



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

Brisbane City Council LORD MAYOR'S BUDGET SPEECH 2026-27



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Madam Chair,

These are not ordinary times we're living through.

In fact, we haven't had ordinary times since the start of the Pandemic.

After the Pandemic came the 2022 Flood, a Global Inflation Crisis and a Cyclone last year.

Then there have been the impacts of global conflicts.

Impacts that have disrupted supply chains, impacted fuel prices and forced costs up even further.

Transport and delivery costs for road infrastructure contracts have already increased by 15 per cent.

Diesel costs for our buses and trucks have jumped by 90 cents a litre, adding millions of dollars in extra costs.

Construction costs have risen by up to 20 per cent, with growing risks to contract renegotiations and supply chain disruptions.

Together, all of these things have delivered big hits to our budget.

Unprecedented hits in our City's modern history.

Impacts amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars.

And even more importantly, they've delivered big hits to household budgets and to the bottom line of local businesses.

As much as we'd like to think the worst is behind us, there are no guarantees and inflation is far from under control.

Of all the world's advanced economies, Australia is heading towards having the highest inflation rate.

The Reserve Bank is forecasting it will be 4.8 per cent in the June Quarter.

Higher than the United States, New Zealand, Canada, The UK, Germany, France, Japan and Singapore.

While all of these economic challenges have come our way, we've also seen record population growth.

Recent years have seen Brisbane's population grow faster than at any other time in at least 30 years.

This incredible rate of growth continues to put pressure on roads, transport, housing and services.

These combined economic and population pressures have not been experienced by any other Brisbane City Council administration since the Second World War.

Despite these challenges, the Budget I'm presenting today is balanced, it's responsible and keeps costs down for residents.

We're keeping costs down, while everything else is going up.

It's a Budget that delivers a rate increase that's below inflation.

It's a Budget that delivers the lowest rates of any council in south east Queensland.

Not just lower by a bit. Lower by an average of \$400 a year.

It's a Budget that drives down debt, with no new borrowings for the first time in nearly a decade.

It's a Budget that spends less where we can, but invests more where it counts.

This is a Budget that builds on our record of making Brisbane's lifestyle even better.

This is a Budget that plans and invests in the roads, bridges, footpaths and bikeways we need to keep Brisbane moving now and in the future.

It's a Budget that funds the critical planning work required to unlock thousands of new homes for Brisbane residents.

This is a Budget that ensures Brisbane seizes the opportunities of tomorrow while responding to the very real challenges of today.

But at its beating heart this is a Cost-of-Living Budget.

This Budget is all about keeping costs down for Brisbane residents.

Regardless of whether they own or rent, regardless of whether they are young or not-so-young, regardless of whether they live in the inner-city or our suburbs, we're in their corner.

Madam Chair,

Just over two years ago, Brisbane residents turned up on polling day and backed our team to keep Brisbane moving.

They rejected the radical and risky Green/Labor Coalition of Chaos Opposition and instead chose our united and experienced team.

They rejected their reckless plans for billions of dollars in unfunded promises and new taxes on housing – precisely the formula we're seeing out of Canberra.

Instead, they chose our plan to strike the right balance between keeping costs down and keeping Brisbane moving.

They chose our plan to keep making Brisbane's lifestyle even better, a plan which has helped make our city one of the most attractive destinations in the world.

Today's Budget keeps our commitment to Brisbane residents.

Today's Budget delivers on that commitment with...

- Record spending on core Council services like road resurfacing.
- 94 per cent of all investment will occur in our suburbs in line with our Suburbs First Guarantee.
- Increased investment in the parks and precincts our residents love, like Mount Coot-tha, Kedron Brook and the Wynnum Manly and Lota Foreshore.
- An exciting new and reimagined program to help keep Brisbane residents moving well and further supercharge our dawn economy.

- Plans for the next steps of Brisbane Metro, our bus rapid transit solution that has delivered more than 10 million trips and captured national and international attention.
- The continued rollout of our tall-over-sprawl housing strategy that protects our character suburbs and native bushland, and ensures new homes are delivered in the right places near transport.
- Unprecedented new investment that will directly tackle homelessness.
- Our plan to renew the Story Bridge, without tolls, and funds our commitment over the forward estimates.
- A Budget that is balanced and debt that continues to decline, an approach which has helped see us through repeated natural disasters, as well as COVID and a cost-of-living crisis.

And, this is a Budget that keeps costs down by delivering the lowest residential rates in south east Queensland!

Economic Outlook

Madam Chair,

Our budgets have consistently been framed amid uncertain times on a national and international level, and this one is no different.

I discussed those challenges earlier.

Against such a backdrop, the Albanese Federal Government has done exactly what it repeatedly said it wouldn't do.

It fiddled around with tax settings on Australian property.

Their changes have fuelled uncertainty and sapped confidence out of the Australian economy.

