



Ipswich City Council 2017-2018 Budget Speech

Delivered by Acting Mayor Paul Tully | June 27, 2017



A budget to advance Ipswich

This budget continues to position our city on a sustainable growth path with one of the most significant capital expenditure programs in the history of Ipswich.

It is a budget of action to raise the bar on investment in our cultural and heritage precincts.

This budget caters for both today and the future while keeping a tight lid on increases.

This budget delivers progress and action in every division.

In Ipswich Central council-owned Ipswich City Properties is about to commence demolition as part of phase two of the redevelopment of our new city heart.

Our CBD is getting the star treatment it deserves – make no mistake, this is a once in a generation opportunity to move forward and bring to our city centre a unique blend of specialty retail, dining, recreation and outdoor entertainment.

This budget has been designed to get the best value for money, defines the priorities, and makes sure all divisions are treated fairly.

It is a responsibility we take very seriously to address the important issues for our community including jobs, lifestyle and planning for the future.

This is a great time to be in Ipswich as we deliver on our visionary plan to become Australia's most liveable and prosperous smart city.

Our commitment to a digital future has never been stronger.

From the Ipswich Smart City Plan to Advance Ipswich – but being a smart city goes beyond digital technology.

Technology is just an instrument. It's about people and how we use technology to bring the community together.

It's also about new ways of learning, working and living.

Our vision is for a truly connected community full of ideas, energy and innovation.

Our current population of 200,000 is predicted to increase to 400,000 by 2041.

In the coming year we will witness the large increases across the city including Springfield, Ripley Valley and Redbank Plains.

Importantly, for existing ratepayers this new development is funded by developers and the new residents who buy the land and not funded by existing ratepayers.

This budget also focuses on further efficiencies, while at the same time positioning Ipswich to attract new business and industry investment.

We are one of Australia's fastest growing cities, so time is of the essence if we are to define our future prosperity.

The key highlights of this budget include –

- A 46 per cent increase over last year taking capital expenditure to \$146 million
- No cuts to core council services
- An unprecedented 360 streets and roads across all divisions to be renewed or reconstructed
- Major projects for 2017-2018 include –
 - Old Toowoomba Road upgrade to four lanes between Lobb St and Toongarra Rd - \$4 million
 - A \$3.3 million project for a new three-loop Ipswich Cycle Park partnership with the 24//7 Cycle Safety Fund and Ipswich Cycling Club at Raceview
 - Improvements to Brisbane Street, West Ipswich between Burnett and Hooper streets - \$1.5 million
 - Goodna Creek bikeway stage 3 between Crawford St and Redbank Plains Road - \$1.1 million
 - \$8.5 million on the Accelerated Kerb and Channel Program in older suburbs; and
 - \$1 million allocated to the Beautiful Ipswich program to enhance parklands in existing suburbs across the city
- All achieved with a budget surplus of \$7.8 million

Ipswich City Council's total budget for 2017-2018 is \$479 million.

This year's capital expenditure allocation is \$146 million - an increase of 46 per cent over last year.

The average rate and charges rise for residential owner-occupiers will be 85 cents per week or 2.95 per cent.

Again this year, the early payment discount of \$132 over the full year will apply for payments made in full and by the due date.

Those on the full age pension will continue to receive remissions of up to \$245 per annum.

For the first time, council will follow Brisbane's lead and will use a three year average valuation to cushion any rapid increases in property valuations.

A maximum 15 per cent cap will continue to apply to all owner occupied residential properties.

It's important to note that rates alone do not cover the full operations of council:

- Ratepayers do not pay for new roads and parks in new suburbs
- Ratepayers do not pay for new residential or business developments
- Private developers must pay their own way and build new infrastructure such as streets, kerb and channelling, parks and drainage

Managing growth

Why is this important?

Because it creates new jobs – essential to secure our future prosperity as a community and city.

Construction on the new Springfield Central Sports Complex off Sinnathamby Boulevard is already underway.

Funded by developer contributions of \$34 million, this \$40 million project is the single biggest sports and recreation project in the history of Ipswich.

A total of 22 hectares will be fully developed for use by the community and sporting clubs.

When completed in late 2018 this sporting and recreation mecca will offer:

- 8 tennis courts
- 16 netball courts
- 8 rectangular fields
- 4 ovals
- An athletics track
- 3 club houses; and
- 600 car parks

Growth needs to be firmly balanced so it does not compromise our natural environment or our heritage.

Importantly, there is no net loss of native vegetation in major development areas.

Developers are required to plant a similar area on another part of the site or pay council to plant native vegetation elsewhere within Ipswich as part of the one for one tree replacement policy.

A survey of Ipswich's koala population was undertaken in 2016 by Joanne Bussey and Dr Bill Ellis head of the Koala Ecology Group at the University of Queensland.

The current koala population is estimated to be between 3,000 and 4,000 and is in generally good health.

Further expansion of koala food tree plantings will also help the local population into the future and assist the Ipswich Koala Protection Society and Moggill Koala Hospital.

