



Special Meeting of Council Minutes

Date: Thursday, 18 June, 2026
Time: 12:00 pm
Location: Dalby Corporate Office, Western Downs Regional Council

Voting Members:

- Cr. A. N. Smith
- Cr. K. A. Bourne
- Cr. O. G. Moore
- Cr. S. J. Condon
- Cr. P. T. Saxelby
- Cr. K. A. Maguire
- Cr. G. M. Olm
- Cr. M. J. James
- Cr. S. Bougoure

Officers:

- J. Taylor, Chief Executive Officer
- B. Bacon, General Manager (Corporate Services)
- G. K. Cook, General Manager (Infrastructure Services)
- D. Fletcher, General Manager (Community and Liveability)
- B. Donald, Senior Executive Officer
- S. Edgar, Executive Officer (Corporate Services)

1. DECLARATION OF THE MEETING OPEN

The chairperson declared the Meeting open at 12.00PM.

2. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

3. CORPORATE SERVICES

3.1 Corporate Services Report Adoption of the Budget Policy for 2026-27

This report seeks adoption of the *Budget Policy* for 2026-27, which is reviewed annually to ensure alignment with Council's strategic and operational objectives.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved by: Cr. M. J. James

Seconded by: Cr. S. J. Condon

That Council resolves to adopt the *Budget Policy* for 2026-27 (attachment one).

CARRIED

3.2 Corporate Services Report Adoption of Budget Policies 2026-27

The *Local Government Act 2009* requires Council to adopt policies related to the annual budget to ensure the effective and efficient financial governance of the organisation. Whilst the *Debt Policy* must be adopted annually, the *Investment Policy* and the *Financial Management and Investment Strategy Policy* need only be reviewed annually to ensure they continue to meet Council's strategic and operational objectives.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved by: Cr. K. A. Bourne

Seconded by: Cr. K. A. Maguire

That Council resolves, in accordance with section 104 of the *Local Government Act 2009* and sections 191 and 192 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, to adopt the:

1. *Financial Management and Investment Strategy Policy* (attachment one);
2. *Investment Policy* (attachment two); and
3. *Debt Policy* (attachment three).

CARRIED

3.3 Corporate Services Report Adoption of Revenue Policy, and Procedures for Levying Rates and Charges 2026-2027

The purpose of this report is to adopt the *Revenue Policy* for the Westerns Downs Regional Council's 2026-2027 budget and the procedures for the levying of rates and charges for the 2026-2027 financial year.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved by: Cr. P. T. Saxelby

Seconded by: Cr. G. M. Olm

That Council resolves to:

1. adopt the *Revenue Policy* (Attachment One), in accordance with section 169(2) and section 193 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*; and
2. adopt the following procedures for the Levying of Rates and Charges for 2026-2027, in accordance with Chapter 4 Part 1 of the *Local Government Act 2009* and the provisions of the *Revenue Policy* and *2026-27 Revenue Statement*:

Description of Rates/Charges	Frequency	Basis
Differential General Rates	Half Yearly	50% of total for year
Special Charges	Half Yearly	50% of total for year
Separate Charges	Half Yearly	50% of total for year
Waste and Recycling Collection Charges	Half Yearly	50% of total for year
Environmental Waste Levy Charges	Half Yearly	50% of total for year
Water and Recycled Water Access Charges	Half Yearly	50% of total for year
Water and Recycled Water Volumetric Charges	Half Yearly	Based on Consumption
Water and Recycled Water Volumetric Charges (High Water Consumers as determined by Council)	No more than Bi-Monthly and no less than Half Yearly	Based on Consumption
Wastewater Access Charges	Half Yearly	50% of total for year
Gas – commercial connections	Monthly	Based on Gas Consumption and periodic access charges
Gas – domestic connections	Quarterly	Based on Gas Consumption and periodic access charges

CARRIED

3.4 Corporate Services Report Adoption of 2026-27 Revenue Statement

The purpose of this report is to adopt of the *2026-27 Revenue Statement* as part of the 2026-2027 Budget. Section 169(2)(b) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* requires Council to include a revenue statement in its annual budget.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved by: Cr. S. J. Condon

