

Mayor's Budget Meeting Report 2023-2024

This budget is all about the future. Not today, or tomorrow but the next couple of years and also thinking about the framework we set for the future generations, the next 5, 10, 25 years ahead.

We need to be proactively looking towards our future in tourism, economic development, social amenity and most importantly our people!



In 2023/24 the Boulia Shire Council has attracted a large slice of capital works due to the continued lobbying of the Councillors on the ratepayers behalf.

The following major initiatives will take place during the 2023/24 financial year:-

- 1) Boulia's Outback Way, also known as the Donohue Highway, has been successful in obtaining grant funding to complete the pave and sealing to the Northern Territory border
- 2) Construction of 6 Staff Housing Duplex Units
- 3) Connection of nbntm to Boulia Township
- 4) Flood Damage Restoration works pending from the 22/23 rain event

Looking towards the future - Council is actively seeking investors to develop the Industrial Estate.

Meetings have been attended to finalise the Local Housing Action Plan, a Government supported initiative for residential allocation of land for housing in Boulia.

The Council will continue to work toward enhancing all of its current regional partnerships such as:-

- Western Alliance of Councils;
- Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD);
- Outback Regional Roads Group (ORRG);
- RAPAD Water & Sewerage Alliance (RAPADWSA);
- Central West Regional Pest Management Group (CWRPMG);
- The Outback Highway Development Council.

All of these organisations are considered important in assisting in the forward progress of the Boulia Shire Council.

Other initiatives to be undertaken by Council include:-

Road Construction and Maintenance

The requirement to provide trafficable roads across the shire which are linked to intrastate and interstate road networks ensures our ability to provide reasonable transport for livestock and the increasing tourism trade. Boulia has over 1254klm of road networks which is in need of constant maintenance either through too much water (flooding) or not enough water (bulldust holes)... there is never a happy median. Your rates work harder than most city cousins in the 'value for money stakes' when it comes to road building out here.

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Council Roads

Council will spend \$15,851,654 in the 2023/24 financial year on Council roads. This expenditure is made of funded programs and Council reserves:-

i)	Shire road maintenance (Council reserves-various locations)	\$1,000,000
ii)	Coorabulka / Slashers Creek Roads (Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Funding (QRRRF))	\$1,700,000
iii)	Pave & Seal Donohue Highway - (Dept of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts).	\$12,000,000
iv)	Re-sealing Donohue Highway (Council reserves)	\$ 157,154
v)	Road to Recovery (R2R) projects	\$ 498,000
vi)	Re-sealing Donohue Highway (Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS))	\$ 300,000
vii)	Town Streets (Council reserves)	\$ 144,000
viii)	Outback Regional Road Group expenses	\$ 52,500

External funding sources of \$14,348,000 (R2R \$498,000/TIDS \$150,000/DITRCA \$12,000,000/QRRRF \$1,700,000) will be utilised to fund this work with the balance of \$1,503,654 coming from Council revenue.

Flood Damage

Work will be completed on the flood damage repairs for the April - May 2022 event, approximately \$1,750,892 worth of work will be completed in 2023/24. Pending approval for the recent rain event December 2022 – April 2023 will supply further restoration works on Council roads for 2023/24. This is where the work is generated to support not only the Council workforce but also local contractors.

The Outback Way – Donohue Highway

The Donohue Highway remains the only section of the Outback Way which is controlled, managed and maintained by a Local Government Council. The Donohue Highway - 'The Outback Way - Australia's Longest Short Cut' will continue into the future as a consideration for Council budget funding as this section is still deemed a 'Council' road.

This is an obligation which is a double edge sword.

- We need to keep our workforce and contractors employed and keep the road in a trafficable state.
- But the ongoing cost to seal the remainder of the road and commence the re-seals is outside of our financial capability as a small Council without assistance from other levels of Government.

We are working together with several departments both State and Federal to work a solution for the ongoing sealing and subsequent re-seals which when completed will channel jobs and money into the Queensland economy.

