within the local government area (Attachment 1).

The area has exceptional night sky quality, a key requirement for a Dark Sky Reserve designation. The location and topography of the area is also ideal, with the Blackall Range acting as a natural shield protecting the area from much of the skyglow from coastal urban areas and surrounding cities and towns.

### **Phase two: Community engagement and supporting technical documentation.**

Phase two included the following key elements:

#### ***1. Key stakeholder engagement and briefings***

Phase two focused on engaging key stakeholders, including State Government agencies, Energex and the community, to build understanding and support for the project. Dr Ken Wishaw played a leading role as a dedicated community champion, providing expert advice and education. DarkSky International guided the project to ensure it met designation requirements, while strong partnerships with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships and Energex are helping to improve lighting practices across parks, forests and streets, supporting the goal of reducing light pollution.

#### ***2. Community consultation***

Two formal community consultation phases confirmed support for the Dark Sky Reserve project and the Draft Lighting Management Plan. The first phase in 2024 engaged the community through surveys and events, with 95% of survey respondents supporting night sky protection and recognising benefits for wildlife, wellbeing, and tourism. The second phase in 2025, sought feedback on the Draft Lighting Management Plan and showed continued support, with 94% of survey respondents valuing dark sky preservation and 91% endorsing the plan's objectives, alongside calls to balance safety with low lighting and progress timely implementation.

### **3. Preparation of supporting technical documentation**

#### **Lighting Management Plan**

The Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve Lighting Management Plan (**Appendix A**) shapes the selection, placement, installation and operation of all new, replacement or retrofitted outdoor lighting across the proposed Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve. This is a key requirement under the International Dark Sky Places Program.

The plan is intended to be applied with other endorsed Council guidelines and specifications including the Urban Lighting Master Plan and Electrical and Lighting Infrastructure Manual.

The plan:

- Provides direction for new or upgraded Council-controlled outdoor lighting installations in public open spaces and other public lighting where appropriate within the Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve.
- Establishes a common set of principles to guide lighting provided by other key stakeholders within the Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve including Energex, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships, Department of Transport and Mains Roads and the community.
- Provides direction for the application of good practice lighting principles to inform the proposed Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme regarding outdoor lighting associated with new developments within the proposed Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve.
- Raises community awareness of the Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve and educates how the community can support dark sky aspirations through good practice lighting principles.

The Lighting Management Plan has two levels of application for how it will be used:

1. Mandatory.
2. Encouraged.

Mandatory application refers to Council owned and operated lighting in the proposed Reserve. This means any new or upgraded outdoor lighting within the proposed Reserve owned and operated by Council must follow the Lighting Management Plan. For example, street and roadway lighting, lighting in parks and gardens spaces, Council controlled sports lighting and lighting associated with Council buildings and facilities.

Encouraged application applies to all other stakeholders responsible for outdoor lighting within the reserve such as existing and proposed private developments and State Government assets etc.

#### **Night sky quality measurement program**

Seasonal night sky quality data was captured across the proposed reserve area at over 20 locations. This data helped to understand the quality of our night skies and if we meet DarkSky International requirements for a reserve designation, while also tracking any changes from impacts of light pollution. Two permanent night sky quality meters were installed within the proposed reserve and are continuing to capture data daily.

### ***Lighting inventories***

Two lighting inventories were completed, one for the core zone and one for the peripheral zone, to provide an understanding of the amount and distribution of public lighting within the proposed Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve.

### ***4. Lighting upgrades***

Council completed lighting upgrades as part of demonstrating its commitment to the reducing light pollution. These upgrades include improvements at the Isaac Moore Park amenities block, Kenilworth, an identified stargazing location, and at the Maleny Community Precinct, where local public stargazing events are held.

The LED Streetlight Replacement Project continued in partnership with Energex. This project will replace 4000 Energex-owned streetlights with LED lights across the Sunshine Coast region, including over 160 streetlights within the proposed Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve. This project is being delivered through funding received from the Australian Government's Local Road and Community Infrastructure Program (LRCIP).

### ***5. Proposed Planning Scheme provisions***

The proposed Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme recognises the Dark Sky Reserve in the Sunshine Coast hinterland in the Strategic Framework mapping and supports the protection of dark skies by requiring that external lighting associated with new development within the Dark Sky Reserve be carefully positioned and managed to minimise light pollution.

