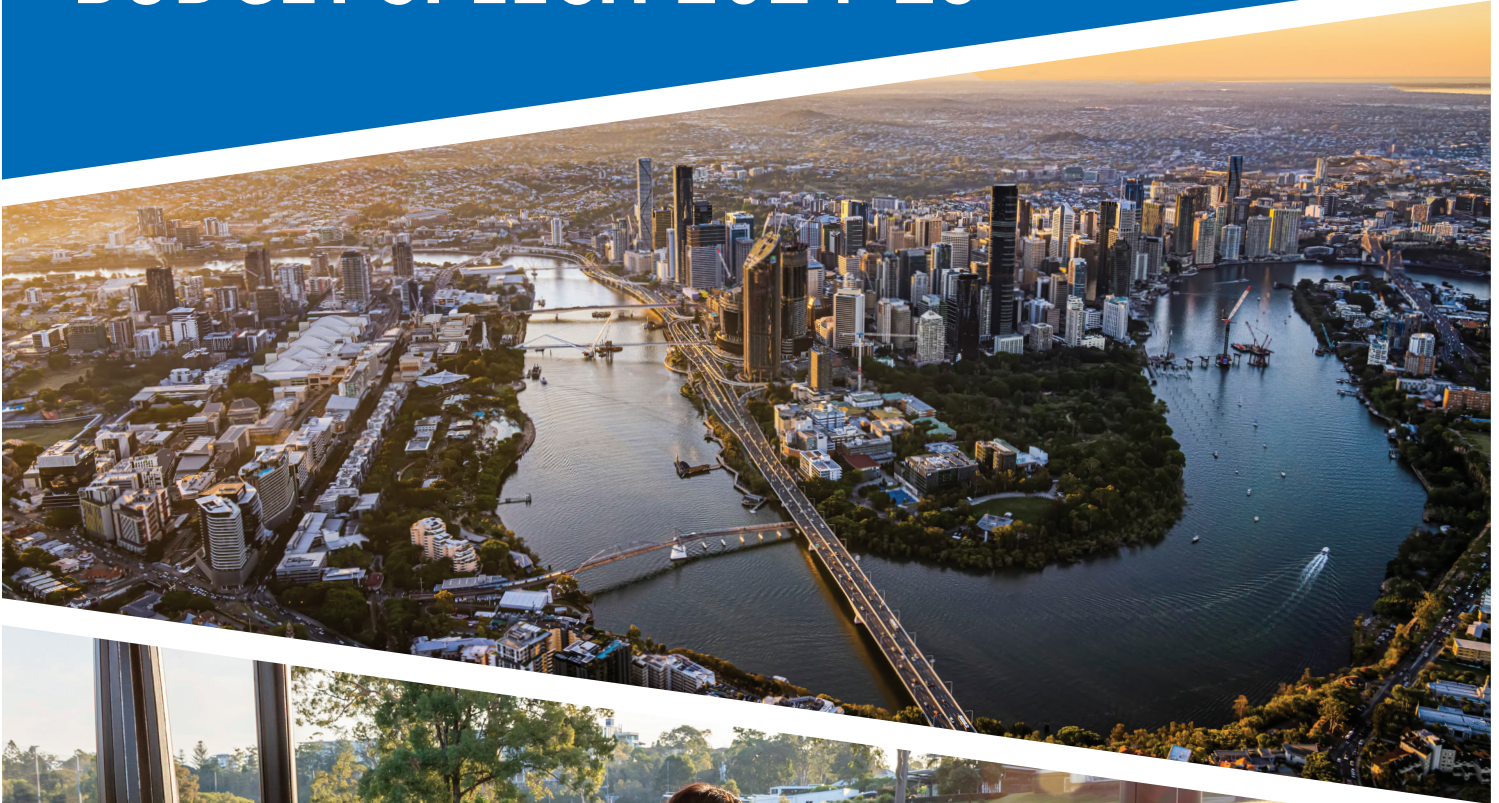


Brisbane City Council



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

LORD MAYOR'S BUDGET SPEECH 2024-25



Madam Chair,

On behalf of the 1.3 million residents of Brisbane, I rise to present the 2024-25 Budget.

This is a Budget that keeps Brisbane moving while living within our means.

