

FAQs – Budget & Council Plan – 2021

What is the rate increase in percentage terms?

In 2021/22, the average annual general rates increase will be 1.5 per cent, in line with the state-wide rate cap.

There will also be an increase in the standard waste charge by \$18, largely due to the impacts of the global recycling crisis and market disruption.

Does that mean my rates will increase by exactly 1.5 per cent from last year?

No, as rate increases are also based on the outcome of property valuations conducted by the Victorian Valuer General.

All Councils in Victoria are required to undertake new valuations every year and the City of Casey undertook a valuation of rateable properties as at 1 January 2021. Valuations are independently certified by the Valuer General.

Ratepayers should not expect their rates notice to rise by exactly the rate cap of 1.5 per cent, as the level of rates will be affected by the relative values of individual properties to the average rate.

Revaluation of your property does not increase the total amount of rate revenue collected by Council. Rather it determines the proportion of rates you need to pay relative to other property owners. The 1.5 per cent rate cap applies to the overall amount of money that Council is receiving from rates.

If your property's value grew by more than the average, you will experience an increase to your general rates higher than the 1.5 per cent rate cap. Properties that grew in value, but remained lower than the average (or decreased in value) will experience an increase lower than 1.5 per cent rate cap.

Based on the preliminary property valuations (which are waiting certification from by the Victorian Valuer General) rates will increase by an average of \$26.57.

What is the Annual Budget?

The Draft Annual Budget outlines the services and initiatives that Council will undertake in the 2021/22 financial year. The Budget includes detailed information about the rates and charges to be levied, the capital works program to be undertaken, where Council allocates its financial resources and other financial information within the 2021/22 financial year.

What is the Long-Term Community Vision 2031?

The Long-Term Community Vision defines the community's aspirations for the future of the municipality, which is to **become a more connected, bold and resilient community**.

The Vision was informed by feedback and insights obtained through Council's largest ever community engagement program *Shape Your City*. *Shape Your City* provided an opportunity for our community to tell us how they would like Council to engage with them, what their vision is for the future of the municipality and what their specific needs and expectations are of Council. The Vision document is a legal requirement under the *Local Government Act 2020*, Section 89, and describes the community's aspirations for the next ten years informed by deliberative community engagement.

What is the Council Plan?

The Council Plan 2021-25 outlines how we will achieve our *Long-Term Community Vision 2031 (the Vision)* to – **become a more connected, bold and resilient community** – while also focusing on how we will work with our community, key stakeholders, community organisations, surrounding municipalities and other levels of government.

The Council Plan was developed based on the feedback from Shape Your City, Council's largest ever engagement program. Shape Your City identified five key themes, which our community stated as their priorities for the future of our city. These key themes have helped shape the strategic objectives and priorities set out in the Council Plan.

What is the Strategic Resource Plan?

The Strategic Resource Plan is the key medium-term financial plan produced by Council and should be read in conjunction with the Draft Annual Budget 2021/22 and the Council Plan 2021-25.

It is a rolling plan (one year to the next) that summarises the resources allocated, and plans developed to achieve the themes over the next four years.

Given this is the first Council Plan and Community Vision to be developed under Administration, did the process change?

These strategic documents were developed based on extensive feedback obtained from our community through Council's largest ever engagement program, Shape Your City. The City of Casey undertook this 12-month deliberative engagement program, which is a legislative requirement, to inform these documents. The engagement identified five key themes that our community stated as their priorities for the future of the city. These themes are now captured in the Vision and Council Plan, and will guide us as we plan for the future of Casey.

What is a submission?

A submission is a written statement that explains your views about a topic or proposal and how you may be affected if the Budget goes ahead. There are a few ways you can make a submission. Submissions can be made online via the submission form on Casey Conversations page.

Alternatively, ratepayers can send written submissions addressed to the CEO via email to caseycc@casey.vic.gov.au or mailed to PO Box 1000, Narre Warren, 3805.

Where do my comments go?

The draft documents have been developed by Council and they are now open to the public and other key stakeholders for comment. Your feedback will be collated by officers, along with other views and expertise critical to the Budget and Strategic Resource Plan.

The final plan is developed considering all the views shared, as well as key factors including funding, legal criteria, existing commitments and priorities. This information is then presented to Council to determine the final recommendation/s. Please be aware that all submissions will be reproduced in Council documents available to the public.

Sharing your views and experiences can provide Council with new ideas or information or a new perspective. So, even if your comments are not word for word in the final documents, having your say will ensure that we are informed about how you would like to improve

your community life. This means that we can better advocate on your behalf, if we need to, or better consider your needs, now and in the future to improve living in the City of Casey.

Why can't you reduce spending to allow for lower rates?

Council understands the financial pressures facing residents, but we cannot afford to stop our investment into community facilities, parks and roads or providing crucial services to our communities.

