

August 2021

Our reference: 1058879

Community Questions and Responses

“Between a Rock and a Hard Place”

Community Engagement

General

1. How many days did Council engage a media representative to assist council with the preparation of the meeting format and what was the cost to council for this contract?

Kim Skubris was engaged for two days to assist councillors hone the message they wanted to share with community. This was to ensure that the messaging was clear, concise, represented Council's collective voice but didn't bore Community, given the information councillors wanted to present was 1.5 hours (saying more with less words).

Kim also worked with Councillors to help them overcome any fears of public speaking or being in the spotlight.

Kim also worked with our media team (which consists of 2 people who do all public notices, media releases, communications to the public) to help them with the communication to the communities about the issues from these meetings.

The format of the meeting was totally the councillor's decision given their previous experience with town hall meetings. There was a lot of information to share in a short period of time and councillors wanted to share the same content with each town.

The cost to council for these engagements was: \$8,508.42

2. When the existing gardens were removed from Apex Park, Eidsvold, were the pavers dumped, and if so, why weren't they reused or on-sold?

The pavers were removed and stored at Council's Depot for future re-use and some have been utilised by a local community group for a community project. There are statutory requirements that need to be met for the sale of surplus materials.

Section 227 of the Local Government Regulation 2012 states that for valuable non-current assets, a contract cannot be entered into unless it first invites written tenders or is offered by for sale by auction. The legislation also provides for when exceptions to this rule may apply and these exceptions are detailed in Section 236 of the Local Government Regulation 2012. It should be noted that before an asset disposal can proceed by exception, a Council resolution is required.

3. How much will the general rates increase to cover expenditure for council's mismanagement?

You can be assured that if there was mismanagement by Council, then the Queensland Audit Office (who annually audits the finances of Council) and Crime and Corruption Commission Queensland would have stepped in.

To remove the deficit, in other words break even, the rates would have to be increased by 78% across the board. However, rest assured councillors don't consider this to be at all a viable option for our communities.

The general rates are tabled for council resolution at the same time as Council's budget. Last year the general rate increase was 1.88%. At the budget meeting this year the rate increase was 3% and was in line with other QLD council's rate increases.

It is worth noting that for each 1% of a rate increase, council receives \$95,000 more income.

It is also worth noting that many councils charge fees and other charges which add to their income. These can be from parking fines, development applications, council businesses and most even make money from water or waste services.

In this year's budget of the projected \$38.2 million in total income:

3.14% from Fees and Charges

49% from Rates, Levies and Charges

With the remaining 47.86% coming from State or Commonwealth governments. (This government money is highly competitive hence we are always highly active in the advocacy space)

4. Where is Council up to with the Eidsvold Rifle Club and the Department of Natural Resources issues?

To the best of our knowledge the issue has been resolved. However, this is a question best directed to the President of the Eidsvold rifle club as the issue is between the club and the Department.

5. Concern is raised with the lease of the Historical Society Agreement regarding Workplace Health and Safety and future maintenance requirement to Council owned buildings.

For clarity we are presuming this question is in relation to Eidsvold Historical Society. Leasing documents make maintenance requirements very clear. Workplace Health and Safety is subject to QLD legislation and all council owned and leased buildings are subject to its rulings.

6. When Council employees must travel for a greater period than one hour from their depot to the job site, would it not be more prudent for these men to be provided hotel/motel/housing accommodation at Council's cost?

Yes, it may be prudent for Council to seek accommodation within our region, where possible, to prevent excessive travel time however all costs must be factored when making this decision.

Councils have certified agreements which are agreements between unions and councils. NBRC certified agreement (2018) states:

6.3.3 North Burnett Regional Council Work Council agrees that should an employee be required to travel and work requiring an overnight stay within the NBRC area as requirements of his/her position then the employee will receive payment of allowances in accordance with the "Distant Work Arrangements" Administrative Direction.

7. Why are so many managers employed to carry out tasks and be so mismanaged in a lot of areas?

Currently within the organisational structure there is 1 CEO, 2 General Managers & 8 managers. For comparison, in 2009 (the first year after amalgamation) there was 1 CEO, 4 Directors (General Managers), 1 Assistant Director and 8 Managers.

The 8 managers are responsible for:

- **Financial Services:** Finance, Procurement, Creditors and Stores
- **Customer Experience and Communities:** Libraries, Community Development, Sport and Recreation, Arts and Culture, Customer Service, RM Williams Australian Bush Learning Centre and Australia Day
- **People and Performance:** Industrial Relations, Recruitment, Training, Workplace Health and Safety
- **Planning and Environment:** Environmental Health, Natural Resource Management, Compliance/Local Laws, Development Services and Waste
- **Water & Wastewater:** Water and Wastewater
- **Works:** Civil Construction and Maintenance, Works Programming and Parks and Open Spaces
- **Assets:** Asset Management, Fleet and Facilities Maintenance
- **Strategic Projects:** Advocacy, Media and Strategic Projects

Unlike your normal business our council business is much more than one dimensional. We don't focus on one service or one product. We are a multifaceted organisation. Each manager has different experience, qualifications and skill sets for them to do the job required.

If you can find one person who has qualifications in road maintenance, project management, finance, computers, law, development, water, wastewater, environmental health, asset management, workplace health and safety, libraries, community events and a few other skill sets such as media and communications – please let us know.

8. A letter was written some time back offering to provide memorial gates at the Monto Cemetery. When will a response be forthcoming?

Sometimes community want to do beautiful things such as this. In this instance, a response was provided in correspondence dated 12 May 2021.

For anyone considering such a gesture the process is:

Council is required to advertise the proposal to the community, including providing a scope of the design, and provide details of why you are wanting to gift the community.

This information is then assessed, and any feedback provided.

Following this, Council's media team then includes the information in communication to community. If there are no objections, your request can then be progressed.

9. A request for road naming, road upgrade and to be placed on the rural address register is still waiting for a response.

Road naming, upgrades and rural addressing are all complex issues and require time to investigate, consult and carry out.

10. Questions regarding housing in Montgomery Street, Gayndah:

- (a) Does the house belong to Council?**
- (b) What improvements have been carried out at this location?**
- (c) Is it occupied by a council employee?**
- (d) Was the dwelling recarpeted?**
- (e) Were all bedrooms airconditioned?**
- (f) If the occupant is a council employee, are they issued with a Toyota Prado and if so, why has Council seen fit to provide such a vehicle?**

Council owns a house in Montgomerie Street. Council currently owns 18 houses across the region. 6 are commercially tenanted, 9 are tenanted by council employee or contractors as per their contractual arrangements and 3 are for short term arrangements.

All housing is currently under view as part of our SDR and councillors at their General Meeting on 28th July 2021 resolved:

“That Council authorise Staff to procure agents to act on Council’s behalf in the sale of excess housing stocks in a timely manner as per presented in Workshop on 7 July 2021 and Councillors are provided progress updates as to which houses are proposed for sale”.

Improvements on this house include security upgrades in response to security issues posed by actions of certain members of the community. The bathrooms have been refurbished due to the wet seal in both bathrooms leaking and causing damage to the house.

It is occupied by a Council employee.

All bedrooms were not airconditioned and the dwelling was not recently recarpeted.

The current occupier does not drive a Toyota Prado.

11. Who’s making the decisions?

In a General Meeting Agenda community can see recommendations put to council by officers. It is up to councillors to make sure they have all the relevant information about any issue on the agenda so they can make the best decisions in the public interest.

Informed decision-making means that:

- consider all relevant information before making a decision
- thoroughly read through officer reports and recommendations
- seek further information before the meeting if needed, by following the council’s acceptable request guidelines (the council’s policy on asking council officers for advice or information)
- vote to defer matters for future debate if needed

Below information is extracted from [Good decision-making | State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning](#)

“Matters that come before council for a decision will be accompanied by a report written by a council employee with the necessary expertise in the relevant area. The report should contain a summary of the matter, an analysis of relevant issues, data and recommended options or a course of action for councillors to consider before deciding on the matter.

Council reports should be impartial and represent the officer’s professional opinion of what is the best recommendation in the public interest. A councillor must not attempt to influence council officers or encourage them to make particular recommendations to council. If you disagree with a recommendation, you can argue against it and seek to persuade enough councillors to support those ideas in the meeting, rather than trying to influence council officers to make favourable recommendations.

To ensure that councillors are transparent and accountable, the council meeting minutes are required to record full details of any votes where councillors make a decision that is significantly different to the council officers’ recommendations. In some cases, there is a requirement that the reason for such decisions be recorded”.

So, Councillors make the decisions but must consider what the officers have recommended in their professional opinion as to what decision would be best in the public interest.

12. There is concern about just who is running Council. Please tell us the percentage of total budget spent on consultants/ advisors in this last financial year?

This Council, along with all other similar councils, rely heavily on consultants to provide support when qualified staff with these skillsets are not available. This is budgeted for specific projects as required, as was required for our Service Delivery Review. Councillors then take this information on board as part of our evidenced based decision-making approach.

Any external resources that are utilised are done so on a case-by-case basis. The cost of this is covered under the specific project and not as a line item.

13. Why can’t I just ring my councillor to get a job done anymore?

Things have changed. Below is an extract from the Department of Local Government

“If you want to request that your council provides or improves a service, or fixes a problem, this is known as a service request. Service requests include installing new lighting, new road signs, a request to change library hours, repair a damaged road, mow a footpath, clean graffiti or remove a fallen tree. To make a service request you should contact your council’s call centre or hotline, email address, or enquiry counter. This ensures that council can prioritise the request efficiently and organise for council officers to complete it.

If you contact a councillor, they may refer your request to the usual council hotline, email or council officer. It is the councillor’s role to focus on strategic decision-making for the whole council area rather than managing day-to-day service requests, which are the responsibility of the council’s CEO and other council officers.

It is illegal for a councillor to contact a council employee to direct them to complete your work request”

More information can be found here:

[community-guide-to-local-government.pdf \(dlgrma.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.dlgrma.qld.gov.au/community-guide-to-local-government.pdf)

When the new legislation came into effect Council sought Legal advice as to who deals with matters:

10. Examples of the types of matters that should be dealt with by councillors include:
 - (a) the long-term direction of the Council;
 - (b) adopting Council's budget for a financial year;
 - (c) determining Council's policies and procedures;
 - (d) consulting with the community; and
 - (e) matters that require a Council decision under the Act (e.g. the decision to commence litigation).