They've caused concerns about rising inflation, interest rates and household rents.

It's exactly the opposite of what we need right now.

And where is all the extra money raised going from Canberra's extraordinary tax-and-spend approach?

Certainly not Brisbane or Queensland.

Not yet anyway.

Instead, councils like ours continue to incur cuts and cost shifting from Canberra.

Despite all of those new Federal Labor MPs, they couldn't deliver a single additional dollar for a new project in Brisbane.

According to the LGAQ, there's been a 378 per cent increase in the cost to councils from Canberra's cost shifting over the past 20 years.

The 2026-27 Federal Budget didn't include a single new program for local councils.

Over the past decade, Canberra's tax coffers have swollen by almost 81 per cent, yet Financial Assistance Grants to councils have only increased by 51 per cent.

These grants used to be the equivalent of 1 per cent of Canberra revenue 30 years ago. They're now almost half that.

Over the past five years, Brisbane's share of these grants has declined from 8.6 per cent to 6.6 per cent, while over the same period our population increased by almost 9 per cent.

Canberra's approach simply doesn't add up.

Keeping costs down

Madam Chair,

Against the backdrop of international turmoil, national uncertainty and local cost increases, many Queenslanders might expect to see significant increases.

We've already seen the impact on some councils under cost pressures and more will follow.

In recent days, other councils in south east Queensland have already announced rate increases of more than 11 per cent.

These are councils that already charge far more than Brisbane does.

There's already been media speculation about an above-inflation rates rise in Brisbane.

I can guarantee that would have certainly been the case under the Green/Labor Coalition of Chaos.

Brisbane residents won't forget how they made \$3.5 billion worth of unfunded promises just over two years ago.

Their reckless promises would have forced up Council spending by 20 per cent, driving up the rates and rents of every single Brisbane resident.

By contrast, we promised across-the-board savings of 10 per cent, a staggering 30 per cent difference.

If a Green/Labor Coalition of Chaos was presenting today's Budget, they would be delivering double digit rate increases.

Fortunately, that's not the case.

We promised Brisbane residents responsible financial management and that's what this Budget delivers.

This is a balanced Budget with a sensible surplus for a rainy day.

As I said earlier, this Budget delivers lower debt.

In fact, our debt levels will be \$345 million lower than expected this time last year.

That means a saving of more than \$200 million in interest costs over the life of those loans.

Driving down debt and keeping costs down means we're able to deliver cost-of-living relief right when it matters most to Brisbane residents.

With inflation expected to be 4.8 per cent in the June quarter, I can confirm our general rate increase will be well below that figure at 3.97 per cent.

Madam Chair, that means Brisbane residents will continue to pay the cheapest rates in south east Queensland.

It means Brisbane residents already on the lowest minimum rates will pay just 70 cents more a week.

For the average owner occupier, it will be just \$1.22.

That's good news for homeowners.

But it's also good news for renters because it means less pressure on rent.

Brisbane's cheapest rates will be \$405 below what people pay on average elsewhere in south east Queensland.

And that figure has been calculated before many of those councils hand down their budgets.

This means the "Brisbane discount" will only get bigger over the coming financial year.

Had our rate rise been in line with the RBA's 4.8 per cent inflation forecast, it would have collectively cost Brisbane residents almost \$15 million over the next 12 months.

Instead, that money will remain in their pockets, which is good news in these uncertain times.

Madam Chair,

We're also looking after our pensioners by increasing our rebate scheme, which is already the most generous in Queensland.

Almost 40,000 pensioners will benefit, with the maximum rebate increasing \$52 a year to \$1350 and the partial rebate increasing \$26 to \$675.

Collectively, these rebates will save our pensioners almost \$30 million this year.

Seniors will also continue to enjoy our Council's free off-peak travel.

Although I must admit the savings aren't as much as they used to be thanks to the Crisafulli Government's permanent 50 cent fares.

Our on-time rates discount will save residents an estimated \$16.7 million, while our rebate for not-for-profits will save charities, kindergartens and other organisations an estimated \$2.2 million.

And I know what many of you will be waiting to hear ... yes, I can confirm the return of our enormously successful \$2 Summer Dips.

There were a record 758,000 visits to our pools last Summer from Brisbane residents, and no doubt a few from beyond our boundaries as well, with \$2 Summer Dips saving them \$2.8 million.

The previous year, pool visitor numbers were 726,000 and the savings \$2.5 million.

Our \$2 Summer Dips isn't just saving people money, it is helping keep our community healthy and happy, which should be the central aim of every council.

Collectively, our cost-of-living initiatives will save our residents an estimated \$76.5 million this year, up from the \$70.2 million saved last year.

I know these savings are incredibly important in the current economic climate and I am proud our team is able to deliver them for Brisbane residents.

Housing and Homelessness

Madam Chair,

This Budget also continues to roll out our tall-over-sprawl housing strategy.