This is a Budget that responds to the challenges of today and ensures that Brisbane seizes the opportunities of tomorrow.

This is a Budget based on a clear understanding of the cost-of-living pressures residents are facing.

This is a Budget that continues to prioritise the investment needed so Brisbane keeps getting better.

This is a public transport-focused Budget and the Budget that will see Brisbane Metro operations commence.

This is a Budget that invests 89 per cent of all expenditure in our suburbs, ensuring Brisbane remains the best place in the world to live, work and relax.

And, unlike other levels of government, this is a balanced Budget that ensures our Council spends only what it can afford.

We're doing this so we don't add unnecessary costs on to residents now and into the future.

Madam Chair,

On March 16, this city's residents overwhelmingly chose to keep Brisbane moving.

They chose our united and experienced team with a strong track record for ensuring Brisbane continues to get even better over a radical and risky Green/Labor Coalition of Chaos.

They chose our effective and affordable plan that recognises and acts to address the twin challenges of rising living costs and near-record growth.

They rejected the alternative which was billions of dollars in ill-conceived and unfunded promises that would have driven up the rates and rents of every single Brisbane resident.

Today's Budget delivers on the commitments we made to Brisbane residents.

It delivers on our four-point plan to:

- Build better roads to tackle traffic congestion;
- Improve public transport with more services to more places more often;
- Make Brisbane's lifestyle even better by investing in the parks, playgrounds and sports fields our community needs; and
- Meet the challenges of delivering a balanced Budget because we know this is the most responsible way we can take pressure off Brisbane households.

We were also upfront with Brisbane residents that we needed to find savings in our Budget amid ongoing pressure from global inflation.

Going into an election with a commitment to tighten the belt of Brisbane City Council was unconventional, if not unprecedented.

Yet we wanted Brisbane residents to know we were aware they were enduring rising living costs and that we believed the best way to address this at a Council level was responsible financial management.

Our approach certainly contrasted to those opposite, who throughout the election made it clear they thought responsible financial management was a bad thing.

Our approach is also in stark contrast to the State and Federal governments who have opted to rack up huge bills to finance big handouts. Handouts which we will all have to pay for down the track.

I would love to be on my feet today announcing a raft of new projects.

The next stage of our Bridges for Brisbane program.

The next Bradbury or Hanlon Park.

But right now, that would place more pressure on rates and rents.

That's why we made a commitment to Brisbane residents that we would manage the city's Budget responsibly.

Because living within our means, means keeping pressure off the residents of Brisbane.

That is exactly what we've done with this Budget.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Madam Chair,

Households across Brisbane continue to be vigilant and cautious amid ongoing uncertainty about global and domestic economic conditions.

The Budget I hand down today takes the same approach.

Persistent inflation means residents continue to feel the pinch every time they fill their trolley at the local grocery store.

All that talk a few months back about the Reserve Bank cutting interest rates has all but disappeared with inflation continuing to be the bugbear of our economy.

The Federal Budget confirmed national growth is sluggish.

And just last week the national accounts showed Australia's economy grew by just 0.1 per cent over the first three months of this year, prompting warnings we're teetering on the edge of a recession.

All of this, of course, has implications locally.

Our housing sector continues to endure price spikes, supply chain problems and critical labour shortages.

That's having a big impact on the construction of new homes in Brisbane.

The market's inability to deliver new homes at a price people can afford to pay is exacerbating the current housing shortage.

It's also having a negative impact on the income Council normally receives for building-related activity.

This challenge, of course, comes on top of Brisbane's most costly flood and a global pandemic, both of which delivered major financial blows to the city's Budget.

COST SHIFTING

Madam Chair,

This Budget is also framed amidst a disturbing trend of cost-shifting from State and Federal governments onto local councils like our own.

These other levels of government already reap 97 cents in every dollar of tax revenue in this country, leaving just 3 cents for local government.

Yet they increasingly favour foisting their responsibilities and problems onto local Councils and local communities.