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Funds have been allocated through the Federal budget for the initial stage at Chainage 170 to 178 and work has now started on this stage which is valued at \$3,900,000 for paving and sealing.

State Roads

Council will receive funding to complete \$1,721,990 of work on behalf of the State Government in 2023/24. This will include:-

i)	Roads Maintenance Performance Contract (RMPC) – Barcaldine	\$1,414,990
ii)	RMPC – Cloncurry	\$ 255,000
iii)	Declared Pests and Weeds Management (RMPC) – Barcaldine	\$ 21,000
iv)	Schedule 4 Road Edge Guide Posts (RMPC) – Barcaldine	\$ 31,000

Plant Replacement

Council's Plant Committee have identified the replacement of 'yellow plant' and utilities to ensure the workforce is able to continue with scheduled road work.

New plant replacement is taking some time due to supply and demand in the current economic situation, the Plant Committee will identify requirements. Pre-ordered plant includes 2 Medium Trucks, \$530,752 has been allocated for these replacements. This will be offset by anticipated trade-in's totalling \$75,000 and a transfer from reserve of \$548,752.

Housing

Council maintains 27 houses, 9 units and 3 pensioner units. It has allotted \$736,700 for upgrades and general maintenance expenses and \$2,983,450 capital expenditure to upgrade the housing and construct new unit assets. Of this \$2,983,450, Council has received funding for \$1,820,000, and \$1,163,450 is made up from Works for Qld (W4Q), Local Government Grants Subsidy Program (LGGSP) and Federal Assistance Grants (FAGS). The capital expenditure includes refurbishing of the houses, fencing, garages, construction of staff units.

Information Technology

Provision has been made in the budget to allocate \$391,000 on Information Technology from Council project accounts.

The Information Technology budget allocation includes:-

i)	Renewal of current software licences	\$150,000
ii)	Upgrading of existing technology	\$80,000
iii)	Consultant expenses	\$61,000
iv)	IT Server and Computer Replacements	\$100,000

Council is in the process of receiving funding from Regional Communities Program for implementation of nbn™ for fibre to the premises for the Boulia township, \$2,264,083 plus \$718,783 from nbn™ Local, and the State Government, the entire project is \$3,482,866. This project will run over 2 years, 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Environment and Natural Resources

The total budget for Environment and Natural Resources is \$273,000. Major activities include environment management, pest plant and wild dog control and feral pig management, stock route operations and maintenance and animal control.

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Grants & Donations to Community Groups

Council will continue to provide assistance to community groups that enhance the sporting and cultural diversity of Boulia through significant financial and in-kind assistance. Council has budgeted \$150,000 for assistance to events including the Golf Club, Camel Races, Campdraft, Races and Rodeo including facility hire.

Financial Assistance Grants

Council's allocation under the Federal Government's Financial Assistance Grants Scheme is \$4,820,490.

Tourism, Cultural Activities & Arts

Council will continue to promote Boulia Shire with \$1,008,315 budgeted for the continued operation and maintenance of the Min Min Encounter and the Heritage Complex.

Recreational Facilities

Boulia has very high standards of recreational and sporting facilities and we will maintain the standard with operational expenditure of over \$1,170,500. Capital works of \$330,000 which is comprised of funding applied for of \$230,000 and Council reserves of \$100,000 will be used to upgrade and maintain the facilities.

Works for Queensland 2022/2024 Round 4

A number of projects previously identified in the Corporate Plan are now able to be earmarked for completion thanks to State Government funding received under the 2021/24 Works for Queensland Round 4 Program.

2021-2024 W4Q Boulia Shire Council Projects List			
Council Housing Renovation (various)	Painting, renovation bathrooms, kitchen, replacing stumps, stairs etc	300,000	In progress
Min Min Encounter	Painting, walls, ceiling, flooring, fitout	150,000	Completed
Robinson Park Shelter	New shade shelter for playground	30,000	
ANZAC Garden Gazebo	New shade structure for the ANZAC Garden	66,667	Completed
Improve the sewer aeration system	Purchase and installation of solar power unit	60,000	Completed
Solar at Urandnagi	Urandangi Depot	220,000	
Sewerage Pump Station Refurbish	Boulia Pump Station 1	200,000	In progress
		\$ 1,026,667	

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Rates & Charges for 2023/24

Council have decided not to increase the Council general rates and services for 23/24 however discount will decrease to 4%.