It's all about more homes in the right places, near transport corridors, shops and services.

We've introduced or are introducing new Suburban Renewal Precincts in Stones Corner, Alderley, Chermside, Cannon Hill, Mt Gravatt, Upper Mount Gravatt, Sandgate and Wynnum.

We're reforming on-site car parking rates required for new homes close to major centres or high-frequency transport.

This change is aimed at relieving construction cost pressures that are adding tens of thousands of dollars to the price of new units and townhouses.

We're overhauling heights and lot sizes in Brisbane's low-medium density residential areas too.

This will help ignite the construction of more townhouses, row houses and apartments so young first-home buyers and older downsizers have more opportunities and options where they want to live.

This is all in addition to our Kurilpa Sustainable Growth Precinct plan where 4,400 homes have now been proposed in this very popular area, which is already well serviced by a myriad of transport options.

In contrast, those opposite continue to come up with new excuses to oppose housing.

It's easy and it's the lazy, short-term option.

They spend their time backing local anti-housing NIMBY campaigns led by known Labor and Green operatives.

But I can promise Brisbane residents, we'll keep getting on with the job of backing new homes where people want to live.

Why? Because our children and grandchildren need us to put aside short-term political expediency and think long-term.

Because young people need us to think long-term.

Because renters need us to think long-term.

Because Brisbane needs us to think long-term.

Madam Chair,

Homelessness is an incredibly complex problem that requires innovative solutions.

Our Council already does more than any other to help rough sleepers, but there's always more we can do.

We've completely waived infrastructure fees for community housing providers, which has helped them deliver more homes by saving them more than \$3 million in recent years.

We're continuing to fund Pathways out of Homelessness grants, with more than \$7 million allocated since we established the program.

We'll continue to hold our Homeless Connect event each year.

Last year, I was incredibly proud to announce a \$500,000 contribution towards the establishment of a 24/7 homelessness night sanctuary operated by Emmanuel City Mission.

Our investment helped build bathrooms and sleeping facilities for women, which meant the sanctuary could cater for both men and women for the first time.

The sanctuary is currently a weekly overnight service offering safety and warmth for people experiencing homelessness.

It's a respectful place that has space to cater for men and women, where they can share a meal and get some rest.

Now in only its sixth month, the sanctuary has delivered more than 600 safe night stays.

This number is incredible for something that is only getting started, but it's the personal stories that matter.

Take Neil for example.

An overnight stay not only meant a night off the street.

It meant he was able to get to his job interview the next day, rested and ready. He got the job and he got a helping hand out of homelessness.

The sanctuary is currently raising funds so it can open more often to help people like Neil.

I'm proud to announce our Council will contribute a further \$250,000 a year for the next three years.

This money will help Emmanuel City Mission extend its operating nights so more people can get the rest they need and the help they deserve for a pathway out of homelessness.

Making Brisbane's Lifestyle Even Better

Madam Chair,

Brisbane is the best place in the world to live.

It's not just me saying it. People are voting with their feet.

Brisbane continues to be one of the fastest-growing cities in Australia.

While net internal migration is declining in Sydney and Melbourne, Brisbane is gaining.

Our population growth in recent years has been the highest in around 30 years.

Why are people choosing Brisbane?

It's simple. We have the best lifestyle in Australia.

In fact, this year Brisbane was crowned the best city in the world to raise a family, well above other Australian destinations like Sydney, Melbourne and Perth.

And why did we stand head and shoulders above all others?

Namely, it was our incredible number of parks, bushland reserves and green spaces.

Through long-term planning, we've also helped deliver thriving precincts and projects like James Street, Howard Smith Wharves, Fish Lane and West Village, which are incredibly popular.

Key projects, including Howard Smith Wharves and West Village, have been opposed by the Greens and Labor.

It's another example of their short-term thinking and their habit of opposing everything, even if it's good for Brisbane and incredibly popular with residents.

During my time as Lord Mayor, I've always prioritised investing in our parks, playgrounds and precincts.

I know how much they're loved by our residents and how they make our lifestyle in Brisbane even better.

Since 2019, we've created over 80 new parks in Brisbane. We now have a network of more than 2,180 parks and preserved bushland areas.

Some of our playgrounds have become incredible attractions.

Hanlon Park in Stones Corner, Bradbury Park in Kedron, D.M. Henderson Park in MacGregor and Archerfield Wetland District Park in Durack are just a few of our must-do park destinations for Brisbane families.

In addition, we've rolled out new shade sails to more than 150 playgrounds over the last few years to help kids be sun safe while they play.

And through our incredibly popular Food Trucks and Coffee Carts in Parks program, we've mapped out almost 100 locations where vendors can park.

It means Mums and Dads, Grandmas and Grandads can grab a coffee while the kids play or people can find their favourite food truck in a park after hours and grab a bite to eat.

