

Barton Deakin Brief: Brisbane City Council Budget 2015-16

17 June 2015

The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Councillor Graham Quirk, today handed down Brisbane City Council's 2015-16 Budget.

Brisbane City Council is the largest local government area in Australia and is home to around 1.1 million people.

The \$2.6 billion Budget focuses on transport projects, suburban road upgrades, city beautification, the Digital Brisbane Strategy and economic development programs.

Overview

Brisbane City Council will post a \$197 million surplus this year, a \$5 million surplus in 2015-16 and a \$187 million surplus in 2016-17.

Net debt is forecast to reduce to \$1,088 per capita in 2015-16. This is down from \$1,411 per capita in 2014-15. Net debt in Brisbane City was greater than \$2,000 per capita a decade ago.

In 2015-16, Brisbane City Council will increase rates for residential and commercial properties by an average of 2.5%. Council fees and charges will also increase by 2.5%, with on-street parking fees remaining frozen.

Transport and roads

The 2015-16 Budget includes transport investments of:

- \$114 million on Brisbane's bus and ferry network, including \$5.2 million over the next three years to refurbish the eight oldest CityCats;
- \$100 million in suburban road resurfacing, including 15 larger projects over \$1 million;
- \$38 million towards the Kingsford Smith Drive Upgrade, with \$609 million to be spent on the upgrade over the forward estimates;
- \$31 million for new off-road and on-road cycling paths;
- \$2 million this year to commence works on widening the Inner City Bypass to four lanes between Legacy Way and the RNA tunnel, which is expected to cost \$80 million; and
- \$1.6 million to begin Stage 1 of the Wynnum Road corridor upgrade, which is expected to cost \$80 million over the forward estimates.



A record investment in road resurfacing during 2015-16 of \$100 million is a key highlight of the Budget. Likewise, the Council will provide a record \$114 million in 2015-16 for Brisbane's buses and ferries, as the only City Council in Australia that runs a public transport system.

The Council's \$31 million investment in bikeways is part of a \$120 million commitment over four years to the *Better Bikeways 4 Brisbane* program. The program accommodates the extra 8% of Brisbane residents per year who use cycle paths.

City beautification and revitalisation

The 2015-16 Budget includes a \$6.3 million package of initiatives to beautify Brisbane including:

- \$5.3 million on a Suburban Centre Improvement Project for the Alderley shopping centre, funded through a partnership between Council and property owners within the centre; and
- \$3.75 million on a Suburban Centre Improvement Project for Honour Avenue in Graceville, which is currently in the concept design phase.
- \$2.2 million towards turning water back on in three Brisbane fountains and for the commissioning of a new fountain within the CBD;
- \$1.8 million for street and laneway enhancements through the *Vibrant Laneways* program;
- \$1.6 million for 'New World City' lighting in the CBD;
- \$671,000 for new city artworks and public artwork on key infrastructure; and
- \$123,000 to stabilise the Kangaroo Point North cliffs, so they can be used for rock climbing.

Economic development

The 2015-16 Budget allocates \$15.5 million towards implementing key recommendations of the *Brisbane 2022 New World City Action Plan* and building on the success of hosting the G20.

The Budget will support Brisbane Marketing to:

- Attract new direct international flights and cruise ship opportunities from some of Brisbane's most popular countries including China, Korea and the United States;
- Ramp-up efforts to attract business events such as conventions and conferences;
- Ramp-up efforts to attract major sporting and entertainment events to Brisbane, with a target of attracting one significant drawcard event per month (comparable to events such as the Brisbane International tennis tournament and Brisbane Racing Carnival);
- Attract more international students, keeping international education as Brisbane's largest export. Several new programs will be rolled-out as part of the *Study Brisbane* strategy including an international talent repatriation program, a global student internship program, a next generation engagement program and a city education showcase.



Digital

The 2015-16 Budget builds on Council's *Digital Brisbane* strategy through:

- A \$1.1 million investment in extending free WiFi coverage across the CBD;
- Retaining Brisbane City Council's Chief Digital Officer, to oversee the digital strategy;
- Further investments in the geospatial industries initiative with \$243,000 allocated in 2015-16 for the use of Council's new Open Data Portal;
- An ongoing commitment to Open Data. This will include continuing to release SCATS real-time traffic light data as well as Brisbane Arterial Roads travel time data.

Further information

- The Brisbane City Council 2015-16 Budget can be found [here](#)
- The Lord Mayor's budget speech is available [here](#).
- Previous Barton Deakin Briefs on the Brisbane City Council can be found [here](#).

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