In Brisbane, for example:

- Our Council has been funding 65 per cent of the cost of delivering childhood vaccinations.
- The State Government has legislated away their responsibility for the management of fire ants when they're found on council land.
- Since 2005, the compensation we receive for collecting the State's Emergency Management Levy has increased by just 10 per cent while over the same period inflation has risen by 67 per cent.
- The State Government made us responsible for cleaning-up suburban meth labs after the police come in and shut them down.
- The State Government has made us responsible for managing infection control for tattooing, body piercing and recently they've thrown in suburban botox clinics.

These are just a few examples out of many. But it's part of a much bigger challenge.

Our Council, and Brisbane residents, have long been expected to carry a much larger burden than other councils.

We will invest a record \$195 million this year to subsidise public transport when in every other local government area in Queensland this is solely a State Government responsibility.

Unlike other councils across the State, many of the major arterial roads in Brisbane are council roads.

These roads come with major maintenance and upgrading requirements that in other council areas, are funded by the State Government.

For example, Old Cleveland Road is a State Government responsibility in Redland City, but is largely a council responsibility in Brisbane.

Ipswich Road is the same.

Several years ago, the government even tried to give us a section of the Gateway Motorway to maintain.

And while the Sydney Harbour Bridge is State-owned and funded, the Story Bridge is council-owned and funded, despite being originally built by the State Government.

This is not a recent development. It's part of a long-term challenge that has seen state governments of all colours overlooking Brisbane in favour of pork-barrelling regional areas.

Meanwhile, we are the only Council in Australia delivering major congestion-busting and city-shaping transport projects.

These are projects that would be delivered by State Governments everywhere else in Australia.

In fact, everywhere else in Queensland too.

Brisbane Metro, Kangaroo Point Bridge, Moggill Road and Lindum Crossing, are all projects which would be the responsibility of the State Government anywhere else in Queensland or Australia.

Yet when the Federal Budget was delivered, the Australian Government funnelled billions of dollars into covering the rising costs of the State Government's road and rail projects, but left Council to fend for itself.

Meanwhile, State and Federal revenue has grown 74 per cent and 65 per cent respectively in the decade to 2022.

The State Government's land tax alone has increased by 66 per cent.

Yet grant assistance to councils has increased by just 12 per cent over the last decade while the operating costs increased by over 30 per cent.

Just last month, the State Local Government and Housing Minister crowed about the renewal of a \$100 million fund for SEQ councils for critical infrastructure to help fast-track housing.

Yet Brisbane's share was artificially capped, meaning our residents will once again be short-changed compared to everyone else in south east Queensland.

Councils like ours are increasingly forced to do more while our share of the pie gets smaller.

To be clear, I am always happy for Council to do the work when it comes to infrastructure and public transport.

But we need fair funding from the other two levels of government.

My team and I will continue to fight for a fair share for Brisbane residents.

COST-OF-LIVING

Madam Chair,

Despite the immovable challenges of global conditions and the ongoing threats from other levels of government forcing their problems on us, this Budget delivers for Brisbane residents.

It once again delivers the cheapest residential rates for owner-occupiers in south east Queensland.

It delivers the most generous pensioner rebate scheme in Queensland, recognising that our older residents are also some of those most impacted by rising costs.

I can confirm general rates for Brisbane owner-occupiers will increase by just 3.8 per cent. This is about \$2 a week extra in total rates.

That is an extraordinary result in the current climate.

Of course, this follows an increase of just 3.45 per cent last year, which was well below the 5.4% average for our neighbouring south east Queensland councils.

Today's result is in stark contrast to the last Labor administration in City Hall.

While they'll no doubt cry foul, their record is delivering four rate rises in excess of 6 per cent. Increases which were as much as 21 times the inflation rate.

Just imagine if it were a Green/Labor Coalition of Chaos sitting on this side of the Chamber today.

We've done the hard work to trim Council spending by 10 per cent under our sensible savings plan. A plan we announced before the election.

Without that plan, rates today could have increased by as much as 32.6 per cent.

Let me repeat that. Rates would need to be up to 32.6 per cent higher if we had not taken strong and decisive action to re-balance the Budget.

And if these numbers sound far-fetched to some, last year multiple New South Wales councils had to increase their rates by more than 50 per cent in a single year to deal with rising costs.

Just last month an Adelaide council put forward a 14 per cent rate rise to bring its budget back into balance.

These are not even councils with large capital works budgets and exposure to major project escalations.