Town Areas

After discount, the total rates payable on an average Boulia residential allotment with general rates, water, sewerage, environment and garbage charges will be \$2,107.20 per year.

After discount the total rates payable on an average Urandangi residential allotment with general rates, water, environment and garbage charges will be \$1,098.24 per year.

Rural Areas

Categories remain unchanged.

Rate in the dollar is tiered with each category.

Boulia Sewerage

There has been no increase to the Boulia sewerage charge. This charge will remain at \$482.00.

Boulia and Urandangi Water Supplies

Water charges have seen no increase, with the charge remaining at \$683.00.

Boulia and Urandangi Refuse Service

No changes to the Residential cleansing rate for 2 x 240 litre bins serviced weekly, this charge will remain at \$379.00.

No change to additional wheelie bin service charge of \$195.

Commercial – no change, to cost or service. Commercial bins collected 3 times a week, charge is \$1,227 per year.

Waste Management Facility Levy

No change to Levy, all unoccupied and vacant land in townships plus for all rural properties within a 30 kilometre radius of the townships is still \$90/year.

Environmental Levy

No change to Environmental Levy. This is to assist in funding for protection, enhancement and restoration of our local environment. Also includes planning of new waste and recycling opportunities. This levy is \$50 / year because at some stage all properties utilise the services from businesses in our townships.

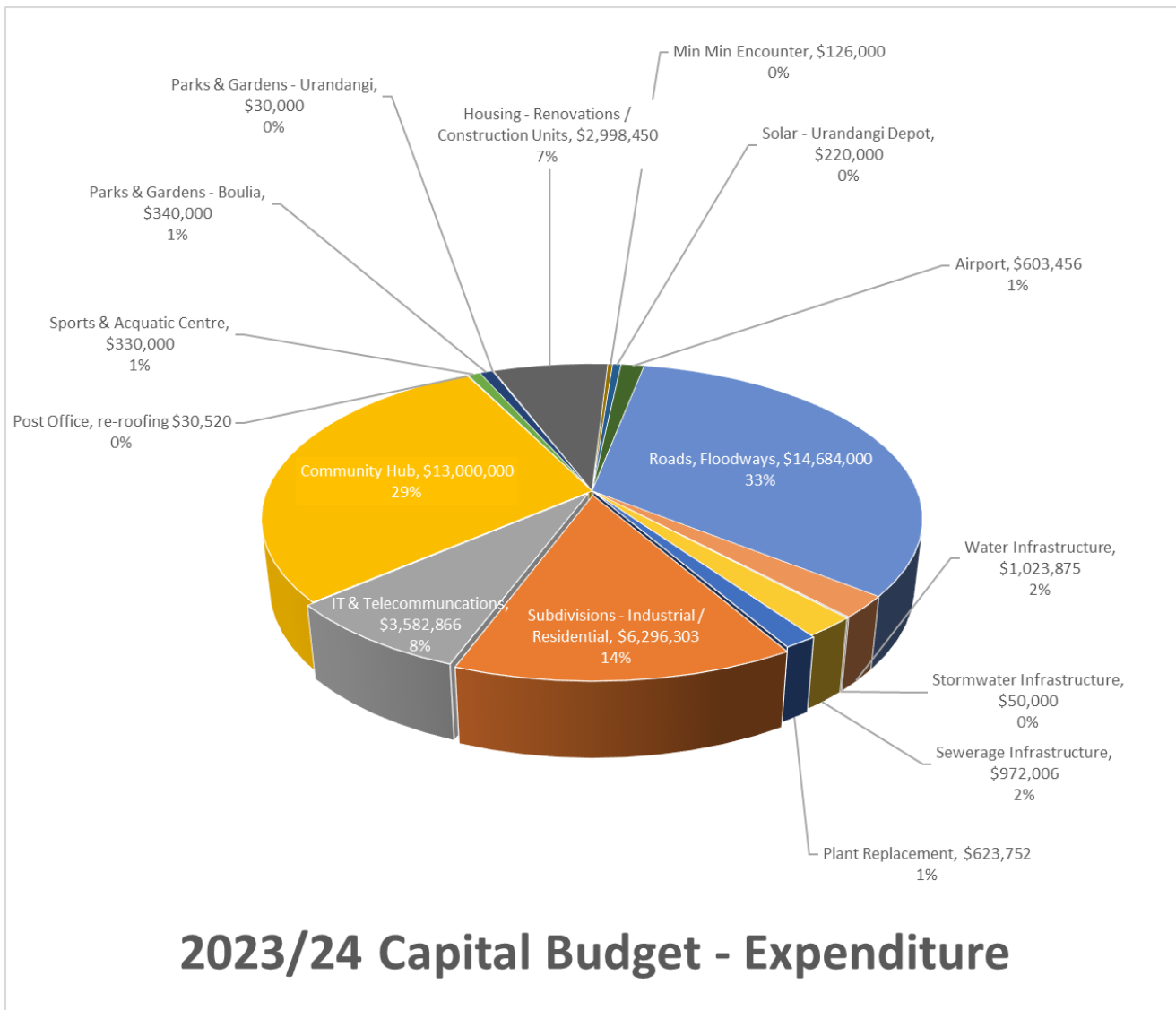
Set out on the following page is a number of graphs showing the break-up of Council expenditure and income for the 2023/24 financial year.

