

2017/2018 BUDGET Media Package

OVERVIEW

Mayor's Message 2017/2018
Expenditure Highlights
Budget Briefs

RATES

Differential General Rates

MEDIA RELEASES

MEDIA RELEASE – Council delivers its second budget
MEDIA RELEASE – Budget Synopsis
MEDIA RELEASE – Water Tank Rebate for Residents
MEDIA RELEASE - Local Community the Real Winners

Further information:
Julie Cave
Media & Consultation Officer
0429 430 250



Mayor's Message 2017/2018

Our first year as a Council serving the community is behind us, and it was an exciting and successful year. I have no doubt that this year will be just as challenging. It's important to our role that we understand the variety and diversity of our business and activities in order to build sustainable communities. Over the past year, we took a lot of time to listen to the issues that concern the community, and we actively work with our residents to ensure that decisions are made in line with community expectations, while meeting Council's overall direction.

For the past five months, Council has been working on the budget for 2017/2018. All Councillors have worked closely with staff in the development of the Budget this year, and substantial community feedback has been incorporated into the Budget.

The Budget is consistent with the Long Term Financial Forecast with a 3.4% rise across the general rate and the utility charges for water, wastewater and waste collection and recycling. This is below the forecast 4% and recognises that many ratepayers were finding themselves in challenging financial circumstances.

A number of sessions were held to discuss the public submissions received throughout the public consultation period. I'd like to thank everyone in the community who made a submission as part of the Budget process.

While everyone within the Council team has been urged to carefully review spending, the need to provide the appropriate level of services expected by the community has also been considered.

The good news is that the draft Budget forecasts a moderate operating surplus of \$399,000 as well as a further reduction of Council's debt by \$2 million.

This means that as Council repays its debt and repayments decrease, greater funds will be available for future Council projects and will give Council a higher level of financial flexibility.

There are several specific items in the budget I'm really pleased with. These include:

- Residents of the Southern Downs who are currently on the reticulated water supply, and who decide to buy a water tank can apply for a rebate from Council.
- The new mobile library, which is a multi-purpose vehicle that Council will use for the library, emergency management and community engagement.
- The increase in the Community Support Program of \$150,000.
- The waste water charge for Killarney will be frozen for a period of twelve months.

Council will also deliver another significant Capital Works program with approximately \$23.04 million included in the Budget which features several major projects to be undertaken across the region.

Highlights include:

- *Black Spot funded initiatives \$300,000*
- *Forest Plains Road pavement repairs \$350,000*
- *Rehabilitation - Goomburra Road \$500,000 & Harslett Road \$300,000*

- *Road resealing and re-sheeting of gravel roads \$3.2 million*
- *Stanthorpe Aerodrome Runway Reseal \$700,000*
- *Stanthorpe Wastewater Treatment Plant \$185,000*
- *Sycamore Street reconstruction \$450,000*
- *Warwick Aerodrome Taxiway Realignment \$700,000*
- *Warwick Water Treatment Plant Upgrade - Clarifier Stage 2 \$900,000*
- *Warwick Effluent Reuse – Stage 2 \$2.21 million*
- *Water trunk main construction Storm King Dam to Stanthorpe Water Treatment Plant \$3.28 million*
- *Widening - Amiens Road \$1 million & Inverramsey Road \$1.19 million*

Overall this budget is about continuing to build a firm financial foundation, through the delivery of an operating surplus and reducing debt; accounting for our infrastructure, through consistent upgrades and maintenance; and empowering our community through the increase in our Community Support Program.

The budget for 2017/18 was developed through a rigorous process of consultation and review and Council endorses it as financially responsible.

Yours sincerely
Mayor, Cr Tracy Dobie

Expenditure Highlights

- \$1.4 million for improvements to the Stanthorpe and Warwick Aerodromes
- \$123,000 for works to the Warwick cemetery
- \$150,000 for the Stanthorpe Outdoor Burial Wall
- \$250,000 to replace the mobile library
- \$75,000 for Warwick Saleyards safety improvements
- \$450,000 for the Sycamore Street reconstruction
- \$1.10 million for the resealing of roads across the region
- \$2.10 million for the resheeting of gravel roads across the region
- \$300,000 for a number of Black Spot funded initiatives across the region
- \$1.19 million for widening Inverramsay Road, Goomburra
- \$1 million for the widening of Amiens Road
- \$800,000 for the rehabilitation of Goomburra Road & Harslett Road
- \$100,000 for the expansion of the Allora stockpile
- \$100,000 for additional works at the Warwick and Stanthorpe waste facilities
- \$900,000 for the Warwick water treatment plant upgrade
- \$3.28 million for the Storm King Dam water trunk main construction
- \$2.21 million for Stage Two of the Warwick effluent reuse
- \$300,000 for the Dragon Street pump station upgrade
- \$175,000 for Stanthorpe waste water additional emergency storage

Budget Briefs

AERODROMES

Council will reseal the Stanthorpe Aerodrome runway and realign the Warwick Aerodrome taxiway with an allocation of \$1.4 million in the 2017/18 budget. A further \$340,000 has been allocated towards the development of the Warwick Aerodrome.

CEMETERIES

A total of \$123,000 has been budgeted for operating and maintenance costs for the region's cemeteries, which includes the restoration of Mitchner Shelter at the Warwick Cemetery. There is also \$150,000 for the new Stanthorpe Outdoor Burial Wall.

CIVIC EVENTS

The Christmas decorations in the region will be upgraded for \$20,000.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Council has allocated \$145,000 for our ongoing commitment to managing disasters effectively.

FUNDING TO COMMUNITY

Council has again committed its support to local groups and organisations by way of community funding programs including Community Grants, Community Support and Fast Response Small Grants to the sum of \$247,000. This includes a significant increase to our Community Support Program of \$150,000.

LIBRARIES

In recognition of the ongoing high use of the libraries, Council continues its commitment to funding library services. In this financial year, Council will upgrade the mobile library at a cost of \$250,000.

MAJOR EVENTS

Council will again invest in a number of major events held in the region including, Jumpers and Jazz in July Festival, Warwick Rodeo, the Stanthorpe Apple and Grape Harvest Festival and the Historic Leyburn Sprints, with a total commitment of \$55,000.

PARKS

A total of \$125,000 has been budgeted for the provision of parks and gardens operations and maintenance. Council places a strong emphasis on the amenity of the region as well as providing safe outdoor areas and play equipment for children and families.

