Shire of Broome
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MEDIA RELEASE

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Shire adopts 2026/27 Annual Budget focused on essential services, key projects and long-term sustainability

The Shire of Broome has adopted its 2026/27 Annual Budget at its Ordinary Council Meeting held on Thursday, 25 June 2026, confirming a $41.2 million capital works program and a balanced approach to maintaining essential services while managing increasing costs.

Shire President Chris Mitchell said the budget responds directly to the pressures facing both the Shire and its community, while continuing to invest in the infrastructure and services people rely on every day.

"This year's budget is about striking the right balance. We know cost of living is a real concern, and we've worked hard to minimise impacts while making sure services don't fall behind," Cr Mitchell said.

The 2026/27 budget includes:

- $32.3 million in rates revenue to support service delivery
- $41.2 million capital works program, comprising $30.9M of carry forward 2025/26 works, with more than 60 per cent funded through external grants
- Continued delivery of core services including roads, waste, parks, community facilities and beach lifeguards

A significant portion of this investment is already underway, with major projects continuing through 2026/27, including:

- $23.5 million Walmanyjun Cable Beach Foreshore Redevelopment – Stage 2
- $2.2 million Old Broome Road Upgrade
- Ongoing investment in roads, recreation areas and community infrastructure across the Shire

More than $24.9 million of the capital works program is funded through external grants, helping reduce the burden on local ratepayers while still delivering major improvements for the community.

To manage rising costs, Council has made the decision to prioritise essential services and defer some non-essential projects.

The budget has also been developed against the backdrop of reduced Financial Assistance Grants from the Australian Government, placing further pressure on local government finances. Like councils across Australia, the Shire is receiving less untied Commonwealth funding, increasing reliance on locally generated revenue to continue delivering the services and infrastructure the community expects.

Cr Mitchell said this approach ensures the Shire can continue delivering reliable services without overextending financially.

"Like local governments across Australia, we're being asked to do more with less," Cr Mitchell said.

"Rising costs, coupled with reduced Financial Assistance Grants, mean we've had to make careful decisions about where we invest while protecting the essential services our community relies on.

"We're seeing cost increases across the board, from fuel and materials to insurance and staffing.

"Our focus has been on protecting the services the community relies on, while deferring lower-priority projects where needed to maintain financial sustainability."

Operating pressures in 2026/27 include:

- $22.1 million in employee costs, reflecting workforce requirements and housing support in a regional area
- $13.3 million in materials and contracts to maintain services and infrastructure, a $300,000 reduction on 2025/26
- $2.38 million in utilities and $919,000 in insurance, both increasing due to inflationary pressures

Broome residents continue to face significantly higher living costs than those in Perth. The Kimberley Development Commission's Regional Price Index shows Broome's cost of living is 15.3 per cent higher than Perth, placing additional pressure on households while also increasing the cost of delivering local government services.

Rates remain a key part of how the Shire funds the services and infrastructure the community relies on every day.

For 2026/27:

- Rates are forecast to raise to a total of $32,299,519 to fund essential services and infrastructure.
- The average residential rate increase is 5.97 per cent, equivalent to around $3.63 per week.

Despite this increase, Council has kept long-term rate growth below inflation. Over the past seven years, cumulative rate increases remain 1.58 per cent below Perth CPI, despite rising operating costs and regional challenges.

"Rates are one part of a much bigger funding picture, but they're essential to keeping Broome running day to day," Cr Mitchell said.

"They help fund everything from roads and waste services to libraries, parks and community facilities used by residents, businesses and visitors."

The adoption of the budget comes alongside ongoing advocacy regarding public and community housing rate exemptions.
Broome has a significantly higher proportion of public housing than metropolitan areas, with around 16 per cent of housing stock compared to around 3 per cent in Perth.

Recent exemption decisions have:

- Reduced 2025/26 rates revenue by $240,496, with an ongoing impact of around $125,000 per year.
- Contributed to a 0.4 per cent increase in rates in 2026/27.

If all public housing properties were to become exempt, the potential impact could reach up to $2.8 million in lost annual revenue.

Cr Mitchell said this highlights the need for a fairer system.

"We strongly support social and affordable housing for the vulnerable members of our community, and acknowledge the benefits that public housing brings, however there also needs to be a sustainable funding model behind it," he said.

"When a significant proportion of properties aren't contributing to rates, the cost is ultimately shared by a smaller group of ratepayers."

The Shire continues to advocate to State and Federal Governments for a more equitable approach that supports both housing outcomes and the delivery of essential services.

As part of this year's rates rollout, the Shire is providing clearer and more accessible information to help residents understand how rates are set and what they fund.

This includes updated FAQs, an animated explainer video, a dedicated rates webpage and a public information campaign aligned with the release of rates notices.

"We know rates can be complex, and we're focused on explaining them in a way that makes sense," Cr Mitchell said.

"This is about being upfront with the community and explaining what things cost, what we're prioritising and how we're planning for the future."

Key dates for ratepayers

Full payment due:

Single instalment: 27 August 2026

Two-instalment option
- First instalment: 27 August 2026
- Second instalment: 14 January 2027

Four-instalment option
- First instalment: 27 August 2026
- Second instalment: 29 October 2026
- Third instalment: 14 January 2027
- Fourth instalment: 18 March 2027

The Shire is also running its early payment incentive again this year, with ratepayers who pay in full by the due date automatically entered into a draw to win one of several cash prizes.

Residents can learn more about their rates, payment options and available support by visiting **www.broome.wa.gov.au**

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