913941_1

Chief Executive Officer
North Burnett Regional Council

20 March, 2020
Page 3

11. Examples of the types of matters that should be managed by Council's operational and administrative arm include:
 - (a) the day-to-day provision of services to the public;
 - (b) road maintenance and repairs;
 - (c) billing and collecting rates and charges;
 - (d) appointing and managing Council employees; and
 - (e) managing and administering contracts that Council has entered into.
12. Based on this analysis, our view is that the examples referred to in paragraph 1 of this letter relate to operational and administrative matters that are the responsibility of the CEO and employees under section 13 of the Act. Individual councillors do not have the power to manage or deal with these types of matters.

14. Can you explain the varying distances in Shire road network lengths across your publication platforms?

This is potentially due to the lengths being correct at the date of publication. Our Asset Database changes as new assets are created, removed or reformed. Council endeavours to ensure consistency in its information and would be interested in knowing the specific publication platforms being referred to as of concern.

As an example, just a few months ago the Roads and Transport Alliance Board endorsed the Roads and Transport Alliance Project Team (RTAPT) to undertake a review of local government road length data as the data set, they currently use for funding is from 2012.

15. How has council implemented and managed the expectations of the QAO and contract auditors? If not, why not?

The QAO is a State Government entity. Part of its remit is to monitor the financial and governance performance of Council's across Queensland. Each year the QAO releases a report into the performance of Council's. This report has highlighted a number of Council's are facing financial sustainability challenges and NBRC has long been one of these. In addition to this, NBRC undertakes an end of year financial audit each year. This work is conducted by an independent audit team who are appointment by the QAO. This occurs for every Council in Queensland.

At the end of the audit NBRC receives an audit report and this may contain a number of recommendations. The 2019/2020 audit report made a number of recommendations for NBRC to consider. Progress of work is reported by to the QAO throughout the year as needed and is formally captured in the end of year audit process.

The final audit for 2019/2020 was adopted at the general meeting held on 25 November 2020. The resolution can be found in the minutes which can be found here: <https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Confirmed-General-Meeting-Minutes-November.pdf>

16. Has Council engaged an independent Auditor to sit on the Internal Audit Committee?

No, council does not see this as a requirement at this time. As per Council resolution 2020/142, in November 2020: "That Council dissolves the current Audit and Risk Committee and Policy 109 is rescinded. That an Internal Audit Function Program Report be delivered for adoption by Council at the February 2021 Meeting with a workshop prior".

The FY20 Audit Report was then adopted in January 2021 resolution 2021/06. The minutes of this meeting can be found here: <https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Confirmed-Council-General-Meeting-Minutes-27012021-1.pdf>

17. Does Council have the capacity to undertake the review of current Asset Valuations and instigate a changed methodology for asset management? If not, why not?

Some issues in Asset valuations have been an issue picked up as part of our Service Delivery Review process.

Council has the capacity and some skills to undertake reviews of Asset Valuations, and ongoing review in managing the various asset classes. There are instances where very specialised technical skills sets are required and these are utilised on a 'as needs' basis.

Council is currently reviewing the asset management plans and these are being updated to be in line with recent condition assessments and reviewed to monitor the levels of service provided to the community.

18. Can the council explain why the depreciation percentage has increased from 6% to 15% over the past 9 years?

Council has been affected by many disaster events during this time which resulted in over \$160 million in flood recovery and betterment works.

This increase has been due to these capital projects as each one has to be included in our depreciation schedule. Often the asset was replaced at an increased value rather than book or current value and this had added to Council's depreciation schedule.

Additionally, there are some assets which may be classified as end of life and could be excluded from the asset register. NBRC is working through this process with the QAO.

19. Is there an explanation why Depreciation (compared to recurrent budget) is higher than other council authorities when expressed as a percentage?

Depreciation is entirely attached to asset base.

With the 12th largest road network out of the 537 councils around Australia, it is our road assets which throw our depreciation numbers out.

Council has \$1.1 billion in assets with over \$160 million of that built in the last 10 years.

Only these 22 councils have more assets than us (in order of assets): Isaac Regional Council, Whitsunday Regional Council, Gympie Regional Council, Cassowary Coast Regional Council, Western Downs Regional Council, Central Highlands Regional Council, Bundaberg Regional Council, Gladstone Regional Council, Rockhampton Regional Council, Fraser Coast Regional Council, Redland City Council, Ipswich City Council, Mackay Regional Council, Cairns Regional Council, Toowoomba Regional Council, Douglas Shire Council, Townsville City Council, Sunshine Coast Regional Council, Logan City Council, Moreton Bay Regional Council, Council of the City of Gold Coast, Brisbane City Council.

There is much talk within the sector to address depreciation.

20. What steps will council be taking to reduce Assets without reducing services?

As a regional Council there are a range of assets that we cannot dispose of. We will be continually reviewing our assets, their usage, and their value to the community over time. Council most recently resolved to begin selling any excess housing stock.

Council has said since 2019 that a "Financially sustainable council may not equal a sustainable community". Council is highly aware of the absolute need to maintain assets and deliver services so our communities can prosper for generations to come. It's this balance of assets, services, risk, cost and community that councillors are committed to get right.

21. Identified as a concern in various reviews, what processes are being planned to address the WPHS issues?

Please refer to the Operational Plan 21/22 which can be found here: <https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/publications/> under the budget tab. Councils' WHS plan and progress on rectifying issues raised in the safety audit are discussed on a monthly basis with the management team. Quarterly reporting on the operational plan is then provided to Council with the most recent meeting held on 28 July 2021.

22. Does the council have a policy enacted to attract business and investment into our shire?

Please refer to Council's endorsed Economic Development and Innovation Strategy here: <https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/economic-development-2-0/>.

Council has embarked upon a project to effect major amendments to the planning scheme to not only align with the proposed Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan but to reduce barriers to business development. This was received at councils meeting 28th July.

Council's Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan (which can be found here: <https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/20210728-Council-General-Meeting-Agenda.pdf>) also identifies a strategy to support business incubation in new waste and resource recovery industries.

- 23. What effort has been expended in exploring alternative fund-raising options such as the implementation of a differentiated rate application applied to non-residential domestic rental properties (Ref: Lockyer Regional Council)**

Council is undertaking a full review of its rates and charges over the next 12 months. Given 1% rate increase raises an extra \$95,000 in revenue, this is only one piece of a very large puzzle.

- 24. Will Council adopt a Register of Delegations appropriate for a regional council and will that register be available on NBRC website? If not, why not?**

Councillors have taken this feedback on board and will discuss into the future. The currently adopted register of interests was in line with recommendations from the Local Government Association of QLD and can be found here: <https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Appendix-A-Amended-and-Updated-Register-of-Delegations-Council-to-CEO-Reviewed-March-2020.pdf>

Register of Delegations are not available on all council websites however we have had a look and like the layout of this one from Toowoomba (www.tr.qld.gov.au/about-council/council-governance/delegations). We are interested in your thoughts – is this a clear way to lay out this very large document? Is there an even better way?

- 25. Why does it take so long for councillors to get back to me with information? It never used to be this way.**

Because legislation changed the way councillors can ask for information.

The below extract is taken from State Government: [Good decision-making | State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning](#)

“As a mayor or councillor you cannot direct council employees. If you need any information from a council employee, you must follow the acceptable request guidelines of that council. However, the mayor does not have to comply with the acceptable request guidelines when making requests for advice to the CEO. Through the appropriate request process, you can ask council's officers and technical experts for more information or advice before the council meeting.

Under acceptable request guidelines, you must make sure that any requests for information or reports are legitimate, lawful and related to your role.

Under the legislation, the CEO must provide a councillor with the information within 10 business days. If the CEO believes that is not practicable, they must advise the councillor within 10 business days and then provide it within 20 business days.

Here is the link to Council's policies: <https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/publications/>

26. Why aren't Councillors permitted to meet with staff that may be affected by proposed changes to allow staff to put their point directly to Council?

The only staff member Councillors employ, and the mayor is tasked through legislation to manage, is the CEO.

The CEO employs all other staff. Legislation prevents Councillors interfering with council staff employee matters.

In saying that all Council staff feedback is being collated and will be provided to Councillors for collective review.

27. Why didn't Council follow the advice of the SDR Consultants and allow staff to discuss further issues affecting employees instead of ELT having to carry out this task and employees be issued with letters which effectively gag them?

In the SDR Report to Council, tabled 24 February 2021, it talks to an SDR Steering Committee. With few additional people or resources at our disposal, the decision was made that Council's Executive Leaderships Team felt they were best placed to provide this for an organisation that is going through extensive change, staff turnover and uncertainty.

As indicated in the SDR report, there were multiple sessions and avenues for staff to raise issues and this was extended to include 1 on 1 meetings with affected staff by members.

Consultation with staff has been undertaken in accordance with the *North Burnett Regional Council Certified Agreement* and requirements of the *Queensland Industrial Relations Act 2016* and included opportunities for 1 on 1 meetings, feedback to be provided via email, feedback to be provided through union delegates and more.

There was no content in the letters provided to staff that "gag" them, all staff are held to standards under our Code of Conduct and we understand the confidential and personalised nature of what such significant change might mean to each affected staff member.

All staff were given a range of opportunities to discuss their personal circumstance, access support if required and provide valuable feedback that has informed and assisted the change process since Councillors made their decisions on 30 June 2021.

You can find the decisions here: www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Signed-General-Meeting-Minutes-30-June-2021.pdf

28. Why are Council paying on-call for maintaining airports?

Council has a regular program of inspection and maintenance of the regions aerodromes to comply with CASA regulations. On-call instances would only be in response to a particular issue or concern affecting emergency access.

29. When are Council organising for defibrillators to be installed in Monto?

Council has not rolled out a program for the installation of defibrillators in other towns. In Gayndah, the Masonic Lodge completed a program and 2 defibrillators were installed by the group at Council facilities with conditions. There are no plans at this time to organise the installation of defibrillators in any Monto facilities.

30. Staffing - could some of the existing jobs be streamlined and combined to save wages?

Council does this quite often where possible, however, it depends on staff workloads and qualifications/skill set to carry out duties accordingly.

For example, Council currently employs a Manager that has the skill set/qualification to oversee and sign off on legislation matters regarding, Waste, Environmental and Development Services. This Manager was originally employed as the Environmental Services Manager, however when the Development Manager retired then Council merged the two positions under one person. When this staff member chooses to leave Council, then Council is at risk of having to replace this position with up to three people as it is extremely rare to have a diverse skillset within one person.

31. There is a lot of council cars amongst the North Burnett Regional Council. Who pays for these vehicles? I am not referring to the actual works department but more to the office staff side of things. If the Mayor, CEO etc took a cut to a new work vehicle & used their own source of transport could they not write off through Tax like the rest of us do. Is there possible money saving options this way??

It is a money saving option the way we do it now.

Due to the substantial number of kilometres driven to undertake duties across the region, Council derives savings from providing vehicles rather than reimbursing for expenses or paying a cents per kilometre allowance as per ATO rates.

