

Tuesday, 17 November 2020

SUPPORTING COUNCILS AND COMMUNITIES DOING IT TOUGH

The 2020-21 NSW Budget will see critical support provided to help communities hit hard by the triple crises of drought, bushfires and the pandemic.

Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock said the Budget included more than \$200 million to help the State's 128 councils to deliver infrastructure, facilities and services to build a better NSW.

"The NSW Government is committed to supporting our councils to deliver for their communities," Mrs Hancock said.

"In April, we announced a nation-leading \$395 million COVID-19 Local Government Economic Stimulus Package to safeguard council jobs and delivery of community services and infrastructure. This Budget will continue to ensure we support councils and communities doing it tough."

Budget highlights for 2020-21 include:

- **More than \$78 million** to help local councils provide pensioner discounts on rates and charges;
- **Almost \$57 million** to fund the additional cost of holding full attendance voting at next year's local government elections, including funds reserved to ensure compliance with COVID-19 requirements;
- **Almost \$33 million** to help councils meet increases in the emergency services levy to pay for new compensation arrangements for firefighters with cancer;
- **More than \$9.4 million** under the Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme to help councils pay for loans for upgrades and maintenance of infrastructure;
- **\$6 million** to fund expansion works at the RSPCA NSW Sydney Shelter at Yagoona;
- **Almost \$6 million** from the Companion Animals Fund for councils to manage pet cats and dogs including pounds/shelters, ranger services, dog exercise areas, and education and awareness programs;
- **More \$4 million** under the Low-Cost Loans Initiative to help provide low interest loans to councils to invest in infrastructure to address housing affordability; and
- **\$650,000** under the Digital Restart Fund towards the design and development of a new database for the NSW Pet Registry.

"Since 2011 the Government has provided more than \$9.7 billion in financial support to our councils to deliver and improve infrastructure, services and facilities for their communities," Mrs Hancock said.

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