



# Budget 2007/2008

Esk Shire Council  
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## Local government amalgamations

Council's adopted its 2007/2008 budget on 13 June 2007 – well before the State Government announcement that Esk Shire Council and Kilcoy Shire Council are to be amalgamated into a new "Somerset Regional Council" from March 2008.

As set out in our budget and over the months leading up to amalgamation, Council will continue to manage the Shire in a financially sustainable and responsible way. We will hand the new Somerset Regional Council one of the best balance sheets of any medium-sized council in Queensland. State Government figures released in May 2007 showed that Esk Shire Council had the 16<sup>th</sup> best financial sustainability rating of any Queensland council of any size.

I expect our amalgamation partner will make similarly responsible decisions over coming months.

## State water and sewerage takeover

The State Government has advised that it will take control of Esk Shire water and sewerage assets. Of great concern is the possibility that the State will seize these assets without adequately compensating this community for what they are worth. Without adequate compensation, this change will affect everyone, not just people on town water.

I welcome the advice of Deputy Premier Anna Bligh that the State Government will not exempt the new owners of Lakes Wivenhoe and Somerset from making fair rating contributions to our community in the future.

## Council's 2007/2008 pre-election, pre-amalgamation budget is based on:

- Continuing to reduce debt. We will reduce council debt by \$0.8 million during 2007/2008 to \$1.8 million.
- Investing in infrastructure. Council will ensure our vital infrastructure is improved. Details of where capital expenditure will go have again been set out on a map to show that the money is fairly distributed. The replacement of Pointings Bridge between Coominya and Lowood will be the largest single capital works project ever undertaken by Council and we are very grateful for the funding support provided by the Australian Government for this project. Council is also very grateful for the 50% funding to be provided for the new Esk library by the Queensland Government.
- Containing operating costs. Council will not be pressured into uneconomic decisions that favour some property owners at the expense of the general community.
- Sustainable rating. In the long run, no council – amalgamated or otherwise - can provide services for less than what those services cost. Nevertheless, Esk Shire's net rates and charges will remain very reasonable overall. A map is attached setting out some expected rating changes that result after the huge State valuation increases.

I commend Esk Shire Council's 2007/2008 budget to the community.

Graeme Lehmann – Mayor, Council of the Shire of Esk, 30 July 2007

## Rates

- Overall, minimum general rates for owner-occupiers, farms and businesses, water base charges, sewerage charges, garbage charges and SES levy will increase by 4.3%.
- While percentage general rates for properties that have higher State valuations have all been reduced, what will happen in each area will largely depend on State valuation increases. Please refer to the attached map for guidance.
- The two rating categories containing the most properties (2 and 11) have been set as follows:

Rating category on your last rate notice	Minimum general rate 2006/7	General rate as a percentage of valuation 2006/7	Minimum general rate 2007/8	General rate as a percentage of valuation 2007/8
2	\$534	0.697%	\$557	0.548%
11	\$534	0.989%	\$557	0.752%

- Discounts will remain at 15% for all general rates, water base charges, sewerage charges and garbage charges.
- Water consumption charges will increase in line with SEQWater price increases
- Rural fire levies will remain at \$20 per property and the environmental levy will be \$6.40 per rate notice.
- Council will reduce charges for many schools, churches, retirement homes and other community groups so that these bodies will need less reliance on the local community during a time of severe and continuing drought.
- Council will also reduce some charges to hotels and motels to help our local tourism industry.

Esk Shire Council PO Box 117 Esk Qld 4312	<b>Libraries</b> Esk 5424 1477 Toogoolawah 5423 1551 Lowood 5423 1551	Esk Shire Council (Lowood branch) Cnr Michel St & Main St Ph 5426 1451 Fax 5426 1816	<b>Councillors</b> Graeme Lehmann 0419 799 770 (Mayor) Joan Burke 5426 0153 (Deputy Mayor) Robin Caddy 5426 7630 Noel Kammholz 5427 9213 Simeon Lord 5424 8130 Bruce McCallum 5426 4418 Bruce Pearce 5423 1645 Lyn Robertson 5423 0619 Bob Whalley 5426 6958 Lawrie Witham 5424 2085 Neil Zabel 5426 1494	<a href="mailto:glehmann@esk.qld.gov.au">glehmann@esk.qld.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:jburke@esk.qld.gov.au">jburke@esk.qld.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:rcaddy@esk.qld.gov.au">rcaddy@esk.qld.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:nkammholz@esk.qld.gov.au">nkammholz@esk.qld.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:slord@esk.qld.gov.au">slord@esk.qld.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:bmccallum@esk.qld.gov.au">bmccallum@esk.qld.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:bpearce@esk.qld.gov.au">bpearce@esk.qld.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:lroberton@esk.qld.gov.au">lroberton@esk.qld.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:bwhalley@esk.qld.gov.au">bwhalley@esk.qld.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:lwitham@esk.qld.gov.au">lwitham@esk.qld.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:nzabel@esk.qld.gov.au">nzabel@esk.qld.gov.au</a>
2 Redbank Street Esk Ph 5424 4000 Fax 5424 4099 Email <a href="mailto:eskshire@esk.qld.gov.au">eskshire@esk.qld.gov.au</a> Website <a href="http://www.esk.qld.gov.au">www.esk.qld.gov.au</a>	<b>Swimming pools</b> Lowood 5426 1545 Toogoolawah 5423 1187	FAUNA Assoc Inc (24 hour wildlife service) – 1300fauna1		
After hours emergencies - phone 5424 4000	ARROW Wildlife Assoc Inc (24 hour wildlife service) – 5424 1997			