The current reimbursement rate for work related use of private vehicles is approximately 72 cents per km: <https://www.ato.gov.au/Business/Income-and-deductions-for-business/Deductions/Deductions-for-motor-vehicle-expenses/Cents-per-kilometre-method/#:~:text=The%20rate%20is%3A,%E2%80%9317%20and%202015%E2%80%9316>

Purchasing vehicles that hold their value better (e.g. Toyota Prado's) also helps Council's bottom line, as there is less value lost on changeover compared to cheaper cars of other brands. It is also paramount that the vehicle is suitable for the region's road conditions and nature of driving (e.g. a lot of early morning and evening driving is undertaken by users).

As an example, to compare the costs:

Council Provided Vehicle	Vehicle Reimbursement
Mayor Based on 40,000km/year	
\$17,000	\$28,800
Councillor Based on 25,000km/yr	
\$11,000	\$18,000

As for the car of the CEO – the vehicle is included as part of their salary package, so it is up to them to decide on the vehicle as its value forms part of their personal income. Once again, the CEO could take the reimbursed option, but it would cost council more.

32. There are so many grey nomads and backpackers that come through this area, why aren't we creating more opportunities for these groups to spend money in our region and create more revenue?

The economics generated by Tourism is of great benefit to our region's businesses.

Council allocates resources to promote our region as a collective through the North Burnett Tourism guidebook and social media promotion of our Naturally beautiful region.

<https://driveinland.com.au/>

<https://www.facebook.com/VisitNorthBurnett>

<https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/visit-north-burnett/> (check out our new Visitors Guide)

Council has also supported projects such as the Monto Magic Art Trail project and Wall of Fame Project in Biggenden through allocation of Federal funding. Both projects were community developed and led, with council supporting.

We all have a role to play in creating opportunities within our region. If you have a fabulous idea, gather a group of people, and make it happen! Council will support you wherever possible.

Support is also available through organisations such as BIEDO.

33. Necessity of number of council vehicles? Accountability of council vehicle use. Are vehicles being used solely for work? Why are council vehicles being used to travel to and from work? Shouldn't they just be used for required travel as part of the job?

Council seeks to achieve best practice standards of safety regarding the provision and use of council owned motor vehicles under General Policy 3100 - Motor Vehicle Policy (can be found here <https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/3100-Motor-Vehicle-Policy.pdf>).

Council vehicles are provided in accordance with this policy and any other relevant individual employment arrangement. Council continues to monitor similar local governments and industry standards with respect to motor vehicle usage. Council is also mindful of the need to recruit and retain suitable staff in a very competitive employment market.

Council provides a suitable range of motor vehicles for the delivery of Council services throughout the region as may be required.

The Chief Executive Officer ("CEO"), at their sole discretion, determines the vehicle use type for each employee, based on their role, and responsibility or employment contract.

34. In Mundubbera, the BBQ at the ski area has been broken for as long as I have lived here. Whose job is that?

Residents are encouraged to report these issues through Council's Customer Service Section on 1300 696 272 or email admin@northburnett.qld.gov.au and a Customer Request will be generated for action by the appropriate Council department.

In this case the reported complaint was investigated, and the BBQ was found not to be broken. The issue seems to lie in the amount of time residents need to hold the button in to ignite properly.

To double check, we confirmed that of 11/8/21 it was working well.

35. Look at cost of executive staff and supervisors. Does council really need all of these?

Executive staff and supervisors are required to enact and ensure compliance with requirements of legislation, for example, the *Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)* and *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)*, while ensuring the endorsed direction of Council is enacted.

The tiers of Executive Management remuneration packages are reported in our Annual Report as required by legislation for all general manager positions and above. All Councils are required to do this as part of their Annual Report and can be compared.

North Burnett reporting from Annual Report

Salary Range	Number of Executives
\$200,000-,300,000	3

In a McCarthur report they classified our council as a category 4. Category 4 councils had the below table of salaries (the high end and the low end of that category). All our managers, general managers and CEO sit at the very bottom of the low band for their positions. We are one of the lowest paying Council's in Qld, yet with some of the biggest challenges.

McCarthur Table

Position	High	Low
Chief Executive Officer / General Manager	\$365,000	\$215,000
Directors / Group Managers	\$255,000	\$145,000
Managers	\$220,000	\$90,000
Coordinator / Team Leader	\$160,000	\$65,000

36. Why is team building trips needing to be held away? If the North Burnett is so "great", why not hold them here?

Team building activities are a standardised practice of businesses when a new team is formed – it helps with the forming, storming, norming, performing stages of a new team.

In 2020 the newly elected Councillors spent the first 3-4 weeks together utilising the disaster building as part of their team building. This space was chosen as it was private to allow for deep, robust conversation. That was Councillor's decision.

Many councillors from surrounding regions decide to go out of their regions for this purpose.

Just as it was up to councillors where to hold their own meetings, equally so, it is at the decision of the CEO to decide whether to undertake team building/future planning activities within the location of their choice within the budget allocated by councillors to do their job.

A fundamental criterion in team building activity is when possible to conduct activities remote from the work environments which offer constant distraction to participants.

37. Do we need to keep RM Williams Centre open? Could RM Williams Ctr be sold?

At the Council meeting held on the 26th of May, Council resolved:

- 1) Call Expressions of Interest for the possible disposal of the asset through lease or sale of the RM Williams Australian Bush Learning Centre in accordance with the requirements of Section 228 of the Local Government Regulation 2012; and
- 2) Council conducts a community survey to gather community sentiment on the future of the RM Williams Australian Bush Learning Centre; and
- 3) Further consider a report on the outcome of the Expressions of Interest and survey feedback at the August 2021 General Meeting.

Stay tuned...

38. Why does Gayndah council leader live in Bundy?

We presume by Gayndah council leader, that you mean the CEO of the North Burnett Regional Council?

If that is the case, the CEO is provided accommodation within the region as part of their employment agreement (it forms part of their income).

Council does not provide any other accommodation as part of this position. The CEO's movements outside work hours/functions (i.e. their private time) is a personal and private matter.

39. Do we need so many parks in each town? Can some of these be sold off for housing?

That is a great question. We did a park review in 2018 and defined 3 groups of parks.

Table 3.1.1: Types of Open Spaces

Type	Characteristic
District Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High Profile:• Major park used by large numbers and community events• Has Structures, such as Playgrounds, Toilet blocks
Local Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has structures such as at least one of the following: Playgrounds, Toilet Blocks, BBQ, Shelters, Table/Chairs, Paths• Includes road side rest areas with structures• Community events
Nature Reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No structures, may have gardens• Improved grasslands or• Unimproved grasslands

We have 64 parks over the following areas (including nearby villages):

- Gayndah – 15
- Mundubbera – 10
- Monto – 9
- Perry – 4
- Eidsvold – 14
- Biggenden – 12

Some cannot be sold off for housing without going through re-zoning applications, development approval and a substantial amount of money allocated to ensure land is compliant for sale. Further community engagement would also need to be undertaken as most local parks are 'Community' parks – such as Lions Parks, Jaycee Parks, Rotary Parks, etc.

40. How much do Salto locks cost the council each year?

The Salto lock system provides security to all Council offices, depots and facilities. The system has an annual service fee of approximately \$25,000.

41. Why is Council involved in Eidsvold Golf Course?

The land is a reserve for parks & recreation and Council is the trustee. The land is leased to the Eidsvold Golf Club. Council provides a subsidised water allocation to the Eidsvold Golf Club to assist in providing greens and maintenance of a pleasant entrance to the southern side of Eidsvold.

42. Why is Council involved in Mt Perry Racecourse?

The land is State Government Land under a Reserve for Racecourse. Council is the trustee of the State Land and the Mt Perry Race Club Inc have a 20-year lease over the land.

Council is responsible for maintenance of the airstrip, surrounding vegetation control and access road to airstrip.

43. Are all Council leases negotiated at the appropriate price?

All new and renewed leases for commercial arrangements are negotiated at commercial rates. There are many concessional leases in place to support community organisations.

Some community organisations access concessions for rates and charges as per below.

Assessments exempt from the General Rates, Environment Levy & Local Disaster Management Levy – Public Halls

10374-00000-000	COALSTOUN LAKES & DISTRICT	34 MAIN STREET	COALSTOUN LAKES QLD
10458-00000-000	DEGILBO HALL RESTORATION AND SOCIAL CLUB	RAINBOW STREET	DEGILBO QLD
20003-00000-000	T'TEES OF THE MEMORIAL HALL	3 QUEEN STREET	ABERCORN QLD
31425-00000-000	GOOROOLBA PUBLIC HALL	GOOROOLBA BIGGENDEN ROAD	GOOROOLBA QLD

Assessments exempt from the General Rates, Environment Levy & Local Disaster Management Levy – Public Halls

31456-00000-000	NORTH BURNETT REGIONAL COUNCIL (TRUSTEE)	CEMETERY ROAD	BYRNESTOWN QLD
40319-00000-000	RESERVE FOR PUBLIC HALLS	46 KELVIN STREET	MONTO QLD
41471-50000-000	RESERVE FOR PUBLIC HALL	1546 HARRAMI ROAD	HARRAMI QLD

Assessments Exempt from General Rates CWA

20091-00000-000	PUBLIC HEALTH RESERVE	47 MORETON STREET	EIDSVOLD
30422-00000-000	QLD COUNTRY WOMENS ASSOCIAT	5 PINEAPPLE STREET	GAYNDAH QLD
40004-00000-000	RESERVE FOR HEALTH PURPOSES	21 BANCROFT SCHOOL ROAD	BANCROFT QLD
40736-00000-000	RESERVE FOR HEALTH	14 PINE STREET	MULGILDIE QLD
50073-00000-000	THE QUEENSLAND COUNTRY WOMEN'S	'QCWA'	73 HEUSMAN STREET
60067-00000-000	THE QUEENSLAND COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOC	79 LYONS STREET	MUNDUBBERA QLD
	CWA Monto (Residential Dif Cat)		
	CWA Biggenden (Commercial Diff Cat)		

Kindy

10224-00000-000	BIGGENDEN & DISTRICT KINDERGARTEN INC,	CAROLINE STREET	BIGGENDEN QLD
20192-60000-000	EIDSVOLD KINDERGARTEN ASSOC. INC.	75 GOLDEN SPUR STREET	EIDSVOLD QLD
40426-00000-000	MONTO KINDERGARTEN ASSOC. INC.	19 FLINDERS STREET	MONTO QLD
60366-00000-000	MUNDUBBERA KINDERGARTEN ASSOCIATION	27 BAUER STREET	MUNDUBBERA QLD