Overall, our Council is performing to an exceptional level and it is with pleasure that I recommend the adoption of the 2023/24 Budget.

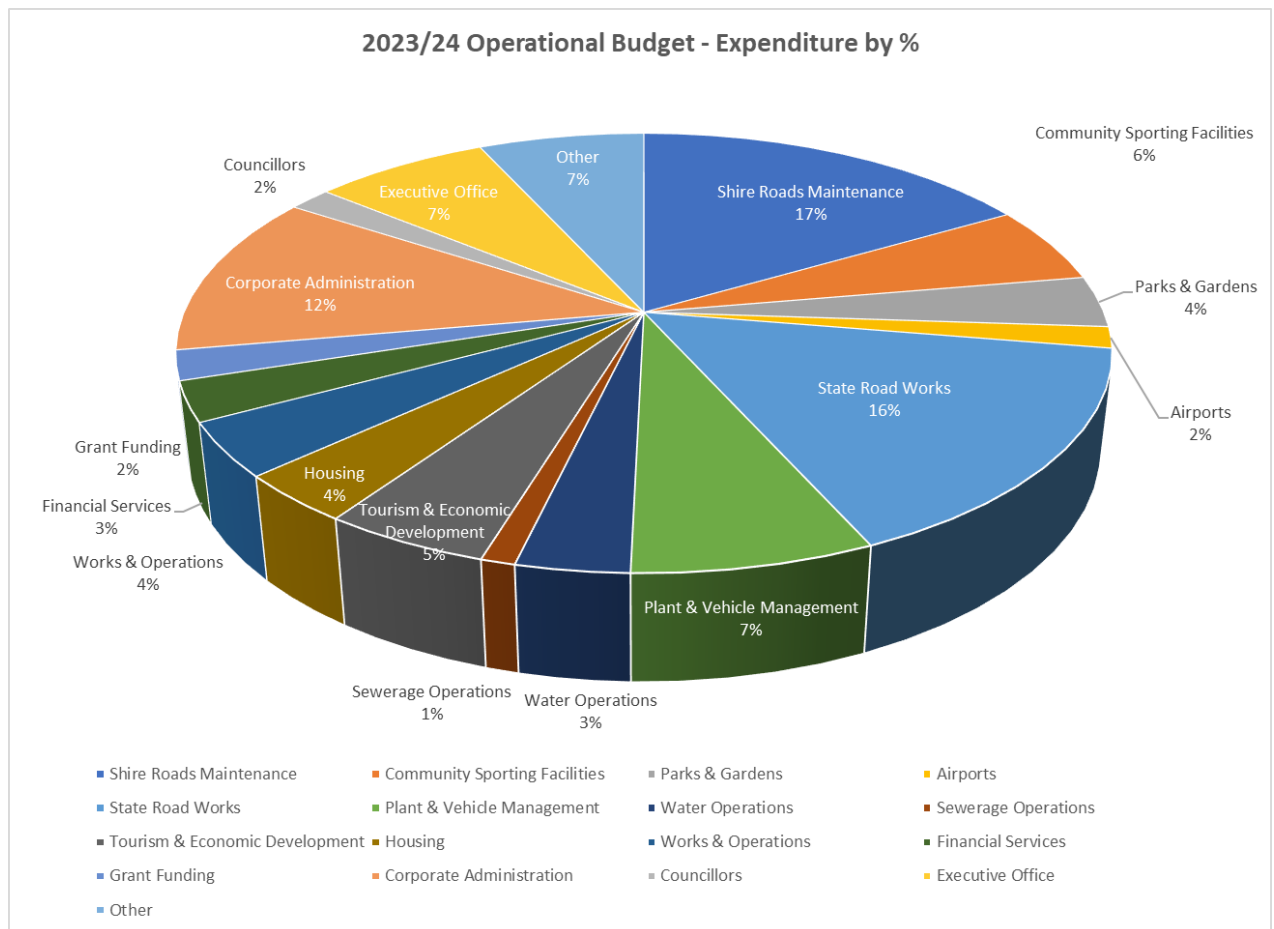
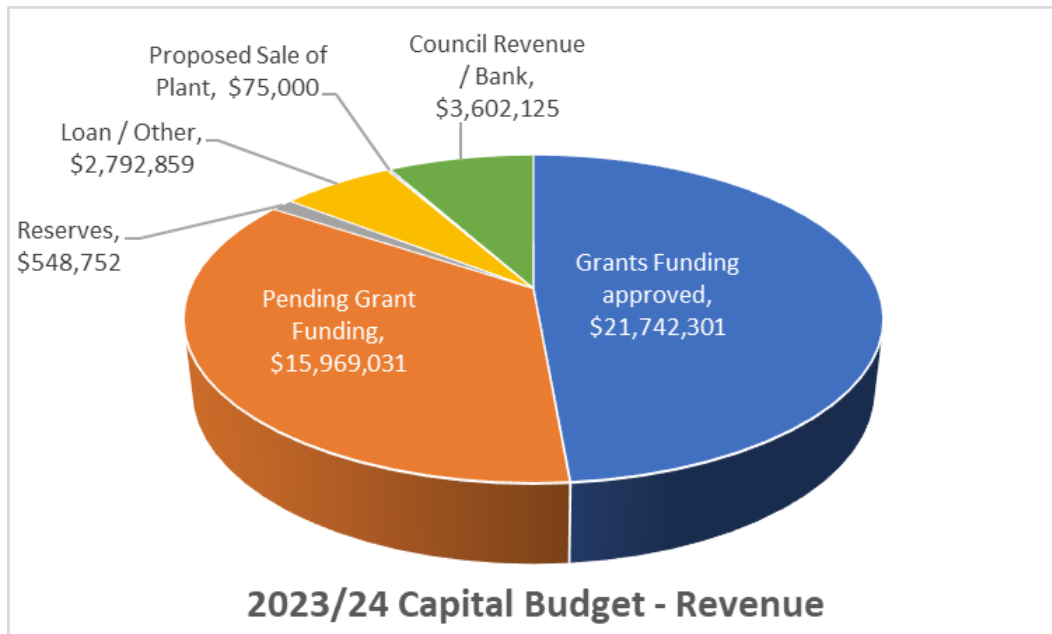
Councillor Rick Britton

Mayor

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