It's clear that regardless of whether councils are large or small, our level of government is under significant financial pressure nationwide.

Yet against this background, it's extraordinary that those opposite continue to oppose sensible savings.

On top of their opposition to our sensible savings, they splashed out with a combined \$3.5 billion worth of new big-spending promises.

If a Labor or Green Lord Mayor was standing here today, heaven forbid, there is no doubt in my mind that residents would be facing the largest rate rise in Brisbane City Council's 99-year history.

The impact on Brisbane residents and Brisbane businesses from the reckless spending spree they promised would have been absolutely devastating.

Madam Chair,

While we take a sensible approach to spending, today's Budget includes a number of cost-of-living measures that benefit Brisbane residents.

We will continue to fund free off-peak travel for seniors which has saved our seniors \$14 million in Translink fares since it was introduced in October 2019.

Our residents can get cash rebates of up to \$200 for household composting and food waste recycling equipment.

And we will retain our heavily discounted green bins which continue to cost less than \$1-a-week.

This Budget also confirms the return of our wildly successful \$2 Summer Dips.

This initiative saved Brisbane residents – and a few residents from other council areas who use our pools – almost \$2 million last summer.

\$2 Summer Dips was a simple and effective way our Council helped residents reduce costs while providing some affordable and active fun for all ages.

During December, patronage at Brisbane's 22 public pools doubled.

That's right. Doubled.

Just imagine our pool patronage figures if we hadn't had such a wet summer.

People took advantage of the discounts which meant adult entry was reduced from \$6.40 to \$2.

For a family of four, the cost fell from \$20.15 to just \$8.

Some of the feedback we received was incredible.

➤ Amy from Moorooka said:

My family and I would like to extend our sincere thank you for providing a summer of \$2 pool entry. We had a wonderful holiday and visited the pool nearly every day, sometimes twice a day! Thank you for another incentive to get outdoors, exercise, and enjoy Brisbane.

➤ Arron from Morningside said:

Thank you for sending out the pamphlets in the mail which tell me about want (sic) the Brisbane City Council has been up to in the mall with me (sic). I appreciate it and I think they're very good and contain a lot of useful information. The two dollar summer dips program is an excellent initiative, keep up the good work.

➤ Another resident from Sandgate said:

Thank you very sincerely for the \$2 swims. I go to Sandgate pool and the low price has meant I can go three times a week as recommended by my doctor. I can say without exaggeration that it has changed my life. Thank you again.

With rising living costs still hitting households, we recognised \$2 Summer Dips was an important initiative which is why we promised to bring it back.

And that's precisely what we will do.

BUILDING BETTER ROADS

Madam Chair,

Brisbane is growing.

Over the past decade, Brisbane has been the fastest-growing capital city in the country.

With our strong economy, incredible climate and reputation for being a clean and safe destination, Brisbane will continue to grow.

In fact, our Sustainable Growth Strategy estimated Brisbane's population will grow to 1.55 million by 2041 while the Brisbane Economic Development Agency's new State of the City report highlighted that our economy will grow by 68 per cent to \$275 billion.

We know that this growth is both a challenge and an opportunity.

That's why it's vital that we invest in our roads and that we fight to ensure Brisbane receives its fair share from the State and Federal governments.

This year we will complete the Moggill Road Corridor Upgrade Project which removes the old Indooroopilly roundabout and replaces it with a new intersection and fly-over, as well as better safety.

Meanwhile, further up in the section of this corridor that is not controlled by Council, the State took one look at the troubled Kenmore roundabout and threw it in the "too hard basket".

We're getting on with the current stage of the Beams Road upgrade, which will help ease congestion through this busy area of Brisbane's north.

We're making our roads safer with Federally-funded black spot projects including along James Street in Fortitude Valley, Kessels Road in Salisbury and Wynnum Road in Tingalpa.

We're doing a range of small projects that make a big impact, like new and improved turning lanes in The Gap, Sunnybank Hills and Virginia.

And we're doing the planning and design work necessary for the next round of projects along Kelvin Grove and Enoggera roads, Cavendish Road, Kitchener and Holdsworth streets in Coorparoo and Underwood Road in Eight Mile Plains.

