



**MEDIA RELEASE: WEDNESDAY, 27 JUNE, 2018**

### **2018-19 COUNCIL BUDGET REVEALED**

Council endorsed the 2018-19 Budget and revised Council Plan at a Special Council Meeting on Tuesday 26 June.

The budget has a strong focus on renewal and replacement of ageing infrastructure over the coming financial year, with a capital works budget of \$15 million and a whole host of exciting projects, including:

- ✓ Avenel Preschool Upgrade- \$526,000 (\$376,000 external funds)
- ✓ Nagambie Recreation Reserve Upgrade- \$250,000 (\$150,000 external funds)
- ✓ New Euroa Visitor Information Centre- \$160,000
- ✓ New toilet block on High Street Nagambie- \$400,000
- ✓ Friendlies Reserve upgrade- \$210,000 (\$160,000 external funds)
- ✓ Deep Water Boat Ramp on Loddings Lane- \$395,000 (\$295,000 external funds)
- ✓ Roads (resealing, road shoulders, re-sheeting, rehabilitation and zero class road upgrade program)- \$6.05 million
- ✓ Maintenance and construction of urban paths, walking tracks and pedestrian bridges- \$427,000
- ✓ Maintenance and replacement of bridges and major culverts- \$2.12 million
- ✓ Drainage maintenance and improvements- \$1.75 million

Council's 2018-19 Budget provides for a capped average rate increase of 1.9 percent, significantly under the State Government's imposed rate cap of 2.25 percent.

Council has also reduced the farm rate differential from 85 to 82.5 percent of the residential rate, in recognising the contribution the farming sector makes to our local economy.

Mayor Amanda McClaren said Council's decision to increase rates by 1.9 percent has resulted in a reduction of the rate in the dollar charged to properties compared to last year.

"This reduction is the result of growth and development across the shire in the last 12 months, which has seen an increase in the number of rateable properties and their total value across the shire."

However, the 2018-19 financial year also brings with it a revaluation period which may mean that individual property rates will vary from the 1.9% average, depending on their valuation changes.

Council has worked hard to strike a balance between ratepayer affordability and the need to source adequate funds to maintain a large geographical area and significant infrastructure with such a small ratepayer base.



Mayor Amanda McClaren said one of the most exciting parts about the new budget is the amount of external funding Council has been able to source for significant projects.

“We have worked so hard to advocate for greater funding in our region and we are really starting to see exciting results,” Mayor McClaren said.

“We have a significant capital works budget, with over \$2 million worth of external funding coming into the shire to bring new infrastructure which will drive our local economy, promote investment and make our shire an even better place to live, work and play.”

Mayor McClaren also explained there has been an added \$84,000 in waste costs for Council since the draft budget was released as a result of necessary contract negotiations due to global pressures placed on our recycling processor.

“These costs will be absorbed by Council’s surplus funds, so we want to reassure ratepayers this will not impact their hip pocket this financial year,” Mayor McClaren explained.

“Ongoing negotiations will be happening with our recycling contractors and whilst we are currently in a comfortable position, we cannot predict the level of costs associated with recycling and waste in the years ahead.”

Council would like to thank community members who were involved in the budget submission process for their input and for the range of great ideas generated.

The following projects were supported through the submission process:

- ✓ Upgrade road and widen culverts at Strathbogie Recreation Reserve- \$10,000
- ✓ New shade sails for Nagambie Senior Citizens- \$8,500
- ✓ Scoping for pavilion upgrade at Strathbogie Recreation Reserve- \$10,000
- ✓ Scoping for Avenel Primary School parking solution- \$10,000
- ✓ Longwood Community Centre bore contribution- \$15,000
- ✓ Nagambie Streetscape items- \$15,000
- ✓ Trial of new treatment for Siems Road- \$35,000
- ✓ Contribution to new bowling green for Nagambie Bowls Club- \$15,000

The 2018-19 Budget and revised Council Plan can be accessed on Council’s website [www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au](http://www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au) or by visiting Customer Service at 109A Binney Street or 317 High Street Nagambie.

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