

CITY OF PALMERSTON
**MUNICIPAL PLAN
& BUDGET**
2020/2021

DRAFT

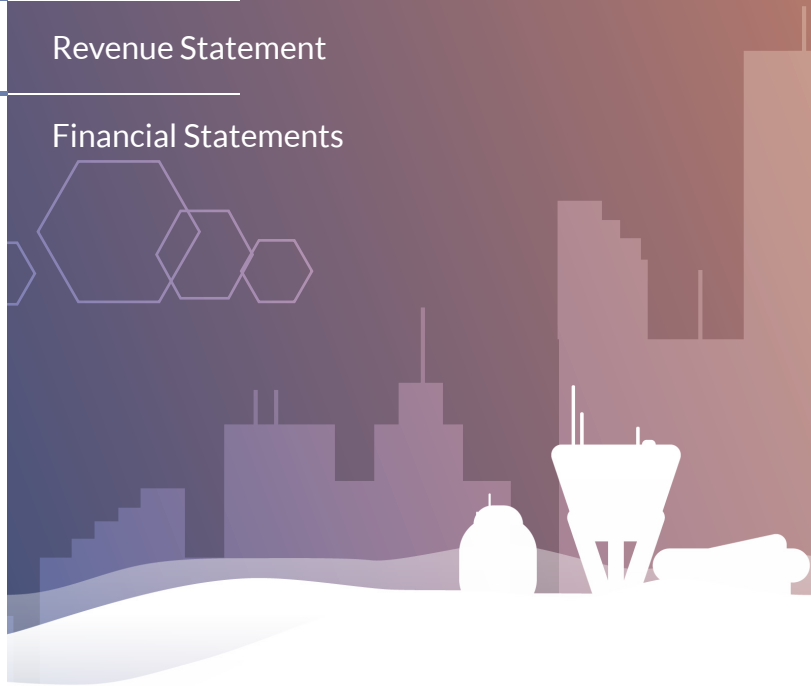


**“ COUNCIL
RESPECTFULLY
ACKNOWLEDGES**

the Larrakia People; the traditional owners of the land and waters of the Palmerston Region, and pays respect to their elders: past, present and future.

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CITY OF PALMERSTON 2020/2021 DRAFT MUNICIPAL PLAN & BUDGET



The Municipal Plan is Council's 'action plan', outlining services, programs, events, facilities and infrastructure we intend to provide and maintain for the 2020/21 financial year; it also contains Council's Annual Budget, including proposed rates, fees and charges. As such, it is the key document to bring together the actions outlined in the Community Plan and Long-Term Financial Plan. Council's Long-Term Financial Plan is presented as a separate document due to the intent of reviewing the Long-Term Financial Plan annually in November starting in November 2020.

City of Palmerston's vision is to create 'A Place for People', where we focus on our strengths to ensure our City thrives into the future.

Our community is at the centre of everything we do. In achieving this we contribute to the vision where:

- Palmerston is a welcoming, vibrant, family-friendly city that fosters diversity and unity.
- In Palmerston, everyone belongs, and everyone is safe.

Our vision recognises the importance of valuing and investing in the natural environment, balancing economic imperatives and focussing on innovation to enable social transformation in our City.

The Community Plan defines the vision and identifies priorities for Council, shaped by the community members who were directly involved in its development. It provides certainty for the community, businesses and individuals alike; providing a sense of what they can expect from Council over the next ten

years. As a Council, we want to ensure we are working towards the long-term outcomes that our community wants and expects.

Community Plan Outcomes:

- 1. Family and Community:** Palmerston is a safe and family-friendly community where everyone belongs.
- 2. Vibrant Economy:** Palmerston is a destination-city for employment, it is a place where businesses are encouraged to set up and grow.
- 3. Cultural Diversity:** In Palmerston we celebrate our cultures in a way that values our diversity.
- 4. Future Focused:** Palmerston is an innovative city that sustains itself through the challenges of the future.
- 5. Environmental Sustainability:** Palmerston is an environmentally friendly, liveable city that promotes renewable practices and sustainability.
- 6. Governance:** Council is trusted by the community and invests in things that the public value.

The outcomes encompass objectives for Council to achieve, and measures of success to indicate whether Council has achieved those outcomes.

Performance Plans have been prepared against the outcomes, and their objectives, and provide information on how the strategies will be achieved.



36,933

POPULATION



52KM²

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA



30

MEDIAN AGE



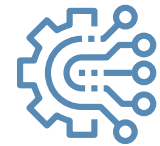
\$1.6 BILLION

LOCAL ECONOMY



\$40 MILLION

TOTAL BUDGET
OPERATING EXPENSES



\$719 MILLION

TOTAL ASSET VALUE

Public Consultation

Local governments in the Northern Territory are required to undertake planning and reporting activities in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2008* (the Act) and *Local Government (Administration) Regulations*.

The *Local Government Act 2019* has been deferred for 12 months, coming into effect in July 2021, to allow Councils time to concentrate on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Work will continue with the review of all Council policies, to ensure compliance with this Act.

The draft Municipal Plan and Budget 2020/21 is available for public consultation online from Thursday 4 June 2020, with the last day for submissions Thursday 2 July 2020.

All submissions received will be reviewed at the Ordinary Council Meeting on Tuesday 21 July 2020, with the approved Municipal Plan adopted by Council before 31 July 2020, under the Act.

Making a submission:

@ Have Your Say at Council's website,
www.palmerston.nt.gov.au

📍 Attn: Chief Executive Officer
Municipal Plan and Budget 2020/21 Submission
City of Palmerston PO BOX 1, Palmerston NT 0831

✉ palmerston@palmerston.nt.gov.au



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

I am pleased to present the City of Palmerston draft 2020/21 Municipal Plan and Budget.

Since election in April 2018 this 9th Council has been planning for the future of our growing community. The Community Plan developed by residents is a wide-reaching document that assists Council to shape the future of Palmerston. Council intends to deliver services and projects in line with this plan, despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Palmerston is not alone in its efforts to innovate and adapt its service delivery to continue our community support towards our new social normal. I am extraordinarily proud of our residents' resilience and compassion.

At such a difficult time in our nation's and Palmerston's history, Council has carefully balanced the need for investment in our city with keeping rates as low as possible to assist our community.

This has resulted in a balanced budget where Council is:

- Holding the cost of your rates. There will be no increase from 2019/20.
- Holding the cost of your waste service charge. There will be no increase from 2019/20.
- Holding the cost on all Council fees and charges. There will be no increase from 2019/20.
- Continuing with free entry to the Palmerston Pool.
- Continuing to provide free all-day parking in our City Centre while local recovery is underway.
- Rates financial hardship applications.
- Maintaining our City's capital works program.
- Maintaining our services levels across the whole municipality in all areas.

While these decisions have an impact on Council's Long-Term Financial Plan, Council believes these steps are necessary and will have a minimal impact in the short-term on the sustainability of Council.

Council will continue to partner with the Northern Territory Government to provide infrastructure and programs, such as Drop-In Sports, to support and engage young people at risk. The Youth Drop-In Centre, at the Palmerston Swimming and Fitness Centre, will be a safe space for young people to access appropriate support services. Providing youth engagement activities and supervision, this facility will establish and support partnerships with local organisations and youth support services.

Council has extended free entry for all to the Palmerston Pool. This initiative alone has been successful, increasing facility usage in the past year, and Council recognises the benefits that swimming, and exercising bring to our community. Many of Council's popular community events and programs, such as our On Frances street party and outdoor movie program FlicNics, will return to encourage social participation, activate public spaces, provide a variety of entertainment and promote economic growth by attracting visitors to our city.

Rebuilding and investing in our local economy are crucial to Council; projects, partnerships and initiatives are underway to deliver this objective. Working closely with all levels of Government, we are planning to build infrastructure to support our growing community needs. The planned major upgrade of Gray Community Hall is sure to be a significant and popular development for our community. Ongoing environmental initiatives including \$250,000 towards tree planting will further enhance liveability, providing a cool, shaded, green city.

A community-driven project will result in a major upgrade of Marlow Lagoon Dog Park with a design that takes into consideration safety and functionality. Community funding will continue with \$130,000 budgeted in the Community Benefit Scheme for events and activities that benefit our community. I encourage community groups to apply for funding for their projects. In addition, Council offers in-kind support such as venue hire, which last year was estimated at over \$190,000. An investment of \$85,000 in public artwork projects will build on the amenity of our city and invigorate the local creative industry. The planned addition of an audio recording facility within our Library will engage with aspiring local artists and offer opportunities to showcase their talent. This \$180,000 project will provide a fit for purpose facility to create audio and visual content for expressive art as well as advertising, information sharing, and education.

Our community is at the centre of all we do, and every opportunity is taken to consult and involve them in our decision-making processes. I encourage you to read Council's draft plans for the coming 12 months and provide your feedback to ensure Council continues to meet community needs. Palmerston is ultimately 'A Place for People' and our aim is to provide the best possible experience for all residents, visitors, students and workers in our city.

Athina Pascoe-Bell
City of Palmerston Mayor

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Council and the Palmerston community have proven their ability to rise to meet all challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. The City and its people have demonstrated their strengths, resilience and compassion – together we look forward to the coming year with purpose. I thank the community for their support to Council, and to each other.

This Municipal Plan contains Council's Annual Budget and outlines services, programs, facilities and infrastructure we intend to provide and maintain for the 2020/2021 financial year, to work towards achieving Community Plan outcomes.