General Hall

20092-00000-000	RESERVE FOR SOLDIERS MEMORIAL	49 MORETON STREET	EIDSVOLD
30257-00000-000	GUIDES QUEENSLAND	13 MAUD STREET	GAYNDAH QLD
30337-50000-000	THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN	24-26 FIELDING STREET	GAYNDAH QLD
40101-00000-000	GUIDES QUEENSLAND	13135 GLADSTONE-MONTO ROAD	MONTO QLD
	RSL Mundubbera (Commercial Diff Cat)		

Sporting

10194-00000-000	BIGGENDEN & DISTRICT TENNIS ASSOC. INC.	ALICE STREET	BIGGENDEN QLD
10399-00000-000	DALLARNIL SPORTS CLUB INC AS TRUSTEE	MAIN STREET	DALLARNIL QLD

20441-20000-000	SPORTING SHOOTERS ASSOCIATION OF	51 RIFLE RANGE ROAD	EIDSVOLD QLD
30288-00000-000	GAYNDAH & DISTRICT TENNIS ASSOCIATION	25-31 BARROW STREET	GAYNDAH QLD
40535-00000-000	MONTO DISTRICT TENNIS ASSOCIATION INC Gayndah Gun Club	LEICHHARDT STREET	MONTO QLD

Assessments in Differential Rating Category 13 - Community Not for Profit (Not eligible for concession under proposed policy)

Masonic

10035-00000-000	THE TRUSTEES OF BIGGENDEN LODGE NO 136	EDWARD STREET	BIGGENDEN QLD
10408-00000-000	MASONIC HALL - DALLARNIL	8 MAIN STREET	DALLARNIL QLD
30041-00000-000	THE TRUSTEES OF GAYNDAH LODGE	75 CAPPER STREET	GAYNDAH QLD
40384-00000-000	THE TRUSTEES OF THE MONTO LODGE	12 FARADAY STREET	MONTO QLD

Premises with Liquor License

10003-00000-000	BIGGENDEN BOWLS CLUB	EDWARD STREET	BIGGENDEN QLD
10566-00003-000	BIGGENDEN GOLF CLUB	ISIS HIGHWAY	BIGGENDEN QLD
20040-00000-000	EIDSVOLD BOWLS CLUB		
20041-00000-000	EIDSVOLD BOWLS CLUB INC	5 ESPLANADE STREET	EIDSVOLD QLD
30102-00000-000	GAYNDAH BOWLING CLUB	13 MESON STREET	GAYNDAH QLD
30953-00000-000	BINJOUR BOWLS CLUB	18312 BURNETT HIGHWAY	BINJOUR QLD
31108-00000-000	GAYNDAH GOLF CLUB INC	91 OLD NANANGO ROAD	GAYNDAH QLD
40946-00000-000	MONTO BOWLING CLUB	33 AIRPORT ROAD	MONTO QLD
41009-00000-000	MONTO GOLF LINKS	9 RIFLE RANGE ROAD	MONTO QLD
50517-00000-000	TRUSTEES - Mt Perry Golf Club	268 SMOKERS GULLY ROAD	MOUNT PERRY QLD
60357-60000-000	MUNDUBBERA BOWLS CLUB INC	1 SELIGMANN AVENUE	MUNDUBBERA QLD
60472-00000-000	MUNDUBBERA GOLF CLUB INCORPORATED	2 FRANK MCCAULEY STREET	MUNDUBBERA QLD
60496-00000-000	CENTRAL BURNETT GUN CLUB INCORPORATED RSL Monto (Commercial Diff Cat)	507 MUNDUBBERA-DURONG ROAD	BOYNEWOOD QLD

Commercial

40079-00000-000	ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY QUEENSLAND	44 LISTER STREET	MONTO QLD
40086-00000-000	ST JOHN HOLDINGS LTD	26 LISTER STREET	MONTO QLD

Vacant Land20232-90000-
000MUNDUBBERA
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

CROWN STREET

EIDSVOLD
QLD**44. Why do Council wages cost \$15M?**

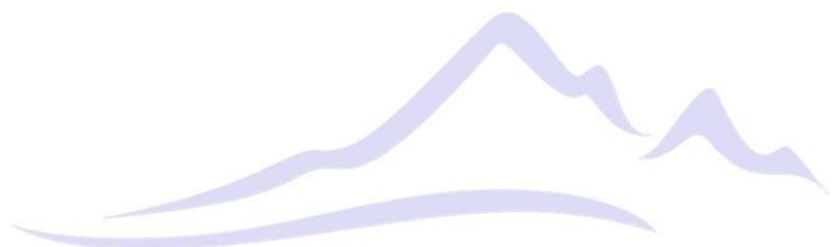
Council employs staff to deliver services across the following areas:

- Aerodromes
 - Caravan Parks
 - Cemeteries
 - Community Development & Support
 - (a) Community Development Planning and Support
 - (b) Community Buildings & Facilities
 - Cultural Development
 - (a) Museums & Historical Societies/Art Galleries
 - (b) Community Bus
 - (c) Libraries
 - Council Housing
 - Customer Service
 - (a) Administration
 - (b) Media & Comms
 - Development Services
 - (a) Development Assessment & Compliance
 - (b) Building & Pool Compliance
 - (c) Plumbing Services
 - Disaster & Emergency Management
 - Economic Development
 - Elected Members
 - Financial Services
 - Fleet
 - Governance
 - ICT
 - Land & Habitat Conservation
 - (a) Bushland Reserve Management
 - (b) Pest Management
 - (c) Environment Management
 - Local Laws & Public Safety
 - (a) Local Laws Education & Compliance
 - (b) Public Security – CCTV
 - (c) Permits – use of land for commercial and community activities.
 - Parks & Open Spaces
 - People & Culture
 - (a) HR Management
 - (b) Payroll
 - (c) WHS
 - Pools
 - Procurement
 - Public Amenities
 - Public Health
 - Public Lighting
 - Quarries
- 

- Roads
 - (a) Local Managed
 - (b) RMPC
 - (c) RPC
 - (d) Bridges
 - (e) Road slashing/landscaping
 - (f) Drainage (stormwater?)
 - (g) Sealed Roads
- Showgrounds
- Sport & Recreational Services
 - (a) Gyms
 - (b) Ovals etc
 - (c) Recreational pathways
 - (d) Planning, programs & support
- TV rebroadcasting
- Washdown Bays
- Waste
 - (a) Waste collections
 - (b) Waste disposals
 - (c) Resource recover (including education)
- Water and wastewater treatment and delivery

Additionally, there is superannuation, leave costs, etc.

Below are our employee benefits for 2020 and 2019. 2021 will be available when our financial statements are finalised and signed off later this year.



North Burnett Regional Council
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 30 June 2020

		2020	2019
	Note	\$	\$
5 Capital Income			
Increase in Asset Revaluation Surplus			
Land		-	1,812,811
Buildings		-	1,686,551
Other infrastructure		-	1,842,508
Water	13	9,091,203	-
Sewerage	13	6,984,772	-
		16,075,975	5,341,869
6 Employee Benefits			
Total staff wages and salaries		12,163,068	12,752,671
Councillors' remuneration		435,394	424,197
Annual, sick and long service leave entitlements		1,782,421	2,174,455
Superannuation	23	1,549,941	1,622,905
		15,930,824	16,974,228
Other Employee Related Expenses		589,957	588,032
		16,520,781	17,562,260
Less: Capitalised Employee Expenses		(1,359,517)	(2,259,155)
		15,161,264	15,303,105

Councillor remuneration represents salary, and other allowances paid in respect of carrying out their duties.

Total NBRC employees at the reporting date:

Elected members	7	7
Administration staff	83	86
Depot and outdoors staff	97	113
Trainee staff	10	6
Total full time equivalent employees	197	212

45. Can you have an open Council meeting where people can observe the process?

All General Meetings are open to the public (they must be under legislation). You can find the dates and locations here <https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/council-meetings/>.

Council welcomes the attendance of the general public in the gallery to the open portions of General Meetings. Due to COVID-19 if you wish to attend a Council meeting, please contact Executive.Support@northburnett.qld.gov.au

If you or your organisation would like to make a presentation to Council regarding a particular topic, please contact Council's Executive Services staff on 1300 696 272 to make arrangements.

[You can also zoom into our general meetings by contacting the same email and we will send you the link.](#)

Since late 2020 councillors have been having information workshops (these are informal meetings where councillors ask a lot of questions and are given a lot of information about topics but do not make any decisions as decisions must be debated and made in a public general meeting. Although these meetings aren't open to the public, their agendas/topics of discussion are made public (also at the above link).

46. Can rate payers / community groups be given the opportunity to invest their dollars to provide museums, historical societies and art galleries?

Our region has many groups who do this, at no cost to Council. A great example is the new Biggenden Art Gallery, which is operated by the newly formed Biggenden Arts Group and is run by volunteers with their own funds raised. There are many opportunities for community groups to invest back into these community facilities and rate payers can do this through donations to these community groups.

47. Where are cuts being implemented in administration? Where are the figures on these expenses?

In line with the SDR and future operational plans Council will be implementing efficiencies across all service areas in Council.

48. Are our aerodromes being used frequently enough to be kept maintained? Emergencies now have the helipad at the hospital.

The regions aerodromes serve several purposes including recreational flights, transport, freight and the vital operations of the Royal Flying Doctors Service which provides a medical service outside of emergencies and that which may not be able to be delivered via helicopter operations.

Council will continue to monitor usage rates and consider potential operational efficiencies wherever possible.

Budgeted and current Aerodrome Operating Expenses are indicated below.

2022	2021
\$201,698	\$169,803

Council has just received Federal Government Funding to upgrade fencing around 4 of the region's aerodromes.

49. Is it necessary that council housing is available when so many houses are available to rent and the council houses are occupied all the time?

Please see answer to question 10.

50. How much money is spent on councillors' vehicles, what bonuses councillors receive. Is this necessary? Can cuts be made here?

See table Q31.

As far as provisions go for councillors there is a policy "Reimbursement and Provision for Mayor and Councillors" found here: <https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/103-Reimbursement-and-Provision-of-Facilities-for-Mayor-and-Councillors.pdf>.

The policy (2017) states that Councillors should not be financially disadvantaged when carrying out the requirements of the role of councillor and should be fairly and reasonably compensated in accordance with statutory requirements and community expectations. Councillors are reviewing this policy as it doesn't reflect the actual working of the current council yet are aware that future councils may not share the same level of generosity.