PEST MANAGEMENT

Council has budgeted \$1.1 million for pest management operations throughout the region. Council has allocated funding of \$11,000 for replacing a section of the Killarney Wild Dog Fence and \$20,000 for the replacement of 1.5km of the Stanthorpe Wild Dog Fence, continuing the commitment to combating the problems caused by wild dogs in the region. Bounty payments for wild dogs are again being provided by Council to assist in the control of these animals.

ROADS AND BRIDGES

Just over \$8.27 million will be spent on roads and bridges in the 2017/18 budget, ensuring safer roads for all users. Major projects include \$800,000 for the rehabilitation and widening of Goomburra Road and Harslett Road; \$1.198 million for widening of Inverramsay Road; and \$1 million for the widening of Amiens

Road. The budget also contains \$2.1 million for gravel re-sheeting and \$1.1 million for re-sealing of roads throughout the region.

SALEYARDS

Council has allocated \$75,000 to replace the cattle yards at the Warwick Saleyards.

STREETSCAPES

Works have begun on improving the streetscapes of Allora and Killarney, with \$300,000 allocated for both projects.

SUPPORTING ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Council recognises the importance of a vibrant local arts community and the 2017/18 budget will support the arts, culture and heritage locally with a budget allocation of around \$415,000. This amount includes funding of \$350,000 towards the operation and maintenance of the Warwick and Stanthorpe Art Galleries; \$15,000 for the Stanthorpe Museum and \$50,000 to the Stanthorpe YMCA.

WASTE SERVICES

A total of \$8.320 million has been allocated to the upgrade of water and wastewater facilities in the region. Stage 2 of the Warwick water treatment plant has been allocated \$900,000, \$2.215 million has been allocated to Stage Two of the Warwick Effluent Reuse, and \$3.28 million allocated to water trunk main construction at Storm King Dam. Further allocations include pump station upgrades at Jackie Howe Drive, Warwick (\$50,000), Tyrell Street, Stanthorpe (\$75,000) and Dragon Street, Warwick (\$300,000).

ENDS

Differential General Rates

Table 1 – 2017/18 Rating Category Definitions

Category	Intent of Category	Identifier	Cents in dollar	Minimum General Rate
Residential 1	Lands where the dominant use is residential, that are required to pay water access charges according to the SDRC Revenue Statement and the assessment size is less than or equal to 4,047 m ²	01A, 02, 03, 06A, 07B, 08A, 09A, 72A	1.392	\$1,085.00
Residential 2	Lands where the dominant use is residential, that are required to pay water access charges according to the SDRC Revenue Statement and the assessment size is greater than 4,047 m ²	01A, 02, 03, 06A, 07B, 08A, 09A, 72A	1.203	\$1,085.00
Residential 3	Lands where the dominant use is residential, that are not required to pay water access charges according to the SDRC Revenue Statement and the assessment size is less than or equal to 4.4 ha	01A, 02, 03, 06A, 07B, 08A, 09A, 72A	1.137	\$1,085.00
Residential 4	Lands where the dominant use is residential, that are not required to pay water access charges according to the SDRC Revenue Statement and assessment size is greater than 4.4 ha	01A, 02, 03, 06A, 07B, 08A, 09A, 72A	1.069	\$1,085.00
Major Shopping Facility	Lands where the dominant use is as a major shopping facility, including shopping centres, a group of shops or supermarkets with car parking provided	12, 14, 16	1.714	\$11,840.00

Category	Intent of Category	Identifier	Cents in dollar	Minimum General Rate
Commercial and Industrial – CBD	<p>Land where the dominant use or intended use is for commercial and/or industrial purposes where any part of the land is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facing Palmerin Street, located between Victoria Street and Percy Street in Warwick, and Facing High Street and Maryland Street, located between Davadi and Corundum Streets and the northern end of Carnarvon Bridge in Stanthorpe 	01B, 06B, 07A, 08B, 09B, 10, 11A, 13, 17, 18A, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37A, 38, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, 49 72B	1.572	\$1,175.00
Commercial and Industrial – Town	<p>Land where the dominant use or intended use is for commercial and/or industrial purposes located within the locality boundaries of Warwick, Morgan Park, Rosenthal Heights and Stanthorpe and not rated within the Commercial and Industrial CBD category. The locality boundary is defined by the use of the locality on the official property address.</p>	01B, 06B, 07A, 08B, 09B, 10, 11A, 13, 17, 18A, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37A, 38, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, 49 72B	1.433	\$1,175.00
Commercial and Industrial - Rural	<p>Land where the dominant use or intended use is for commercial and/or industrial purposes and not rated within either the Commercial and Industrial – CBD category or the Commercial and Industrial – Town Category</p>	01B, 06B, 07A, 08B, 09B, 10, 11A, 13, 17, 18A, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37A, 38, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, 49 72B	1.330	\$1,175.00

Category	Intent of Category	Identifier	Cents in dollar	Minimum General Rate
Agriculture and farming 1 Value between \$0 - \$325,000	Lands with a value of less than or equal to \$325,000, and the use or intended use is farming, agriculture or rural in nature including grazing, breeding, fattening, dairying, pig and poultry farming, aquaculture, vegetable growing, the growing or gathering of crops of any kind or the rearing of livestock. This category excludes land uses of 79 and 82. Includes land identified as land use 88 not located within the boundary of Map A. Properties in this category receive a concessional value for primary production.	60, 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 74, 76, 77, 78, 83, 85, 86, 87, 89, 88A	1.250	\$1,085.00
Agriculture and farming 2 Value between \$325,001 - \$850,000	Lands with a value of greater than \$325,000 and less than or equal to \$850,000, and the use or intended use is farming, agriculture or rural in nature including grazing, breeding, fattening, dairying, pig and poultry farming, aquaculture, vegetable growing, the growing or gathering of crops of any kind or the rearing of livestock. This category excludes land uses of 79 and 82. Includes land identified as land use 88 not located within the boundary of Map A. Properties in this category receive a concessional value for primary production.	60, 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 74, 76, 77, 78, 83, 85, 86, 87, 89, 88A	0.956	\$4,065.00