Council and Northern Territory Government are partnering to deliver an additional \$1 million of expedited capital work projects as part of the Special Community Assistance and Local Employment Grant. This will support our local suppliers and keep Territorians employed in our COVID-19 recovery and work towards our new social normal. These projects are additional to our 2020/21 capital works plan, where Council plans to deliver capital work programs to the value of \$6.139 million, with a focus on supporting the local economy. In the past 12 months 87% of Council expenditure has been spent locally.

Council plans to grow its investment in infrastructure to support our growing community. The Palmerston Library is a vital asset; to ensure its longevity Council will engage a specialist library design consultant to work with local architects on the Library Masterplan refurbishment project. In a Territory first, Council will be installing two Anytime Contactless Library vending machines where our community can access library resources at their leisure and convenience. Recent refurbishments to the Palmerston Recreation Centre have added value to this popular community facility. Over the next ten years \$85.86 million in forecast expenditure for new infrastructure and renewal of existing assets, represents a significant investment in our local community and economy.

Council is committed to reducing its current and ongoing environmental impacts. Installation of a solar photovoltaic (PV) shade structure over car park bays within the Civic Plaza parking area will conclude this year. This \$300,000 project, commenced in 2019/20, will provide power for up to 50% of Council's administration building and will assist in cooling the city and mitigating the heat sink effect of the car park. Council has allocated \$80,000 for an extensive Waste

Education Program that will provide residents with key information on recycling and reducing waste. Lighting improvements will continue into 2020/21 with further 'Dark Spots' initiatives where Council is enhancing lighting in our city to improve amenity and safety.

While Council continues to focus on financial sustainability, recent developments has not changed this approach. Although these changes have a small impact on the Long-Term Financial Plan, Council's deficit is still anticipated to decrease by 25% over the coming decade. Council's savings remain at a sustainable level to fund Council operations, provide a safety net for unforeseen circumstances and see Council to continue to deliver for our Community.

The Council team and I look forward to working for you and our other partners in delivering this Municipal Plan and Budget over the coming year for our community.

Luccio Cercarelli
Chief Executive Officer



PALMERSTON

OUR YEAR 2020/2021



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Since election in April 2018 this 9th Council has been planning for the future of our growing community. Council intends to deliver services and projects in line with the Community Plan, despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Palmerston is not alone in its efforts to innovate and adapt its service delivery to continue our community support towards our new social normal. I am extraordinarily proud of our residents' resilience and compassion.

At such a significant time in our nation's and Palmerston's history, Council has carefully balanced the need for investment in our city with keeping rates as low as possible to assist our community. Council is holding rates including your waste service charge for 2020/21 at the same level as last year. There will be no increase for our ratepayers. Council has also decided to hold the cost of all fees and charges for the next 12 months, to ensure Council is assisting the community during these times. While these decisions have an impact on Council's Long-Term Financial Plan, Council believes these steps are necessary and will not affect the sustainability of Council. Council is committed to ensuring Palmerston is a 'A Place for People' and the 'Family City' of the Northern Territory.

Athina

Athina Pascoe-Bell
City of Palmerston Mayor



**NO INCREASE TO RATES OR
WASTE SERVICE CHARGE**



**NO INCREASE TO
FEES & CHARGES**



\$1M PARTNERSHIP FOR CAPITAL
WORKS WITH THE NORTHERN
TERRITORY GOVERNMENT'S
SPECIAL COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE
AND LOCAL EMPLOYMENT GRANT



\$1.45M PARTNERSHIP FOR THE
GRAY COMMUNITY HALL UPGRADE
WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT



FREE CITY CENTRE PARKING
(ZONES A TO D)



**FREE ENTRY TO THE SWIMMING &
FITNESS CENTRE FOR POOL USERS**



WASTE EDUCATION PROGRAM



\$130,000 FOR THE
COMMUNITY BENEFIT SCHEME



VERGE BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAM



\$100,000 FOR THE ANNUAL
PRE-CYCLONE CLEAN-UP



\$6.139M CAPITAL BUDGET



\$130,000 MARLOW LAGOON
DOG PARK IMPROVEMENTS



**AUDIO RECORDING STUDIO AT THE
CITY OF PALMERSTON LIBRARY**



\$250,000 FOR TREE PLANTING



\$85,000 PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

\$250,000 FOR STAGE 2:
BEAUTIFICATION OF TEMPLE TERRACE



\$2.3M FOR ROADS



\$55,000 FOR SHADING PUBLIC
AND OPEN SPACES



\$2.45M FOR PARKS AND RESERVES

\$395,000 FOR
STORMWATER DRAINAGE WORKS



\$250,000 FOR LIGHTING DARK SPOTS



SOLAR PV SYSTEM FOR
COUNCIL BUILDING REDUCING
ENERGY DEMAND AND COSTS



YOUR RATES

Rates, including the Waste Service Charge, for the 2020/21 financial year will be held at the same level as last year. There will be no increase for our ratepayers. Council uses Unimproved Capital Value (UCV) as a basis for all rating calculations within the City of Palmerston.

RATING ZONE	RATE ON UCV	MINIMUM RATE	CHANGE
R, RR (Excluding RR in the suburb of Marlow Lagoon), SD, MD, MR, HR, CL, FD, PS, SP8, SP9 (<10,000m ²), SP9 (>20,000m ²), SP10 and SP11	0.530022%	\$1,227	No increase from 2019/20
RR in the Suburb of Marlow Lagoon	0.411615%	\$1,227	No increase from 2019/20
GI and LI	0.443029%	\$1,227	No increase from 2019/20
All Other Rateable Land	0.767487%	\$1,227	No increase from 2019/20

WASTE CHARGE CATEGORY	2019/2020	2020/2021	MOVEMENT
120L/240L	\$490	\$490	No increase
Upgrade to 240L Service	\$149	\$149	No increase
Unit Complex < or = 25 units	\$490	\$490	No increase
Unit Complex >25 units	\$240	\$240	No increase

OTHER CHARGES APPLY FOR DIFFERENT SERVICES. FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.PALMERSTON.NT.GOV.AU

EARLY BIRD DRAW

Each year, Council runs a draw which gives two lucky ratepayers, who have paid their rates in full by the first instalment date, \$1,500 each. Early Bird Draw Terms and Conditions will be available in August at www.palmerston.nt.gov.au

CONCESSIONS

Council offers eligible concession holders a Rates Concession on rates. If you have any queries regarding your eligibility, please contact:

NT Concession Scheme: 1800 777 704

Palmerston Community Care Centre: (08) 8999 3344

Financial Hardship: Council offers a Rates Concession for both residential and commercial ratepayers experiencing financial hardship. To be eligible for this concession, financial hardship is defined as a situation where a ratepayer is unable due to illness, unemployment or other reasonable

cause, to discharge their financial obligations towards the City of Palmerston. Residents who are experiencing financial hardship should contact Council's Finance Team as soon as possible to discuss individual circumstances.

Council also understands that you may be experiencing difficulties in paying your account during COVID-19. If this is your current situation or you are experiencing any form of hardship then we strongly urge you to contact Council so together we can discuss options and/or arrange a suitable payment plan.

Council offers additional concessions and property owners can apply for more than one concession at a time. If you have any queries regarding your eligibility for any of the concessions, please contact Council's Finance Team on (08) 8935 9961 or email: rates@palmerston.nt.gov.au



The 9th Council consists of the Mayor and seven Alderman who represent the entire city (Palmerston does not have divisible wards). Residents elect their Council every four years, with the next election due on 28 August 2021. Council elects one Alderman to serve as Deputy Mayor for a term of 5 months at a time.

ELECTED MEMBERS



MAYOR
ATHINA PASCOE-BELL

Athina moved to Palmerston in 2004 with her husband, who was in the Defence Force at the time, and bought their home in Marlow Lagoon just a few months after arriving. She is the mother of two primary school aged children and is currently studying towards a law degree. Prior to becoming Mayor, Athina had an extensive career in the public service and is focused on the good governance of the Council and ensuring that the right decisions are made at the right time.



ALDERMAN
AMBER GARDEN

Amber moved to the Territory from Queensland in 2003, and with her ever-supportive husband purchased a property in Farrar in 2010. She is familiar with Council meeting processes, financial reporting and requirements under the *Local Government Act*, due to over nine years' experience in local government administration. Amber is also passionate about improving animal management, safety, accessibility and communications with the community to make it a liveable city for all to enjoy.



ALDERMAN
BENJAMIN GIESECKE

Ben was born in Melbourne, but grew up in Adelaide. He moved to the Territory in 2004 to begin his career as a property professional after completing his Bachelor of Business (Property) degree. Ben bought his first home in Moulden in 2005, however he and his wife now live in Johnston. He has previously worked for two of the largest national valuation firms, but is now with one of the big four banks. He has extensive experience in the real estate market across the Territory and is also active in the local multicultural community.



ALDERMAN
DAMIAN HALE

Damian came to the Northern Territory in 1974 and has lived in Maningrida, Katherine, Darwin and Palmerston. He currently lives in the suburb of Gunn with his partner, Maria. Damian was the former Federal Member for Solomon from 2007-2010. After almost nine years Damian resigned from the Australian Workers Union in March 2019. He is employed as a Co-ordinator of Supports for local indigenous company, Sacred Business Services and is the Head Coach of the NT Titans Rugby League team.



