

# Deputy Mayor criticises govt electricity pricing review

Toowoomba's deputy Mayor Mike Williams has criticised the Queensland Competition Authority for its electricity pricing review which will add \$2.3 million a year to Toowoomba's water supply costs.

Cr Williams said he was critical of the authority for releasing its final price determination during the election period.

"The time for us to respond was too short. It's a travesty," Cr Williams said.

He was speaking during the Toowoomba Regional Council's Water and Waste Committee meeting last week, when details were provided of electricity price increases to be imposed on the council's water and waste water pumping operations.

Under the QCA edict, off-peak pumping will no longer result in discount charges, and many of the electricity tariff conditions under which Toowoomba council has operated, have been changed.

The committee was told that water supply costs would increase by \$2.3 million,



Cr WILLIAMS  
T ravesty

equal to \$246 per megalitre supplied. That's an increase of 76 per cent.

A report to Committee said it was apparent the review process and consultation by QCA was inadequate.

"Better consultation would have given the QCA an understanding of the very significant impacts on Toowoomba council and its water business, and consequently its ratepayers."

Toowoomba's water supply system is unique in Australia in that all water has to be pumped to the Mt Kynoch treatment plant, requiring lifts of 231 metres from Cooby Dam, and 457 metres from Cressbrook Dam.

If water has to be pumped from Wivenhoe Dam, the total lift is 700 metres. Last year electricity was responsible for 42 per cent of Toowoomba's water supply system costs.

The council has gained a 12 month transition period.

However, these new charges are likely to be even greater when the carbon tax is imposed from July 1.

# Food precinct opening



Mac Stirling, managing director of developer Lauder Pty Ltd, with Mayor Paul Antonio and Craig and Annmarie Stibbard from Craig's Highfields Home Hardware at the official opening of the food precinct at Highfields Village Shopping Centre.

# Emu Creek Road first major flood recovery job

The re-opening of Emu Creek Road near Crows Nest marks the first major project completed under Toowoomba Regional Council's flood reconstruction program.

Final guardrail installation marked the end of the project between the New England Highway and Mill Road, Emu Creek.

Cr Carol Taylor said the council was pleased to see traffic using the vastly improved road.

"This project is the first major job completed under council's Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Ar-

rangements (NDRRA) reconstruction program," Cr Taylor said.

"The flood recovery program is funded 75 per cent by the federal government and 25 per cent by the State.

"Council acknowledges the work of contractor, Civil Mining and Construction and all associated workers.

"The firm overcame a number of challenging design issues to repair three culverts under Emu Creek Road, which were severely damaged in the 2010/11 summer floods.

"The improved design features mean the culverts are more durable

and will offer better long-term flood protection for the area.

"Council also is mindful of residents' patience and understanding while reconstruction has been completed. I thank residents for their co-operation."

Cr Taylor said council was progressing with work to repair unprecedented damage to the region's 10,000km road network and bridges

following the 2010/11 floods.

She said around 1300 reconstruction projects valued at more than \$150 million were included in the total NDRRA reconstruction schedule.

Cr Taylor said works projects were stepping up across the southern region around Clifton and Nobby along with projects around Millmerran and Pittsworth.



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# Pet keeping fees on the rise

The fees and charges for keeping cats, dogs and other animals in the Toowoomba region are set to be increased by five per cent.

The fees and charges for businesses and a host of activities registered under the Food Act and the Environmental Protection Act are set for a similar five per cent increase.

Toowoomba Regional Council's Environment and Community Committee, at its first meeting since the election, agreed to the increases.

Councillors questioned the five per cent figure, when inflation was less than this.

But they were told that the cost of providing some of these services had increased by about six per cent annu-

ally. Working dogs and guide dogs do not incur a council fee, but the pensioner fee for a desexed dog will become \$22.

The council has to make an early decision on these fees and charges before the end of the financial year when many registrations expire.

# Drink driving charge

Highfields police intercepted a 38-year-old female motorist on Highfields Road at 9am, Saturday, May 26.

She was charged with drink driving after recording a blood alcohol concentration of 0.07 per cent.

She will appear in Toowoomba Magistrates Court later this month.

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