We'll also deliver on our Safer School Precincts commitment announced during the election.

We're initially targeting four areas – Mansfield, Kedron, Indooroopilly and Wynnum Manly.

Combined, these areas include a dozen different schools.

We'll develop detailed plans for each area, which will include things like pedestrian crossings, widening of footpaths, expansion of 40km/h school zones, kerbside drop-off and pick-up zones and establishing gateways at school zones.

These changes won't just benefit students.

They will also help reduce road congestion in our suburbs and keep Brisbane moving.

Madam Chair,

It's also important that we make the most of our existing road network.

I can confirm today that we're launching a global expression of interest process to identify the best and latest traffic management technology.

And we want to introduce it to Brisbane's roads.

By utilising smart technology, including artificial intelligence, we have great potential to get our roads and buses operating more efficiently.

That's why during the election our team promised \$15 million to trial new traffic management technology and confirm the best system to roll out further.

When new technology was trialled in Birmingham, it resulted in traffic flow improving by up to 23 per cent in the first year.

It's not just about traffic management, it's also an opportunity to introduce priority for buses on key transport corridors.

Our plan certainly contrasts with those opposite whose big idea for tackling congestion was to set up a committee.

IMPROVING PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Madam Chair,

Within months, we will be ready to start operating the first Brisbane Metro services.

Servicing 18 improved stations along dedicated busways, Brisbane Metro will deliver a transport revolution for our city, capable of delivering turn-up-and-go services on a modern, accessible, quiet, comfortable and fully-electric vehicle.

The Federal Government has invested in this project.

And from the talks I've had with Premier Steven Miles, I know he sees huge potential to expand Brisbane Metro into other areas of our city.

In fact, other south east Queensland councils are already considering how Brisbane Metro can be used in their areas as a mass transit solution to ease congestion.

This Budget also confirms we're taking the next step to deliver turn-up-and-go Brisbane Metro services to northside residents.

We're starting the planning work for a new state-of-the-art Brisbane Metro charging station and depot on the northside.

This depot will be pivotal for operating electric Metros and zero-emission buses along the State Government's Northern Transitway and proposed busway.

Brisbane's north is in real need of transport solutions and our advocacy has already prompted the State Government and Opposition to commit to our proposal for a new northside tunnel linking Carseldine to Kedron.

We're hopeful that the work we are undertaking now will mean Brisbane's north can have a below-surface motorway for vehicles with Gympie Road utilised for Brisbane Metro.

This Budget also confirms our election commitment to progress discussions with the State Government for an Eastern Metro.

Their Eastern Busway was supposed to go all the way to Capalaba but stopped at Coorparoo years ago and hasn't advanced since.

We're going to work with the State Government on an Eastern Metro along the existing corridor that will link Coorparoo to Carindale and on to Capalaba, stopping at several Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic venues along the way.

Madam Chair,

This Budget also continues this Council's commitment to public transport and confirms our biggest investment in public transport ever.

Between turn-up-and-go Metro services and the introduction of Brisbane's New Bus Network, our Council is leading the way getting more services to more places more often.

Combined with building better roads, this is how you tackle congestion.

This year, Council's support for public transport services will increase to \$195 million.

That means over the last decade our investment has doubled.

That's right: doubled.

But we know that to successfully tackle congestion, the State Government needs to invest more in Brisbane buses, too.

While our investment has doubled in the last decade, the State has capped Brisbane bus funding increases to inflation.

Our contribution to public transport allowed us to introduce new services, like the Blue and Maroon CityGliders, and make off-peak travel free for seniors.

But it is simply unsustainable for this Council to continue solely subsidising growth services in Brisbane.

We've been in talks with the State to support more services in Brisbane and help convince more people to leave their car at home and take the bus.

Their six-month trial of 50-cent fares tackles affordability, but what we really need is to work together to make our buses more frequent and more reliable.

We want the State to back Brisbane's buses.

We want to see funding from the State that will deliver more bus services for Brisbane's growing population.

We want an investment that will lock in world class services for the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games.

If we get the deal that we have proposed to the State Government, we will see the biggest boost to Brisbane bus services in more than a decade.

That those opposite have complained we're spending too much on public transport just shows logic departed their depot long ago.