We must balance the external costs being placed on Council and our responsibility to continue delivering high quality services and building community infrastructure.

What are my rates paying for?

Rates are used to fund Council's investment in community infrastructure such as maintaining, renewing and building new community and family centres, and sports and recreation facilities, maintaining roads and parks, as well as to support the delivery of 66 important community services.

The Draft Budget features an operating budget of \$405.1 million to ensure Council continues to provide vital services to more than 360,000 residents and a \$131.6 million capital works program to fund more than 200 infrastructure projects in our new, growing communities as well as to undertake necessary renewals and improvements to our existing facilities.

What if I am having difficulty paying my rates?

We appreciate that this is a very challenging time and many people in our community are experiencing hardship.

Where possible, Council is providing flexibility to affected customers and encourages anyone unable to meet their rate payment by the due dates to contact Council as soon as possible, to make arrangements and discuss potential relief options.

Why do I still have to pay my rates when the Council was removed?

The City of Casey now operates under Administrators, appointed by the State Government until October 2024. Administrators must perform all the functions, powers and duties of a Councillor of the Casey City Council, including representing the interests of Casey's communities, as set out in the Local Government Act 2020

The continued delivery of services, programs and capital works projects for our community has not changed since the appointment of Administrators.

What are the major initiatives being funded through the Capital Works Program 2020/21 Budget?

This year's \$148.5 million Capital Works Program has identified several key projects to be delivered throughout the municipality, while also consolidating works commenced in the last financial year.

This year our Capital Works Program is combined of various projects of significantly high value that will go a long way towards enhancing the livability of the City of Casey, including huge investments in sport and recreational facilities.

Examples of these include:

- Commence Minta Farm ICP early works package, construction of Bells road from Grices road to O'Shea road including associated intersections & major culvert. (\$22.5M)
- Commence construction of Clyde Recreation Reserve, Clyde (\$17.75M)
- Casey Fields Soccer Stage 2 works, Cranbourne East (\$15M)
- Continued construction of Family and Community Centre at Elliston Estate, Clyde Village (\$2.75M)
- Continued implementation of Robert Booth Reserve master plan works, Hampton Park (\$2.09M)
- Continue construction of district level Soccer and Cricket multipurpose community pavilion, 3 Soccer pitches and 1 Cricket oval, sport lighting, cricket training nets and playground, Tulliallan Estate, Cranbourne North (\$950,000)

For further examples and more information please see our media release (insert link) or budget highlights document (insert link).

Does Council's service delivery over the next 12 months look any given that the City of Casey is under administration?

The continued delivery of services, programs and capital works projects for our community has not changed since the appointment of Administrators.

Does the Fire Services Property Levy generate additional income for Council?

All Victorian Councils are required to collect this levy on behalf of the Victorian Government and must pass the full amount on to the State Revenue Office.

The Fire Services Property Levy will continue to appear as a separate charge on your Council rates notice.

This replaces the fire services contributions which residents and businesses previously made through their insurance premiums on their properties.

What is the DCP, and what does this refer to in the context of the Capital Works Program?

DCP refers to Developer Contributions Plan, which outlines the levies landowners and developers must pay to the State Government and Council to fund infrastructure and facilities for the new community.

This source of income for Council is put towards progressing important infrastructure projects across the City of Casey.

How will the Coronavirus (COVID-19) impact the 2021/22 Budget and subsequently Council's service delivery over the next 12 months?

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) had a significant impact on the community and in turn on the financial position of the City of Casey.

Council is doing its best to find a balance between financial sustainability to see us through to the other side of this crises for the longer term benefit of the Casey community, while also being able to be kind and responsive to the growing pressures our residents and ratepayers are grappling with every day.

Over the last 12 months, the City of Casey modified several of its key services to adapt to the new conditions to ensure it can continue to provide our essential, and most other services to support our community.

We will continue to provide services and keep our community updated with any changes.

For more information, as well as for other COVID-19 related resources, visit

www.casey.vic.gov.au/coronavirus

How can I have my say on these documents?

All residents are invited to view the Draft Budget, Draft Community Vision and Draft Council Plan and make a submission up until 5.00 pm on Wednesday 2 June 2021.

The documents can all be downloaded at www.caseyconversations.com.au.

Submissions can be made online via the submission form on Casey Conversations.

Alternatively, ratepayers can send written submissions addressed to the CEO via email to caseycc@casey.vic.gov.au or mailed to PO Box 1000, Narre Warren, 3805.

Following the exhibition phase, all submissions will be heard at a Council meeting on Tuesday 8 June. Please note, all submissions made by members of the public will be reproduced in Council documents and available to the community.

All written submissions will be considered prior to Council adopting the budget at its Special Council Meeting on 29 June 2021.