So far, there have been more than 18,000 hours of bookings from 70 different vendors as part of this program.

Madam Chair

Last year, we appointed Brisbane Sustainability Agency to develop a new master plan for one of Brisbane's most important natural assets, Mount Coot-tha.

We asked the agency to develop a long-term strategy that preserves Mount Coot-tha's valuable native areas while enhancing the precinct's existing attractions.

This includes the Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens, the Sir Thomas Brisbane Planetarium, the Summit lookout and the area's network of walking trails.

We asked them to draw inspiration from other award-winning nature and park precincts around the world.

We asked them to explore opportunities like a 170-kilometre wilderness walking trail to Mount Archer, a night-time light show in the gardens and sustainable eco-accommodation options.

The agency's draft plan will be released later this year and I am excited to see what they deliver.

Meanwhile, we will undertake some upgrades to the existing facilities at the Summit, including improved parking and landscaping.

Madam Chair,

We also promised a master plan for the popular Kedron Brook as well as investment in Kingfisher Creek, Oxley Creek Common and the Wynnum Manly, Lota and Brighton foreshores.

This Budget delivers on those commitments.

The Kedron Brook Vision is exploring new opportunities for recreation and relaxation while making the prized waterway more resilient.

Ahead of the release of the vision, this Budget continues our investment in the Brook's very popular bikeways with new lighting through Enoggera and Alderley.

Kingfisher Creek is the third priority precinct of our Norman Creek Master Plan and we will be creating new parkland with better bikeway connections and improved drainage for the area surrounding the creek, which is prone to flooding.

In the Oxley Creek corridor, we will continue the transformation of this once highly polluted waterway with investment in Graceville Riverside Parkland, along with vegetation works throughout the creek corridor.

For the Wynnum, Manly and Lota foreshore, we will release the master plan for further consultation and start work on the areas the community have told us are a priority.

The area around the Wynnum Wading Pool will see new investment, improving Pandanus Beach and making our wading pool even more attractive for families and visitors to enjoy during the summer months.

I look forward to sharing the entire plan for the Wynnum, Manly and Lota foreshore with the community soon.

Our foreshore improvements will complement our plan to revitalise the Wynnum central business area, with opportunities for new apartments, and more retailers and venues.

In Brighton, we will finish off our upgrades, including new bathroom facilities, picnic areas and improved beach access.

We'll also undertake a significant number of park upgrades, including in Keating Park in Indooroopilly, Mowbray Park in East Brisbane and 7th Brigade Park in Chermside.

I also look forward to completing the plan for the Ellen Grove District Sports Park and undertaking major construction work on Pallara District Sports Park.

Work has also commenced on a major upgrade to Carindale Recreation Reserve.

We will also be planning for the creation of sports park facilities for the growing community of Upper Kedron, thanks to a commitment from the State Government towards the Honeyeater Street Park.

With design and consultation on the Bulimba library upgrade complete and a contract awarded for construction, we will see a refreshed Bulimba Library delivered this year.

We're also increasing the library collection purchasing budget so there are more opportunities for our residents who love reading.

For those who prefer diving into a pool over diving into a good book, we're refurbishing the Dunlop and Parkinson pools.

Ongoing investment in our parks, playgrounds and preserved bushland precincts is precisely the reason why Brisbane is regarded as Australia's lifestyle capital.

It's also the reason why we're the best place in the world to raise a family.

Madam Chair,

Our Better Suburbs Grants have helped more than 440 community organisations since they were introduced in 2021.

These grants have helped clubs and community spaces across Brisbane, making them better places to visit and attracting new participants.

They recognised the important role clubs play in our community, helping keep residents of all ages healthy, happy and engaged.

That's why from next year we will boost funding for the Community Facility Category.

This means more clubs will be able to get access to grants of up to \$200,000 to help them design and deliver better clubhouses, sports fields, change rooms and car parking.

For the community support category, we will increase the maximum grant from \$10,000 to \$15,000 to help clubs undertake important maintenance and improvement works, improve their sustainability and purchase new equipment.

Madam Chair,

I think one of the best barometers of any city is the health and happiness of its residents.

And Brisbane has both in spades!

The sun rises earlier in Brisbane than any major city in the world.

Our residents have embraced this phenomenon and made it part of our culture.

Groups offering park runs, early morning park pilates and café coffee raves are springing up all around our city.

It's something many visitors notice when they come to Brisbane.

Where in Europe they embrace the dark, in Brisbane we embrace the dawn.

New research shows the dawn economy in Brisbane rivals the night.

It estimates more than 30 per cent of our food businesses are open by 7am.

That drops to 19 per cent in Sydney, 16 per cent in Melbourne, and 15 per cent in both Canberra and Hobart.

When the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games arrive, this is what the world will discover about Brisbane, a unique and spectacular destination with a healthy and happy population that rises earlier than anywhere else in the world.

