



KENTISH COUNCIL
MEDIA RELEASE

FOR RELEASE: IMMEDIATELY

RATES INCREASED IN LINE WITH INFLATION

Kentish Council has approved the Annual Plan and Budget for 2023/24.

The Council has been in a strong financial position over recent years, and this has assisted it to fund the Council costs in relation to the June 2022 windstorm damage of \$332,000 and the October 2022 flood damage totalling \$677,000 without an extraordinary increase in rates. The total cost of these events was \$3,220,000 and Council greatly appreciates the support provided by the State and Federal Governments under their disaster recovery funding. The diversion of Council resources to repair the damage from these two disasters did have an impact on other maintenance programs and an emphasis will be placed this year on restoring roads and other assets to their previous conditions.

The proposed capital works program is \$6.011 million including \$2.767 million for projects carried forward from 2022/23 and asset renewal of \$3.102 million.

The Financial Management Strategy and Asset Management Plans have been reviewed when preparing the budget to ensure Council remains sustainable into the future and continues to live within its means. Capital works projects have felt the brunt of a shortage of skilled workers, with a lack of contractors to help with capital works, an increase in the inflation rate, and the simple fact that prices for materials have increased across the board.

Mayor Haberle stated that “Major works listed in the budget include:

- New Roundabout at Main St/High St intersection in Sheffield
- Completion of the widening of West Nook Road
- Spring Street Stormwater
- Railton Flood Mitigation – awaiting confirmation from the Federal Government for an extra \$1.7 million as the cost is now estimated to be \$15 million.”

Council continues to seek efficiencies through further resource sharing and by taking opportunities to contribute to regional development. The majority of savings generated from efficiencies gained up to this point have been reinvested into new technology and plant and equipment to modernise Council operations. This will enable Council to better cope with increased community expectations on the range and quality of services provided.

Key budget information regarding the rate increase, operating result, services levels, cash and investments, capital works, financial position, financial sustainability and key strategic activities of the Council are included in the Annual Plan which is available on Council's website.

The Kentish Council has agreed to increase the General Rate by 6.9% for 2023/24 which is in line with the Consumer Price Index and will help fund the \$6.011 million capital works program and achieve an underlying surplus of \$42,853.

Mayor Haberle said, "In setting rates for 2023/24 Council considered the impact of rising prices on both the cost of the goods and services provided by Council but also on the capacity of ratepayers to meet living costs."

Council will allow a discount of 2% where rates are paid in full by the due date of the first instalment.

ENDS

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