

Gympie Regional Council Meeting – 26 July 2023

Ratepayers across the region will need to dig deeper into their pockets in the coming months with rates on the rise again, with the council finally revealing by how much.

Come along to the council meeting tomorrow morning and hear what council has to say for itself!!

www.gympie.qld.gov.au/downloads/file/4598/2023-07-26-ordinary-agenda-part1

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A big thank you to the 25 members that turned up yesterday to the Gympie Regional Council meeting.

Well, it just keeps getting better.

Council has just announced a General Rates **increase of 5.5%** in the 2023 budget. This is on top of a 4.77% rate rise in the 2022 budget, on top of a 3.2% rate rise in the 2021 budget and **NOT** a word was spoken about it the pretty ORDINARY meeting yesterday.

Ratepayers deserve better than this corporate money-making empire. In the words of one councillor at the meeting yesterday “This is a business” in reference Item 6.6 Procurement Panel discussions surrounding the fairness of local contractors submitting tenders and allowing them to charge travel costs and the fairness of how council intended in breaking up the region into three different areas. This discussion shows the absolute disdain local government and state government have for the people.

The timeframe for this discussion was only slightly shorter than that allocated to Item 7.3 Proposed Facility Naming – 110 Emperor Street, Tin Can Bay, which felt like this was the most important topic for discussion on the agenda.

Where does the best interests of the people stand with this local government?

Clearly the June meeting minutes discussion on Item 6.6 Annual Valuations Consultation where the mayor and councillors voted on the recommendation, that stated, *‘Upon reviewing the potential impact of recent interest rate rises on property markets and the available sales evidence within Council’s Local Government Area since the last valuation and noting that valuations have been issued for the previous three years, it is appropriate that Council request that an annual valuation not be performed’*.

Recommendation M09/06/23 Moved Cr J Milne Seconded Cr SA Waldoock, ***That Council resolve to request that the Department of Resources’ State Valuation Service do not undertake an annual valuation of the Gympie Regional Council Local Government Area which would take effect from 30 June 2024. Carried*** FOR: Cr HT Smerdon, Cr DH Stewart, Cr RA Fredman, Cr NG Jensen, Cr GC Hartwig, Cr SA Waldoock, Cr WA Polley and Cr J Milne AGAINST: Cr BM Devereaux www.gympie.qld.gov.au/downloads/file/4568/2023-06-28-unconfirmed-ordinary-minutes-part1

Discussion at the June meeting from mayor and councillors was that they do not have to pass on the potential rate rise to the ratepayers as everyone is struggling in the region, has been completely ignored by this council, mayor and councillors. The new Rates and Charges will be an increased \$6.1M income to the council.

Enough is enough, we the people need to take our stand against this rouse **business**. This business runs free of competition.

The Councils primary reasons for the above rate increase include employee costs and goods and services excluding extra ordinary items have gone up but offsetting the increased cost base is a significant reduction in depreciation of predominately attributed to the separation of the Rattler. In addition to the General Rate, there are several council charges that will be listed on Gympie Regional Council’s rates notice including Sewerage Charge, Garbage, Water Access and Water Consumption Charges, and the Rural Fire Levy.

Attached is the link to the [Gympie Regional Council Budget 2023-2024](#) that shows the **Breakdown of rates**. General Rates – up 5.5%, Water Connections – up 6.5%, Sewerage – up 6.5%, Cleansing Charges (bin collection service) – up

6.5%, Water Consumption – up 7.5%. The excessive waste that has been demonstrated by the use of external consultants through the year has been astounding.

These increases are forced upon the ratepayers by a Qld government legislative requirement to councils that we the people supposedly agreed to contract under. These rate increases are a requirement under the Land Valuation Act 2010.

The following document shows for the Gympie Region, the revaluation included 25,600 properties, with an estimated total value of approximately \$7,157,813,360, an overall increase of 40% since the last valuation [Gympie Regional Council - Land valuation update 2023](#) , this is a BUSINESS with the pure intent to make profit from the people.

In Item 6.3 Amendment to 2023-2024 Schedule of Fees and Charges, the council has been forced to review their charges to a community facility in the Kilkivan Showgrounds and Equestrian Centre following the notification of the fees and charges increase to users, the public made it very clear to council that they will no longer be using the facility due to the increase in facility charges. Council at the meeting yesterday carried the recommendation to revert to the previous fees and charges for the use of the Kilkivan Showgrounds and Equestrian Centre **following public backlash**.

Item 6.6 Procurement Panel report identifies the recommendations include that the Bonnick Rd, Waste Facility Eastern Cell Construction tender be accepted for a lump sum \$4.34M inclusive GST.

One positive recommendation was received that 20 computers normally disposed of by auction will be given to community groups.

The Gympie Gold Museum has been allocated \$646K to carry out flood repairs at the Gold Museum.

Item 8.1 Infrastructure Services Directorate Report – July 2023 identified a backlog of 360 Km's of business-as-usual grading works road maintenance that had not been completed with an estimated 360 days for completion. The report identified council officers had implemented a Star Rating concept that would identify priority roads for repair but Cr Fredman raised concerns with the Star Rating process particularly how is the judgement made on how dangerous conditions are prioritised, for example single lane bitumen roads with severe drop offs on the edge that could cause a rollover. The council officers committed to reviewing the process and provide councillors and mayor with further information at workshop.

For those that have been attending meetings over the past 7 months, we know that “Workshop” meetings are closed to the public so no further information is made available to the public relating to any matter discussed at these meetings.

Following the meeting yesterday, there are questions regarding why there was NO discussion on;

- the rate increases,
- why there was no discussion for the ability to reduce the rates increases from the interest of \$2.69M received for 2022-23 from the \$88M cash reserves invested with Qld Treasury,
- NO discussion relating to reduce council fees and charges when interacting with council to lessen the burden on an already straining economy.

The ratepayers are now paying one of the highest rates, fees and charges to councils in Qld and this council under the pretext that it is obligated to review and increase rates, fees and charges annually in line with CPI as defined by the Qld government, and is doing exactly as what is expected of a BUSINESS, as clearly described by a councillor yesterday and that is to make a profit.