We want to embrace this special part of Brisbane.

That's why we're launching a new Move Well Brisbane program to replace our Active and Healthy initiative.

Move Well Brisbane will be the biggest boost to free programs we've ever had.

It will complement the fitness movements that are already occurring across Brisbane with even more free and affordable fitness and movement programs.

We will more than double the number of sessions from 9,000 to 20,000 over the next two years.

We will expand the number of operators who deliver the sessions from 200 to up to 400.

We will make Move Well Brisbane available in more places, more often, from dawn to dusk, from Monday to Sunday.

We will partner with some providers and sponsor others to help all those community wellness groups that are already operating survive and thrive.

And importantly, we will shift the focus to include more whole-body wellness, mindfulness and nutrition.

Move Well Brisbane will deliver free and affordable options for all ages and abilities.

We're committed to keeping Brisbane moving. And this is another way we will do it.

We will also consult with residents about a new Dawn Economy Plan to look at ways we can modernise our approach to activating our parks.

Madam Chair,

The previous State Government's waste levy – or bin tax - continues to drive up costs for households.

I'm glad to see the Crisafulli Government is currently reviewing their waste strategy.

I hope any new approach will relieve the growing cost pressures on councils and residents created by the bin tax.

While we've continued to boost our recycling initiatives, including an expanded city-wide green bin service, these services come at a higher cost to residents.

Together with other councils in south east Queensland, we're working to explore new options to divert waste from landfill, while keeping costs down.

I can confirm today that through the South East Queensland Council of Mayors we are in discussions with the Wagners about turning our waste into sustainable aviation fuel.

If the Middle East crisis showed us anything, it's that the world needs more fuel options and sustainable fuel supplies are critical.

The opportunity to turn local rubbish into local fuel is an exciting one and something we're keen to investigate.

Keeping Brisbane Moving

Madam Chair,

Whether you drive a car, catch a CityCat, take a bus, ride a bike or like to walk, our Budget helps keep Brisbane moving.

Unlike those opposite, who say that investing in roads is not the answer, we believe in a balanced approach.

Better roads, better public transport and better active travel infrastructure are all important in a growing city.

Can you imagine what getting around Brisbane would be like without Brisbane Metro, including the repurposing of Victoria Bridge and the new Adelaide Street tunnel, the New Bus Network, the Kingsford Smith Drive upgrade and Loes Bonney Riverwalk, the Breakfast Creek Bridge, the Moggill Road Corridor upgrade, the Kangaroo Point Bridge, the CityLink Cycleway and the Indooroopilly Riverwalk?

Not to mention previous projects like the Clem7 tunnel, the Go-Between Bridge, Legacy Way tunnel, Inner-City Bypass widening project, the Botanic Gardens Riverwalk, New Farm Riverwalk replacement, the Woolloongabba Bikeway and scores of suburban road and bikeway upgrades.

The Brisbane of today is better off because of the decisions and investments we've made.

Without the network of roads, tunnels, bikeways and public transport we helped deliver, Brisbane's transport system simply would not work.

The first stage of Brisbane Metro, our fully electric, turn-up-and-go bus rapid transport solution, has helped ignite a massive 30

per cent uplift in bus use over two years, with more than 10 million trips on Metro services alone.

The Kangaroo Point and Breakfast Creek pedestrian bridges have together been used more than 7.3 million times by pedestrians and cyclists.

What do all these game-changing pieces of transport infrastructure have in common?

They were all at some point or another opposed by members of the Green/Labor Coalition of Chaos.

They complain now about the need for roads and the need for more funding.

Yet their lord mayoral candidates at the last election both indicated they don't believe building better roads would help reduce congestion.

Regardless, we're getting on with the job of planning and building our transport network that will help keep Brisbane moving.

We're undertaking a detailed business case into our exciting plan to expand Brisbane Metro north to Carseldine, south to Springwood, east to Capalaba and into Brisbane Airport.

The business case, which is being funded by the Federal Government, will also finalise the best approach to deliver our commitment to a new Northern Metro Depot.

I know many people romanticise trains and light rail.

But if Labor's Cross River Rail debacle confirms anything, it's that it costs far too much and takes far too long considering the anticipated benefits.

That's "if" the expected benefits are ever achieved. The jury is still out.

And look at the huge cost and disruption of new stages of Gold Coast light rail.

What our Brisbane Metro solution has proven is fast and frequent bus rapid transit is a far more financially prudent and practical option to help grow public transport patronage and reduce congestion.

Don't get me wrong.

We still believe in building better roads and tunnels.

In fact, our team strongly believes our blueprint for a new northern tunnel linking Carseldine to Airport Link should be the highest priority transport project after the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

However, our Brisbane Metro Expansion Plan will deliver a suite of options for bus rapid transit that can be delivered in stages now, before the Games and beyond the Games.

The business case will decide which routes should be a priority.