Category	Intent of Category	Identifier	Cents in dollar	Minimum General Rate
Agriculture and farming 3 Value greater than \$850,000	Lands with a value of greater than \$850,000, and the use or intended use is farming, agriculture or rural in nature including grazing, breeding, fattening, dairying, pig and poultry farming, aquaculture, vegetable growing, the growing or gathering of crops of any kind or the rearing of livestock. This category excludes land uses of 79 and 82. Includes land identified as land use 88 not located within the boundary of Map A. Properties in this category receive a concessional value for primary production.	60, 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 74, 76, 77, 78, 83, 85, 86, 87, 89, 88A	0.906	\$8,125.00
Horticulture 1 Value between \$0 - \$50,000	Lands with a value of less than or equal to \$50,000 and the use or intended use is agricultural in nature related to orchards (citrus, exotic fruit, nut, stone and other fruit and nuts etc) and/or vineyards, such as grapes and related cultivation. The property may or may not include a winery and/or a cellar door. Properties in this category receive a concessional value for primary production.	79, 82	4.314	\$1,085.00

Category	Intent of Category	Identifier	Cents in dollar	Minimum General Rate
Horticulture 2 Value between \$50,001 - \$100,000	Lands with a value of greater than \$50,000 and less than or equal to \$100,000 and the use or intended use is agricultural in nature related to orchards (citrus, exotic fruit, nut, stone and other fruit and nuts etc) and/or vineyards, such as grapes and related cultivation. The property may or may not include a winery and/or a cellar door. Properties in this category receive a concessional value for primary production.	79, 82	3.317	\$2,155.00
Horticulture 3 Value greater than \$100,000	Lands with a value of greater than \$100,000 and the use or intended use is agricultural in nature related to orchards (citrus, exotic fruit, nut, stone and other fruit and nuts etc) and/or vineyards, such as grapes and related cultivation. The property may or may not include a winery and/or a cellar door. Properties in this category receive a concessional value for primary production.	79, 82	3.011	\$3,315.00
Extractive	Lands where the purpose of use or intended use is to extract quarry, mining and minerals from the ground and related activities. Assessments that are a lease for mining activities are included in this category.	40A, 40B	4.653	\$3,540.00
Noxious and Hazardous Industry	Lands where the purpose of use or intended use is a fuel dump or storage, oil refinery or industry which in Council's opinion emanates offensive noise, odour, dust etc, including abattoirs	31, 37B	1.579	\$1,485.00

Category	Intent of Category	Identifier	Cents in dollar	Minimum General Rate
Private Forestry	Lands where the use or intended use is for the growing or harvesting of natural and/or plantation hardwood or softwood and located within the boundary of Map A.	88P	1.454	\$815.00
Special Uses	Lands where the use or intended use is Religious, community, welfare or defence oriented including aged residential institutions, nursing or convalescent homes, hospitals, sports clubs, cemeteries, showgrounds, airfields, libraries, educational, parks and gardens, defence force and community protection centres. This category excludes lands where the use or intended use is to generate a profit, such as licensed clubs.	11B, 18B, 27, 48, 50, 51, 52, 55, 56, 57, 58, 92, 96, 97, 99	1.053	\$980.00
Other	All other lands	00, 91, 95, and all other	4.653	\$1,085.00

Media Release – Budget 2017/2018

Council delivers its second budget

At its June Special Meeting held today in Warwick, Southern Downs Regional Council adopted the 2017/18 Budget.

Southern Downs Mayor, Cr Tracy Dobie said she was proud to deliver the 2017/2018 Annual Budget on behalf of Council and the community.

“This budget is financially responsible. It has been developed in line with Council’s Long Term Financial Plan, and we have been able to bring in a 3.4% rate rise, along with the discount of 7.5% on the general rate.

“Balances have been struck between working towards our long-term financial sustainability, delivering value for money services and investing in, and developing the Southern Downs as a great place to live, work and unwind.

“Council has a key focus on attracting new businesses, new residents and new visitors to the region, to stimulate our local economies, to create new jobs, and to grow our population into the future.

“To support this, we’re investing in our future by upgrading and improving much needed assets including water, wastewater and waste infrastructure.

“Council will deliver a \$23.04million capital works program to ensure the region’s infrastructure assets are not only maintained, but improved, to meet increasing demand for these services.

“Council is committed to continuous improvement, and we will review the services we deliver to the community on a quarterly basis, to identify further areas for savings and efficiencies.

“Just as we did last year, the budget process undertaken this year provided the opportunity to the Southern Downs community to review and provide input about the draft budget.

“So, this is a budget that belongs, not only to Council, but importantly, to our community, and I thank everyone who attended the information sessions, and provided submissions and presentations to Council.

“I also want to thank our very dedicated staff across all areas of the organisation and particularly Chief Executive Officer, David Keenan, Manager Finance and Information Technology Andrew Page and the Finance Team for their work in delivering today’s budget.

“This is a budget with a major focus on financial stability, strong asset management and community empowerment,” concluded Mayor Dobie.

Cr Dobie said she is particularly pleased to see an increase in the Community Support Program of \$150,000; the upgrade of the mobile library and the introduction of a water tank rebate for residents of the Southern Downs.

ENDS

Media Release – Budget 2017/2018

Budget Synopsis

As part of Southern Downs Regional Council's budget process, each Manager has been required to present their draft budget to the Chief Executive Officer, and Manager Finance and Information Technology Manager and, to justify the levels of expenditure in their operational budgets, as well as validating forecast income levels and sources. Every line item in each Manager's operational budget has been through a process of scrutiny and close examination.

This year, for the second time, Council gave the community the opportunity to view and make submissions on the proposed budget. Council gave 28 days' notice of its intention to adopt the proposed budget and made the budget available for inspection at its offices and on its website. A person had the right to make a submission on any proposal contained in the budget and any submissions have been considered before adoption of this budget by Council.

The budget process also required each Manager to review all fees and charges associated with their area of operation to ensure that the fees and charges are relevant and can be benchmarked against other local government authorities. After consultation with key user groups, many of these fees and charges have been updated.

Additionally, as part of the budget preparations, Managers were required to provide bids within the capital works program. Each bid needed to be strategically supported by a plan or strategy that has been adopted by Council. Furthermore, Council's primary objective has been to support capital works that can attract, at a minimum, dollar for dollar funding from State or Federal government.

Council staff have been very successful in attracting funding of \$6.99 million of the capital works budget, sourced primarily from the State and Federal governments. It should be noted that the majority of these works are required to be carried out by contractors, rather than Council day labour staff.

Following the presentation of the managers' budgets, all Councillors were provided with a full copy of the budget, including each income and expenditure line. Councillors were given presentations by the Chief Executive Officer and each Director and Manager for their respective area. Councillors provided feedback on the cost of each service, its relevance to the "core business" of Council, community benefit and areas where cost efficiencies could be applied.

