

Council adopts overall budget of \$240 million for 2024/25

Wagga Wagga City Council has this week adopted an overall budget of \$240 million, including total operating expenditure, capital renewals, and new capital projects.

The overall figure includes a total operating expenditure budget of \$159.31 million in addition to more than \$81 million of Capital works projects and programs for the 2024/25 financial year.

Council adopted the Operational Plan 2024/25, the Fees and charges for the financial year 2024/25, and the Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) 2024/25, at its Ordinary Meeting on Monday 24 June.

These documents inform how Council operates, from rubbish and roads to our parks, cultural and sporting facilities, to maintaining or improving existing facilities.

For the 2024/25 financial year, Council has forecast a balanced budget for the first year of the LTFP, with the financial years 2025/26 to 2026/27 projecting deficits and years 2027/28 to 2033/34 showing surpluses for the 10-year rolling plan.

Mayor of the City of Wagga Wagga Councillor Dallas Tout said Council's budget and delivery program focus on delivering services for a growing and diverse community while planning for the future.

"Financial sustainability is one of the key issues facing local government due a range of factors, such as growing demands for community services and facilities and their ongoing operational costs, constrained revenue growth and ageing infrastructure," Cr Tout said.

"The projected deficit positions from 2025/26 to 2026/27 highlight the significant challenges Council has been facing with revenue restrictions and rising costs.

"It will continue to have a substantial impact on the delivery of projects and services, which will require Council to be highly innovative and efficient in delivering the Operational Plan and Delivery Plan items."

The capital works projects and programs account for more than \$81 million of the planned activities for the 2024/25 financial year.

Among the significant one-off projects capital works projects are the Jim Elphick Tennis Centre Upgrade, Bill Jacob Athletics Centre, and some upgrades to the Gregadoo Waste Management Centre.

The \$16.7 million allocation for roads includes one-off roads projects and recurrent roads program budgets, such as the Pine Gully Road Corridor Works (\$2,034,453), Local Road Repair Program (\$2,804,143); Pavement Rehabilitation Program (\$3,798,831); and Reseal Program (Renewal) (\$3,215,989).

Council staff will present a further report at the next available Council meeting with the information necessary to consider an amendment to the Public Art Policy (POL109) to remove the \$50,000 cap currently placed on Public Art funding.

Integrated Planning and Reporting suite of documents

Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) is the planning and reporting framework the Council uses to work towards achieving the community's vision.

Under NSW Government legislation, councils must prepare a number of plans that provide details on how a council intends to deliver works and services in the short and long term.

This is based on the community's priorities, which have been identified through consultation and engagement, as well as the resources available to council in delivering these items.

The framework ensures councils illustrate their various plans together, to understand how they interact in planning for the future.

Operational Plan

The Operational Plan is a statement of commitment to the community from each newly elected council and sets out a four-year plan to respond to the community's long-term vision as stated in the *Community Strategic Plan 2040*.

The Operational Plan is a sub-plan of the Delivery Program and sets out the projects, programs and activities to be undertaken in a 12-month period. The Operational Plan includes a financial snapshot.

Long Term Financial Plan

The Long Term Financial Plan is a 10-year financial planning document with an emphasis on continuing to be 'Fit for the Future', ensuring that Council is financially sustainable, efficient, effectively manages infrastructure and delivers services to the community, and has the scale and capacity to effectively engage across the community, industry, and government.

The plan is formulated by using a number of estimates and assumptions to project the future revenue and expenditure required of Council to deliver those services and projects expected by the community.

Fees and Charges

The Fees and Charges 2024/25 is a document which stipulates Council's revenue and pricing policy and the fees and charges applicable for Council services including: the hire

of Council facilities, sewer charges, waste management charges, special rate variation, rates and annual charges, planning fees and stormwater charges.

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About Wagga Wagga City Council

Wagga Wagga City Council serves more than 68,000 residents across an area of 4825 square kilometres with an overall budget of \$240 million.

The organisation manages more than \$2.48 billion in assets, including a 2300-kilometre road network, Wagga Wagga Airport, Livestock Marketing Centre, and the Oasis Aquatic Centre.

Council also provides important community facilities such as Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, Wagga Wagga City Library, Museum of the Riverina and Civic Theatre, as well as maintaining countless parks, playgrounds and sporting facilities to ensure Wagga maintains its reputation as 'the City of Good Sports'.

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