ALDERMAN
SARAH HENDERSON

Sarah is a hardworking community advocate and business woman who has been an active member of the Palmerston community for three decades. With her husband, she has brought up five children in Palmerston and now her grandchildren are being raised in this community. She has been actively involved in many different Palmerston community groups over the years.



ALDERMAN
DR TOM LEWIS OAM

Tom is a teacher, author and war veteran. An NT resident for 30 years, Tom served with the Australian Defence Force in the Iraq War, and now writes history books and teaches at a local high school. Tom lives in Durack. He is married with two daughters. In what spare time he has left he enjoys playing tournament chess.



ALDERMAN
LUCY MORRISON

Lucy has lived in the Northern Territory since 2008, after moving to Palmerston from Queensland. She has more than 10 years' experience in the media industry and started her career as a print journalist working for newspapers both in the Northern Territory and Queensland. Lucy then steered her career into communications, public relations and media advising. Lucy is passionate about healthy living and enjoying an active lifestyle and wants to get more youth involved in sports and local activities in the community.



ALDERMAN
MICK SPICK

Mick has lived in the Northern Territory since 2006. During his 11-year career in the Australian Army Mick and his wife Hannah bought their family home in Driver in 2016. Mick currently works in Indigenous health as an education and training officer. Mick is also a current member of local community groups which include the Palmerston RSL and Palmerston Raiders RLFC. Mick's aspirations for Palmerston is to have the most liveable, sustainable and inclusive city within the Northern Territory.

Allowances

Elected Members are provided with financial support in recognition of the significant amount of work required in representing their community. Council intends to provide the following allowances to Elected Members, in accordance with *Local Government Guidelines 2: Allowances for Council Members*.

Allowance Description	Mayor	Deputy Mayor	Aldermen
Annual Base Allowance	\$87,635.66	\$32,405.27	\$15,761.63
Annual Electoral Allowance	\$23,065.90	\$5,767.68	\$5,767.68
Professional Development Allowance	\$3,753.17	\$3,753.17	\$3,753.17
Maximum Extra Meeting Allowance	Nil	Nil	\$10,508.15
TOTAL CLAIMABLE	\$114,454.73	\$41,926.12	\$35,790.63

Aldermen are entitled to claim an Extra Meeting Allowance up to a yearly maximum as outlined in the table above. Details of other entitlements for Elected Members are outlined in Council Policy *EM02 Elected Members Benefits and Support* available on Council's website.

Review of Constitutional Arrangements

On 12 May 2017, following a submission from Council, the Department of Housing and Community Development informed Council that the Minister had approved increasing the number of Elected Members from seven to eight. This took effect at the 2018 General Election. These arrangements are currently suitable for Council, however, Council are currently finalising a review of these constitutional arrangements which will be completed by August 2021 and any changes are in place for the 2021 General Election.



EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

As per the Northern Territory *Local Government Act 2008*, Council employs a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and delegates responsibilities to carry out the day to day functions of Council. The CEO is responsible for the overall administration of Council and works closely with the Elected Members to ensure Council goals and objectives are met. The CEO is supported in his responsibilities by three Directors who, with the CEO, form Council's Executive Leadership Team. Staff members operate under the CEO's direction across four key areas: Office of the Chief Executive Officer, City Growth and Operations, Lifestyle and Community, and Organisational Services.



LUCCIO CERCARELLI
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

- Office of the Mayor and Elected Members
- Executive Support
- Council Meetings
- Governance
- Strategic Planning
- Partnerships



NADINE NILON
DIRECTOR

CITY GROWTH AND OPERATIONS

RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

- Stormwater Drainage
- Waste and Environmental Sustainability
- Transport Network
- Parks and Open Space
- Public Lighting
- City Planning
- Infrastructure Design and Delivery
- Emergency Management



AMELIA VELLAR
DIRECTOR

LIFESTYLE AND COMMUNITY

RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

- Arts and Culture
- Placemaking
- Recreation and Leisure
- Community Events
- Regulatory Services
- Libraries
- Health and Wellbeing
- Community Facilities
- Community Development
- Local History and Heritage



RICHARD IAP
DIRECTOR

ORGANISATIONAL SERVICES

RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

- Customer Services
- Human Resources
- Technology Services
- Marketing and Communications
- Property and Commercial
- Economic Development and Innovation
- Smart Cities
- Financial Management
- Risk Management
- Procurement

OUR PEOPLE



Council is an employer of choice, building a diverse and gender-balanced workforce. Council is committed to strengthening the skillsets of our people through personal development and organisation-wide training initiatives. These include leadership and management training for existing and emerging leaders to promote development and succession. Council is improving our workplace benefits packages, which offer employee support services such as health benefits, enhanced leave entitlements and salary sacrifice options. A new Enterprise Agreement currently in negotiation will provide employees with a newly defined set of benefits and conditions when working for Council.

Positions within Council continue to evolve, allowing for diverse and exciting job opportunities for our employees. We continue to modernise and develop our positions to support specialist projects underway, such as *Prójects' Making the Switch* (improved street lighting), and to directly benefit the community by our long-term commitments to environment sustainability.

In accordance with section 101 of the Act, Council directly employs a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who is responsible for the employment of all staff, in accordance with the Staffing Plan approved by Council. The Staffing Plan for 2020/21 provides for the employment of 90 permanent staff members who operate under the CEO's direction and are divided into the four key areas encompassing Office of the Chief Executive, City Growth and Operations, Lifestyle and Community, and Organisational Services. These 90 positions are the equivalent of 88.35 full time staff (known as Full Time Equivalents, or FTEs). This does not include casual staff or limited tenure positions of 12 months or less. At last budget the FTE count was at 85.36 with one FTE added by Council during the year. Two FTEs have been added into this budget.

It should be noted that short-term projects and vacancies may temporarily change the actual number of FTEs at any time during the financial year. The total budget for employee costs for 2020/21 is \$10,164,650.



PERFORMANCE PLANS

How We Measure Performance

Each year, Council undertakes a Community Satisfaction Survey to determine the overall performance of Council.

Council has used community survey methodology since 2012, and a 2019 review identified potential improvements, leading to a new format. The most recent survey, undertaken in June 2019, assesses Council's performance against the Community Plan Objectives, utilises a simpler scoring methodology and allows for more detailed respondent feedback.

Key Findings

Overall performance

The results of the 2019 survey show that the overall Council performance score has increased to 6.56/10 (up from 5.77 last year) and is at its highest level since 2014.

Highest performing services

Highest areas of performance included providing libraries and library services to the community (8.2/10), kerbside waste collection (8.02/10), and providing and maintaining the Archer Waste Management Facility (7.78/10).

Most important services

The most important aspects of council services were maintaining roads (5.31%), ensuring roads build by developers are fit for purpose (4.95%), increasing shading and greening in the city (4.90%), and promoting environmental sustainability (4.87%).

Key issues

When asked explicitly what the most important issues are in the local area, the majority of respondents mentioned crime and safety issues (67%). However, when respondents were asked what Council achievements were important, the most common response was addressing crime.

Crucially, a large proportion (49%) of residents couldn't think of a particular Council achievement or outcome which was important to them. This highlights a lack of awareness of Council achievements and outcomes and the need to invest more in communicating with the community.

The next Survey will be in 2020 with the results published in the 2019/2020 Annual Report.

FAMILY & COMMUNITY



IN THIS SECTION

We focus on families

The wellbeing of our community
is a focus for all our work

We focus on families

Our strategies to support achieving this objective are based around understanding our community's needs, providing engaging and relevant community activities and empowering our youth to engage and succeed.

A family may be more than the traditional concept of a couple of adults with children, and Palmerston prides itself on its diversity, multiculturalism and inclusive outlook.

We are committed to creating a vibrant and inclusive community with opportunities for all families to enjoy everything Palmerston has to offer.

Following the repeal of mandatory venue and facility closures, event and activity cancellations and the relaxation of personal isolation requirements; in 2020/21 Council is set to host a wide range of community events, including many fun activities for all families to get involved in.

Vibrant evening events such as the On Frances series (street party) and Theatrical Nights (outdoor performances) are planned to continue during the dry season, and the popular FlicNics program will again showcase a variety of movies in Goyder Square. Such events invigorate night-time dining and create opportunities for local families to enjoy a night out in Palmerston.

Many of Council's important annual community events and attractions will also return, including Australia Day celebrations, Palmerston Carols and the Palmerston Tree Lighting. Commitment to significant community events and activities such as the ANZAC Day ceremony, Seniors Month programs, Children's Week and other dates of significance extend our support throughout the community. Council continues to participate in information-sharing at the Royal Darwin Show, Defence Force Expo and COTA's Seniors Expo, utilising the new community engagement tools for animal management and the inclusion of targeted specific programs which benefit the community as a whole. Council will continue to identify further opportunities for engagement education to meet the needs and requirements of our community, such as working on responsible pet ownership with the Northern Territory Government's Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development.

Council will continue to facilitate youth-friendly events and programs throughout the year, including a reimagined, and rescheduled, Palmerston Youth Festival. The inaugural 2019 festival saw the Northern Territory Government and Council work in close partnership to organise and host a week of events for Palmerston youth aged nine to 17. The 2020/21

program promises more activities and events, including visual and performing arts, home economics, and sport and recreation activities. Local youth have been involved in the program's development and delivery, adding another layer of success to this incredible event.