As part of the budget process Councillors undertook a review of the level of grants and funding that has been made to community and sporting organisations, considered Council's membership of different peak bodies and organisations, as well as evaluated the level of direct financial assistance and in-kind assistance provided to major events and festivals.

Each Councillor was provided detailed information about the budget and given opportunities to provide input on every service that is delivered by, or on behalf of, Council.

A key component of the budget is the Long Term Financial Forecast. This document takes into account this budget and future budgets to envisage the financial position of Council in the short, medium, and long term. The Forecast incorporates indicators and variables in the current financial environment and extrapolates these into future financial data to determine the capacity of Council to continue to deliver services and manage acceptable levels of debt.

A detailed Long Term Financial Forecast for the years 2017/18 to 2026/27 has been developed to assist Council in adopting an annual Budget within a longer term prudent financial framework. The key objective of the plan is to achieve financial sustainability in the medium to long term, whilst still achieving the Council's strategic objectives as specified in the Corporate Plan.

The immediate forward years project a series of stable underlying surpluses. In the mid to later years of the plan the projected underlying operating result has a gradual upward trend. This is due to Council maintaining its commitment to control spending in these later years.

Income for local government is derived from a number of different sources. Local government must ensure that the appropriate levels of funds are raised to cover the cost of delivering services and replacing assets when they reach the end of their useful life.

Key points on Income and Expenditure

The forecast budgeted result for 2017/18 is surplus of \$7.3 million with total income of \$75.69M and Expenditure of \$68.25M. Some of the key points are:

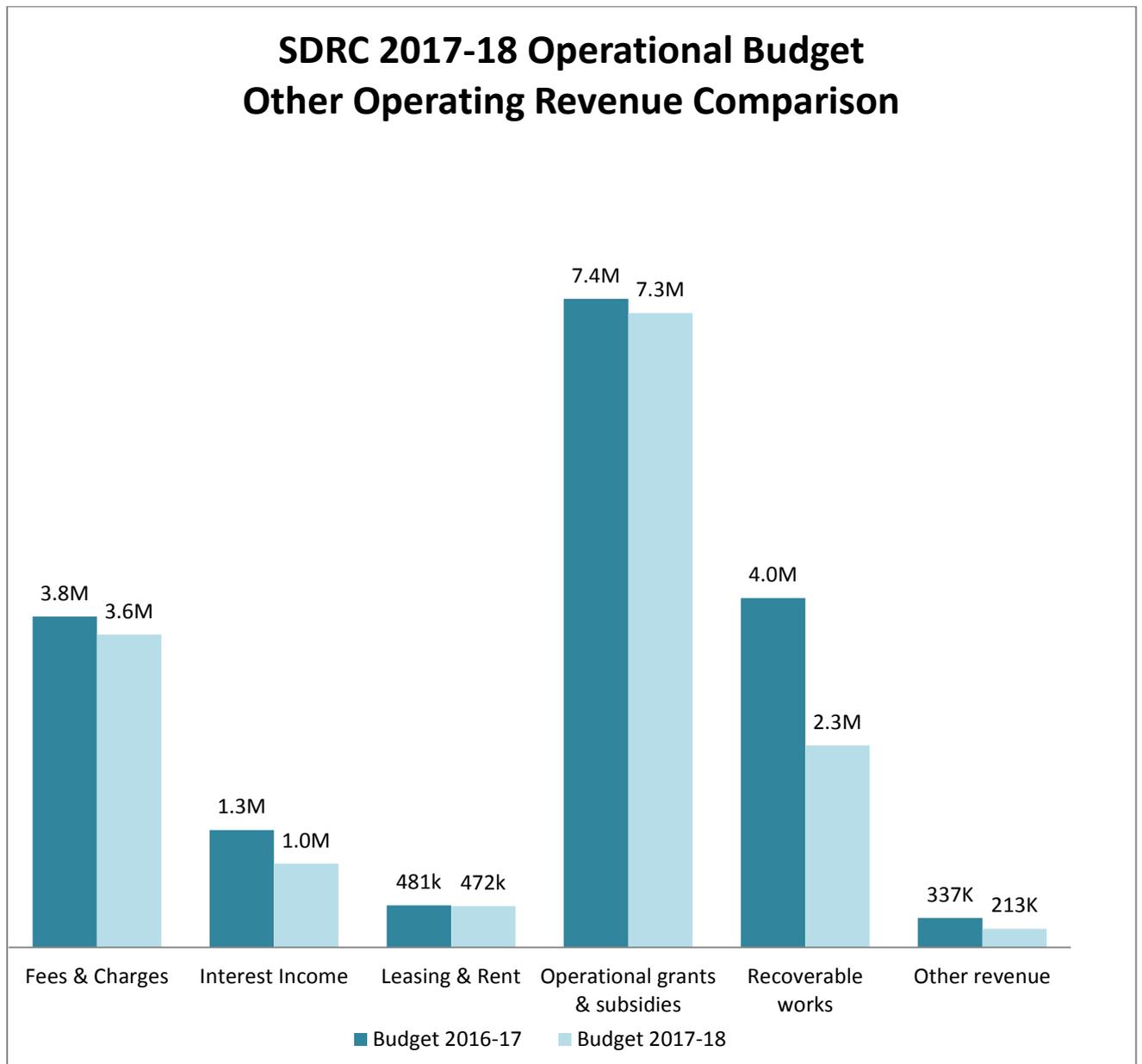
- General Rates have increased by 3.4% on the 2016/17 year, with discount of 7.5% on the General Rate given if the full rates notice, including rates, charges and arrears, is paid within 30 days. Ratepayers will be given the option of paying in two instalments but will not receive the discount if they choose this option.
- Water, Wastewater and Waste Collection charges have increased by 3.4% in this Budget.
- Capital works expenditure is budgeted at \$23.04M, funded \$13.4M from General Revenue, \$6.9M from Capital Grants, \$773K from Sale of Plant and the remainder from Reserves.
- There are no planned borrowings for the 2017/18 year.
- Reviews of the budget will be undertaken at quarterly intervals throughout the year and changes made as appropriate, with the updated budget being presented to Council for adoption.