The proposed Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme includes detailed outdoor lighting provisions that apply to all new assessable development within the Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve. These provisions would be implemented through development conditions and would also apply to certain forms of assessable development.

### ***6. Development of a draft application***

Based on the outcomes of phase two, including strong support demonstrated through both consultation stages and key stakeholder engagement, a draft application (**Appendix B**) to seek formal designation through the International Dark Sky Places Program has been prepared for Council's consideration.

The application has been developed in line with guidance from DarkSky International, following their prescribed structure and incorporating the required evidence to demonstrate compliance with program standards.

### **Legal**

There are no legal implications relevant to this report.

### **Policy**

The Queensland Government's Destination 2045 Plan provides a strong commitment to dark sky tourism including an action to expand Queensland's Dark Sky Reserve network. Council officers have contributed to the associated planning for this state outcome as a result of the expertise developed in establishing the proposed Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve.

The Environment and Liveability Strategy (ELS) provides long-term strategic directions to deliver a healthy environment and liveable Sunshine Coast in 2041 and includes both a policy position to recognise, protect and celebrate dark skies and an action (8.3) to "investigate

opportunities to recognise, protect and celebrate the Sunshine Coast dark sky, in partnership with the community”.

**Risk**

The are no risks relevant to this report.

**Previous Council Resolution****Ordinary Meeting 16 November 2023 (OM23/135)**

*That Council:*

- (a) receive and note the report titled “Establishing a Proposed Sunshine Coast Dark Sky Reserve”*
- (b) note the spatial extent of the proposed Dark Sky Reserve within the Mary River Catchment and adjoining State Protected Areas within the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area (Appendix A)*
- (c) note the Eligibility Assessment Briefing Paper submitted to International Dark Sky Association to support investigations to progress the establishment of the proposed Dark Sky Reserve (Appendix B) and*
- (d) delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to commence the following, and report back to Council to confirm next steps:*
  - (i) a phased community engagement process during 2023-2024 to seek feedback on the proposal to establish a Dark Sky Reserve designation under the International Dark Sky Places Program for the identified area, and*
  - (ii) the preparation of required technical documentation to support the project.*

**Related Documentation**

- Environment and Liveability Strategy (2023 edition).

**Critical Dates**

There are no critical dates relevant to this report.

**Implementation**

Should the recommendation be accepted by Council, it is noted that the Chief Executive Officer will:

- Submit application to DarkSky International for consideration.
- Address any minor changes requested by DarkSky International through the assessment process.



**8.3 FEBRUARY 2026 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

**File No:** Council Meetings

**Author:** Coordinator Financial Services  
Finance and Commercial Partnerships

**Attachments:** Att 1 - February 2025 Financial Performance Report .....79 [↓](#)  
Att 2 - February 2025 Capital Grant Funded Project Report.....97 [↓](#)

**PURPOSE**

To meet Council’s legislative obligations, a monthly report must be presented to Council on its financial performance and investments.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This monthly financial performance report provides Council with a summary of performance against budget as at 28 February 2026, in terms of the operating result and delivery of the capital program.

**Operating Performance**

**Table 1: Operating Budget as at 28 February 2026**

|                                             | <b>Original Budget<br/>\$'000</b> | <b>Current Budget<br/>\$'000</b> | <b>Year to Date Budget*<br/>\$'000</b> | <b>Year to Date Actuals<br/>\$'000</b> | <b>Year to Date Variance<br/>\$'000</b> |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Total Operating Revenue                     | 711,026                           | 697,517                          | 613,275                                | 614,345                                | 1,070                                   |
| Total Operating Expenses                    | 710,315                           | 710,846                          | 450,175                                | 446,016                                | (4,159)                                 |
| <b>Operating Result</b>                     | <b>711</b>                        | <b>(13,329)</b>                  | <b>163,100</b>                         | <b>168,329</b>                         | <b>5,229</b>                            |
| Capital Revenue                             | 163,689                           | 170,233                          | 52,769                                 | 57,903                                 | 5,134                                   |
| Non-Recurrent Expenses                      | 3,056                             | 39,222                           | 15,374                                 | 22,538                                 | 7,164                                   |
| <b>Net Result</b>                           | <b>161,345</b>                    | <b>117,681</b>                   | <b>200,495</b>                         | <b>203,695</b>                         | <b>3,199</b>                            |
|                                             |                                   |                                  |                                        |                                        |                                         |
| <b>Capital Expenditure</b>                  | <b>262,388</b>                    | <b>267,311</b>                   | <b>132,830</b>                         | <b>127,953</b>                         | <b>(4,877)</b>                          |
|                                             |                                   |                                  |                                        |                                        |                                         |
| <b>Total Cash Balance (including Trust)</b> | <b>271,422</b>                    | <b>292,453</b>                   | <b>307,264</b>                         | <b>365,900</b>                         | <b>58,636</b>                           |