Council will continue to provide and support a range of school holiday activities and general youth events to celebrate National Families Week, NT Youth Week and other significant focus events. Council will also work in partnership with youth support organisations to coordinate and develop activities for young people in Palmerston, and will continue to host sport sessions at the Palmerston Recreation Centre, creating a safe hub for our young people and providing diversionary activities for at-risk youth.

City of Palmerston Library returned to offer its usual high-quality free services and programs to users of all ages, designed to engage and entertain our community, improve child and adult literacy, support all forms of learning and encourage participation in a range of free technology that allow people to upskill, develop and connect. Innovative community outreach methods that were developed in response to the personal isolation requirements have been adapted and absorbed into long-term deliverables, further enhancing Council's community services.

Council provides engagement opportunities for diverse community-led activities through use of Council venues such as the Palmerston Recreation Centre, Palmerston Library, Gray Community Hall, Driver Family Resource Centre and the Palmerston Swimming and Fitness Centre.

Council also offers all pool users free entry to the Palmerston Swimming and Fitness Centre, and free drop-in activities for youth at the Palmerston Recreation Centre.

The wellbeing of our community is a focus for all of our work

Our strategies to support achieving this objective are based around careful consideration of community impact of Council decisions and working in collaboration with the community and service providers.

Healthy, active communities are important, and we are committed to providing opportunities for residents to develop healthy habits through a range of accessible programs and initiatives. Wellbeing is more than physical health; it also encompasses mental, emotional and social health factors.

Council's Palmerston Recreation Centre provides affordable and accessible options for the broader community, with a wide range of programs and

activities offered by facilitators operating at the venue. Council's in-kind support for groups and activities utilising Council venues will further support services that benefit the wellbeing of the community. Council encourages community use of the Palmerston pool by offering free entry. Redevelopment of this facility will add even more opportunities for residents to be active and engaged within the community.

Council actively supports community organisations and groups to deliver community initiatives, programs and events which benefit the community. Council provides annually \$130,000 in Community Benefit Scheme funding for grants, donations and sponsorships. Council will also continue to offer representation support which provides financial assistance for individuals and teams representing Palmerston, the Northern Territory or Australia. During this coming year Council will be actively supporting many organisations to revitalise the community with a range of programs, activities and events. Council recognises the efforts of exceptional young people in our community by providing funds for annual Community Service Awards, which are determined by each school.

We are continuing our partnerships with the Northern Territory Government, local clubs, volunteers, service providers and other organisations to provide additional opportunities for all ages.

Tales to Tails is an innovative Palmerston Library program which, following a successful trial, will continue as a regular program. Run with our partners Good Dog Therapy Services, reluctant young readers can practice reading to trained therapy dogs, in a safe and welcoming environment.

Council's Activate program allows Palmerston residents low-cost access to a range of physical activities to socialise and improve their physical and

mental health. The Council-sponsored Youth Drop-in Sports and Council's school holiday program also support and engage young people, and those at risk.

Council will continue to facilitate the Palmerston Safe Communities Committee to strengthen communication and partnerships with government departments, Northern Territory Police, local businesses, community groups and other sectors. Council contributes to building a safer community by promoting connection through events such as Neighbour Day and Parks Week.

■ Measures of success

The following measures will provide indicators of our success in achieving this outcome:

- An increase in the number of people attending Council events and engaging in community activities.
- Reduced crime rates – specifically a reduction in alcohol-fuelled violence.
- Increased partnerships in place between the Council and other levels of government which seek to address crime.
- Increased accessibility of Council facilities and resources for community activities for all members of our community.



VIBRANT ECONOMY

IN THIS SECTION

Improve Palmerston's image

Palmerston's economic
future is bright

■ Improve Palmerston's image

Our strategies to support achieving this objective are based around strengthening the image and brand of Palmerston, and promoting the ethos of employ local, buy local.

Council is committed to ensuring that Palmerston remains 'A Place for People' and will continue to enhance the image and brand of Palmerston.

Council's brand and image are consolidated further by the provision of quality, timely, relevant communications. Council will also communicate strongly to the community about the investment it makes in supporting our community, particularly the not-for-profit sector, as well as investment in infrastructure and other developments.

Our ongoing *Prójects*, initiatives and projects proposed to support our region's future growth, contains several social infrastructure projects to deliver:

- more open space and family friendly facilities;
- greater lifestyle choice, especially for youth;
- local jobs;
- tools to fight crime and anti-social behaviour;
- Smart City opportunities;
- lower energy costs and a reduction in carbon emissions; and
- an increase in our urban forest.

Delivery of these projects, in conjunction with the Federal and Northern Territory Government, will attract people to live, shop and work in our community.

Council is forecasting to spend \$85.86 million on renewal, upgrade and new infrastructure over the next ten years. Significant *Prójects* include the enhancement of facilities at the Palmerston Swimming and Fitness Centre (*Splashing Out*) as well as the development of a community facility in Zuccoli (*Where We Live Matters*).

As a significant employer and investor, Council will continue to ensure that it supports local business, with every effort made to utilise local suppliers and to ensure that locally based businesses and industries are given an opportunity to participate in tender or quotation processes. In the 2019/20 financial year 90% of Council expenditure occurred in the Top End, resulting in \$27.4 million being spent locally.

A local supplier criteria weighting of at least 20% is applied to the assessment process to ensure value-for-money to Palmerston from procurement activities. Local businesses still need to be competitive and present value for Palmerston, including how they deliver local benefits.

Over the coming year Council will further engage with local businesses to raise awareness of vendor opportunities.

■ Palmerston's economic future is bright

Our strategies to support achieving this objective are based around building and encouraging a well-planned, sustainable economy that involves youth, entrepreneurs and our wider business community.

Council will continue to work with Northern Territory Government to develop strategies to promote activation and movement in the Palmerston CBD. Council is currently collaborating with the Northern Territory Government to develop the final Palmerston Central Area Plan for inclusion in the NT Planning Scheme.

Council recognises the importance of supporting development, including by the delivery of infrastructure, while building an identity for Palmerston. Council will continue to ensure the involvement of the community in decision-making by reviewing and providing comment and representation on behalf of the community to the Northern Territory Government on development applications. The global economic slow-down due to COVID-19 impacted Palmerston businesses, families and individuals as everywhere. Council aims to resume providing and supporting events and activities to attract people to our local businesses in a bid to increase employment and business occupancy rates.

In 2019, free timed parking in the Palmerston city centre was made available to the community to encourage people to visit the area and support local businesses, while guaranteeing availability of parking. Free parking was extended to all-day parking in March 2020 to further encourage shoppers to utilise city centre businesses and services.

Parking regulation within the Municipality continues to be a focus for Ranger Services, with opportunities for improved service levels through information technology systems, assisting with compliance and traffic turn-over.

Council initiated several projects to assist local businesses and service-providers, with increased promotion and vendor opportunities in the lead up to the pandemic closedown. Council will continue to provide free parking in selected areas in order to maximise public uptake of local shopping opportunities.

Council will continue its ongoing sponsorship of community events and groups, including the Northern Territory PGA Championship which provides more than \$1.5 million of economic benefit to our local businesses. Funding of Environmental Initiatives and

Graffiti Removal projects, as well as the implementation of Public Art Program, further enhances the amenity and attractiveness of the city while providing local purchasing opportunities.

Council has created several opportunities for youth involvement in the planning, developing and delivery of event and activities for their peers. This initiative allows for consultation with and commitment from our community, as well as upskilling and enabling career pathways for individuals. The resumption of community initiatives such as Pop-Up Dining support entrepreneurial ventures.

■ Measures of success

The following measures will provide indicators of our success with regards to achieving this outcome:

- The people of Palmerston choose to shop locally.
- Occupancy rates – retail shop spaces are full.
- Employment rates increase.
- The population of Palmerston is growing (families stay).
- More tourists visit Palmerston.
- There are more funds available for Council to invest in the community.
- There are more businesses located in Palmerston.
- Council is committed to ensuring local businesses and industry receive the support they need in order to grow and prosper within our region - measured through the Community Satisfaction survey.



Council has created several opportunities for youth involvement in the planning, developing and delivery of event and activities for their peers.





CULTURAL DIVERSITY

IN THIS SECTION

To celebrate our rich culture
and diversity

Recognise and support diversity
through our partnerships and
leadership

To celebrate our rich and cultural diversity

Our strategies to support achieving this objective are based around the development of a Culture and Diversity Plan and taking every opportunity to recognise and celebrate our cultural diversity and heritage.

Cultural diversity is when population differences are well represented within a community. These include race, ethnicity, age, ability, language, nationality, socioeconomic status, gender, religion, or sexual orientation. Culture gives us our identity; cultural diversity enriches us all.

We celebrate our community in many ways. Council celebrates the final step in the journey to become an Australian citizen with a several Citizenship Ceremonies held throughout the year. In 2019/20, 227 people became Australian citizens in Palmerston and the resumption of ceremonies in 2020/21 will see a much greater number. Council awards outstanding community members and groups at each Australia Day ceremony, in partnership with the Australia Day Council.

Council is committed to growing and supporting local cultural events and has increased its efforts to facilitate and enable these following the relaxation of social distancing requirements.

Palmerston celebrates its cultural diversity with multiple events throughout the year. Key events facilitated, funded or otherwise supported by Council include in 2021:

Harmony Day – Council welcomes and supports refugees and enhances cultural and religious diversity in our community.