MAKING BRISBANE'S LIFESTYLE EVEN BETTER

Madam Chair,

Brisbane is Australia's lifestyle capital.

Our residents know it.

Sydney and Melbourne residents have discovered it too which is why they're moving here in such numbers.

Growth is both an opportunity and challenge.

We can't let Brisbane be a victim of its own success.

Our record of planning new lifestyle precincts like Howard Smith Wharves and delivering new parks and playgrounds throughout our suburbs has helped earn Brisbane the mantle of Australia's lifestyle capital.

This Budget ensures that journey continues.

This year we will complete the transformation of Murarrie Recreation Reserve and progress planning for new sports parks in Pallara and Ellen Grove.

We'll finish turning Archerfield Wetlands District Park from a wastewater treatment plant to picturesque parkland as part of the 20-year Oxley Creek Transformation.

And we'll progress improvements to the Kingfisher Creek Corridor as part of the Norman Creek Master Plan.

We'll also begin the Kedron Brook Master Plan which is an exciting opportunity to take this already popular 110 square kilometre catchment to the next level.

We're going to look for long-term opportunities where we can undertake bank stabilisation and habitat planting and create areas where we can return natural water flow.

The 20-year Kedron Brook Revitalisation Vision will deliver a recreational precinct that is loved by locals and is more flood-resilient.

We'll also undertake park and playground upgrades right across Brisbane, including in:

- Macaranga Crescent Park in Carseldine.
- Bill Hewitt Reserve in Camp Hill.
- Glindemann Park in Holland Park.

We'll undertake improvement projects in a number of Brisbane's favourite places, including New Farm Park, Mount Coot-tha and Mt Gravatt lookouts as well as Rocks Riverside Park.

There's also new and improved dog parks for Toowong, Bellbowrie, Windsor, Greenslopes, Forest Lake and Nudgee Beach.

And we'll complete the final year of our Sun Safe Suburban Playground program which aims to ensure every playground in Brisbane has some form of shade cover.

In its first two years, this program will have added shade to 66 playgrounds across Brisbane, and we are aiming to complete another 34 this year.

This administration has a proud record of delivering major upgrades to our bayside foreshores.

Two decades ago we commenced work on revitalising the Wynnum, Manly and Lota foreshores.

It's a part of Brisbane that all residents can and do enjoy.

This year we have also allocated funding to develop a masterplan for the future of the Wynnum, Manly and Lota foreshores.

I know the local community has many ideas on how they would like to see this part of the city improve even further and over the coming financial year we want to hear those ideas as we plan for the next two decades.

I know our new Councillor for Wynnum Manly, Alex Givney, has the energy and enthusiasm to work with her community on such a transformational project.

This will be in addition to our \$1.2 million commitment to a major upgrade of the children's playground near the Wynnum Wading Pool.

We will also work with the Federal Government to deliver on their commitment to improve the Brighton Foreshore following our community consultation last year.

Madam Chair,

Our 2180 parks are already great places to take the kids to play, have a picnic or take the dog for some exercise.

From tiny pocket parks loved by locals to destination playgrounds like Bradbury Park which draws residents from across Brisbane, our open spaces are an important part of preserving and enhancing our city's lifestyle.

Yet wouldn't it be even better if it was easy to grab a coffee at the park?

That's exactly what we are going to do under our Coffee Carts in Parks plan.

We're going to undertake a citywide assessment to identify the best locations and times when coffee carts – as well as other mobile food vendors – can cater for residents at our parks, playgrounds and dog off-leash areas.

Sixty areas have already been identified through an initial assessment and this is expected to be significantly expanded.

We'll streamline the approval process for vendors and set up a booking process for approved locations.

And we'll make it cheaper for mobile food operators to access this great initiative, with a new \$450 annual fee.

In some of Brisbane's most popular parks, it will mean residents will be able pick up a coffee from a vendor in the morning or an ice-cream in the afternoon.

Madam Chair,

Public safety is vital for maintaining Brisbane's enviable lifestyle.

Unfortunately, crime – particularly youth crime – is a growing problem.

We need the State Government to step up and do everything it can to address this issue.

While crime is a state issue, there are things Council can do to improve public safety.

