



## MEDIA RELEASE

At the Council meeting held on 20 July 2006, the Circular Head Council adopted the 2006-2007 Annual Plan and Budget Estimates, announcing an average increase of 2.88 % for Council rates and charges.

General Manager, Greg Winton said *“Community needs, expectations and priorities have certainly come to the fore in the latest budget deliberations. Financial sustainability in the light of greater economic pressures on council-related costs has been offset by strong financial management of its resources. Certainly the moderate increase is reflected in the strong fiscal position despite the significant expenditure being planned this year.”*

Mayor, Ross Hine speaking at the meeting said *“Council officers should be congratulated on a difficult budget process which was necessary to ensure community funds were being directed appropriately. Aged and disability services, tourism, education, recreation and increased emphasis on planning issues are all major strategies being addressed by this budget”.*

Rates for Water Reticulation and Waste Disposal have not increased. Sewage disposal charges increase by 4.0 %, together with a 3.50 % increase in general rates. The State Government Fire Levy has increased by approximately 5.00 %.

Despite this impost, most properties generally will not realize an increase of more than 4.00 %. As a result of this moderate budget, rate increases for urban residential properties will be in the order of \$37 to \$52 per annum or \$1 per week. Urban, non-residential properties as well as rural sector houses and farms are set to increase by no more than 3.8 %. These higher figures are due to the greater impact of the Fire Levy over and above the change in the general rate to those properties. The maintenance of water and waste charges also has a greater effect on urban properties.

Council has reviewed its costing mechanisms and further aligned its charges with the Government Prices Oversight Commission’s recommended guidelines. This has resulted in revised cost allocations and the subsequent maintenance of 2004-2005 rates for Water Reticulation for a further year. Revaluations of infrastructure assets in line with condition assessments will occur during this financial year resulting in a more accurate economic assessment.

Revaluations of all rate-able properties will also occur during the coming year. It is Council’s intention to ensure consistency and fairness within the changes to valuations. In order to ensure this process is complete in its assessment, reviews of charges for other services such as waste, water and sewerage will also be done.

Finance Assistance Grants and Roads 2 Recovery funding significantly impacts on the Council's ability to maintain a strong budget position. Continuation of these funds in conjunction with recognition of the unique problems facing small, rural councils is of paramount importance.

Significant expenditure items include:-

- \$1.3 million to upgrade Montagu Road (2.75 km)
- \$315,000 to reconstruct West Esplanade (450m)
- \$165,000 to reconstruct Montagu Road/ West Esplanade intersection
- \$390,000 to replace four bridges
- \$270,000 to reseal 15 klms of existing bitumen roads
- \$350,000 for CBD improvements
- \$80,000 to install a roundabout at corner King & Nelson Streets
- \$99,000 for upgrades to footpath, kerb & channel in Hellyer Street, Smithton
- \$270,000 for treatment plant aeration system replacements
- \$50,000 to refurbish toilets at Tatlows beach
- \$250,000 to complete netball/ tennis courts project
- \$360,000 contribution to first stage of the Emmerton Park Aged Care development

Rate notices will be distributed by the end of July.

**Authorised for general media distribution by Greg Winton, General Manager,  
Circular Head Council on Thursday, 20 July 2006.**

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