As I've said before, how much of the expansion plan is delivered will depend on the commitments made by other levels of government.

This is particularly the case for the Federal Government given it receives more than 80 per cent of all tax revenue raised in Australia.

We'll also progress a business case into a new pedestrian bridge between Toowong and West End after securing the necessary land.

This bridge might not be an immediate priority.

But as the Kangaroo Point and Breakfast Creek bridges have shown, these new pedestrian connections can be incredibly popular and benefit both sides of our river.

Madam Chair,

One key initiative to help keep Brisbane moving that I'm particularly excited about is our Smarter Suburban Corridors initiative.

Under the Smarter Suburban Corridors initiative, we're aiming to use A.I. to improve the performance of our signalised intersections.

The technology is capable of learning, predicting, adapting and optimising network performance in real time.

It is certainly a much smarter way of improving the performance of our current network compared to costly and disruptive upgrades.

This year, we will award the contract and conduct a trial in select corridors.

We want to vigorously test and refine the technology before considering a further rollout.

With improved intersection performance, reduced delays and proactive network management, Smarter Suburban Corridors will hopefully help get Brisbane residents where they're going sooner and safer, at a fraction of the cost of expanded roads.

We'll also continue to roll out our Clearway Action Plan.

By reviewing and updating clearway operating times on some of Brisbane's busiest roads, we're able to keep Brisbane moving during critical AM and PM peak traffic times.

The introduction of longer clearway operating times on Musgrave and Waterworks roads between Red Hill and The Gap is already saving motorists more than 1,000 hours of delays each week and reducing travel times.

Our next clearway review will look at Vulture Street in Woolloongabba.

Madam Chair,

While these solutions ensure we are smarter with how we use our existing infrastructure, we're going to continue to deliver new and improved roads, bridges and bikeways.

Work is ongoing on the latest stage of widening Beams Road between Carselgrove Avenue and Handford Road to a separated 4-lane road.

We'll deliver a new intersection at Archerfield, Azalea and Pine Road in Inala with new traffic lights, dedicated turning lanes and pedestrian crossings.

We've also got new and improved bikeways planned across Brisbane, including connecting the Minnippi Parklands with the golf course, the Melbourne Street bikeway extension, the new Shafston Avenue Bikeway and the much-anticipated Sylvan Road Bikeway in conjunction with intersection upgrades at Milton and Croydon and Sylvan and Croydon roads – all of these projects aimed at keeping Brisbane moving.

Madam Chair

I know many councillors on both sides of the chamber were excited by *The Big Fill*.

Our Council crews deserve enormous credit for the work they did, racking up record after record for daily pothole filling.

The Big Fill was all about letting residents know that if you find it, we will fill it.

If it's urgent, it'll get done within 24 hours. If it's not, we aim to get it done within 7 days.

Yet *The Big Fill* was only a small part of our road program.

A much bigger part will be *Operation Smooth*.

During 2026-27, we will invest a record amount in regular road resurfacing.

Under *Operation Smooth*, we'll deliver smoother streets right across our city, including some of Brisbane's busiest roads

There's so many to name, but I simply can't resist.

Albion Road (Albion / Windsor)

Beenleigh Road (Sunnybank)

Belmont Road (Belmont)

Canberra Street (Hemmant)

Coulson Street (Wacol)

Eagle Farm Road (Pinkenba)

Forest Lake Boulevard (Forest Lake)

Graham Road (Carseldine)

Hamilton Road (Chermside / Wavell Heights)

Hawken Drive (St Lucia)

Henson Road (Salisbury)

High Street (Toowong)

Inala Avenue (Durack)

Ipswich Road (Annerley)

Johnson Road (Larapinta)

Lacey Road (Carseldine)

Learoyd Road (Acacia Ridge)

Logan Road (Upper Mount Gravatt)

Lutwyche Road (Lutwyche / Windsor)

Mains Road (Sunnybank)

Mccullough Street (Sunnybank)

Meadowlands Road (Carindale)

Miles Platting Road (Rochedale)

Moggill Road (Indooroopilly)

Mt Nebo Road (Enoggera Reservoir)

Murphy Road (Zillmere)

Norris Road (Fitzgibbon)

Orchard Road (Richlands)

Pamela Street (Pinkenba)

Pickering Street (Enoggera)

Randle Road (Pinkenba)

Samuel Street (Camp Hill)

Scrub Road (Carindale)

South Pine Road (Enoggera)

Sylvan Road (Toowong)

Toohey Road (Salisbury)

Waterworks Road (The Gap)

Wilston Road (Grange)

And the biggest resurfacing job of all will be the south side of Story Bridge, a massive project that once again demonstrates our ongoing investment in this icon.

Madam Chair,

Brisbane has a massive network of footpaths.

We have more than 5,000 kilometres of footpaths throughout our suburbs and the city.