Details of the monthly financial report are contained in **Attachment 1 (to be provided)**.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council receive and note the report titled “February 2026 Financial Performance Report”.**

**FINANCE AND RESOURCING**

This report sets out the details of Council’s financial performance and investments for the month ending 28 February 2026, and meets Council’s legislative reporting requirements.

**CORPORATE PLAN**

**Corporate Plan Goal:** *Organisational excellence*

**Strategic Pathway:** We serve our community by providing this great service

**Operational Activity:** S31 - Financial Management - Strategic management of Council's finances, assets, procurement and contracts that support effective supplier relationship, resource allocation and financial sustainability.

**CONSULTATION****Councillor Consultation**

Consultation has been undertaken with the Organisational Excellence Portfolio Councillors, E Hungerford and J Broderick.

**Internal Consultation**

This report has been written in conjunction with advice from:

- Chief Financial Officer
- Executive Leadership Team

**External Consultation**

No external consultation is required for this report.

**Community Engagement**

No community engagement is required for this report.

**Legal**

This report ensures that Council complies with its legislative obligations with respect to financial reporting in accordance with Section 204 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

Investment of funds is in accordance with the provisions of the *Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982* and the associated Regulations and the *Local Government Act 2009*.

**Policy**

Sunshine Coast Council’s 2025-26 Investment Policy, and

Sunshine Coast Council’s 2025-26 Debt Policy.

**Risk**

The 2025-26 budget has been adopted with an operating deficit position, however this outcome is acknowledged and Management has established a clear pathway to improve operating performance over the medium term, with a strong focus on long term financial sustainability for the Sunshine Coast region. The achievement of the targeted operating result is a key element of Council's long term financial sustainability strategy.

The 2025-26 budget is based on management estimates and assumptions including:

- Rates and charges revenue incorporating population and property growth forecasts
- Interest revenue and finance costs based on forecast interest rates
- Depreciation informed by asset valuation, useful life and asset condition estimates
- Recurrent capital expenditure reflecting capitalisation estimates

Management has used its best endeavours and judgment to determine these estimates and assumptions based on the available data, with reference to independent sources and relevant historic information where possible. There is a risk that the actual results may vary from the estimates. Any material variances will be monitored and reported to Council through the Monthly Financial Performance Report.

**Previous Council Resolution****Ordinary Meeting 26 February 2026 (OM26/10)**

*That Council:*

- (a) *receive and note the report titled "Budget Review 2 2025-26"*
- (b) *adopt Appendix A as tabled, pursuant to sections 169 and 170 of the Local Government Regulation 2012, Council's amended budget for 2025-26 financial year incorporating:*
  - (i) *the statement of income and expenditure*
  - (ii) *the statement of financial position*
  - (iii) *the statements of changes in equity*
  - (iv) *the statement of cash flow*
  - (v) *the relevant measures of financial sustainability*
  - (vi) *the long-term financial forecast*
  - (vii) *Council's 2025-26 Capital Works Program, endorse the indicative four-year program for the period 2027 to 2030, and note the five-year program for the period 2031 to 2035*
- (c) *note the following documentation applies as adopted 7 July 2025*
  - (i) *the Debt Policy*
  - (ii) *the Revenue Policy*
  - (iii) *the total value of the change, expressed as a percentage, in the rates and utility charges levied for the financial year compared with the rates and utility charges levied in the previous budget, and*
  - (iv) *the Revenue Statement*