Operating Budget Comparisons – 2016/17 to 2017/18

Revenue Analysis

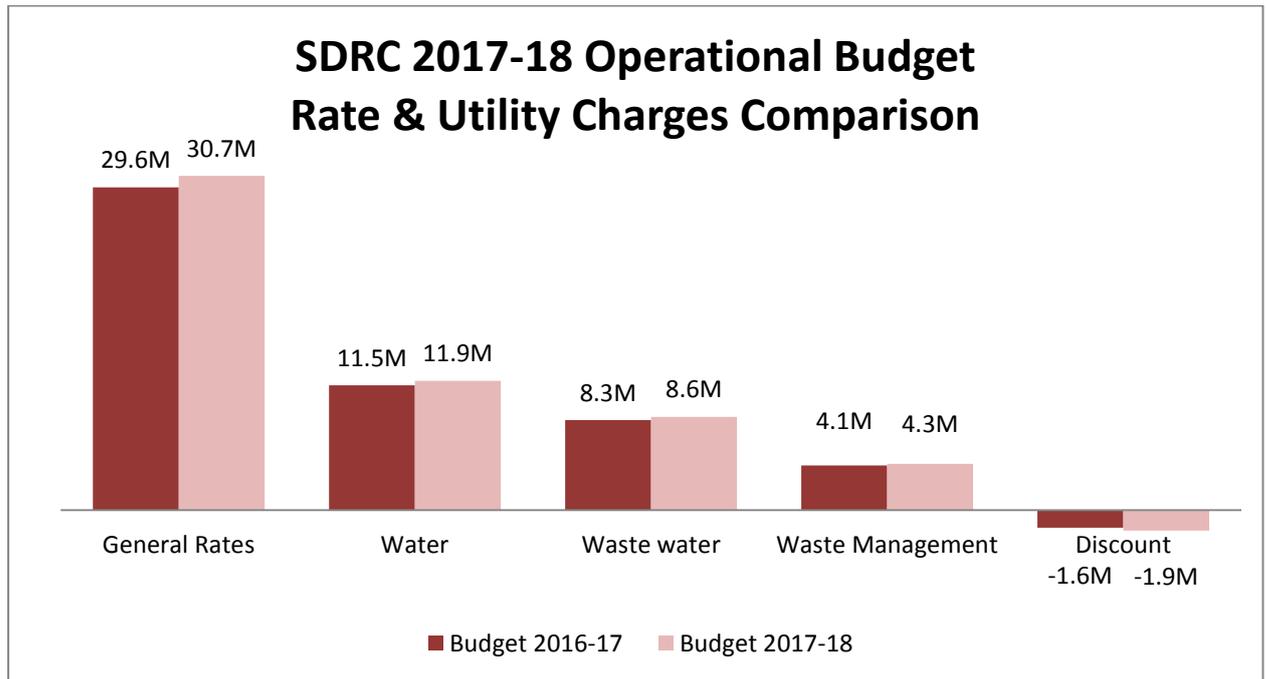
With regard to income and revenue, the following table outlines the forecast income for fees and charges, interest, leasing and rent, grants, operating grants and subsidies, recoverable works and other revenue.

It is projected for rates and charges to increase in line with the 3.4% rate increase, while all other forms of income are expected to decrease.



Rates and utility charges comparison

The 3.4% rate rise increases the forecast level of income which is consistent with the increase in the utility charges and represents a decrease from the previous year. The additional income from the utility charges is required to update the infrastructure that provides the services to the community. Funds raised through the increased utility charges will be allocated to the infrastructure priorities identified in the Water and Wastewater Asset Management Plans and the Waste Management Strategy, both formally adopted by Council.



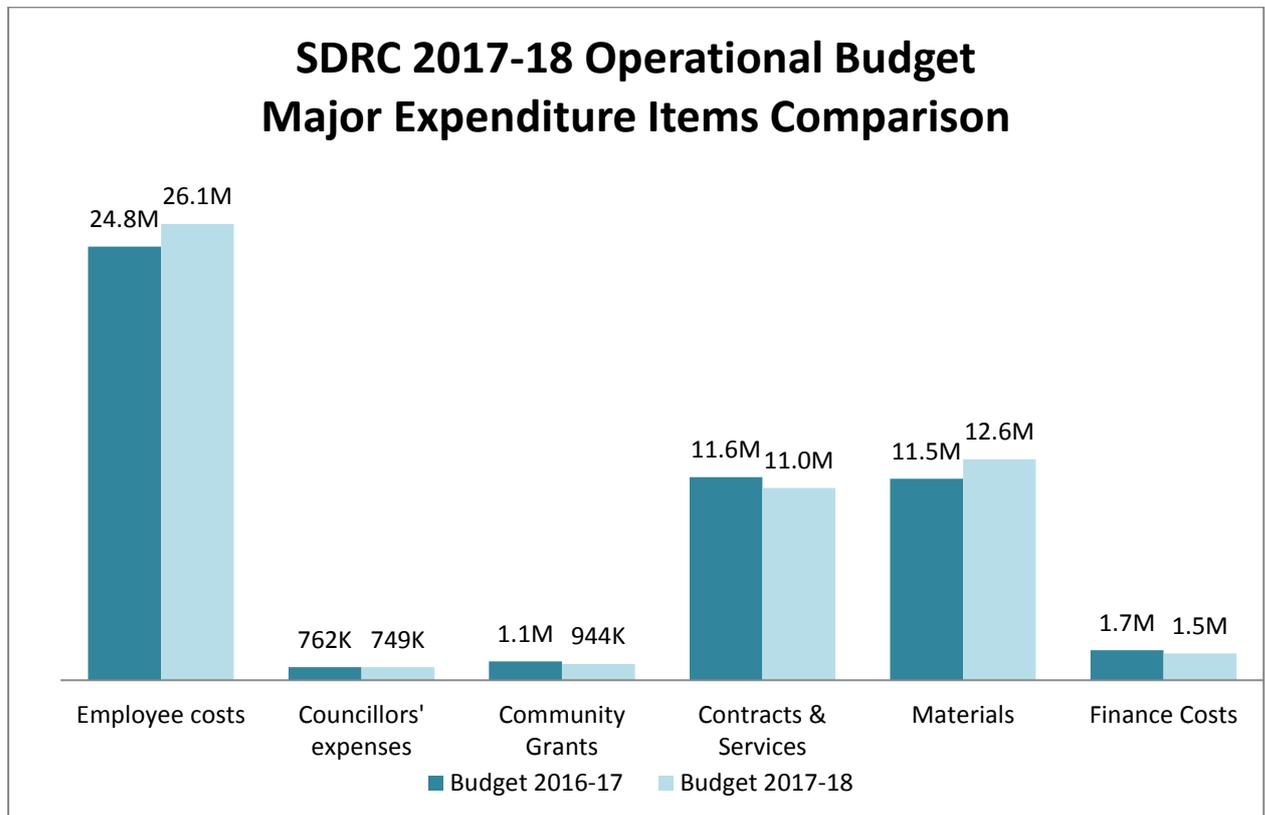
Major expenditure items comparison – Whole of Council

In relation to the operating expenditure, the following budget changes have occurred.

