

30 April 2021

Have your say on Council's 2021/22 Draft Budget and Fees & Charges

Warrumbungle Shire Council has placed its Draft Operational Plan for 2021/22 on public exhibition and is seeking submissions from the community.

"The Draft Operational Plan and Budget provides the community with an overview of the projects, programs and activities that Council will deliver in the next financial year as well as the Revenue Policy incorporating the proposed fees and charges," said Warrumbungle Shire Council Mayor, Councillor Ambrose Doolan.

Council resolved at the Council Meeting 15 April 2021 to place on exhibition the draft consolidated 2021/22 Operating Plan and Budget documents for Public Exhibition and to seek written submissions from the public for Council's consideration. Additionally, four-year Delivery Plan details, incorporating the 2021/22 Operating Plan and Budget, are included in the documents on exhibition.

The draft documents include a consolidated Operational Plan that shows estimated operating income of \$37.169M before capital grants and contributions of \$9.417M and operating expenditure of \$41.282M supported by the Revenue Policy and proposed Fees and Charges and a proposed capital works projects of \$18.039M. The estimated consolidated Operating Result of 2021/22 is therefore a deficit of \$4.113M before Capital Grants and Contributions or a surplus of \$5.304M after.

"In compiling the draft consolidated 2021/22 Operating Plan and Budget Council's staff ran two Budget Workshops with councillors to thoroughly discuss the issues faced by Council now and in future years," said Cr Doolan.

To finance the general, waste, water and sewerage fund operations, Council has proposed to adopt an increase in rates and charges of 2% plus catch-up provisions for General Fund, a 2% increase in waste charges, a 15% increase in annual and water use charges and fees and a 5% increase in sewer charges and fees.

"In the decision to increase the water rate charges by 15%, Council considered the impact of the ongoing reduced water usage following the recent drought and the increase in operating costs," Cr Doolan explained.

“Increasing the sewer charges and fees by 5% was decided due to the consideration of operating income against the operating costs.”

The decision to increase the general rates pegging amount of 2% (plus catch up) was based on the constraints on Council operations to increase operating income against the increases in operating costs. In particular, the additional provision of \$1.467M for depreciation of roads, drainage, bridges, causeway/culverts and other transport infrastructure that was condition assessed in 2019/20 and revalued by external valuers and the continuation of the increase in contribution towards the State Government funding of emergency services such as the Rural Fire Service, Fire Services and the State Emergency Service from 2019/20 by over \$200,000 per year.

“This is your opportunity to have your say on this budget. Submissions can be made online or in writing. Don’t miss out on this opportunity,” concluded Cr Doolan.

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