Seconded by: Cr. K. A. Bourne

That Council resolves to:

1. adopt the *2026-27 Revenue Statement* (Attachment One), in accordance with Section 104(5) of the *Local Government Act 2009* and sections 169 and 172 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*;
2. levy the Differential General Rates and Minimum General Rates for 2026-27, as set out in the *2026-27 Revenue Statement*, pursuant to section 94 of the *Local Government Act 2009*

and section 81 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* and in accordance with the provisions of the *Revenue Policy* and the *2026-27 Revenue Statement*;

3. levy the proposed 2026-2027 special charges and where applicable, adopt the overall plans and annual implementation plans, pursuant to the provisions of the *Revenue Policy* and *2026-27 Revenue Statement*;
4. levy the 2026-27 Utility Charges as set out in the *2026-27 Revenue Statement*, pursuant to section 94 of the *Local Government Act 2009* and section 99 and 100 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* and in accordance with the provisions of the *Revenue Policy* and *2026-27 Revenue Statement*;
5. allow a discount of five (5) per cent on General Rates (including Minimum General Rate) as stated in the *2026-27 Revenue Statement*, pursuant to section 130 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* and in accordance with the provisions of the *Revenue Policy* and *2026-27 Revenue Statement*; and
6. adopt the application of interest, from the day the rates or charges become overdue, at the maximum rate of 12.19 per cent per annum, to be applied from 1 July 2026 on all rates and charges (excluding overdue gas accounts) which remain unpaid thirty (30) days after the due date for payment, pursuant to sections 132 and 133 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* and in accordance with provisions of the *Revenue Policy* and *2026-27 Revenue Statement*.

CARRIED (6 to 2)

For: Cr K. A. Bourne, Cr O.G. Moore, Cr S. J. Condon, Cr
G. M. Olm, Cr. A. N. Smith, and Cr. M. J. James

Against: Cr. P. T. Saxelby, and Cr. S. Bougoure

3.5 Corporate Services Report Adoption of Rates and Charges and Special Charges Concessions 2026-27

This report considers the proposed Rates and Charges and Special Charges remissions, concessions and allowances to apply for the 2026-2027 financial year and the *Rates and Utility Charges Concession Policy* for the Western Downs Regional Council's 2026-2027 budget.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved by: Cr. P. T. Saxelby

Seconded by: Cr. M. J. James

That Council resolves to adopt the following concessions in accordance with the provisions of the *Revenue Policy* and the *2026-27 Revenue Statement*:

1. Council Pensioner Rate Remission

- a. A Council Pensioner Rate Remission of twenty (20) per cent (up to a maximum of \$200 per annum) of gross rates and charges (except for Special Rates and Charges, Rural Fire Levies, State Emergency Management Levy Charges, Water Consumption Charges, Charges on the Land, and Miscellaneous Fees and Charges) be provided to eligible pensioners in accordance with the State Government Pensioner Rate Subsidy Scheme in 2026-27. This remission is provided pursuant to sections 120(1)(a), 121(a), and 122(1)(b) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*; and
- b. A Council Pensioner Rate Remission of twenty (20) per cent (up to a maximum of \$200 per annum) be provided to occupants of independent living units at aged care facilities and retirement villages and who are also pensioners under section 123(1) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*. The remission will be provided to eligible pensioners where:

- i. part of the rates or charges that the Council considers is attributable to the part of the land where pensioners have a right to exclusive occupancy (section 123(2) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*), and
- ii. the landowner agrees to pass the benefit of the remission on to the pensioners.