The current policy includes provisions for reimbursable expenses of:

- Attendance at a council event as part of their role.
- Professional Development (mandatory training and discretionary training)
- Travel costs
- Accommodation
- Meals
- Hospitality expenses
- Cab charges and public transport
- Administrative and office amenities
- Secretarial Support
- Computer and printer for business use
- Photocopier and paper shredder access
- Stationery
- Name badge and safety equipment
- Vehicles
- Fuel
- Mobile phone (only business use)

The way the 2020 elected councillors work is:

- All councillors have paid their own way to all events (including the Mayors Ball in 2019 and all shows across the region).
- At any stage possible accommodation costs are reduced by sharing rooms or by staying with family or friends.
- All councillors have a vehicle, mobile phone and fuel paid for business use (see Q16 for further information)
- No councillors have chosen to be reimbursed for any meals.
- The Mayor shares secretarial support with the CEO and other councillors.
- Councillors can access printers at Council facilities.
- No councillors have accessed any hospitality money.
- Only the Mayor has asked to access the discretionary training budget to attend the company directors' course – a course recommended by the previous Director General for Local Government Warwick Agnew. This course is approximately \$10,000 of which council would reimburse \$5000. At this stage the mayor has chosen not to do the course or access this funding due to time constraints.

- This term of councillors has also made the decision in the first few weeks to not have any catering at their meetings. Instead, councillors bring their own lunch, bring lunch to share or spend their own money in the town.

51. Why is it that the Gayndah cleaner has to travel to Biggenden to carry out cleaning there? At least 2 hours and transport costs are lost every trip.

The Gayndah cleaner has provided relief at Biggenden recently. Council only has one cleaner in each town, so the only pool for relief are staff from other towns.

52. Why is it that the CEO lives at Bargara + travels to and from Gayndah in a council supplied vehicle 2 days (approx) per week when council owns + maintains a perfectly good CEO's house in Gayndah? This to me is using "working from home" as a huge waste of ratepayers' money. What does this whole exercise cost? Rates, water, electricity + insurance on Gayndah house, registration, insurances depreciation, fuel, tyres + services of vehicle. Salary + time spent on the road not attending to her "CEO" duties

Let's break this one down.

- The CEO does not live at Bargara (see Q38)
- The CEO travels in their own vehicle which is part of their salary package. (see Q10, Q31)
- CEO's employed by council are entitled to one residence in the region. This is standard condition as part of their employment contracts (always has been).
- The CEO works in the entire region and may reside anywhere within the region.
- What anyone employed by council does in their private time is a private matter.

53. Why are contractors from long distances away utilised to do work such as water pipe upgrades when we have contractors in the North Burnett region quite capable of doing the work and employing local workers?

Generally, contractors are not employed from long distances away as it is an economic reality that they cannot compete on price with capable local contractors.

Local contractors also benefit from a financial preference weighting to tenders which favours local business <https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Policy-104-Procurement-and-Purchasing-121020.pdf>.

However, Local Governments must act, under regulation, to ensure they provide value for money in their tendering and contractual arrangements. Depending on the size and likely value of a project, that may require going to a wider group of suppliers.

Some contracts, whether because of size or complexity, etc., are not within the capability of local companies, which again necessitates going to a wider group of possible suppliers.

One of the key tools councils use to gain access to suitable suppliers of both goods and services is the LGAQ's Local Buy arrangement. Using this arrangement is also one of the best ways they can streamline project operations and demonstrate that no corrupt financial dealings occur.

Currently, no local contractors have taken the opportunity to register with this program to gain the obvious advantages doing so provides, even though it has been in place for over a decade. As a result, they choose to exclude themselves from any opportunities from our Council or indeed other QLD councils.

Council is happy to work with any local businesses to assist them in the registration process. Local Buy are looking to come out and hold some information sessions in the region for local suppliers on how they can tender. This will be rolled out by BIEDO. Suppliers can find information here <https://www.localbuy.net.au/homepage/43/information-for-suppliers>.

54. Do aircraft operators pay landing fees?

There is no charge for landing fees in Councils fees and charges.

55. Do sport and recreation users contribute to the upkeep of these facilities.

The inconsistencies across the region in this area was identified in the SDR report. This is an area which will be reviewed in the coming year.

56. WHY are we the community not allowed to speak / ask about the CEO and the use of the Council vehicle purchased for travel to and from her home in Bundaberg/Bargara? Why are WE paying for the maintenance on this vehicle? When the decision for the move was that of the CEO - travel to and from work SHOULD be in their PRIVATE vehicle. Travel costs WITHIN our NBRC area should utilise the council funded/maintained vehicle!! WHY are employees being SILENCED! If transparency AND accountability AND help from US is coming to attention - WHY, WHY, WHY!!!

Please see answers to Q's 10, 31, 38, 52

57. Can the ombudsman be utilized in any form?? Can the Local Govt Association be mobilized across the entire state to surge in unison to resist the State Govt takeover and control of Local Gov'ts?

Yes, Council has engaged LGAQ as part of their advocacy. Council is also working closely with other similar unsustainable councils to join us in our fight for equality and fairness across all local governments.



This article was published in Council Leader Winter 2021 edition (A QLD publication)

ADVOCACY +
ADVOCACY +

LAST ONE OUT, PLEASE TURN OFF THE LIGHTS

By Rachel Chambers / North Burnett Regional Council Mayor

It's time to fix the system and address the inequity across our state.

Dear community,

Growing up in Brisbane I never dreamed that I would one day be forced to regard adequate road maintenance, drinking water, recycling, sewerage, and community swimming pools as luxury items.

Yet recently, as Mayor, I stood in front of my community and shared the shocking news that due to the uncertainty of future funding, these council must consider restricting service delivery with such severity that all of these essential services would be affected.

Imagine that: essential services that are only essential if you have the money within a geographic boundary to regard them as such. This is not the Queensland we want.

One third of local governments in Queensland are now at high risk of becoming financially unsustainable.

And I don't know why no one is talking about it. Well, no one except everyone in local government, and many parliamentary reports and papers dating back more than a decade. Given local governments' role as the foundation on which all communities are built, the fact that so many of these foundations are unstable, and crumbling, should sound deafening alarm bells at One William Street.

Right now, local government is concerned. State and Federal governments have heavily relied on borrowing to stimulate the Queensland and Australian economies. The grants that so many councils rely on are at risk. Councils have already been told to consider how to continue providing essential services in a "cost affordable manner" and are bracing themselves for more uncertainty to come.

That recent data tells a different story—the exact opposite is needed and more funding secured as a vital piece of the local government puzzle.

The ability of local governments in Queensland to source their own revenue is vastly different depending on location, population size, rate base and the ability to levy user charges. On the surface, spending less than you earn is a sound financial approach. Dig a bit deeper and this unrealistic and unfair demand on some Queensland communities begins to unravel.



The ability of local governments in Queensland to source their own revenue is vastly different depending on location, population size, rate base and the ability to levy user charges.

The system of financial sustainability, as it stands, draws a 'line' around a geographic area (council area) and implies a closed system where ratepayers must pay for the assets and services within this 'area'. The folly in this lies in the fact that as Queenslanders we all use each other's infrastructure and even let people from other states, territories and countries use it on occasion.

When the ratepayers of a (geographic area) are unable to afford to maintain the shared assets within this 'council area' alone, they are expected to cut costs by reducing maintenance and lowering service levels. This results in job losses and loss of liveability. Once on this roundabout, there's no getting off.

Financial sustainability of councils has long been touted as a 'challenge'. If or councils like the North Burnett, just three hours northwest of Brisbane CBD, it's more like hiking handout up a street, with the hopes and dreams of the community on your back.

With over a billion dollars in assets (including the 12th longest road network among Australian councils) and only 7,000 ratepayers, the ability for this council to fund its own way has never been an option and will never be an option unless of course the community can live without roads and water.

As Queenslanders living in 2021, our expectations are similar regardless of our home address. The difference is, as Queenslanders, our home address dictates the level of services provided.

The system is broken. And there's work to do on all sides. The future of Queenslanders depends on it.

Councils have work to do to get their long-term planning and asset management in order. I have confidence the sector can do that.

State Government must harness a better understanding and appreciation of the work

CREATE A SAFER COMMUNITY

IMPROVE VISIBILITY & SAFETY TODAY!

Yindi

MODERN VERSATILE LED POST TOP LIGHT

20W

30W

40W

60W

75W

100W

NEW

DESIGN AWARD 2019



Call now and ask for design support

1800 365 444 | Priscilla 0423 693 660 | enlighten.com.au

16 COUNCIL LEADER
COUNCIL LEADER 17

This article was published in LG Focus (an Australian publication)

16 COUNCIL LEADER
COUNCIL LEADER 17

A fair share of the pie

North Burnett Regional Council (NBRC), Queensland, has been leading the fight for a fairer share of State and Federal funding for local government through a campaign highlighting the harsh financial reality facing smaller regional councils.

NBRC, one of the 30 percent of Queensland councils identified by the Queensland Audit Office of being at high risk of becoming financially unsustainable, launched its **Between a Rock and a Hard Place** campaign in April to have an honest conversation with the region's ratepayers and the higher levels of

government about the disconnect between the funding, the revenue streams available to regional councils and the cost of providing essential services and maintaining infrastructure that the community needs.

It began with a community roadshow through the six rural towns that make up the North Burnett region – Mt Perry, Gayndah, Mundubbera, Biggenden, Eidsvold and Monto.

United in their message, the councillors attended each meeting and took their constituents through a candid presentation of NBRC's financial situation, including proposals around service changes to road grading methodology, library opening hours and the future of the regions five pools, that Council would need to consider unless the funding imbalance to local government is addressed.

A petition was presented to State Parliament by Mayor Rachel Chambers, while letters were sent to State and Federal Ministers.

Residents were also encouraged to enact their civic duty and write to the State and Federal governments demanding action.

In June, Council took its fight to Canberra, presenting to Federal Senators and MPs at the Australian Local Government Association's National General Assembly.

NBRC's ultimate goal is to secure a stable, long term funding model that gives councils like the North Burnett certainty, so they can continue to provide the essential services communities rely on and create a sustainable community for future generations.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOCUS

58. Why didn't the C.E.O introduce herself + speak at recent Shire Mtgs?

Councillors introduced the CEO and staff at the beginning of each meeting.

The 'Between a Rock and a Hard Place' community meetings were Mayor and Councillors meeting with Community, there was no role for the CEO at these. Councillors asked her to attend to listen only. The CEO attended each session and was mostly at the front door managing Covid check-in's or assisting with seating allocations.

It is the Councillor's responsibility to set the budget and it is the Councillors responsibly to inform the community, not the CEO's.

59. Where are we at with mining in our region?

We are just about to launch an investment prospectus for the region on September 6th in Brisbane – stay tuned! There will also be a website. We will update this page when it becomes available.

60. What about unpaid rates - what is the cost to council? Can council not sell property? Why are we focusing on the four areas above? Do they cost the most? What about the other boxes of services on the next page?