- (v) *the rates and charges to be levied for the 2025-26 financial year and other matters as adopted 7 July 2025*
- (vi) *the Strategic Environment Levy Policy*
- (vii) *the Strategic Arts and Heritage Levy Policy*
- (viii) *the Strategic Transport Levy Policy*
- (ix) *Prescribed Services Charge Plan (No. 2) 2025-26 Financial Year and*
- (d) *endorse the 2025-26 Minor Capital Works Program (Appendix B).*

**Ordinary Meeting 26 February 2026 (OM26/9)**

*That Council receive and note the report titled "January 2026 Financial Performance Report".*

**Ordinary Meeting 18 September 2025 (OM25/82)**

*That Council:*

- (a) *receive and note the report titled "Budget Review 1" and*
- (b) *adopt Appendix A as tabled, pursuant to sections 169 and 170 of the Local Government Regulation 2012, Council's amended budget for 2025-26 financial year incorporating:*
  - (i) *the statement of income and expense*
  - (ii) *the statement of financial position*
  - (iii) *the statement of changes in equity*
  - (iv) *the statement of cash flow*
  - (v) *the relevant measurers of financial sustainability*
  - (vi) *the long term financial forecast*
  - (vii) *Council's 2025-26 Capital Works Program, endorse the indicative four-year program for the period 2027 to 2030, and note the five-year program for the period 2031 to 2035.*
  - (viii) *Debt Policy*
- (c) *note the following documentation applies as adopted 7 July 2025*
  - (i) *Revenue Policy*
  - (ii) *the total value of change, expressed as a percentage, in the rates and utility charges levied for the financial year compared with the rates and utility charges levied in the previous budget*
  - (iii) *the Revenue Statement*
  - (iv) *the rates and charges to be levied for the 2025-26 financial year and other matters as adopted 7 July 2025*
  - (v) *the Strategic Environment Levy Policy*
  - (vi) *the Strategic Arts and Heritage Levy Policy*
  - (vii) *the Strategic Transport Levy Policy*
  - (viii) *Prescribed Services Charge Plan (No. 2) 2025-26 Financial Year and*

(d) *endorse the Minor Capital Works Program (Appendix B).*

**Special Meeting 7 July 2025 (SM25/4)** in part**1. STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FINANCIAL POSITION**

*That Council receive and note the statement of estimated financial operations and financial position of the Council in respect to the 2024-25 financial year as set out in Attachment 1 pursuant to section 205 of the Local Government Regulation 2012.*

**10. ADOPTION OF BUDGET**

That Council adopt Appendix A as tabled, pursuant to sections 169 and 170 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, as Council's budget for 2025-26 financial year incorporating:

- i. the statement of income and expenditure
- ii. the statement of financial position
- iii. the statement of changes in equity
- iv. the statement of cash flow
- v. the relevant measures of financial sustainability
- vi. the significant business activity statement
- vii. the long-term financial forecast, as detailed in items 10(i) to 10(iv) above
- viii. the Revenue Policy (adopted by Council resolution on 21 May 2025)
- ix. the total value of the change, expressed as a percentage, in the rates and utility charges levied for the financial year compared with the rates and utility charges levied in the previous budget
- x. the Revenue Statement for the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026
- xi. Council's 2025-26 Capital Works Program, endorsing the indicative four-year program for the period 2027 to 2030, and noting the five-year program for the period 2031 to 2035
- xii. the rates and charges to be levied for the 2025-26 financial year and other matters as detailed above in clauses 2 to 9; and
- xiii. the 2025-26 Minor Capital Works Program.

**Related Documentation**

2025-26 Adopted Budget

**Critical Dates**

There are no critical dates for this report.

**Implementation**

There are no implementation details to include in this report.











































**8.4 SALE OF LAND IN NAMBOUR**

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**This item was withdrawn by the Chief Executive Officer.**



**9 NOTIFIED MOTIONS**

**10 TABLING OF PETITIONS**

Petitions only eligible for submission if:

- \* Legible
- \* Have purpose of the petition on top of each page
- \* Contain at least 10 signatures
- \* Motion limited to:
  - Petition received and referred to a future meeting
  - Petition received and referred to the Chief Executive Officer for report and consideration of recommendation
  - Petition not be received



**11 CONFIDENTIAL SESSION**

**12 NEXT MEETING**

The next Ordinary Meeting will be held on 23 April 2026.

**13 MEETING CLOSURE**