

## Gympie Regional Council 26 March 2025

Note: Allona spoke about what was happening with the Fluoride petition. Council is developing with a consultant a survey to go out to the ratepayers asking if they want to maintain fluoride in the town water. A report will be presented to Councillors in the next months workshop meeting.

### Item 3.1 - Minutes from the previous meeting of February - Carried

#### Item 6.1 - Financial Report

- Budget progressive as per normal indicators
- Current \$69.8M is held with the Qld Treasury.

Note: Council is required to hold under the Qld Local Government Regulation an amount of cash required to cover up to three (3) months of the operating budget to cover all monthly expenses.

The percentage of outstanding rates at 28 February 2025 was 29.96% compared to 31.64% for the same period in the prior financial year. The due date for payment of rates is the 6 March 2025 and it is anticipated that the percentage of outstanding rates will trend downwards as the due date approaches.

Council officers have previously stated that an acceptable level of unpaid rates under the regulation is 3%.

#### 6.2 Investigation Policy Update

- Provided by Qld Gov
- CRL Submitted no application for changes made by GRC
- CR Lahn asked what it costs for an investigation
- DIR - \$5K - \$10K depending on complexity.

**In January 2025 the "Red tape reduction taskforce" was established to provide local government advice on reducing red tape. The taskforce will be active as a formal group for six months. For more information on this taskforce please refer to Red tape reduction taskforce | Local government.**

#### Conclusion

**The revised Investigation Policy has been updated to comply with the requirements outlined by the Department of Local Government. This ensures that the investigation process remains consistent, transparent, and accountable, thereby upholding the integrity of the local government.**

**Following discussions with the Elected Members during the Gympie Regional Council Workshop Meeting on 12 February 2025, the following actions will also be taken in relation to this policy:**

**Changes to the Councillor Expenses and Reimbursement Policy:**

Section 9 (page 13) will be amended from: “However, council will not cover any costs incurred in relation to any investigation, hearing, or legal proceeding into the conduct of a Councillor, where a Councillor is found at fault.” to: “However, council may not cover any costs incurred in relation to any investigation, hearing, or legal proceeding into the conduct of a Councillor, **where a Councillor is found at fault.**”

**Concerns to be forwarded to the Department of Local Government, Water, and Volunteers:**

o Further provision of natural justice for any accused Councillor by allowing the provision of information on the individuals who have submitted complaints under investigation.

O That the Office of the Independent Assessor be required to review and assess investigation complaints, and these matters not be referred back to a Council Standing Committee for assessment.

## **STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS**

### **CORPORATE PLAN AND OPERATIONAL PLAN**

### **LEGISLATION AND POLICY**

**Policies:**

Dealing with complaints involving the public official

Information Privacy Policy

Whistleblowers (Public Interest Disclosure) Policy

Code of Conduct for Councillors in Queensland Model Meeting Procedures/Standing Orders

**Legislation:**

Local Government Act 2009 (LGA)

Local Government Regulation 2012 (LGR)

Crime and Corruption Act 2001 (CCA)

Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010 (PIDA)

Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 (PSEA)

Recommendation - pg 39 of 112 Carried

CR Laun - Raised Protection of the councillors undertaking their role.

### 6.3 Audit of Risk

CR Curren asked about the financial cover rated

- Recommends a new coverage

### 6.4 Audit & Risk Report - March 2025

CR Laun asked how does someone get on the Committee?

DIR: Expressions of Interest - present Credentials

- Selected by Committee

## Note: Section 5: Financial Reporting

### 5.1 Finance Branch Update

**The Committee acknowledged the continued improvement in the finance reporting that has occurred over the last year or so and in particular, the inclusion of new information on the 12 monthly cashflow.**

**The Committee raised a red flag in terms of the Council's Expenses Cover ratio which was noted as being at 1.79 months as of 31 January which was well below the recommended benchmark of 3 months for Queensland Councils. This means that the Council's unrestricted cash reserves are significantly below what should be the case making Council vulnerable in the event of an unforeseen financial shock.**

### 7.3 Status Report on implementation of Internal Audit Recommendations

The Committee noted that **11 of the 18 Internal Audit recommendations are overdue**. It was also pleased to note that 4 of the outstanding recommendations have now been completed. The majority of the outstanding recommendations related to the GRiT project and the Director of Corporate Services provided the committee with an update on the external review of this project. He will share the outcomes of that review with the audit and risk committee at its meeting on 5 June 2025.

## RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolves that:

1. The report from the Audit and Risk Committee on its 4 March 2025 meeting be received; and
2. The Chief Executive Officer undertake the relevant actions requested by the Audit and Risk Committee within its report.

## 7.1 Rainbow Bch Rd, IGA

Director stated - the Application is seeking to delay the Residential Development

Manager stated - Current Planning Scheme is up for input & review & the current classification doesn't align with the current planning scheme.

Director stated - Council is seeking to refuse change applications

CR Curren said council officers are working with the applicant to submit the requested information.

Planning Scheme 2013 (The Planning Scheme currently in use was revised and approved under CR Curran when Mayor in 2013).

Note: Material Change of Use (MCU) conditions time limit is now 6 years from application.

## 8.1 Proposed Lease Renewal - Auto Club

Renewed.