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Our reference: 1040916

Honourable Grace Grace MP
PO Box 15033
CITY EAST QLD 4002

Email: education@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Office of the Mayor – Cr Rachel Chambers

Dear Honourable Grace Grace MP

Re: North Burnett Water Safety and Swimming Program

The North Burnett Regional Council is considered to be at high risk of becoming a financially unsustainable council by the Queensland Audit Office. As such, in 2019 the Queensland Treasury Corporation has made a recommendation to the State to not approve further borrowings to council. This decision has triggered a full review of all service delivery in the region, including swimming pools.

Swimming pools cost Council about \$650,000 per year to run. In addition to this operational cost, council will require about \$8 million in capital over the next ten years to keep the pools open across the region. If this money cannot be sourced, the pools will likely be run until failure.

The commitment to make Queensland the water safe state is admirable. I thank you and Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk for recognising the importance of this life skill and committing to ensure every primary school child has access to a water safety and/or learn to swim program. As the Premier stated in February 2018: "Swimming is a life skill every child should have, and every parent and guardian should insist upon".

You would be well aware of the drowning statistics in rural areas being 6.5 times more likely than our urban neighbours. Minister Grace, we are insisting that you, and your government, work with us to ensure every child in the North Burnett has access to learn to swim programs. If we are unable to work with your government on this, we may not be able to continue to deliver the 5 swimming facilities across our region that our communities rely on.

Yours faithfully

Cr Rachel Chambers
Mayor

Address all correspondence to the Chief Executive Officer