Employee costs are forecast to increase by \$1.28 million from \$24.8 million to \$26.1 million and councillor’s expenses are expected to increase from \$762,000 to \$749,000. There is no increase to the number of Council employees.

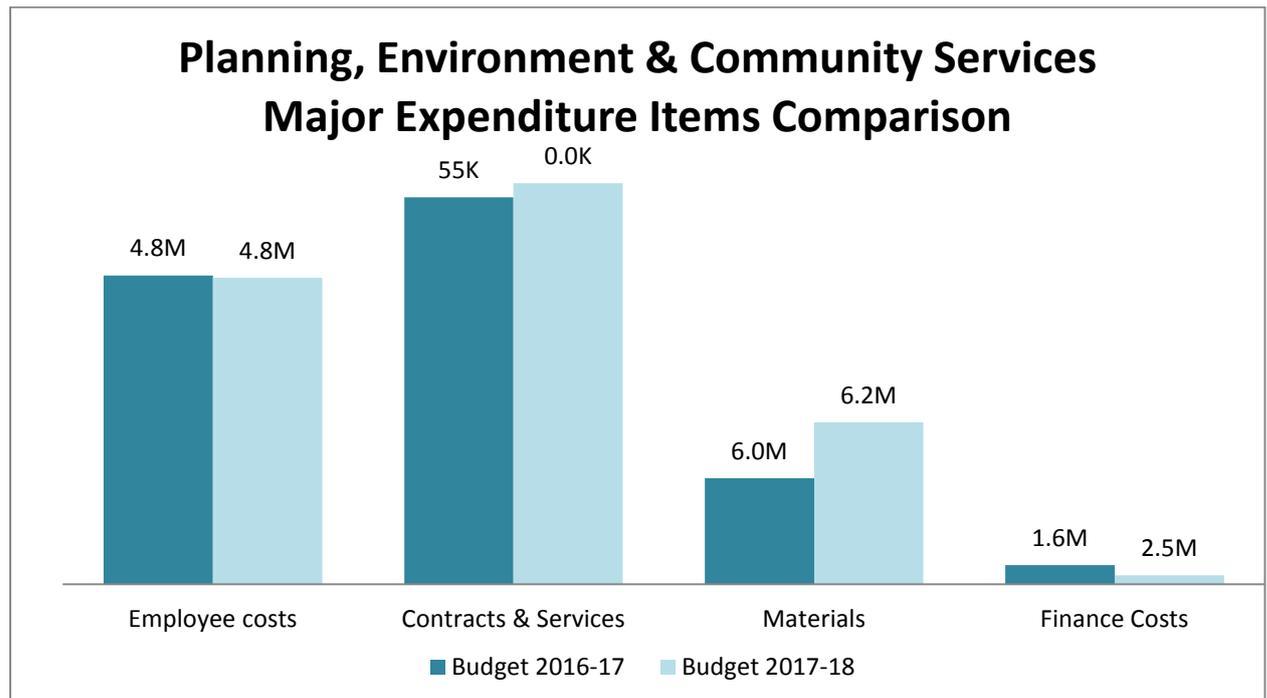
The amount allocated to community grants has decreased from \$1.1 million in 2016/17 to \$944,000 in 2017/18, representing Council’s ongoing commitment to the community. Materials will see an increase from \$11.5 million to \$12.6 million in 2017/18, while Contracts and Services will reduce from \$11.6 million to \$11 million.

There will be a decrease in the finance costs from \$1.7 million to \$1.5 million in 2017/18.



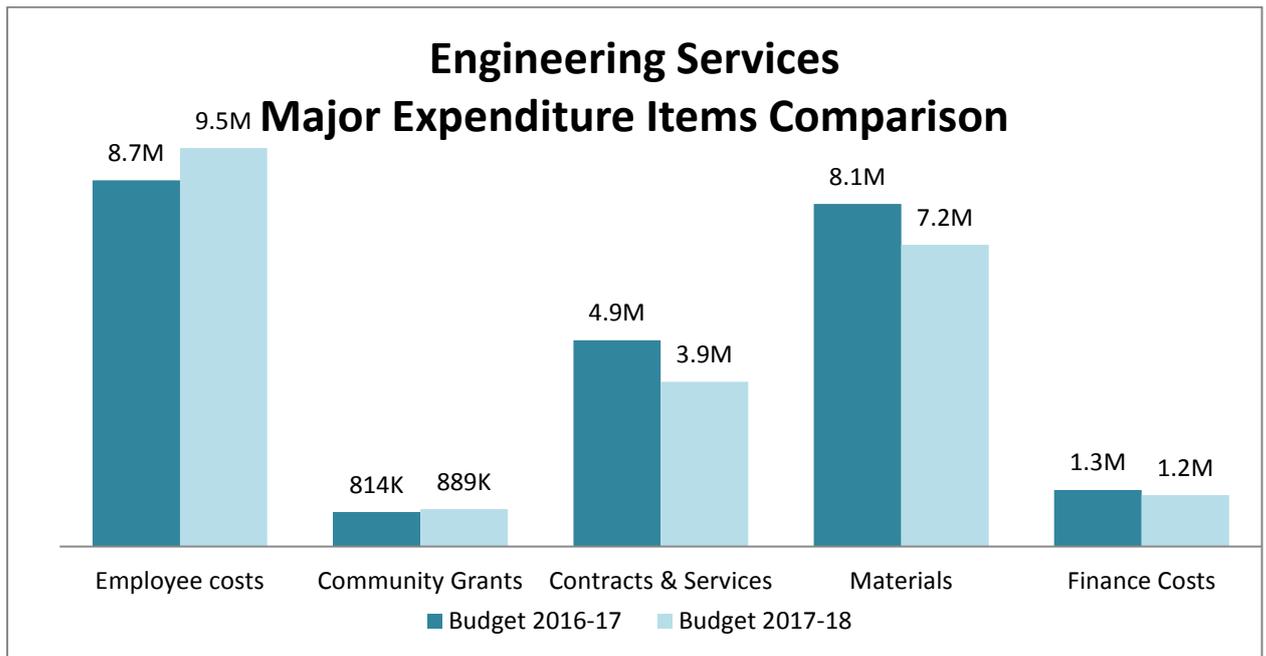
Major expenditure items comparison – Planning, Environment and Community Services

In the Planning, Environment and Community Services Directorate, employee costs remain static at \$4.8 million for the year, while Contracts and Services will rise by \$200,000. Materials will increase from \$1.6 million to \$2.5 million and Finance costs will reduce from \$366,000 to \$140,000.