2. Concealed Leaks

Pursuant to sections 120(1)(d), 121(a), and 122(1)(b) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, Council resolves to grant a concession to a ratepayer who is a member of a stated class of ratepayers, as follows:

a. Stated class of ratepayers

The concession is available to all categories/classes of ratepayers connected to Council's water supply schemes.

b. Type of concession

Council will allow relief by way of a maximum concession of twenty-five (25) per cent of the water consumption charge in accordance with the *Water Meter Guidelines*.

c. Conditions

The concession is granted subject to a ratepayer:

- i. incurring water consumption charges by reason of a 'concealed leak' (as defined in the *Water Meter Guidelines*); and
- ii. satisfying the criteria set down in the *Water Meter Guidelines*.

d. Criteria for granting concession

Council grants this concession on the basis that to require the ratepayer to pay full charges for consumption in circumstances where a concealed leak has occurred (through no fault of the ratepayer) would result in hardship.

3. Rates and Utilities Charges Concession for Community Organisations

Pursuant to sections 120(1)(d), 121(a), and 122(1)(b) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, Council resolves to grant a concession to a ratepayer who is a member of a stated class of ratepayers, as follows:

a. Stated class of ratepayers

The concession is granted to not-for-profit (or non-profit) community organisations responsible for payment of rates and utility charges as the owner or lessee of the land as defined in the *Rates and Utilities Charges Concession Policy*.

b. Type of concession

Council will grant to each eligible organisation the nominated concessions (expressed as percentages against each concession category) for general rates, waste utility charges, wastewater charges, water access charges, and water consumption charges.

c. Conditions

The conditions for granting the concession are outlined in the *Rates and Utilities Charges Concession Policy*.

d. Criteria for granting concession

Community organisations will be granted this concession upon receiving approval of the concession as outlined in the *Rates and Utilities Charges Concession Policy*.

4. Haemodialysis Water Allowance

Pursuant to sections 120(1)(d), 121(a), and 122(1)(b) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, Council resolves to grant an allowance to a ratepayer who is a member of a stated class of ratepayers, as follows:

a. Stated class of ratepayers

Council resolves to grant the allowance to a haemodialysis patient who receives haemodialysis treatment at home under the *Rates and Utility Charges Concession Policy*.

b. Type of concession

Types of conditions are outlined in the *Rates and Utility Charges Concession Policy*.

c. Conditions

Conditions for granting the allowance are outlined in the *Rates and Utility Charges Concession Policy*.

CARRIED

3.6 Corporate Services Report Adoption of Application of National Competition Reform 2026-27

This report considers Council's 2026-2027 Community Services Obligations (CSO). Each financial year, Council must decide whether to implement National Competition Policy (NCP) reforms for its business activities. These reforms enhance transparency, reduce anti-competitive behaviour, and are intended to optimise the allocation of Council resources.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved by: Cr. K. A. Maguire

Seconded by: Cr. K. A. Bourne

That Council resolves to:

1. continue to apply the full cost pricing reform option to the Water and Sewerage business activity for the 2026-2027 financial year in accordance with section 44(1) of the *Local Government Act 2009*;
2. continue to apply the Code of Competitive Conduct to the Waste and Gas Supply business activities for the 2026-2027 financial year in accordance with section 47 of the *Local Government Act 2009*;
3. apply a Community Service Obligation Payment to the following businesses during the 2026-2027 financial year:
 - a. Water;
 - b. Sewerage; and
 - c. Waste.
4. receive Dividend Payments from the following businesses during the 2026-2027 financial year:
 - a. Gas; and
 - b. Sewerage.

CARRIED

3.7 Corporate Services Report Adoption of Estimated Position 30 June 2026 and Financial Analysis

The purpose of this report is to seek adoption of the Statement of Estimated Financial Position as at 30 June 2026 as part of the 2026-2027 Budget and to provide an analysis of key variations between the 2026-2027 Budget and the 2025-2026 Estimated Position.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved by: Cr. S. J. Condon

Seconded by: Cr. G. M. Olm

That Council resolves to receive the Statement of Estimated Financial Position, which includes the Financial Operations (attachment one) and Financial Position (attachment two) of Council for the 2026-2027 financial year.