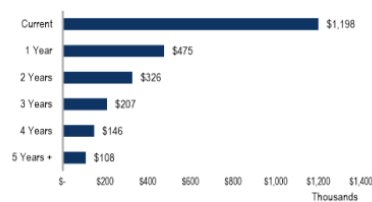
You can find details on unpaid rates in every financial report at General Meetings here is an example:

RATES OVERDUE (as at April 2021)

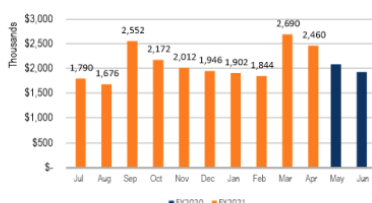
Areas to note

- In April 2021, the rates overdue has decreased from March 2021. This decline has been a reduction from March (\$2,689,608) to April (\$2,459,704) of \$229,904.
- In April 2021, the rates overdue balance decreased by 8.55% compared to the previous month.
- Approximately 68% of rates overdue as at 30 April 2021 are less than one year overdue.
- There do not appear to be any covid-related impacts on rates overdue.

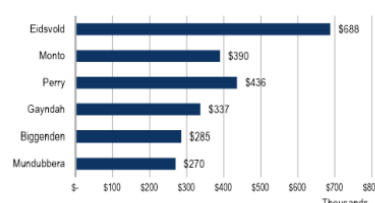
Overdue rates by age



Overdue rates balance



Overdue rates by location



Our rates recovery policy is here:

<https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/2233-Debt-Recovery-Policy-150721.pdf> (under our list of policies when we launch our new look website)

Legislation on selling a property:

Section 227 of the Local Government Regulation 2012 states that for valuable non-current assets, a contract cannot be entered into unless it first invites written tenders or is offered by for sale by auction. The legislation also provides for when exceptions to this rule may apply and these exceptions are detailed in Section 236 of the Local Government Regulation 2012.

It should be noted that before an asset disposal can proceed by exception, a Council resolution is required.

Why did we choose the 4 areas to focus on?

This first round of investigations was chosen due to a combination of readily accessible information, potential savings, risk to the organisation and potential changes to service levels. The next lot of areas to investigate will be undertaken in 2021-2022. These can be found as part of our operational plan here <https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NBRC-2021-2026-Operational-Plan-A4-FINAL.pdf>.

61. Does Council have to be responsible for Caravan Parks? Can they be run privately?

Yes and no.

Most Caravan Parks are operated by lessees under commercial arrangements with Council.

These commercial relationships necessarily take various forms across the region due to the tenure of the land they operate on. Most operate on state reserves for which Council is the trustee.

Council can only extricate itself from these arrangements by closing down the parks completely and handing control of the land back to the State, who prescribe the allowable use of the reserves. The benefits of doing this have to be weighed against the harm to the community in doing so.

Caravan Parks is listed in the SDR and will be addressed into the future per the SDR recommendations.

62. I would like to know if there is some way we could slash our own little bit of road or do some minor repairs e.g. filling in a hole or two without getting a reprimand from the Council?

There are many responsibilities and legislation that pertain to being a road manager.

It's never about a reprimand it's about protecting our community members from litigation.

For roads that have a single landowner user, Council would be willing to consider this offer on a case by case basis.

63. Community bus - what annual cost for how many?

The NBRC bus service is a fully subsidised public transport service from the State Government. The contract was just put out for tender through Q Tenders [here](#).

Passenger numbers for 2020 are below:

Month	Passengers
Jan	254
Feb	213
Mar	186
Apr	65

Month	Passengers
May	77
Jun	140
Jul	165
Aug	165
Sep	188
Oct	162
Nov	187
Dec	195
Total	1,997

64. What public health services do the Council run?

Council runs Environmental Health Services, Food Safety Services and Covid Public Health Services (as per QLD Health directives).

65. What financial services do the Council offer?

Council does not offer any external financial services.

66. What is the councils plan to try and generate an income, separate from rate payments, rather than cut the guts out of everything else, for example, forced redundancies, selling assets, outsourcing all work via sub-contractors? Why are you not trying to attract industry type business back into our small towns ???

These are two separate issues.

1. Council only has 5 ways it can address operational deficits (see table 3.2). Council are doing all five currently.

3.2 Options to Address Operational Deficits

When faced with operational deficits, Council has five 'levers' it can use to address them:

Table 2: Operational Deficit Management Options

Revenue-side Actions	Expenditure-side Actions
Seek additional grant funding	Impose 'one-off' operational budget reductions
Increase rates, fees and charges	Reduce service mix and/or levels of service
	Improve business process efficiency

These actions can be performed separately or together in any order Council chooses. They can also be performed more than once.

2. Attracting industry type businesses back into our small towns
Please see answer to Q32.

67. Why has NBRC staff been silenced with breaking code of conduct threats and losing their job, where is the “transparency” in this?

Please see answer to Q27.

- 68. Has this proposal you are pushing, already been voted on by council in a minuted meeting without first consulting the ratepayers and community? Seems like it has already been decided and you're just ticking the box.**

No decisions had been made before the meeting on 30th June 2021. Councillors were genuinely engaging with community.

At a guess, it may have seemed that way as council had to consult on the 'potential' decisions with staff and unions for months prior to work through all the 'what ifs'. This is just the process, nothing more. The decisions are the decisions of elected council and all community feedback was considered.

You can see the decisions of council which were made at the budget meeting on the 30th of June 2021 <https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/council-meetings/>.

- 69. What are your plans to help our kids? They are the future of this town.**

The responsibility lies with parents to educate, nurture and plan for their own children's future, however, it takes a village to raise a child.

Councils' role is to provide public infrastructure and public services such as sporting, recreational and cultural activities in one way or other.

Council also offers employment opportunities for youth in the region. This year 6 trainee positions were offered.

Pools

- 70. If we have to go down to just 2 pools in the region with the State has a commitment - every primary school child will have access to swimming lessons, who would pay for the costs to bus all the children to these two pools each week? The schools, the NBRC or the State Government?**

The decision made at the Budget meeting was to:

RESOLUTION 2021/60

Moved: Cr Jones

Seconded: Cr Hotz

That Council:

- 1) Continue to maintain and operate existing pools in Biggenden, Eidsvold, Gayndah, Monto and Mundubbera.
- 2) Further investigation and condition assessment of the region's pools is undertaken.
- 3) A fit for purpose asset management strategy is developed and funding sort to replace existing pools over 10 years.
- 4) Review the operating agreements to ensure the most effective delivery of the service to the community and report to Council on the outcomes.

CARRIED 6/0

We sent Minister Grace Grace a letter asking a similar question. You can find the letter and response on our page here <https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/between-a-rock/>.

- 71. Who would be responsible if something bad happened on the roads, just because our local pools have been shut down?**

See Q 70 re pools.

Road behaviour is a matter for the QLD Police Service. Accidents a matter for QLD Ambulance Service. And responsibility/liability when things go wrong is the matter for the courts.

To be clear, Council is not accountable nor responsible for how people drive.

- 72. The State Government recently made a pledge to ensure every child in Queensland learns to swim. Who is going to cover the cost of buses to take students to the only two pools in a large region? Has Council even consulted with the schools?**

Please see answer to Q70.

- 73. I heard on radio this morning that Biggenden Pool is managed by managers of Childers Pool. Question for Council: Could these managements be promoting use of Childers Pool to the detriment of Biggenden Pool as it doesn't have the facilities of Childers?**

Tenders for the management of council facilities include key responsibilities and the ability for a lessee to make money from the lease requires promoting the facility to get patrons through the gate. There is no benefit for the lessee to promote their Childers facility over the Biggenden one. The Biggenden Pool is one of our most successful pools in the region.

- 74. How much does each pool cost council?**

2020 Annual Operating Costs					
	Gayndah	Mundubbera	Monto	Eidsvold	Biggenden
Total annual costs ongoing	\$142,384	\$135,248	\$122,531	\$122,426	\$123,313

Total operational pool cost is \$650,000

This does not include capital works or major repairs.

- 75. It's a government requirement for children to have swimming school lessons, and you are suggesting they will have to travel to another town for their lessons, who will foot that bill? The bus hire, the time out of school, the fuel, the teachers time, the extra time our children will be spending on roads and increasing their chances of being in a car accident.**

Please see answer to Q70.

76. Does Council have to fund pools? Could a lessee be contracted to manage all regional pools and with bi-laws, regulations etc would this be economical or feasible?

No, Councils do not have to fund pools as they are not a legislative requirement of Council nor considered an essential service.

Yes, there are many options that need to be explored over the next year as to what model the pools are operated under and where to secure funding for capital works.

77. Does Council charge an entrance fee to pools or are they free?

There are pool entrance fees, which are set down by Council in the Fees & Charges schedule to ensure regional consistency and that they cannot be inflated by lessees. You can see fees and charges here <https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/fees-and-charges/>.

78. Who gets the pool takings?

Standard practice across the industry is to offer pools with an annual retainer for the pool lessee to manage the facility and then the lessee receives gate and canteen takings to make it a going concern for them.

79. Is there any way to increase profitability of pool operations by ensuring all lessees are passionate and are treating their pool leases like business builders?

Pool operators are like any business and although Council has some scope around the operations of the pool, the way in which it is undertaken is the responsibility of the business owner, the same as any other business, in line with their contract.

80. Is there any income that comes back to the council from the lessees to contribute to pool running costs?

No

81. Ask the state government how they will intend to keep their promise that every child deserves the right to learn to swim if they don't give funding for it to happen?

Please see answer to Q70.

82. Can we privatise the pools?

Yes, we could, in some Local Government Areas community pools are owned and operated as private businesses. For example, Brisbane City council owns 22 pools all of which are run by private operators.

This works in areas where a user pays system produces a profit. Currently in the North Burnett, to break even on the cost of running our pools, each visit would need to cost approximately \$35. This is completely unrealistic and as such, in order for community to have use of pools, council chooses to lose money each year, a decision no private business can make.

Pools are not an essential service of a Council and they are not a legislative requirement of a Council.

There are many options that need to be explored as to the best model of operation and funding for capital works.

83. What will you do with closed pools?

Please see answer to Q70.

84. Does the school help with funding for student use?

This question is best answered by individual schools.

**85. 1. Does the water and sewerage staff still carry out mechanical maintenance on the pools?
2. Does the water and sewerage budget have enough money to assist in some pool maintenance costs?**

Yes, they do. Budget is tight and has to stretch across 5 pools in the region.

85. What will happen to our swimming Clubs? Where will the beginners learn to swim?

The future of swimming clubs is always a matter for each swimming club. Learn to swim programs are run by community groups, schools and privately across Queensland.