If you put it in a straight line, there's enough for a footpath from Brisbane to Hobart and back.

Our team is forecasting we will lay 21,360 square metres of new and improved footpaths next year.

To put that in perspective, that's the equivalent of more than 81 tennis courts worth of new concrete.

These figures don't include the new paths councillors build through their Suburban Enhancement Fund.

I know how councillors on this side of the chamber in particular use this fund to deliver new footpaths.

Madam Chair,

I know first-hand how busy it can be around many of Brisbane's schools during drop-off and pick-up times.

Many schools have grown rapidly but unfortunately this has often not coincided with the Department of Education planning and delivering better parking and drop-off facilities.

It forces the problem onto local roads and streets, which can create safety issues for students, parents and teachers.

Through our Safer School Precincts, we're taking action to deliver tailored and coordinated programs of infrastructure improvements that improve connectivity for pedestrians and enhance active travel options.

We're now progressing the Kedron Safer School Precinct to support students and parents of Padua College, St Anthony's Primary School and Mount Alvernia College.

We're currently designing planned improvements based on community feedback.

We're at a similar stage for the Mansfield Safer School Precinct plan.

We asked people for their say in Wynnum last year and we've recently completed consultation for Indooroopilly.

By making walking and cycling easier and safer, we can help ease congestion around schools at those busy times while also helping residents stay active and improve the liveability of our suburbs.

Madam Chair,

I know people love our CityCat ferry network.

Not only do our ferries get residents where they need to go, they have become a must-do tourist attraction.

So often I see on social media, national and international visitors who simply cannot believe how beautiful Brisbane is from the river.

And they see it all for just 50 cents.

Plans are progressing for a new and larger terminal on the City Reach.

This is the busiest and most important terminal in our entire ferry network, with more than 1.5 million passengers a year getting on and off on this section of the river.

We're currently in talks with a couple of parties about where this new terminal will be located and we're keen to progress with building it as soon as possible.

We're also investing and maintaining our existing terminals.

This year we will also refurbish Apollo Road with new seating, shade, improved lighting and safety cameras, and we'll undertake an upgrade of the heritage-listed Bulimba terminal.

Madam Chair,

With all the work underway to build new roads, railways, hospitals, schools and stadiums, the raw materials needed are going to be incredibly valuable.

All this demand is expected to place enormous pressure on our local construction market.

A report undertaken on behalf of the Queensland Department of Resources found south east Queensland's demand for asphalt and aggregate would increase from 26 megatonnes in 2023 to 37 megatonnes by 2032, a 41 per cent increase.

While reports vary, according to some industry estimates, there's a 100 megatonne deficit of quarry capacity versus estimated demand between now and 2032.

This is an enormous problem, but a huge opportunity for our Council.

We have a well-established network of asphalt and quarry assets that are currently used primarily for our own demand.

This includes two asphalt plants and two operating quarries at Mt Coot-tha and Bracalba.

While we produce material to build and maintain our roads and meet our own construction needs, there's an opportunity to meet some of the wider market demand.

This could become a significant revenue-making opportunity, which will help us keep rates down.

Keeping Brisbane Moving – The Story Bridge

Madam Chair,

Last May we confirmed the Story Bridge would need major renewal works over the next 20 years to give it another 100 years of life.

The expert committee which undertook the work, found the city has been a good steward of the bridge since it was transferred to us by the State Government many decades ago.

Not many major bridges in Australia have reached their 85th birthday, let alone their 100th birthday.

For example, the Centenary Bridge in Brisbane's west is already being replaced with a new bridge.

It was only built in 1964, yet it will be replaced entirely before it's 65th birthday.

The old Hornibrook Bridge connecting Brisbane to Redcliffe only made it to 75 years before being replaced and demolished.

It's the same story in Tasmania, where the old Bridgewater Bridge didn't make it to its 80th birthday.

Despite maintenance, it wore out before it turned 80 and had to be demolished and replaced with the help of Federal funding.

As a result of our high-quality care and maintenance programs, Brisbane now has three major bridges approaching their hundredth birthday.

The William Jolly bridge is 94 years old this year.

The Walter Taylor Bridge is 90 years old this year, and

The Story Bridge is 86 years old this year.

We've been investing diligently and consistently in all of them and we'll continue to do so.

But unlike the Sydney Harbour Bridge, none of our major historic bridges have a toll to fund maintenance and renewal works.

We'd like to keep it that way.

Our ongoing maintenance program has served the Story Bridge well.

It was only built to last up to 100 years.

It was certainly never expected to carry the volume and weight of traffic it does today.

So by any measure, it's doing well and performing well above any expectations.

Over the entire life of the Story Bridge, an average of \$3 million per year has been invested into maintenance. That's not a small amount, year in, year out.

But even the best maintenance will only go so far.

As the saying goes, nothing lasts forever.

Our maintenance work has ensured the Story Bridge will see its 100th birthday.