NAIDOC Week – celebrating the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This year Council is looking to mark NAIDOC Week by commissioning new works by local Aboriginal artists for permanent exhibition around Palmerston.

International Women's Day – Council works with a consortium of diverse Palmerston women to produce events in March.

On Frances series – Council will partner with local businesses to host a series of licensed events to add to Palmerston's evening events calendar.

Preparation for the rescheduled Palmerston Youth Festival (2020 event postponed due to COVID-19) will recommence. Council is partnering with Northern Territory Government to deliver a series of outstanding events in 2021 for Palmerston young people.

The Palmerston Library will continue to offer Drag

Queen Storytime and Bilingual Storytime, innovative programs that directly promote inclusivity and celebrate our cultural diversity.

We continue to support our creative community with the development of the \$85,000 Public Art Program and the planned addition of an \$130,000 audio recording facility within the Library this year.

Recognise and support diversity through our partnerships and leadership

Our Strategies to support achieving this objective are based around building on the strong partnerships with our community, in all its diversity, and incorporating diverse views and perspectives across all elements of planning and decision-making processes.

It is an ongoing Council commitment to support and foster strong community partnerships. During the pandemic all councils were limited in the services they were able to provide to their communities, however their networks and partnerships with each other and a diverse range of organisations has been maintained and strengthened by the shared experiences and challenges.

During the long period of social distancing and restrictions on gathering in groups, Council provided and promoted many opportunities for online collaborations and social interaction. These endeavours will be showcased in future exhibitions of local arts, crafts, and collaborative writing projects. Our annual Children's Art Exhibition, normally held in May for National Families Week, will move to later in 2020 and reflect on the year.

Council continue its partnership with Litchfield Council to provide the Taminmin Library services to the community. Given the size and scale of Local Government in the Northern Territory there are numerous advantages with Councils working collaboratively and developing shared services. This arrangement has allowed for professional development and shared program opportunities for staff and a reduction in overall operational costs, which have been used to improve existing services at the City of Palmerston Library.

We will continue to work closely with Advisory Groups and Committees and provide every opportunity for members of the community to provide feedback on issues and concerns directly to Council. Groups and Committees encompass a variety of cultures and diversity, ranging from seniors to youth. Community consultation projects will continue to be tailored to ensure feedback from residents is received in a

timely and effective manner, directly assisting Council's planning and decision-making processes.

Palmerston Library will be conducting a diversity audit of the library collection, in partnership with the Northern Territory Library, to ensure fair representation of diverse cultural groups within our community, and equitable access to information.

Council provides annually \$130,000 in Community Benefit Scheme funding for grants, donations and sponsorships, and more than \$190,000 value of in-kind support by reducing venue-hire for various groups to offer events, activities and programs to the community.

Council will continue to support the Rural and Palmerston Markets and will expand our vibrant multicultural street food culture through pop-up dining opportunities around Palmerston.

Measures of success

The following measures will provide indicators of our success with regards to achieving this outcome:

- Council consults with and includes the needs of all people in its programs and planning using a mechanism it has agreed with those communities.
- Fostering and promotion of arts and culture within our community and the awareness and promotion of our local history is improved.



A FUTURE FOCUS

IN THIS SECTION

We support and foster innovation

Infrastructure is fit for purpose



■ We support and foster innovation

Our strategies to support achieving this objective are based around developing our people through personal development and encouraging forward-thinking.

Embracing change has enabled Council to continue to deliver key services and support the community throughout the pandemic period.

Innovative projects Council has continued to deliver include:

The \$2 million *Smart Cities* program, jointly funded by the Federal Government and Northern Territory Government, is on track for completion in the 2019/20 financial year. The *Smart Cities* program aligns with Council's Digital Strategy and delivers businesses with infrastructure such as; enhanced wi-fi, high definition CCTV, sound analytics and smart lighting to support them in embracing change and innovation and creating more productive communities.

Council will continue to develop systems and programs to effectively utilise the data and information gathered. Smart infrastructure improves the efficiency, reliability, delivery and maintenance of infrastructure and essential services; Smart Precincts are making community precincts more liveable, productive, sustainable and safe; Smart Services deliver community-focussed local government services; and Smart Planning and design build adaptable and resilient cities through improved land use, strategic planning and governance.

Council continues to invest in its people to develop skills, capacity and resilience. Council budgets for professional development for Elected Members and staff. Enhancing skills and technical knowledge benefits the community as well as individuals and the organisation.

■ Infrastructure is fit for purpose

Our strategies to support achieving this objective are based around managing and maintaining infrastructure to meet community needs, ensure assets have multiple uses and Council adopts innovative approaches.

To ensure infrastructure is fit for purpose Council is guided by its Asset Management Plans for Stormwater Drainage, Roads and Pathways. Council will invest approximately \$889,500 for parks and reserves, \$1.319 million for buildings and facilities, \$1.526 million for roads and \$150,000 for improvements to stormwater drains in the capital budget 2020/21. Further Asset Management Plans for all of Council's diverse assets such as playgrounds, streetlights, irrigation systems, lakes and community halls will be developed during the year to better inform future budgets.

One of the most significant assets, and contributor to the amenity of the City, is our network of irrigation systems that use water from sources such as the lakes, bores and mains scheme water. With a changing rainfall pattern the reliance on groundwater and stormwater will need to adjust over time and Council is exploring options to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of our overall water usage.

Through the *Smart Cities* program, air and weather monitoring sensors have been installed at various locations across Palmerston, and these will assist in managing the irrigation controllers to adjust watering times and duration.

Council has a range of inspections for its assets to identify and manage risks such as secure stormwater pits, pathways, roads and playgrounds. Inspection frequency is timed (weekly, quarterly or annually) to manage resources and reflect seasonal fluctuations of usage. During 2020/21 Council will move from age-based to condition-based inspections to better inform Council and the community on development and implementation of capital works programs.

This makes best use of available funds where intervention (repairs, replacement or upgrading) is required and is not based simply on the age of the asset.

With an ongoing focus on environmental, as well as financial sustainability, Council will continue to upgrade lighting in public places, with \$330,000 to be expended within parks, open spaces and identified dark spots. The immediate and long-term benefits of lighting replacement programs include improved lighting, leading to increased sense of security and safety, as well as the long-term benefits of reduced maintenance and electricity costs resulting in reduced carbon emissions.

During 2020/21 Council will engage further with the community on managing aspects of our parks, road verges and street trees, to ensure an alignment with community expectations, while delivering services in an affordable sustainable way.

Further review of the use and development of community-based infrastructure such as Community Halls and Recreation Facilities (Palmerston Recreation Centre, Palmerston Swimming and Fitness Centre) will continue. Reviews will focus on potential projects and upgrades that allow the assets to be utilised by the community for a wide variety of uses.

Community consultation will guide the refurbishment of the Gray Community Hall, funded by the Australian Government, resulting in a significantly improved community asset that caters to the needs of a wider variety of users.

The Palmerston Recreation Centre will receive major upgrades through an allocation of \$215,000 to improve access to the facility and links to outdoor spaces.

Council will invest \$100,000 to engage a specialist library design consultant to work with local architects on the Library Masterplan refurbishment project. The project will modernise the Palmerston Library to meet the diverse needs of our growing community.

■ Measures of success

The following measures will provide indicators of our success with regards to achieving this outcome:

- Council consults with and includes the needs of all people in its programs and planning using a mechanism it has agreed with those communities.
- Fostering and promotion of arts and culture within our community and the awareness and promotion of our local history is improved.





ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

IN THIS SECTION

Reduce our footprint on
the environment

Palmerston is a cool,
shaded, green city

Encourage personal action and
taking a leadership role

Reduce our footprint on the environment

Our strategies to support achieving this objective are based on decreasing all forms of waste to landfill, educating our community about our environmental footprint and modelling best environmental sustainability practices across all Council processes. Council is planning for an environmentally sustainable future through the City of Palmerston Sustainability Strategy.

Planned projects include continuing Council's solar PV systems installation program. Installation of a solar PV shade structure over car park bays within the Civic Plaza parking area will commence in September. This \$300,000 project will provide power for up to 50% of Council's administration building, equivalent to removing 15 tonnes of CO₂ from the atmosphere annually (source: Federal Dept. Environment and Energy). The shade structure will also assist in cooling the city and mitigating the heat sink effect of the car park. Council will also investigate installing Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points in these car parks. EV car technology is an evolving environmentally sustainable alternative to traditional petrol-based vehicles. Council is reducing its carbon footprint and future-proofing our infrastructure for the ongoing needs of the community.

Council will also focus on water sustainability, with a review of the current irrigation system to determine opportunities for reducing water use when managing public open spaces, providing environmental benefits and possible cost savings.

Improving Council performance in meeting both environmental sustainability and community needs will involve measuring sustainable practices and determining key opportunities to improve sustainable living for the community.

Palmerston is a cool, shaded, green city

Our strategies to support achieving this objective are based around increasing suitable tree cover, and other greening and cooling projects.

In an exciting new initiative, residents are able to access Council-purchased materials to assist in the greening of their adjacent verges. Verges hold important infrastructure to supply public services such as power and water, bus stops and footpaths; they may also be used as public open space to facilitate green corridors. Council has allocated \$20,000 for the beautification of verges. During the year Council will be reviewing the program to expand the scope to include guidance and assistance with verge landscaping options that enhance the streetscape while maintaining the necessary access to the public utilities under the verge.