Major expenditure items comparison – Engineering Services

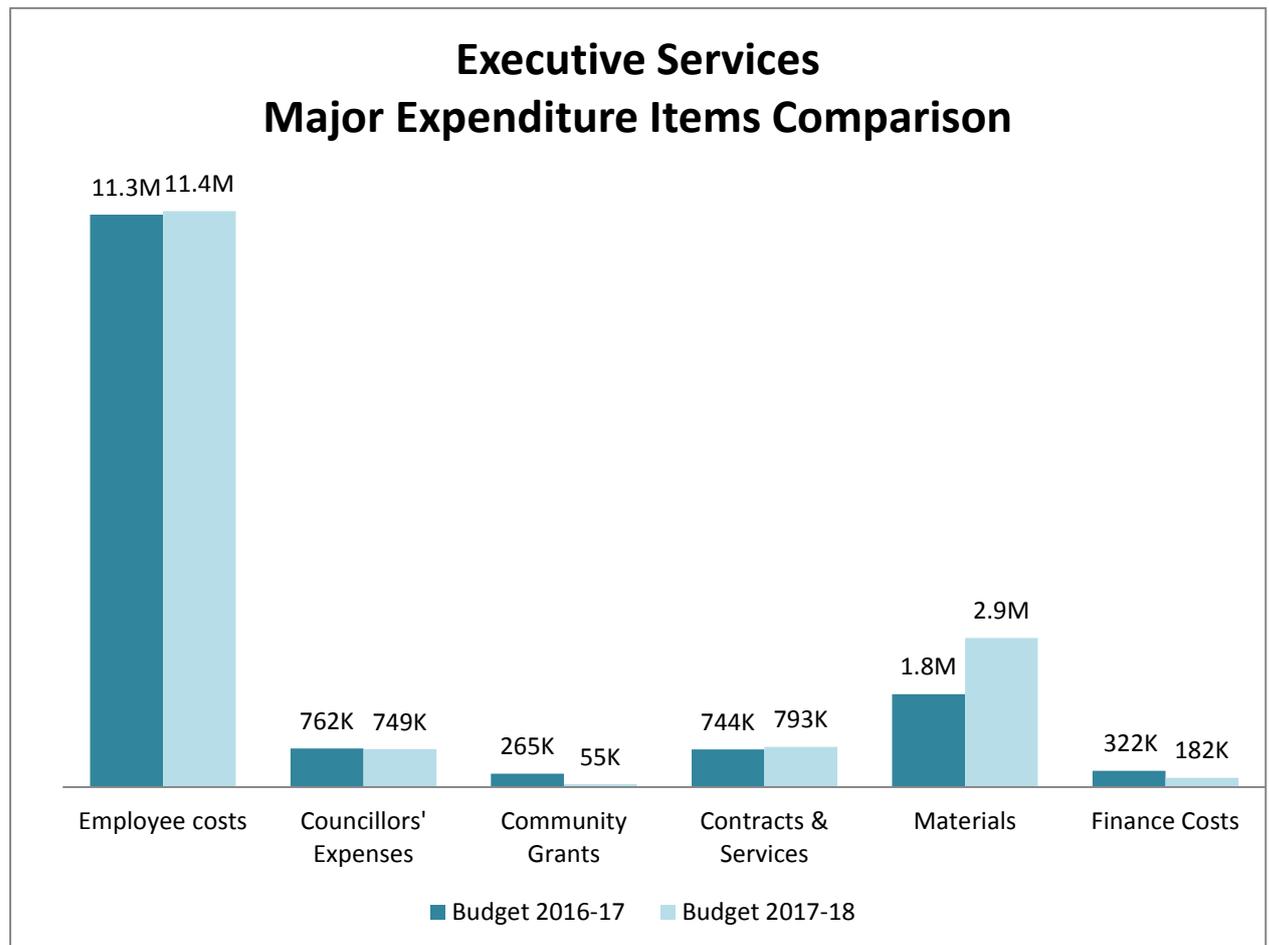
In the Engineering Services Directorate, Employee costs will increase by \$800,000 and Community Grants will rise from \$814, 000 to \$889,000. All other costs will decrease: Contracts and Services by \$1 million, Materials by \$900,000 and Finance costs by \$100,000.