Our new \$1 million Safer Suburbs Grants are directly targeted at Brisbane's sports and community clubs.

From the conversations I've had, I know many of our clubs who have been victims of crime are very much looking forward to this new program.

Clubs are often targeted for theft and vandalism and the cost of repairs just adds to the price of participating in grassroots sport.

Over the past three years, at least 12 Brisbane clubs have reported copper wiring theft, which leaves them without lighting.

Under our new Safer Suburbs Grants, clubs on Council-leased facilities will be eligible for grants of up to \$10,000.

Security screens, CCTV cameras, alarm systems, improved locks and patrol services will all be eligible for funding under the new Lord Mayor's Safer Suburbs grant scheme.

I can confirm applications will open in the coming months, with funding distributed by the end of this calendar year.

We're also committed to rolling out new Suburban Safety Cameras to deter and catch crime and anti-social behaviour.

On top of that, we'll also install new and improved lighting across more than a dozen suburban locations like bikeways, car parks, dog off-leash areas and in open spaces used by fitness groups.

SHORT-STAY ACCOMMODATION

Madam Chair,

Our Council has led the way when it comes to striking a balance between the need for short-stay accommodation to meet spikes in demand and the concerns of neighbours.

We recognise this type of accommodation has a role to play when Brisbane is staging major national and international events.

We also recognise there are areas where short-stay accommodation is appropriate and where it is not and that neighbours in apartments and other types of attached dwellings have legitimate concerns.

We've already introduced Transitory Accommodation rating categories to ensure owners using their properties on the short-term rental market pay their fair share.

There are 1435 properties currently in these categories and today's Budget will increase the cost by a further 10 per cent.

During last year's Budget, I announced the establishment of a 12-month Short-Stay Accommodation Taskforce which was asked to assess the sector's impact on long-term accommodation availability and better ways to regulate where it was allowed.

I can today confirm the Taskforce's findings and recommendations are complete.

It found less than one per cent of Brisbane homes are being used for temporary accommodation.

It also found Council currently had limited ability to regulate short-stay accommodation with the standard of evidence required under state planning laws making it difficult.

The Taskforce also found bodies corporate do not have the power to pass by-laws to restrict the use of short-stay in their buildings.

The Taskforce has recommended the introduction of a new local law requiring owners to prove they have planning approval in order to be licenced by Council to operate as short-stay accommodation.

In addition, they must ensure a property manager is available 24/7 to respond to complaints and pay an annual fee.

It also recommended Council advocate for a number of State reforms, including legislative change to allow bodies corporate to pass by-laws prohibiting or restricting short-stay accommodation.

I can confirm today our Council will be accepting the taskforce's recommendations and will seek approval from the State for a new local law following public consultation.

These changes will make it easier for Council to prevent properties being used as short-stay accommodation where it is not appropriate, and take swifter action against those doing the wrong thing.

Based on data scraped from a number of short-stay platforms, it's estimated there are at least 420 homes being used for short-stay accommodation in Brisbane's low-density suburbs which would NOT meet planning requirements and therefore wouldn't be allowed to continue.

Hundreds of others would have to prove they could meet the requirements of a new local law.

While a large part of regulating short-stay accommodation falls outside the jurisdiction of local governments, I hope we can work with the State Government to introduce sensible changes.

This will allow us to strike a better balance for our residents and visitors, and provide a model for common-sense regulation of this sector which can be replicated across the state and beyond.

Madam Chair,

Today, I can also reveal we plan to undertake a citywide audit of house-to-business conversions.

Too often we see examples of homes bought and converted to businesses while up the road, designated commercial space sits vacant.

If this practice continues unchecked, there's a risk it will shrink our housing stock while our suburban shopping strips suffer.

We will ask Council officers to audit homes being used for businesses on busy roads to assess whether they have proper planning approval.

I'm not talking about home-based businesses.

I'm talking about properties that were formerly homes which are now completely used by business.

There are occasions when this is appropriate.

But we need to assess the impact this practice is having on Brisbane's stock of residential land, particularly on main roads with convenient access to public transport.

WASTE REFORMS

Madam Chair,

Let me turn now to waste, more specifically household waste.