86. If you run only, say, 3 pools in the council area, then which towns are going to benefit? Which towns will have to travel to access the pools?

Please see answer to Q70.

Waste

87. There is no recycling household bins in Biggenden (assuming North Burnett). Why is this lacking and is there funding to support it?

Kerbside recycling including collection, storage, processing and subsequent transport to available markets (if available) is cost prohibitive for our region due to our small scale.

To have this service the cost would need to be worn by rate payers which could double the current household collection charge.

We encourage recycling by having drop off points at our waste management facilities.

88. Could we have a recycling facility? Bottles / Plastic cash for recycling incentives, wood chip the green waste or compost it and sell.?

- **Current recycling options within the region include:**
- **Containers for Change:** Biggenden and Mundubbera (coming) Waste Management Facilities
- **Green Waste:** Biggenden, Eidsvold, Monto, Mundubbera, Mt Perry and Gayndah
- **Batteries:** Biggenden, Monto, Mt Perry, Mundubbera and Gayndah
- **Oil:** Biggenden, Monto, Mundubbera and Gayndah
- **e-Waste:** Biggenden, Eidsvold, Monto, Mundubbera, Mt Perry and Gayndah
- **Cardboard:** Mundubbera, Gayndah and Biggenden
- **Scrap Metal:** Biggenden, Eidsvold, Monto, Mundubbera, Mt Perry and Gayndah

- **Tyres:** Biggenden, Eidsvold, Monto, Mundubbera, Mt Perry and Gayndah
- **Tip Shop:** Mt Perry, Biggenden and Gayndah

Please see this article in the Courier Mail where Rockhampton Council's new green waste fees to save their council \$500,000 per year.

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/rockhampton/green-waste-charges-to-be-introduced-at-rocky-dump/news-story/e0e7c9701228867016a003a6910aba1a>.

As a side note:

Mulching green waste costs council \$60,000 in 2020

Cardboard bailing and transport costs council \$6 per cubic metre.

- 89. This service, when I was younger, used to stay open all day and night, so that it could be used at any time and the only time a paid employee went out there was to move the waste etc. Why was that changed?**

2019 legislation has meant we now have to track and weigh all waste that is put in landfill and pay the state government currently \$80.00 per tonne.

We had to install a new weighbridge at one of our waste facilities to allow us to do this. Mundubbera was chosen as it had the most space for future expansion. All waste now gets transferred to Mundubbera and weighed before burying. We then pay the State Government accordingly. Check out information on the Waste Levy here:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/pollution/management/waste/recovery/disposal-levy>.

Note: Council is investigating un-manned transfer stations and is closely following the work Banana shire is doing with their trial at Wowan Transfer Station <https://www.banana.qld.gov.au/news/article/287/smart-technology-to-be-trialled-at-wowan-transfer-station>.

- 90. Is more recycling of waste products an option? Or does this just add to Council's costs?**

Council is currently investigating any option which would allow us to recycle/process waste without transportation costs.

Council has recently become a member of the Local Authority Waste Advisory Committee (you can find the resolution and full report in our agenda and minutes of the April 2021 General Meeting) and is working with this group's contacts on many options.

- 91. Why do the waste facilities need to be manned? The dump at Mt Perry operated successfully for 100 years before regions.**

Please see answer to 89.

- 92. Could staff be put on individual contracts that means paid normal hour rates for weekends - not double time or time and a half? What about cash for can processing?**

The current award and Industrial relations prohibit Council from doing this, however, if this was a contract to manage the facilities then it would be at the decision of the contractor with how they manage their employees.

93. Re Monto dump: Could this become an unmanned station, as per the Banana Shire, Thangool site?

Please see answer to 89.

94. What do other small rural Councils do?

The biggest change to waste has been due to the Waste Levy.

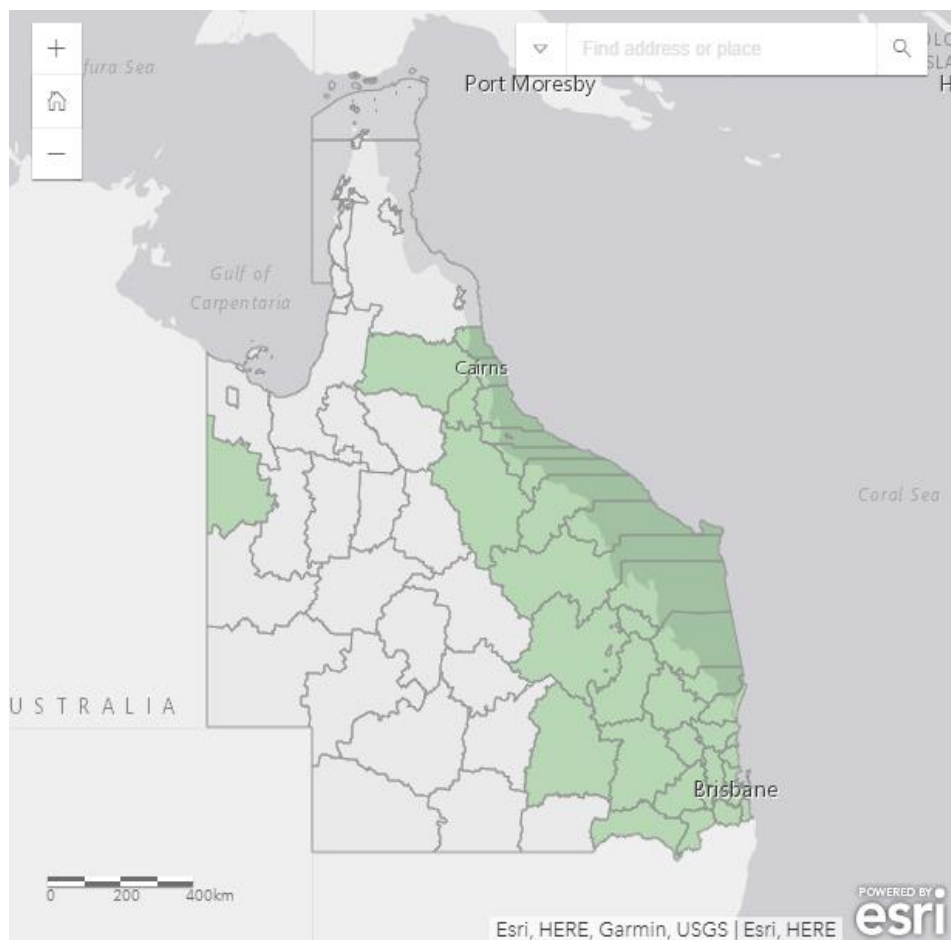
The levy zone includes 39 out of 77 local government areas. These areas together account for around 90% of QLD's population and is where the majority of waste is generated and disposed.

The State did exclude some local government areas recognising the different circumstances faced by remote and less populated communities in Queensland, the cut off was populations of 10,000. We had 10,640.

North Burnett argued with the State to be removed from the levy zone however the State counter argued that we needed to be in the levy as they wanted to ensure areas outside the levy zone do not become 'dumping grounds' in efforts to avoid paying the levy.

We lost, due to our proximity to other large local government areas.

We are in the levy area and therefore now have the extra burden of administering, remitting and reporting against the levy. This also comes with large capital outlay. All of which our ratepayers now pay for.



- 95. If the waste facility isn't open every day, what arrangement do you have in place if a business requires immediate disposal of product (such as perishable foods etc. due to machinery malfunction)?**

Our opening days across the region will be staggered to ensure a facility is open within one hour from each location in the region each day. Council will in future explore options for electronic access by business to facilities when they are closed.

- 96. Are there recycling companies who can be contracted to install and collect waste. Can "useable" scrap and furniture items be saleable?**

All options for re-use and recycling are being investigated. You can read councils waste management strategy (adopted at the July 2021 meeting) on our website.

Customer Service and Libraries

- 97. If these centres have reduced hours what do the workers do then. Are they just shifted to another building to do work?**

Many options were brought to and considered by council. The decision in regards to customer service and libraries was made at the 30th June meeting.

As per council resolution 2021/62. Here: www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Signed-General-Meeting-Minutes-30-June-2021.pdf

- Council removed Saturday trading as of 1st August.
- Kept all weekday hours across the region.
- Asked for an investigation into services and programs which require additional staff and resources such a Tech Savvy Seniors QGap and Centrelink to be reduced or to find alternative delivery mechanisms.

- 98. Are current CS&L staff kept fully occupied? If you cut the customer services times you will still meet your commitment to "Centrelink" + other government agencies or would it be better to all concerned if these services were relinquished to private enterprise providers?**

Considerations the have been modelled to ensure that staff have a full workload, whether in one location or across multiple locations within the region.

No decision was made to cut hours during weekdays. Council is investigating if there are other agencies or businesses who would be better suited to deliver Centrelink and QGAP Services.

- 99. Does the library require a full-time employee? Could someone in the office multi-task and do both?**

Staff already multi-task. They cover Libraries, Council Customer Service and various administration duties across the region. Some staff also look after tasks such as Cemetery, grants programs, collection of washdown bay money, and many more as requested and required by Council.

100. Could you merge the Eidsvold Library with RM Williams (modern facility) and then sell the Eidsvold Library?

Nothing is off the table. There are 2 parts to this question.

The first, could we merge the library with RM? There is already a resolution of council from the Council meeting held on the 26th of May:

That Council receive this report as presented and resolves to:

- 1. Call Expressions of Interest for the possible disposal of the asset through lease or sale of the RM Williams Australian Bush Learning Centre in accordance with the requirements of Section 228 of the Local Government Regulation 2012; and*
- 2. Council conducts a community survey to gather community sentiment on the future of the RM Williams Australian Bush Learning Centre; and*
- 3. Further consider a report on the outcome of the Expressions of Interest and survey feedback at the August 2021 General Meeting.*

The second, could the Eidsvold Library be sold?

Potentially as the land is freehold.

101. Have you thought of a mobile library?

A mobile library was one of the considerations put to council at their workshops. Also considered was our current arrangement of combined libraires and customer service centres.

Costings from other councils to fit out a mobile library and then maintain it were considerably high. Other councils who had implemented it are now considering disbanding it.

	Small Van	Large Van	Prime Mover
Cost & Fit Out	\$200,000	\$350,000	\$1 million
Maintenance/yr	\$70,000	\$90,000	\$138,000

Councils decision at the 30th June 2021 meeting was:

RESOLUTION 2021/62

Moved: Cr Jones

Seconded: Cr Hotz

Council changes the operating hours of its Customer Service and Library Centres to achieve a continued level of services and operational savings by removing Saturday trading at all relevant Customer Service and Library Centres, commencing 1 August 2021. Further to that, services and programs requiring additional staff resources on and above councils Customer Service and Library Centres operations such as tech savvy seniors, Q gap and Centrelink as such be investigated with a view to reduce or find alternative delivery mechanisms as well as minimise staff resourcing across 6 locations for all week days.