Council will continue to undertake programs that work towards the objective of a cool, shaded, green city. This includes the ongoing delivery of the *Liveable Cities* initiative, which seeks to partner with other levels of government to improve the environment by increasing green cover through tree planting.

During 2019/20 Council planted 625 trees under the replacement tree planting program. Council has allocated a further \$250,000 to continue the program this year. Additionally, \$250,000 has been allocated to water these trees during their establishment period to ensure survival.

Council's capital works program includes the provision of \$340,000 for the installation of two new playgrounds, designed to consider shading and cooling requirements and, where practical, smart technology. In addition, \$55,000 has been allocated to the installation and renewal of shade structures in parks and public open space.

Stage Two of the approximately \$250,000 Temple Terrace landscaping project, between Kafcaloudes Crescent and Tamarind Road, will significantly improve the amenity of this area with the planting of trees and grasses.

Encourage personal action and taking a leadership role

Our strategies to support achieving this objective are based on increasing recycling efforts locally and participating in developing guidelines that promote green infrastructure, regionally.

Council will continue to provide opportunities for residents to increase their recycling efforts, kerbside recycling bins, access to the Archer Waste Management Facility and participation in the annual pre-cyclone clean-up.

In 2019 approximately 4,305 tonnes of waste were diverted from landfill through these three programs. The pre-cyclone clean-up will be offered to residents again this year as part of the residential Waste Service Charge, costing \$100,000.

Council is implementing several other waste management strategies, including continuing with the Archer Waste Management Facility Improvement, totaling \$250,000. This involves improving safety at the site and increasing resource recovery options. The improvements include changes to traffic management, improved signage, clear demarcation of recycling areas and the increased ability for facility staff to interact with the public. It is estimated that these changes will increase diversion rates by 100 tonnes annually, saving Council approximately \$10,000 per annum.

Council has allocated a further \$80,000 for a Waste Education Program that will provide the community with key information on reusing, reducing and recycling. Pop-up information stalls at events and shopping centres will reinforce the core messages. The program includes:

- Take the Pledge Campaign; Council will provide incentives to residents who commit to reducing the amount of waste generated within their household.
- A series of workshops with local businesses to devise collaborative actions to target litter hotspots around our City Centre, as well as other sustainable initiatives.
- A bin tagging and rewards program is anticipated to increase recycling rates; residential bins are audited and tagged according to recycling behaviours.
- A school program will focus on reducing food waste and improving the recycling knowledge of students.
- Clean Corridors program will target litter hotspots in the City.

The annual long grass audit on Council verges and private property will again be addressed through a renewed mapping program, designed to streamline the process with improved time frames and increased compliance rates.

■ Measures of success

The following measures will provide indicators of our success with regards to achieving this outcome:

- The level of recycling / proportion of rubbish recycled is increased.
- There is a decrease in littering.
- Increase the canopy coverage (percentage of areas shaded by trees).
- Reduction in businesses using packaging and wrapping.
- Performance in actively protecting and enhancing the environmental assets and infrastructure of the City of Palmerston, while supporting local businesses and industry in sustainable land use, is improved.
- Performance in committing to effective and responsible city planning which balances and meets residential and commercial needs in our community is improved.



GOVERNANCE

IN THIS SECTION

Ensure we have a leading
governance model

Community is at the centre

Healthy working partnerships

Ensure we have a leading governance model

Our strategies to support achieving this objective are based on utilising effective, accountable and adaptable processes to deliver on our Community Plan obligations.

Following adoption of the Community Plan in April 2019 Council has implemented training for all staff to ensure effective delivery of the six outcomes. This sets the foundation for Council to meet its obligation to do what it is supposed to do.

Council continues to work toward the delivery of the six outcomes as adopted in the Community Plan and build a leading governance model.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related social distancing restrictions the meetings of the Risk Management and Audit Committee were suspended in March 2020. Council persists in performing internal audits which align with Council's Strategic Risk Register and Risk Management and Internal Audit Framework. These audits ensure controls and processes are incorporating best practice, and Council is addressing and mitigating any potential risks to the organisation.

Training is provided to Elected Members and staff throughout the financial year to ensure awareness of Council's responsibilities in accountability and legislative compliance. Focus is given to the governance, reporting requirements and implications regarding Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC).

Council is committed to providing its staff with appropriate resources to meet the community's needs. Over the past year Council has finalised a new ground floor Customer Service area, with interview rooms and service kiosks to assist staff to deliver best practice customer service. This year further improvements in Customer Service will include being able to make Council payment and enquiries at the Library. Council continues to provide and upgrade its computer hardware, networking devices and servers to ensure that Council can optimise the benefits of software upgrades to provide more responsive customer service.

Council is investigating the implementation of a Customer Relationship Management system to improve our relationships and interactions with customers and potential customers.

Work will continue with the review of all Council policies to ensure compliance with the new *Local Government Act 2019*, coming into effect in July 2021.

Community is at the centre

Our strategies to support achieving this objective are based on utilising all methods possible to bring community into all aspects of Council business.

Palmerston residents have several methods to participate in Council's decision-making processes:

All Council meetings are again open to the public to attend. Ordinary Council Meetings are currently held in Council Chambers at the Civic Plaza, City Centre on the first and third Tuesday of every month, commencing at 5.30pm. These are again preceded by a 30-minute public forum where members of the community can discuss any issue with Council in an informal environment. Members of the community also may lodge written questions to be answered in Council meetings; a practice that Council promoted and encouraged during the mandatory pandemic closures.

Council will conduct further Ordinary Council Meetings in various locations across Palmerston throughout the year. The intention of these meetings is to bring the Council members to the community and encourage more participation in Council's decision-making process. The pre-meeting public forum is part of the activity.

Elected Members have resumed hosting a monthly stall at the Palmerston Markets to informally engage with the community.

Council's online platforms have expanded, including Instagram and a 10% increase in Facebook followers over the last 12 months. Council will continue to explore more relevant and inspiring social media approaches, as well as continuously improve processes to meet customer requirements and ongoing security challenges.

Council seeks to involve the full diversity of Palmerston residents and will ensure they are engaged through several different tools, approaches and processes that are inclusive of their needs. Council will continue to advertise and provide public consultation in excess of its legislative requirements, to ensure the community has every opportunity to participate.

Each year, Council commissions the Community Satisfaction Survey to determine the overall performance of Council against 14 services areas. The random nature of participant selection (by phone) allows Council to sample unsolicited views from a wide range of residents and gain insight into the effectiveness of its community consultation practices.

We aim to maintain a high degree of community involvement by delivery of clear and effective communication, working to identify and overcome



concerns and barriers to involvement and actively seeking commentary and feedback. Developing the skills, confidence and knowledge of the public in community matters, and evaluating engagement outcomes, will ensure we continue meeting the requirements of national standards and improve future Council projects.

■ Healthy working partnerships

Our strategies to support achieving this objective are based on Council maintaining strong external partnerships and networks to allow strategic contribution to all decisions relating to our city and working in partnership with staff to achieve the very best outcomes.

Council will work collaboratively with all levels of government over the coming year in delivering a number of key projects, including *Prójects* initiatives.

Council will work in partnership with the Northern Territory Government to organise and host the Palmerston Youth Festival, encompassing events and activities over seven days. Palmerston youth aged nine to 17 years are the target participants of this exciting event featuring visual and performance arts, home economics, sport and recreational activities.

Council and the Northern Territory Government are funding *Liveable Cities* projects to green, cool and shade Palmerston, through tree planting and landscaping. Shared projects such as these support local business and our economy.

Council's *Splashing Out* initiative will revitalise the Swimming and Fitness Centre, enhancing the amenities of this already popular facility. This project is jointly funded by the Northern Territory Government, with Council continuing to lobby for Federal Government funding to further support this project.

Council works in partnership with the Palmerston and Rural Market Association to provide a popular weekly Dry Season community event in Goyder Square.

Council continues to facilitate diverse community collaboration and communication networks and advisory groups. Advisory groups include Youth Inspiring Palmerston (YIP), Palmerston Animal Management Advisory Committee (PAMAC), Palmerston Seniors' Advisory Committee (PSAC) and

Palmerston Australia Day Awards Selection Panel. Networks include Palmerston Safe Communities Committee (PSCC), Palmerston Kids Network (PKN) and Palmerston and Rural Youth Services Network (PARYS).

These groups continue to advocate for the interests of sectors of the community and provide a direct link for the community to Council's decision-making processes.

Council continues to engage with staff through group and individual training and professional development, as well as ongoing measurement of communication, available resources and staff expectations. Management works with staff to recognise success and respond to concerns. Negotiations of Enterprise Agreements allow frank and open group discussion. Staff working groups such as Process Improvement Committee allow for identification of opportunities for improvement. Annual Performance Review processes allow individual recognition and upskilling program development.

■ Measures of success

The following measures will provide indicators of success in relation to this outcome:

- Community are satisfied that Council values and encourages participation in Council activities by the community and is committed to delivering the highest possible levels of service and community engagement.
- Community are satisfied that Council is committed to ensuring that the systems and processes of Council support the organisation in delivering the best possible services to the community.
- Community are satisfied that Council values its people and the culture of our organisation. Council is committed to continuous improvement and innovation whilst seeking to reduce the costs of Council services through increased efficiency.
- Community are satisfied that Council is showing corporate and social responsibility, ensuring the sustainability of Council assets and services and undertaking effective planning and reporting of Council performance to the community.