CARRIED

3.8 Corporate Services Report Adoption of 2026-2027 Budget including the Long-Term Financial Forecast

This report presents the 2026-2027 Budget and Long-Term Financial Forecast for adoption.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved by: Cr. A. N. Smith

Seconded by: Cr. K. A. Bourne

That Council resolves to:

1. adopt the 2026-2027 Budget, prepared in accordance with the requirements of section 169 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*; and
2. adopt the 2026-2027 Long-Term Financial Forecast, prepared in accordance with the requirements of sections 169 and 171 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

CARRIED

4. MAYORAL BUDGET STATEMENT

Across the Western Downs, there's a lot we can be proud of. We are a region that shows up for each other. A region that keeps moving forward - through growth, through challenges, and through changing times. That spirit has shaped the Budget we have delivered today. This Budget is not just about numbers. It's about being strong in how we continue to support our communities, strengthen our economy, and plan responsibly for what comes next.

Today, I present the 2026-27 Budget on behalf of my fellow Councillors. This is a carefully considered Budget.

Like households and businesses across the Western Downs, Council is dealing with rising costs. At the same time, external funding has tightened. So we have had to make some tough decisions. We have reduced discretionary funding and focused where it matters most - on essential services, maintaining our infrastructure, and continuing to deliver for our communities.

This year's Budget totals \$324.3 million dollars. It includes \$116.6 million dollars for 122 capital projects and \$207.7 million dollars in operating expenditure to support the services our communities rely on every day. We have also worked hard to secure \$34.7 million dollars in external funding to help reduce the cost burden on our ratepayers.

Everyone in this room knows this has been a tough Budget. We understand that cost of living pressures are real. And we know that any increase in rates is felt by households and businesses.

For us to continue to deliver safe, reliable services across a region as large and diverse as ours, a rates adjustment is necessary. The average increase across all categories is 7.16 per cent, with the average residential rate increase sitting at around \$1.46 per week. We've worked hard to keep this as balanced and fair as possible, while still meeting the needs of our growing region. We are also responding to updated land valuations across the Western Downs, which will impact ratepayers differently.

We have had to make some important changes to how we fund services. Utility charges have been adjusted to better reflect the real cost of delivering water, waste, and wastewater services. And we are moving towards a clearer user-pay approach to ensure fairness across our community. At the same time, we will continue to offer a 5 per cent discount on general rates when paid on time.

This Budget is about balance. Balancing responsibilities with investment. Balancing today's pressures with tomorrow's opportunities.

A key priority remains our local road network. We are investing more than \$26 million dollars into roads, stormwater, and transport infrastructure across the region. And just as importantly, we will continue to strongly advocate to the State and Federal Governments for increased investment into the 2,200 kilometres of national highway and state-controlled roads in our region. Because our roads don't just connect our communities - they drive our economy.

Water also remains our most critical resource. This year, more than \$13.5 million dollars has been allocated to water supply, treatment, and wastewater infrastructure. At the same time, we will continue advocating for long-term water security solutions to support future growth across the Western Downs.

We are continuing to invest in the places and spaces that support strong, connected communities. More than \$35 million is being invested in community development, including parks, recreation facilities, community infrastructure, and events. This includes upgrades to Thomas Jack Park in Dalby, improvements at Chinaman's Lagoon in Miles, and continued planning for the Chinchilla Aquatic Precinct. We are also investing in showgrounds, saleyards, community halls, and local facilities that are at the heart of our towns.

Supporting local events and community initiatives remains a priority. Events like the Chinchilla Melon Festival, Tara Festival of Culture and Camels, and Words Out West continue to showcase our region and support local businesses. Through our grants and funding programs, we will continue to empower community groups to deliver initiatives that bring people together.

This Budget has been developed with our community front of mind. It reflects a commitment to strong financial management, fair outcomes, and the continued delivery of essential infrastructure and services. I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for their leadership, collaboration, and commitment to achieving the best outcomes for our region and its people. And to our Council staff - thank you for the care and dedication that has gone into preparing this Budget.

The Western Downs is a region with a strong future. This Budget ensures we are living within our means, investing where it matters most, and continuing to build a region that is connected, resilient, and full of opportunity.

Thank you

Cr K. A. Bourne expressed a vote of thanks.

5. MEETING CLOSURE

The Meeting concluded at 12.21 PM.