In Favour: Cr Melinda Jones, Cr Leslie Hotz, Cr Dael Giddins and Cr Michael Dingle

Against: Cr Robert Radel and Cr Susan Payne

CARRIED 4/2

- 102. A lot of times, local queries are referred to Gayndah office, so why so many people in offices other than Gayndah?**

Staff are deployed and located across the region. Various departments currently are in various locations. For example, the Rates department is in Eidsvold, the planning and development department is in Biggenden, the regional contact centre is based in Monto, engineering team is in Mundubbera, Finance team is in Gayndah.

- 103. Where do the current staff go if this service is to be reduced?**

As per Council's Enterprise Agreement, staff would be consulted on re-deployment options available to them.

- 104. Can we run courses from CS&L Centres? CPR, RSA, general courses, recreation groups?**

Council's CS&L Centres are a great place for groups to meet and utilise the facility available. It is not suitable for activities like CPR courses, etc though as all residents are entitled to use the facility during opening hours. Our community halls and function rooms are available for hire at reasonable rates. Please see one of our friendly customer service officers or give us a call on 1300 696 272.

- 105. Who uses the library, how busy is it? Community members, visitors including backpackers**

The libraries across our region function as both library and customer service centres and provide a broad range of services to meet the needs of our diverse community. We cater to all segments of the community including locals and visitors. Library numbers can be found in the Council Papers for the 30 June meeting here <https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/20210630-Council-General-Meeting-Agenda.pdf>.

- 106. Could the library be run by volunteers?**

Our library staff undertake extensive training and provide a broad range of services to our community. Libraries are not just shelving books, there is a broad knowledge and skills base required to deliver a professional service to community and meet the requirements to remain accredited with State Library of Qld.

In saying that, there are volunteering opportunities in our libraries.

- 107. Does council make sure they receive full costs back for providing QGAP and centreline services?**

QGAP and Centrelink services covers a portion of operational costs but does not cover the full cost of delivering the service.

- 108. Is Mundubbera the only QGAP Office? How is it funded re staffing? Is it adequately funded? What would be the implication of reducing library hours to the operation of QGAP? What would be the alternative for QGAP services?**

Council currently operate QGAP services in Mundubbera and Eidsvold, funded by contracts with the State Government.

Delivering this service is not Council's core business and responsibility, and so Council is looking at what other organisations or businesses in our community could better deliver this service for the community.

Other QGAP services available in the North Burnett include the Monto and Gayndah Court Houses, which are operated by the State Government directly.

Mt Perry and Biggenden do not have QGAP services.

109. How effectively are the staff being employed at each of these centres?

CS & Libraries are providing over 90% first contact resolution to our communities, demonstrating that they are efficient in their work and are resolving most enquiries accurately the first time.

110. Are there options to lobby to meet the cost of the community service obligation of libraries?

State Libraries sits under the Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts, the Honourable Leanne Enoch MP.

North Burnett Libraries are part of State Libraries QLD rural libraries program. No-one else can deliver this service. State Libraries provide resource and delivery of books into and around the region as part of their agreement. Some programs delivered by libraries are funded, such as the First Five program.

Grading of Roads

111. Regarding the upgrade to McLaughlans Road and Youlambie Road, when are these roads going to be graded and attended to?

The civil works program for the year is now published online here <https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/roads/> so you can see any upcoming work on your road.

We note that these 2 roads have had works completed within the last fortnight as at 12/08/21.

Work is undertaken on a priority basis, with the Council adopting a forward program of works. Construction projects are prioritised based on criteria such as traffic volumes, network linkages, safety environment, asset condition, school bus routes, freight routes for primary production, tourist routes, amenity, and expectations.

Maintenance projects are prioritised based on visual road inspections and data delivered from our RACAS (Road Asset Condition Assessment System) and compared to the International Roughness Indicator for intervention level analysis.

Unfortunately, budget impacts our ability to improve our intervention levels on roads.

The program can be affected by outside influences such as disasters / emergencies, individual road failures, significant external financial contributions, increased industry or development activity in a particular area.

112. Why hasn't improvements to Mt Margaret Road been addressed yet?

Please see answer to Q111.

113. Problem seems to be poor definition of mechanism to set roadwork priorities. Not all roads are equal! Urban gutters are very poor. How are priorities set?

Please see answer to Q111.

114. Does dry grading keep the road in good condition?

Resourcing a more strategic maintenance model and employing light maintenance grading within established patrol grading zones will provide:

- Significant improvement from a road user point of view e.g. currently most users are seeing a grader, at best, once every three years. This will now be at least once a year and in some cases once every 3 months.
- Improved productivity and utilisation of plant.
- Improved asset life. Gravel roads are maintained more frequently and are therefore less susceptible to damage associated with poor maintenance practices e.g. effective drainage to remove water during times of rain.
- Inspection frequency is significantly improved due to the number of staff covering the network.
- Works programming that is much more accurate and predictable.

115. Some owners are willing to maintain roads themselves. Is it possible to provide them with the permission to do so?

For roads that have a single landowner user, Council would be willing to consider this offer on a case by case basis.

116. Your outside gangs seemingly spend many hours travelling to jobs. The expense of this travel and the actual time it takes for work to be completed seems extreme. Has productivity and efficiency been measured?

This is a key area to be addressed by our revised maintenance program. This new program will work to better capture productivity and minimise wasted time in travel. Please see the full report here <https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/20210630-Council-General-Meeting-Agenda.pdf>.

117. How much longer does wet grading last compared to dry grading?

Please refer to the Council Report on Road Maintenance tabled at the 30 June 2021 meeting which details a comprehensive explanation of dry grading compared to wet grading <https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/20210630-Council-General-Meeting-Agenda.pdf>.

118. While SunWater is releasing water from our dams (Cania Dam and possibly others), could the council utilise this "wasted" water for our roads?

No water is wasted. When Sunwater is releasing water from dams it is to ensure water allocations is available to those who have paid for water downstream.

Council utilises a range of water sources to support its maintenance programs.

119. How sustainable is NBRC if road maintenance is removed as an obligation? Is Council still unsustainable?

If roads were removed from Council in their entirety, such as State taking back even 80% of local government roads, then Council would be in a much more sustainable position, as it would remove the asset from Council's asset register and depreciation. This is being considered in NSW – <https://www.governmentnews.com.au/up-15000-km-of-council-roads-to-be-returned-to-state/>

Mowing

120. A ratepayer in Eidsvold currently maintains an area of road reserve to the north of the Eidsvold Golf Club. Is it okay for him to continue to do so?

We have some amazing residents who take pride in the look of their own property and the town that they live in. Residents are welcome to maintain public land adjoining their private property.

121. What land are Council mowing that is not theirs? Why are they mowing it? Who is responsible for it?

Land owned by the State Government and private organisations is currently being maintained by Council. Following the council resolution of 30 June 2021, Council will continue investigating ownership of all parcels of land that are maintained by Council and have conversations with the proper landowners to hand maintenance responsibility back to them.

122. Why are we mowing land that does not belong to council? Why are we not charging the owners?

Please see answer to Q121.

123. What land is mowed that is not council responsibility? What happened to the meeting held with garden groups?? (Gayndah)

Please see answer to Q121.

124. Can volunteers use Council machinery to mow showgrounds?

Council's insurance company does not allow volunteers to use Council machinery due to liability issues.

125. Why can't Council allow local farmers to graze their cattle [on the sides of roads]? Two years ago, the drovers brought their cattle up the National Trail - sides of roads were fantastic then.

Stock route grazing permits are available for farmers who wish to agist stock on roads, reserves and stock routes. Please chat to our Land Protection Team to discuss fees and requirements.

126. Who is responsible for mowing the footpaths out the front of houses in town?

Under Councils Local Laws, (Subordinate Local Law No. 4 (Local Government Controlled Areas, Facilities and Roads) 2011) the occupier of the property adjacent or adjoining a footpath is responsible for ensuring that area does not become overgrown.

Across the region many citizens do this as an act of pride.

Showgrounds

127. Showground facility hire: It appeared that staff were misinformed regarding the Show Societies request for hire of Sports Pavilion. Can someone please clarify what the arrangements are for future events?

This will depend on future showground management arrangements.

128. What does the water, mowing and power cost for Showgrounds?

Town	Details	Cost YTD to Council	Rates & Water YTD
Biggenden	Private - pay own rates and water	-	\$8,703
Eidsvold	Council – Rates, water (\$3,940 YTD), electricity (some agreement with Show Society), mowing, gas and repairs. INCOME Sports Shed Hire ONLY – show society retains all other income	\$14,688	\$8,077
Gayndah	Lease in place until March 2040 (\$1/yr) We pay rates, they pay water & state levy (\$1,365 YTD). They pay all other upkeep.	\$6,833	\$8,889
Monto	Lease – expired Dec 2017 (20% gross rental receipts payable to Council). We maintain grounds ring and 3 public toilets. They insure buildings and pay electricity. We do pest control. Water \$3,526 YTD.	\$14,545	\$14,289
Mt Perry	Council – Rates, water (\$5,189 YTD), electricity, mowing, gas and repairs. INCOME \$3,422 YTD	\$29,679	\$6,777
Mundubbera	Private – pay own rates and water	-	\$9,405

129. What are the exact costs of Showgrounds to Council?

Please see answer to Q115.

130. Why is the funding of Showgrounds a problem?

Inconsistency across the region and is not Council's core business.

131. Is the Monto Showgrounds currently on a lease arrangement?

Yes. The lease has however now expired and the Monto Show Society is currently in negotiations on renewing it.

132. Are Showgrounds freely available for private use?

No, they're not.

133. What is the consistent model you are hoping to implement?

6.7 SERVICE DELIVERY REVIEW - SHOWGROUNDS

RESOLUTION 2021/64

Moved: Cr Hotz

Seconded: Cr Giddins

That Council work with Show Societies and the Queensland Department of Resources to remove itself as trustee for the Gayndah, Eidsvold, Monto and Mt Perry Showgrounds and negotiate a model similar to that of the Biggenden and Mundubbera Showgrounds.

In Favour: Cr Robert Radel, Cr Melinda Jones, Cr Leslie Hotz, Cr Susan Payne, Cr Dael Giddins and Cr Michael Dingle

Against: Nil

CARRIED 6/0

134. Aren't most of the Regions showgrounds operating under a trust arrangement - Show society / Council as trustee for the State? Don't the respective show societies fund all rates and any maintenance, improvements etc. that are undertaken on the showgrounds? If so - what is the cost to Council?

Please see Q115.