Council continues to facilitate diverse community collaboration and communication networks and advisory groups.



OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

■ Supporting the growth of our community

Palmerston is a young community, with a median age of only 30 years and a large number of families. Rapid population growth coupled with a young demographic presents Council with the challenge of growing and renewing essential family-friendly infrastructure for Palmerston and surrounding communities.

Positioning itself as the 'Family Capital of the Northern Territory' and 'A Place for People', Council will continue to implement major initiatives to support this growth.

Ongoing *Prójects* initiatives:

- **Splashing Out** - revitalising the Palmerston Swimming and Fitness Centre.
- **Liveable Cities** - cooling and greening the city.
- **Where We Live Matters** - supporting our growing community by developing new community facilities and amenities.
- **It's Always Brighter** - implementing solar and renewable energy initiatives to create a clean, green and energy neutral community.

Capital works projects:

- **Gray Community Hall Redevelopment** - facility enlargement and improvements.
- **Marlow Lagoon Dog Park Improvements** - redesigned and upgraded to suit community needs.
- **Palmerston Library Recording Studio** - an exciting initiative for emerging local artists.

Completed *Prójects* initiatives:

- **Smart Cities** - focusing on using smart technology to make our community safer and more liveable.
- **Making the Switch** - installing smart LED lighting to create a safer and more sustainable environment for the community.

These projects complement the ongoing replacement and renewal of existing social and physical infrastructure such as footpaths, playgrounds, community facilities and road network.

Over the next ten years Council will spend \$85.86 million in total, inclusive of *Prójects*. The Long-Term Capital Plan will continue to be refined and improved, including the finalisation of Asset Management Plans.

■ Safer communities

Council's Customer Satisfaction Survey (2019) showed that our community values the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour and recognised Council's achievements in this area, with this aspect scoring highest in the Important Council Achievement open question. While Council does not have the authority to investigate crime or get involved in law enforcement matters, Council has embarked on a series of projects to improve safety and reduce anti-social behaviour.

The *Smart Cities* project has increased high definition CCTV coverage in Palmerston for NT Police. The provision of this coverage is supported by an increased wi-fi network. *Making the Switch* is improving public safety by providing brighter, better-focused light and improving the reliability of Council's public lighting network.

Council will also continue to work with organisations including the Northern Territory Government to provide programs that support and engage young people seen to be at risk of offending.

These include the Youth Drop-In Sports program, School Holiday programs and the Library Drop-In zone. The Palmerston Swimming and Fitness Centre is undergoing substantial redevelopment which includes a Youth Precinct, to offer better facilities to at-risk youth.

Council is committed to proactive initiatives to promote responsible animal management in the Palmerston area. Some of the most effective methods used are outreach activities where Council staff and Elected Members attend major community events to promote key messages around dog registration, and the advantages of microchipping and de-sexing.

Built around our Positive Pets in Palmerston branding, we offer free microchipping events, distribute promotional merchandise such as dog leads and toys, and host community information campaigns.

Programs such as Council's Desexing and Microchipping Scheme, Brekkie in the Park, Chip your Pet Month, and issue-specific information sessions will continue.

Activities are held not only in Palmerston, but across the Top End, as Council recognises that members of the Palmerston community attend events outside our municipality, and people outside the municipality may move to Palmerston.

These initiatives have seen dog microchipping numbers triple over the past few years; however, Council will continue to identify further opportunities for engagement and education.

■ Financial sustainability

Council's 2020/21 Budget is impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the hardship experienced by ratepayers in these unprecedented times, Council has decided on holding rates for the 2020/21 Budget year, resulting in no increase in rates. In addition, other income items are also expected to be impacted for at least the first quarter of the financial year.

Operational efficiencies have been achieved in the area of expenditure to minimise the impact of the reduction in income on Reserves and no significant impact on service levels is anticipated.

Infrastructure investment for the year is budgeted at \$6.139 million with some smaller projects being drawn from Reserves due to the reduction in income caused by COVID-19.

■ Collaboration

Council will grow its collaboration with other Councils and other levels of government:

- The Executive Leadership Team will look for increased opportunities for regular and ongoing dialogue with senior executives and Ministers of the Northern Territory Government (NTG). These high-level discussions will address issues where Council and NTG can work together on solutions.
- Council maintains active membership of Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT) and actively participates in all reference groups, working parties and forums created through LGANT.
- Council participates in Top End Regional Organisation of Councils (TOPROC), with the City of Darwin, Litchfield Council, Belyuen Community Government Council, Wagait Shire Council and the Coomalie Community Government Council to consider issues unique to the Top End and facilitate collaboration between these Councils.
- Council attends Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) meetings and functions to consider and seek solutions to Local Government issues on a national level.
- Elected Members and Council officers will regularly hold meetings with government representatives, attend briefings and discussions regarding Northern Territory Local Government and wider government issues.
- Council will actively explore initiatives to enable post-pandemic economic recovery and development at all levels of Government.

Consistent with good governance and financial management, each year Council will review its membership of external organisations to ensure the community is getting maximum benefit from Council's participation. Council will also look for new avenues of collaboration that will benefit the community.

■ Governance

Periodic reviews of internal documentation have the potential to influence or enhance Council's Regulatory and Administrative Framework:

- Review the Risk Management Framework
- Review of the Palmerston (Animal Management) By-Laws
- Ongoing review of policies
- Ongoing review of administrative procedures

REVENUE STATEMENT



Council collects revenue from five main sources. General rates and waste management charges provide 85% of Council's revenue, the remainder provided by grants, fees and charges and investment income.

Due to the impact of COVID-19 on the community Council has decided on holding rates in the 2020/21 budget. Other income items affected include facility hire, interest earnings and other smaller income items. The renegotiation of Council's Enterprise Agreement will occur in this financial year and may impact the budget into the future. Council will need to meet cost increases to maintain levels of service along with continuing to look for opportunities for continuous improvement and efficiency.

■ Valuation

City of Palmerston uses Unimproved Capital Value as the basis for all land valuations in the City of Palmerston area. Unimproved Capital Value is the value of the land without any improvements.

The Valuer-General, Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics, sets the Unimproved Capital values of land. The value of land is reviewed by the Valuer-General every three years to take effect the following financial year. The 2017 revaluation occurred in July 2018 and will apply for the financial year July 2021 to June 2022.

Council plays no role in the assessment of Unimproved Capital Value. If a ratepayer is dissatisfied with their valuation, it is a matter to raise with the Valuer-General. Rates must be paid in accordance with rate notices unless otherwise notified by Council.

All land within the Council area is rateable, except for lands specifically exempt (e.g. Crown Land). Where a service that is subject to a service charge is provided to non-rateable land, a service charge is levied against the land.

■ Rates Strategy

During the 2018/19 financial year, Council commenced the preparation of a Rates Strategy to outline how Council will calculate and collect rates across the next 10 years. Council's Community Reference Group on Rates Strategy and community consultation provided certainty around future rates methodology.

City of Palmerston's draft Rating Policy *FINO2*, describes its methodology of Levying General Rates, whereby Council will adopt the Unimproved Capital Value method as the basis for determining the assessed value of allotments within the Municipality. Council will apply differential rates to various categories of allotments based on zoning and/or location and apply a differential minimum charge to each differential rate to ensure each allotment contributes a set amount at least.

Differential minimum charge may be applied to each separate part or unit of an allotment that are adapted for separate occupation or use. Council may also levy Special Rates to fund a particular purpose.

■ Waste Service Charge

Council charges a fixed amount for waste management and collection. Where multiple residential dwellings exist on the allotment of land, the fee is multiplied by the number of residential units on each allotment.

The Waste Service Charge is levied for the provision of a 120 litre, twice weekly domestic collection, a fortnightly recycling 240 litre bin, free access to the Archer Waste Management Facility and waste management and cleaning across the city. Commercial use of Archer Recycling Centre and Waste Transfer Station is not supported as there is no direct waste charge against either commercial or industrial properties.

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic Council has decided on holding rates for the 2020/21 Budget, this also extends to the Waste Service Charge. Consequently, the charge for customers with a regular waste service remains at \$490. Other categories remain the same.

Waste Charge Category	2019/2020	2020/2021	Movement
120L/240L	\$490	\$490	No increase
Upgrade to 240L Service	\$149	\$149	No increase
Unit Complex < or = 25 units	\$490	\$490	No increase
Unit Complex >25 units	\$240	\$240	No increase

■ Concessions

Eligible NT Concession card holders may be entitled to a concession on rates. City of Palmerston receives a listing from Territory Families (Northern Territory Government) of all the ratepayers eligible for concession at the time of levying the rates, in which the rebate is deducted and noted on the annual rate notice. If a ratepayer becomes eligible part way through the rating year they must pay the rates in full to Council and then contact the NT Concession and Recognition Unit to obtain a refund.

Contact details for NT Concession and Recognition Unit - Territory Families are:

Postal: PO Box 37037 Winnellie NT 0821

Telephone: 1800 777 704

Email: ntconcessionandrecognition@nt.gov.au

Website: <https://ntconcessions.nt.gov.au>

Applications for other concessions on rates and charges will be considered upon application to Council in line with Part 11.8 Rate Concessions in the Act and Council Policy *FIN17 Rate Concession*.

■ Late Payment of Rates

Any ratepayer who may, or is likely to, experience difficulty with meeting the standard instalments and due dates can contact Council to discuss alternative payment arrangements. It should be noted interest

would still be levied in accordance with the Act under any payment arrangement. Current COVID-19 arrangements may include the waiving of interest for a limited time.

