

Thank you to all those that could attend Wednesday's meeting. Again, we had the public gallery full and still they had to add spaces.

The presentations by council officers appears to be changing at this meeting, to the point that even Cr Devereaux thanked the Corporate Services Director for the detailed explanation of the update report. Cr Devereaux stated that he wasn't sure if the Director of Corporate Services was under instruction to deliver such a detailed update that way, but was very pleased for the public to hear the detail. This is nothing more than a show.

As we have been saying since attending the meetings of the corporate council since January, we have noticed several changes in the way councillors have changed their behaviour to demonstrate they have the ratepayers in mind when discussing council items on the agenda, they think the public like to hear how great a job they are doing for the people.

Item 6.1 – Corporate Services update

Finance

2023-24 Annual Budget was adopted by Council at its Special Budget meeting held on 25 July 2023. therefore, public and ratepayers are excluded from attending and hearing anything to do with budget hearings and the public are supposed to take the word of a corporation to operate in the best interests of the public when the public have no input into how and where the taxes derived from the corporate council are best spent.

Rates - The first rates calculation was processed on 27 July 2023 with rates notices subsequently issued from 4 August 2023. There is a significant number of ratepayers who are challenging the lawful authority of these corporations to charge levies, rates, fees fines and charges to the ratepayers and public with a specific item included in the report that reads, "Rates officers continue to monitor the status of outstanding rate assessment, short term payment plans and long-term payment plans".

Local Government 2022 Financial Audit Report to Queensland Parliament

If the public needs any more proof this council is a business, then the Qld Audit Report should be proof enough when the report includes the following statement: "Gympie Regional Council received a yellow light for the Operating Surplus Ratio".

CCTV Program

Again, the issue of ratepayers funding state government business enterprises is being ignored as demonstrated in the funding arrangements for Imbil, Tin Can Bay and Rainbow Beach Police Stations out of ratepayer funds.

Phase 1b - Link Enterprise Solutions have now completed building the CCTV network for phase 1b. The sites included are the Gympie Waste Management Facility, the Gympie Saleyards, the Monkland Quarry, the Dog Pound and the Imbil township. The provision of CCTV access to the Imbil Police Station has also been incorporated into the design to allow monitoring of local CCTV assets.

Phase 1c - The final phase component of the tender, Phase 1c is in planning and design with final pricing and business justification to be submitted for budget approval. The sites under consideration are Tin Can Bay Library, Wes Mitchell Park, Billabong Skate Park, Rainbow Beach

Hall and Library, Kilkivan Equestrian Centre, Gympie Aquatic Centre, Gympie Civic Centre, Gympie Aerodrome, Laurie Hansen Park, Rainbow Beach Foreshore, and the Phil Rodgers Park.

The Directorate Corporate Services Update included the following position summary:

Current Headcount

Council's Position Summary staff numbers at 31 July was 529.

This is made up of total Number of FTE positions of 571. There is currently 451 Permanent, 85 Vacant and 35 Temporary positions. This number includes management, mayor and councillors.

Cr Devereaux asked if there was a comparison of staff numbers from 2022 to 2023 as it appears staff levels seem to be top heavy (mgt v staff)?

Economic Development

Of particular note buried at the end of the report is the position this council holds with the Borumba Pumped Hydro project, council officers continue to collaborate with the State Development to deliver Tendering for Business workshops, focusing on the Borumba Pumped Hydro project, a crucial step towards achieving the State Government's renewable energy goals.

Do not think for one minute this council is party to the agenda for the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Native Title

Although an item in the report, no mention was made of this item until raised by Cr Devereaux. The item included the update on a late joiner applicant that has caused a variation to the Federal Court Timetable in relation to the current Kabi Kabi First Nations Claim that has an effect on a large section of the Gympie Regional Council Local Government Area. The Kabi Kabi Determination was expected by the second half of 2023, but the determination will likely be delayed to at least late 2023 or possibly early 2024. Given the emergence of this new unresolved issue, Council will be provided ongoing updates by Legal Counsel.

Council knows and understands the significance of this item especially since the CEO as a living man, acting in the position as CEO, was served several letters from members of our community requiring the CEO to provide a copy of the "Bill of Sale" between "GYMPIE REGIONAL COUNCIL" and the First Nations Elders from each of the 'Kabi Kabi' Clans giving "GYMPIE REGIONAL COUNCIL" ownership of the land, and authority over the land, of which council's only response was they gain their authority from the Local Government Act 2009.

Cr Devereaux asked if the native title claim would affect the town planning timeframe. The Director advised that the claim had not affected the timeframe as the process is expected to be completed by November.

Item 6.4 Procurement Panel

Council resolved to accept the tender supplied by Origin for the supply of electricity to Council's small sites under a 3-year term agreement beginning on 1 October 2023 and ending on 30 September 2026 with an estimated annual spend of \$725,044.00 which totals \$2,175,132.00 for the 3 years of the electricity retail agreement. This is an increase in the previous contract by 110%.

Cr Fredman made the comment that this is why rates must rise. This is out of council's control. This is the reality council needs to pass on the costs to ratepayers.

Item 6.6 July 2023 Financial Report

The council officer reported that there is an overall actual year to date performance to 31 July 2023 is a surplus of \$39.6m, which is tracking ahead of the forecasted net surplus of \$36.5m. This is nothing more than a profit-making business. The question needs to be asked, why did council increase rates by 5.5% with a nearly \$40M operating surplus.

Item 7.1 Temporary Local Planning Instrument - Biodiversity Protection

Council proposed to make a Temporary Local Planning Instrument (TLPI) and authorised the Chief Executive to seek Ministerial approval for the TLPI.

As a consequence of this the current Temporary Local Planning Instrument - Protection of Biodiversity Values was adopted by Council at the Ordinary meeting of 27 April 2022. TLPIs are not subject to public consultation before they are made as the circumstances that typically give rise to their implementation are such that the timeframes involved in public consultation could be prejudicial to the intent of the TLPI, how very convenient.

Item 8.4 Furness Road Storm water Drainage Upgrades

It was noted that the issue surrounding the petition lodged at the July meeting was investigated and found to be associated with compliance which is being followed up by council. The most notable part of this item was the comment from Cr Fredman who stated that "we like petitioners, but because of the priority work our professionals list, petitioners should not get priority". This just about sums up what council and councillors think of ratepayers and residents, that their concerns should not be recognised.

<http://www.gympie.qld.gov.au/.../2023-08-23-ordinary-agenda>

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