Ipswich's fauna emblem – the brush-tailed rock wallaby – is one of three iconic species identified in council's Nature Conservation Strategy. Recently there has been a number of new sightings in Flinders-Goolman Conservation Estate since lantana was removed.

It's all about creating a strong economy while making sure our heritage and environment remains at the centre of our thinking.

We will not step back from imposing strict conditions on developers including the use of registered wildlife spotters and one for one tree replacement.

Restoring wildlife corridors in older suburbs is also a priority.

Our digital and connected smart city

We have a vision for Ipswich to be Australia's most prosperous and liveable smart city. This is on track.

Ipswich is looking to the future.

Currently Ipswich's top five employment categories by industry are:

- Manufacturing
- Health Care
- Retail
- Education and training; and
- Public administration

Our Smart City Program is focussed on jobs and growth, coupled with liveability.

It's the result of 18 months' work including the city's largest community survey through Advance Ipswich, a review of over 300 Smart City initiatives world-wide and extensive industry consultation.

In March 2016 we delivered Fire Station 101, our award winning innovation hub. Since then more than 3,000 people have attended 120 events including mentor sessions and coding days.

Collaboration is the key.

Smart City is owned by the entire community.

Now and in the future we want to be ahead of game with the Internet of Things.

Innovation is central to building long-term sustainability with visionary new developments and industries.

Ipswich has already been recognised twice in three years as a Top7 intelligent community by the New York based World Intelligent Community Forum.

Three pilots to test smart city technology are currently underway at Rosewood Showgrounds, North Ipswich Reserve and Robelle Domain.

The broadband economy empowers individuals and small businesses to connect globally and locally.

Ipswich CBD redevelopment

As mentioned earlier work is about to commence on demolition of the old shopping centre at the Bremer River end of the Ipswich Mall.

The multi-level car park is to remain open during demolition and construction at street level.

Our commitment to the revitalisation of the Ipswich city centre has never faltered since the 10 – 15 year redevelopment program began in 2009.

Early internal work has started on the next stage of redevelopment with demolition of the Bremer River end of the centre due to start once the rail tunnel under has been inspected.

Important work to preserve the heritage of Murphy's Pub is also well underway.

In about two and a half years council's main administration centre and a new council-owned library will move to their new homes in Ipswich Central.

A budget for all of Ipswich

- \$800,000 for citywide kerbside collection starts next month and runs until September
- \$378,000 for graffiti removal
- \$587,000 to run council's plant nursery which produces approximately 153,000 plants annually, of which 84,000 are distributed to residents through the free plant program
- \$436,000 for Ipswich Nature Centre which now attracts more than 230,000 visitors per year and providing a major boost to local tourism

We know the Ipswich community love their libraries.

This year the budget has allocated \$6.7 million to continue the existing range of borrowing services, mobile library, improvements to the catalogue and web site with further enhancements embracing the digital age.

Planning is advancing well on the proposed Springfield Central library further details will be released when negotiations are completed.

New in 2017

Today I can announce a new five year citywide Greening Ipswich Tree Program.

More than half a million trees will be planted across the city within five years - by 2022.

- 420,000 plants through the free plant program for residents
- Council's Sustainability Strategy has a target of 150,000 new trees in across the city through programs such as Beautiful Ipswich and Habitat Connections

Following agreement with the Department of Education and Training a new multi-purpose hall to be shared between the community and school has proceeded to the final negotiation stage. Council has committed \$2 million towards this project.

The former North Ipswich woollen mill sits on a 1.4 hectare site and will receive a \$1 million boost to preserve the 7,000 square metre historic building.

It is on the state heritage register and will not be lost to the community owing to council's proactive approach in preserving heritage across the city.

Once the building is structurally sound further work will be undertaken next financial year.

Proposed uses include an arts and culture precinct, food, beverage, markets and performance spaces.

When completed it will bring together our history and environment in a contemporary urban setting with ease of access to parklands, public transport and other social amenities.

Pride in our city

Ipswich continues to be a sought after destination for new and established business and education, and a lifestyle choice for young families.

Next March the whole community will get the opportunity to show our pride to the world when the Queen's Baton Relay makes its way through Ipswich for 10.3 kilometres.

We will always offer a friendly welcome – it is part of who we are and who we aspire to be.

We are rich in heritage but remain a new frontier for people to explore.

This budget aims to keep the city on track for our children and future generations.

We are playing our part in the sustainable development of the western corridor.

Council's Advance Ipswich and Smart City plans will help guide our way forward.

We will continue to engage with the community, provide leadership, embrace change where it contributes to the sustainable operation of council function and the well-being of residents.

This is very much a budget that concentrates on the basics expected by the community while launching exciting new projects and programs for residents.

I want to thank all councillors for advocating strongly for their divisions and making a positive contribution to the budget review process.

My thanks also go the CEO and all council staff for once again delivering improved efficiencies and budget operating surplus.

There's no doubt that Ipswich has a very bright future.

This is reflected in the budget for 2017-2018.

It is a budget to advance Ipswich.

I commend the budget to you.

ENDS



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