Council's determined interest for late payments will be imposed in accordance with section 162 of the Act. Ratepayers can apply for a remission of interest under section 163 of the Act as long as they also agree to a repayment arrangement to the satisfaction of Council.

Pursuant to Part 11.9 of the Act, if rates have been in arrears for at least three years, Council may sell the land to recover unpaid rates and associated costs.

■ Fees and Charges

Council has only made minimal changes to fees and charges for the 2020/21 year. These changes include the addition of a fee for an additional bin service to multiple dwellings and the elimination of the regulatory block inspection fee. The Schedule of Fees and Charges can be viewed at Council's Civic Centre, as well as on Council's website:

www.palmerston.nt.gov.au



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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Development and Maintenance
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Rates & Charges

NT Planning Zone		Levied 2019/2020	Budget 2020/2021	Change
R, RR (Excluding RR in the suburb of Marlow Lagoon), SD, MD, MR, HR, CL, FD, PS, SP8, SP9 (<10,000m2), SP9 (>20,000m2), SP10 and SP11	Rate on UCV	0.530022%	0.530022%	0.00000%
	Minimum Rate	\$1,227	\$1,227	\$0
	No of Properties	13423	13454	31
	Estimated Income Rates	\$18,107,268	\$18,146,914	\$39,647
RR in the Suburb of Marlow Lagoon	Rate on UCV	0.411615%	0.411615%	0.00000%
	Minimum Rate	\$1,227	\$1,227	\$0
	No of Properties	251	251	0
	Estimated Income Rates	\$450,206	\$450,206	\$0
GI and LI	Rate on UCV	0.443029%	0.443029%	0.00000%
	Minimum Rate	\$1,227	\$1,227	\$0
	No of Properties	277	277	0
	Estimated Income	\$923,307	\$923,307	\$0
All Other Rateable Land	Rate on UCV	0.767487%	0.767487%	0.00000%
	Minimum Rate	\$1,227	\$1,227	\$0
	No of Properties	449	449	0
	Estimated Income	\$2,334,114	\$2,334,114	\$0

Waste Service Charge

The Waste Service Charge for customers with a regular waste service has remained at \$490. Other categories also remain unchanged.

Waste Management Charge	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Residential Kerbside Collection	\$510	\$490	\$490
Upgrade to 240L Annual Service Charge	\$149	\$149	\$149
Multiple Dwelling 25 units +	\$240	\$240	\$240

Social and Economic Effects of Rating Policy

City of Palmerston is committed to levying rates in a consistent, transparent and equitable manner, while ensuring that both financial and social considerations have been considered when determining the most appropriate rate mix. Council's Community Reference Group on Rates Strategy determined that the rating system and methodology utilised at City of Palmerston should follow the principles of Administrative Simplicity, Economic Efficiency and Equity.

The methodologies are easy to apply, understand and comply with. They make it difficult to avoid paying rates while being practical and cost-effective to administer. The rating methodology and rate mix consider and account for impacts of the rate burden between the differential categories and whether these will have a significant negative effect on economic behaviour. Considered fair and equitable, the methodology considers the benefits received by the ratepayer as well as their capacity to pay.

Statement of Comprehensive Income

Statement of Comprehensive Income	Revised Budget 2020 \$	Proposed Budget 2021 \$
Operating Income		
Rates	21,985,932	22,022,198
Waste Annual Charges	6,845,990	6,857,590
Statutory Charges	144,100	138,450
User Charges & Fees	882,756	807,062
Interest & Investment Revenue	965,160	993,160
Reimbursements	2,614	0
Other Income	300,200	101,625
Grants, Subsidies & Contributions	1,881,427	2,846,524
Total Operating Income	33,008,179	33,766,609
Operating Expenses		
Employee Costs	9,561,981	10,164,650
Professional Services	1,922,600	1,642,676
Auditor's Remuneration	35,000	35,000
Operating Lease Rentals	82,100	46,000
Energy	1,094,457	1,255,557
Materials & Contractors	10,651,981	10,703,905
Depreciation, Amortisation & Impairment	10,034,021	10,400,000
Elected Members Expenses	327,686	385,771
Legal Expenses	499,120	242,200
Water Charges	1,298,844	1,333,095
Telephone & Other Communication Charges	265,484	237,828
Community Grants	130,000	130,000
Other Expenses	3,280,872	3,520,633
Borrowing Costs	52,804	46,000
Total Operating Expenses	39,236,950	40,143,315
Net OPERATING SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	(6,228,771)	(6,376,706)
Capital Income		
Net gain (loss) on disposal or revaluation of assets	41,489	50,000
Developer Contributions	45,000	42,000
Asset Income	0	0
Grants received	1,420,000	830,000
Total Capital Income	1,506,489	922,000
Capital Expenses		
Asset Purchase	6,022,010	2,360,000
Asset Upgrade	9,338,626	3,779,500
Total Capital Expenses	15,360,636	6,139,500
Removed Non-Cash Depreciation Expenditure	10,034,021	10,400,000
Removed Non-Cash Gifted Assets	0	0
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) excluding non-cash items including capital	-10,048,897	-1,194,206
Borrowings	0	0
Repayment of Borrowings	-209,000	-228,223
Reserve Movement	10,257,897	1,422,429
NET SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	0	0

Statement of Financial Position

\$ '000	2020/2021 Proposed Budget
Assets	
Current Assets:	
Cash & cash equivalents	4,000
Investments	27,036
Receivables	2,071
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	33,107
Non-Current Assets:	
Infrastructure, property, plant & equipment	542,378
Investment property	5,100
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	547,478
TOTAL ASSETS	580,586
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities:	
Payables	4,205
Borrowings	235
Provisions	1,850
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	6,290
Non-Current Liabilities:	
Payables	-
Borrowings	1,276
Provisions	1,806
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	3,082
TOTAL LIABILITIES	9,372
NET ASSETS	571,213
Equity	
Retained earnings/(accumulated deficit)	197,721
Other Reserves	26,817
Revaluation Reserves	346,675
TOTAL EQUITY	571,213

Statement of Cash Flows

\$ '000	2020/2021 Proposed Budget
Cash Flows from Operating Activities	
Receipts:	
Rates & annual charges	28,880
User charges & fees	946
Investment & interest revenue received	993
Grants & contributions	2,847
Bonds, deposits & retention amounts received	-
Other	102
Payments:	
Employee benefits & costs	(10,023)
Materials, contracts & other expenses	(19,537)
Finance payments	(46)
Bonds, deposits & retention amounts refunded	-
Other operating payments	-
NET CASH PROVIDED (OR USED IN) OPERATING ACTIVITIES	4,162
Cash Flows from Investing Activities	
Receipts:	
Sale of investment securities	-
Sale of infrastructure, property, plant & equipment	-
Amounts specifically for new or upgraded assets	872
Payments:	
Purchase of infrastructure, property, plant & equipment	(6,139)
NET CASH PROVIDED (OR USED IN) INVESTING ACTIVITIES	(5,267)
Cash Flows from Financing Activities	
Receipts:	
Proceeds from borrowings & deposits	-
Proceeds from borrowings & advances	-
Payments:	
Repayment of borrowings & advances	(228)
NET CASH PROVIDED (OR USED IN) FINANCING ACTIVITIES	(228)
NET INCREASE/(DECREASE) IN CASH & CASH EQUIVALENTS	(1,333)
plus: CASH & CASH EQUIVALENTS - beginning of year	5,333
plus: INVESTMENTS ON HAND - end of year	27,036
CASH & CASH EQUIVALENTS & INVESTMENTS - end of year	31,036

Statement of Reserves

OTHER RESERVES	Opening Balance 01/07/2019 \$	Budget Reserve Balance EOY 2020 \$	Budget Reserve Balance at EOY 2021 \$
Externally Restricted Reserves			
Unexpended Grants Reserve	9,063,501	4,434,363	4,484,363
Externally Restricted Reserves	9,063,501	4,434,363	4,484,363
Internally Restricted Reserves			
Election Expenses Reserve	150,000	150,000	150,000
Disaster Recovery Reserve	500,000	463,100	463,100
Unexpended Capital Works Reserve	1,195,255	1,400,050	1,400,050
Developer Funds In Lieu of Construction	5,099,661	1,678,661	1,325,391
Waste Management Reserve	1,582,545	1,804,545	1,682,565
Asset Renewal Reserve	-	-	-
Major Initiatives Reserve	865,949	614,949	614,949
Internally Restricted Reserves	9,393,410	6,111,305	5,636,055
Unrestricted Reserves			
Working Capital Reserve	8,971,837	6,625,182	5,628,003
Unrestricted Reserves	8,971,837	6,625,182	5,628,003
TOTAL RESERVES	27,428,748	17,170,850	15,748,421

Development and Maintenance of Infrastructure

	Capital	Maintenance
	2020/21 Budget \$	2020/21 Budget \$
Prójects	250,000	-
Buildings	1,319,000	317,500
Parks & Reserves	889,500	1,562,000
Shared Paths & Driveways	780,000	320,000
Roads & Street Beautification	1,526,000	820,000
Stormwater	150,000	245,000
Trees	250,000	660,000
Fleet	535,000	90,000
IT Equipment	50,000	-
Public Lighting	290,000	335,000
	6,139,500	4,349,500



City of Palmerston
'A Place for People'



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