But for the Story Bridge to see its 200th birthday, a major renewal is required.

Once the bridge turned 80, we exponentially increased our investment in the Story Bridge as the early renewal works kicked off.

During the time I've been Lord Mayor we've invested almost \$80 million into life-extension and renewal works.

Today, we're mapping out a very clear path forward to ensure the Story Bridge gets another 100 years of life.

But one thing is clear. We're going to need Federal and State support to ensure the Story Bridge reaches its 200th birthday.

The Federal Government understood that Tasmania couldn't afford to fund the new \$786 million Bridgewater Bridge on its own, so they agreed to contribute 80 per cent of cost.

This is despite the State of Tasmania having an annual budget of \$10.5 billion.

In comparison, the Budget I'm presenting today is less than \$4 billion per annum.

In the coming months, we'll finish the business case and formally submit it to the Federal Government and Infrastructure Australia.

I can confirm today the Business Case is around 80 per cent complete and a Progress Update has been provided to us ahead of today's Budget.

It recommends investment of around \$180 million per year on average, totalling \$3.6 billion over the next 20 years.

For those asking if it would be cheaper to build a new bridge instead, the answer is "not even close".

Estimated demolition and rebuilding costs of an entirely new bridge in the future would be over \$9.3 billion.

If that's not enough of a deterrent, consider that this option would leave Queenslanders without any bridge at all for at least 8 years.

Clearly, that's not an option.

The Business Case Progress Update also recommends an investment of \$1.35 billion on the Story Bridge Renewal ahead of the 2032 Games.

I can confirm we will be seeking funding on an 80, 10, 10 basis from the Federal and State governments and we are confident we will receive their support.

That's 80 per cent from the Federal Government, 10 per cent from the State Government and 10 per cent from us.

The Federal Government already pays for 80 per cent of the Bruce Highway. I am sure they'll do the same for Story Bridge.

And by comparison, the Gold Coast City Council, Australia's second largest local government, has contributed about 10 per cent towards the \$3.2 billion cost of the first three stages of their light rail.

This means our Council's contribution towards the Story Bridge Renewal will be around \$135 million before the Games, and I can confirm this money has been included in today's Budget.

I've already spoken to Premier David Crisafulli and he's indicated a willingness to commit funding for the Story Bridge Renewal.

I've also written to Federal Infrastructure Minister Catherine King to update her on the business case.

Minister King was keen to invest in Brisbane infrastructure projects like our Metro and Kangaroo Point Bridge.

After funding this business case, I'm confident the Federal Government will be equally interested in helping fund the next chapter of Story Bridge.

Some people might see the Story Bridge Renewal as a problem to be solved.

Instead, I believe it's a real honour to be part of the team that doubles its life and ensures this iconic bridge endures.

I'm proud of Brisbane Metro. I'm proud of the new Kangaroo Point Bridge.

But the Story Bridge renewal will be the biggest and most important project ever undertaken by this Council.

I'm excited to work with Cr Murphy and the officers to make it happen.

This is the kind of job people will tell their grandchildren they worked on.

An opportunity to renew an icon.

A chance to give the Story Bridge the sequel it deserves.

Conclusion

Madam Chair,

Our Budget is the result of some incredibly hard work from a dedicated team who get up every day to help make Brisbane even better.

I want to thank Deputy Mayor and Finance Chair Fiona Cunningham along with her Civic Cabinet colleagues Sarah Hutton, Ryan Murphy, Adam Allan, Tracy Davis, Vicki Howard and Andrew Wines as well as all of our councillors.

I want to thank our chief executive officer, Kerrie Freeman, Divisional Manager Anne Lenz, Chief Financial Officer Mark Russell and all the other officers who have worked so hard.

From my office, I want to thank Steven, Nathan, Michael, Hannah and Aaron.

Every Budget presents challenges and choices.

We've made our choices carefully.

Our choice is to make cost-of-living relief a priority.

Our choice is to ensure Brisbane residents continue to pay the lowest rates in south east Queensland.

Our choice is to continue our “tall over sprawl” approach to housing so more homes get built in the right places.

Our choice is to invest in expanding Emmanuel City Mission’s night sanctuary to help people who are homeless and demonstrate our city has a heart.

Our choice is to keep Brisbane moving with record investment in road resurfacing and smart solutions to make our existing network work better.

Our choice is to make Brisbane’s lifestyle even better by investing in our parks, playgrounds and bushland reserves.

Our choice is to help our residents be healthy and happy with programs like Move Well Brisbane.

Our choice is to renew the Story Bridge over the next 20 years, to ensure this iconic Brisbane story gets a sequel.

Our choice is a balanced budget with lower debt and more investment in what matters for our residents.

Our choice is to keep Brisbane moving.

Madam Chair,

I commend this Budget to the Chamber.






Dedicated to a better Brisbane

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