Unlike those opposite who attempted to sneak through the election with a secret plan to cut Brisbane's red-top collections to fortnightly, our commitment is unquestionable.

We will keep Brisbane's weekly red-top waste collection service.

However, just like other councils across Queensland, we are grappling with the challenge of trying to reduce waste to landfill.

Grappling with the challenges of trying to minimise the impact on households from the State Government's waste levy.

We know Brisbane has a finite amount of landfill space.

Since 2022, we have been trialling a fortnightly food waste recycling service in select areas using green bins.

I can confirm today the numbers are in and they're not the silver bullet solution some people thought.

Firstly, an analysis of the waste collected from the green bins in the trial area found just four per cent of what was collected was food waste like vegetable scraps.

Just four per cent.

To put that into context, the average red bin is believed to contain about 23 per cent of food waste.

Secondly, the annual cost to Council of providing this service to the 13,000 trial households was \$2.3 million.

While processing regular green waste costs just \$7.80 a tonne, processing green waste that includes food scraps increases nearly twenty-fold to \$150 a tonne.

So expanding Brisbane's food waste recycling service to all 156,000 households with a green bin would cost Council about \$20 million-a-year.

Just imagine the cost if this service was forced on all 500,000 Brisbane households.

All for a green bin containing just four per cent of food waste.

These results demonstrate the unmitigated disaster the Opposition's plan to make food waste recycling mandatory for every Brisbane household would have been.

Their proposal would have cost Brisbane ratepayers millions and millions of dollars.

And it would have delivered little in terms of reduced use of landfill and exposure to the State Government's waste levy.

As a result of these findings, I can confirm today we will be pausing Brisbane's food waste recycling trial.

It simply makes no sense to continue this service when it costs so much and delivers so little.

Alternatively, our Council will be undertaking a detailed investigation into other more effective and less costly ways we can reduce our use of landfill.

This investigation will consider a number of initiatives, including:

- Rolling out universal green waste recycling bins for stand-alone homes in Brisbane.
- Deploying green waste recycling bins to suitable apartment buildings.
- Incentivising anaerobic digestion and other technologies for apartment buildings.
- Converting select community composting hubs to Advanced Composting Hubs with regular Council collections.
- Trialling soft plastics in road surfaces along with glass and tyres.
- Installing community-based recycling hubs for batteries, CDs, glasses, X-rays and tablet blister packs at Council and Council-leased facilities like libraries, community facilities and sports clubs.
- Investing in a waste-to-energy facility for residual waste.

In the interim, we will continue to offer discounted green bins to Brisbane households.

Since we cut the cost last year to less than \$1 a week, more than 16,000 extra Brisbane households have ordered a green bin.

All these additional green bins helped us collect an extra 4000 tonnes of green waste over the summer compared to the previous year, much of which would have ended up in landfill.

That's a great outcome. And for much less cost.

Madam Chair,

Our Budget is a culmination of a lot of hard work by a talented group of people who are all dedicated to a better Brisbane.

I want to thank Deputy Mayor Councillor Krista Adams, Finance Chair Councillor Fiona Cunningham as well as all our Cabinet Chairs and Councillors.

I want to thank Acting Chief Executive Officer Tim Wright, Divisional Manager Anne Lenz, Chief Financial Officer Mark Russell, Sandra Bridgeman, Emma McCarthy and Elizabeth West.

I want to thank our Finance Policy Liaison Officer Dean, as well as the senior staff in my office Cris, Steven, Nathan and Michael.

This is a Budget that meets our commitment to Brisbane residents.

It meets our commitment to deliver an affordable plan within our means so we don't foist unnecessary costs onto Brisbane households.

Those opposite whinge and whine about sensible savings.

Yet their own election costings showed they would have driven up Council spending by double digits without a credible plan to pay for their policies.

On the other hand, our Budget is balanced.

Our Budget is responsible.

Our Budget helps households facing rising living costs while tackling the challenges of growth.

This Budget once again demonstrates Brisbane residents pay less than other Councils but get more.

More investment in their suburbs.

More roads and transport.

More parks, playgrounds and lifestyle precincts.

This is a Budget that ensures we can continue to build an even better Brisbane.

Madam Chair, I commend this Budget to the Chamber.






Dedicated to a better Brisbane

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