Major expenditure items comparison – Executive Services

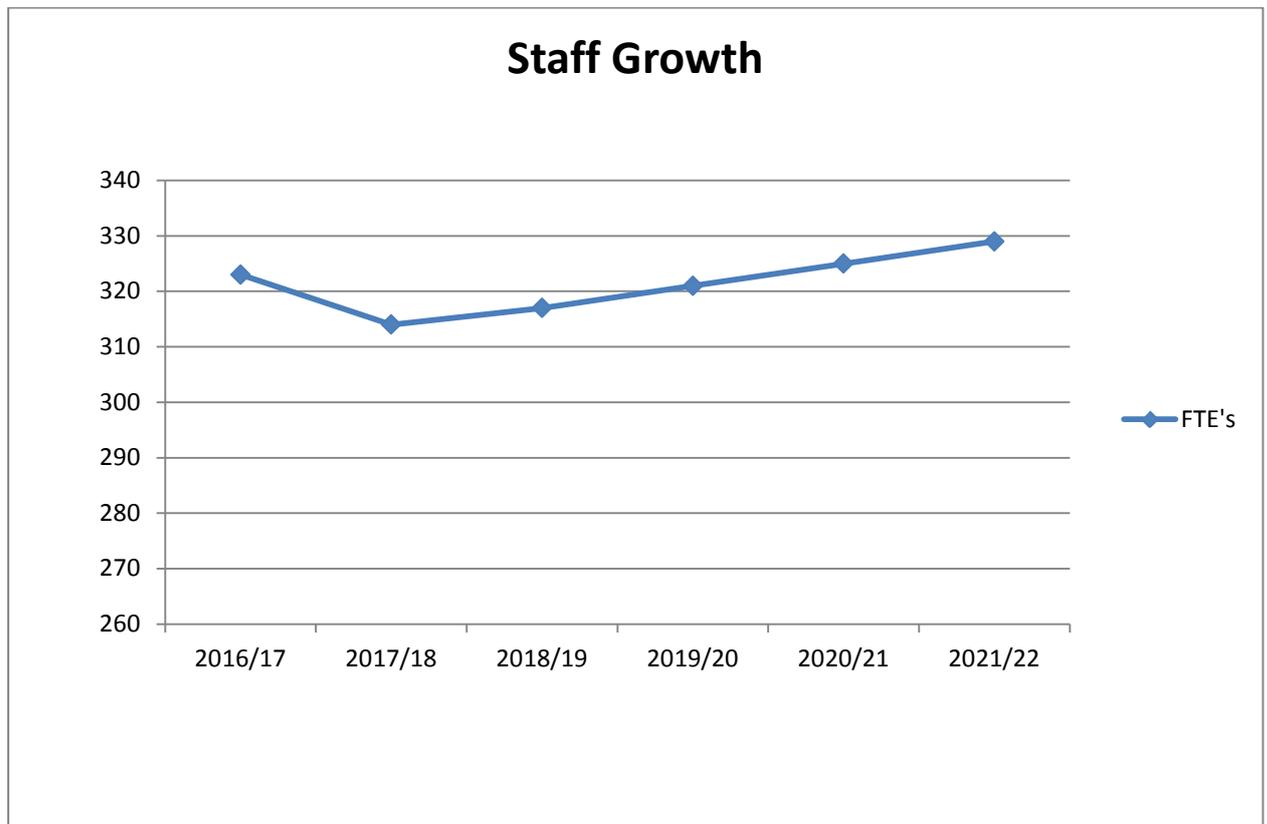
In the Executive Services Directorate, budget employee costs have increased by \$100,000 from the 2016/2017 year. Councillor’s expenses have remained stable, decreasing slightly, while community grants have decreased by \$210,000, and finance costs have decreased by \$140,000.

Materials expenditure has increased to by \$1.1 million, compared to 2016/2017. This increase expenditure can mainly be attributed to an increase in external contracts.



Labour force levels and costs

Employee costs are one of the major costs and assets to any local government authority. From a staffing perspective there has been a consistent strategy to reduce the number of employees without impacting on services. At present Southern Downs Regional Council has approximately 323 full time equivalent (FTE) staff. This will not change in the 2017/18 Budget. This level of staff is comparable with other local government authorities that deliver a similar range of services. The current level of staffing represents the lowest number of staff that has ever been employed at Southern Downs Regional Council.



It is the intention of Council to only replace positions when necessary and where justification can be provided. Council will always recruit from within, should the necessary skills and experience be available, and only advertise externally when the above two conditions cannot be met.

Media Release – Budget 2017/2018

SDRC Offers Water Tank Rebate to Residents

As part of the 2017/2018 Budget, Southern Downs Regional Council resolved to offer a water tank rebate to residents.

Most residents want to 'do the right thing' for the environment – especially if it is easy to do. This water tank rebate will make it easier to save water and money.

This offer is made to ratepayers who install a water tank which is plumbed to their dwelling for any degree of household usage, such as toilet, laundry or general use.

In order to receive the rebate, the ratepayer must provide evidence of the purchase of the water tank and the works carried out to plumb the tank into their home. Evidence should be in the form of tax invoices for the purchase of the tank, the address the tank was delivered to, and from the plumbers who plumbed the tank into the house.

It's important to note that the rebate does not apply to pre-installed tanks and can only be applied once per property. To be eligible, ratepayers need to have their water tank installed on their property within the 2017/2018 financial year.

Upon approval, Council will allow a rebate of 100% of a water access charge levied on the property for the full financial year, regardless of when the evidence is provided.

The extent of the rebate is based on the size of the water tank installed.

This rebate was one of the key recommendations handed down by the Stanthorpe Water Security Assessment Study conducted by the Queensland Government Department of Energy and Water Supply (DEWS) and was subsequently adopted by Council on 28 September 2016.

Southern Downs Mayor Tracy Dobie said that the water tank rebate achieves two benefits to the community. It will make accessing and using water more affordable for residents and will reduce the demand on the region's water supply.

"I'm very pleased Council endorsed this decision," Mayor Dobie said. "Water becomes cheaper for residents, and the demand on the region's water supply decreases. In an era of awareness of water security, anything Council can do to improve it is important. I encourage all eligible residents to take up the rebate on offer."

ENDS

Media Release – Budget 2017/2018

Local Community the Real Winners

The local community will be the real winners under the 2017/18 Budget. A number of initiatives will see residents, local community groups and not-for-profit organisations benefit widely.

The Council has reviewed the way grants are funded to community groups and is pleased to offer funding streams that are more far-reaching. A broader section of not-for-profit organisations can now apply for funding where it previously wasn't available.

"This new allocation of \$150,000 will give great support to organisations operating at the front line of community support," said Southern Downs Mayor, Tracy Dobie.

The replacement of the mobile library offers far more than just library services. This multi-purpose vehicle will offer library services, emergency management and greater community engagement.

"The mobile library will offer high levels of connectivity," said Mayor Dobie. "This is especially important in regional areas that currently have limited or inconsistent Internet services – residents there know they'll be able to use the mobile library for this purpose."

The mobile library will also provide information about Council for residents.

The Visitor Information Centre at Stanthorpe will no longer have to endure hot summers and cold winters – air conditioning is set to be installed, making the Centre a more welcoming place for volunteers and visitors alike.

At Stanthorpe, Storm King Dam will receive an upgrade, with the replacement of public toilets, installation of BBQs and construction of a picnic shelter, improving the amenities to draw more locals and tourists.

At Swanfels, the shelter will be replaced with \$25,000 allocated to the design and materials for construction. Director Engineering Services Peter See says he's pleased that the building work of the Swanfels shelter will be undertaken by apprentices employed by All Trades Queensland. "In conjunction with All Trades Queensland, I'm pleased that Council can support the training and employment opportunities for the young people of the Southern Downs," said Mr. See.

"This Council is committed to supporting the local community as much as possible. Increasing the Community Support Program does just that, as does providing an innovative mobile library and making improvements to the infrastructure tourists to our region enjoy," said Cr Dobie.

ENDS