

Fit for the Future



TWEED

THE FUTURE IS OURS



Welcome to this special edition of the Tweed Link, focusing on one of the most important future planning projects our Council has carried out. We're calling this project 'Tweed the Future is Ours'.

I'm sure most of you would agree that the Tweed is a great place to live. You may not

have thought much about it, but the services your local council provides are a big part of the overall quality of life in the Tweed.

These services include roads, waste collections, community events, cultural activities, community services, recreation and sporting fields and many more.

All up, Council delivers 57 categories of services – that's a lot. We also manage and maintain a large number of assets, such as roads, footpaths, cycleways, community buildings, swimming pools, civic centres and auditoriums and water treatment plants. The NSW Government's local government reform process 'Fit for the Future', has presented to us the opportunity to look at what we do, why we do it, how well we do it and at what cost.

What excites me the most about 'Tweed the Future is Ours' is the opportunity for myself and other Council staff to listen to as many Tweed residents as possible during the project, which is expected to take around 18 months. This is a genuine commitment by Council to have meaningful conversations with as many locals as we can.

We want to know your thoughts on what services and infrastructure we provide, how well we provide them and at what cost. What should we be doing that we currently aren't? How will we pay for it? And are there things we could live without?

The good news is Tweed Shire Council is in a strong financial position. We want to maintain this position and find the best balance of providing quality services and the right infrastructure and delivering value for money for the Tweed community into the future.

I hope you enjoy reading about 'Tweed the Future is Ours' in this special edition of the Tweed Link. There will be updates on the project in issues of the Tweed Link in November this year and March and July next year. Regular updates will also be posted on Council's website: www.tweed.nsw.gov.au

I look forward to catching up with you through 'Tweed the Future is Ours'.

- Troy Green
Tweed Shire Council General Manager



Is the Tweed Fit for the Future?

The 'Tweed the Future is Ours' project grew out of the NSW Government's 'Fit for the Future' process.

The NSW Government wants to modernise local government and ensure all councils across the state, have the financial capacity to provide the services and infrastructure their communities need into the future.

You may have heard in the news about potential amalgamations of some councils in NSW, particularly in the Sydney metropolitan area. The Tweed isn't one of those councils looking at potential amalgamation with another council. We will remain a stand alone council with existing boundaries in place.

A Fit for the Future council is one that:

- saves money on bureaucracy and administration, freeing up funds for front-line services and community facilities;
- can contribute to projects and tackle issues that impact on its residents
- has credibility and influence across councils, across government, and with industry.

Tweed Shire Council and councils across NSW were recently required to show if they had the scale and capacity to be fit for the future.

You can read Tweed's submission in full at www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture

You can also view Tweed's submission on the IPART Website at www.ipart.nsw.gov.au under Fit for the Future where you can lodge comments on the submission up until 31 July 2015.

If you'd like to know more about the 'Fit for the Future process', visit www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au

Much more than roads, rates and rubbish

These days, Councils provide much more than roads, rates and rubbish.

Tweed Shire Council is involved in community services, environmental protection, providing recreational facilities, economic development and many other areas which have direct impact on our lives.

Tweed the Future is Ours

However, many of these assets and services have evolved over time without any real consideration of the long-term implications on Council resources or other ways to deliver services.

Through the Tweed The Future is Ours process, Tweed Shire Council aims to become a modern organisation that provides assets and services at the levels the community wants, that are financially sustainable and provide value for money.

First, Council must through a thorough internal review, arrive at an agreed position and understanding of the assets we control and the services we currently provide.

This process has been underway since January.

In terms of services, Council is reviewing:

- What services it currently provides?
- The levels of these services?
- What is the cost of the current level of the service?
- How the performance of the service is measured?

For assets, Council is looking at:

- What assets do we currently control?
- What condition are they in?
- What level of service to they provide?
- What is the cost of the current level of service for these assets such as how they are delivered, maintained, renewed or upgraded?

A comprehensive program of community engagement will then get underway, as Council gains a sense of community satisfaction with Council services and assets as well as clear direction for the future.

Assets that Council controls

Here are some examples of the more than \$3 billion of assets Council looks after:

Road network:

- 1079km of sealed roads
- 164km of unsealed roads
- 210km of footpaths
- 790km of kerb and gutters
- 208 concrete bridges
- 35 timber bridges
- 99 car parks

Water and wastewater:

- Clarrie Hall Dam, capacity 15,000 ML
- Bray Park (640 ML) and Tyalgum Weir (10 ML)
- 3 water and 8 wastewater treatment plants
- 28 water and 185 wastewater pump stations
- 43 reservoirs
- 716km of water mains and 700 km of wastewater mains

Infrastructure for flood protection:

- 376km of drainage
- 10.4km of levee banks
- 400 flood gates

Recreational and other assets:

- 378 parks
- 37 sports fields
- 82 playgrounds
- 78 picnic areas with barbecues within 39 Council Parks
- 3 aquatic facilities as the Tweed Regional Aquatic Centres
- Public toilets and amenity blocks
- 11 cemeteries
- A public plant nursery

Community buildings:

- 33 community buildings
- 3 community centres
- 3 libraries
- 2 civic centres
- Regional museum and regional art gallery

Services Council provides

There are too many to list here but here are some of the services Council provides, just listing those from A to D*:

Airfield	Coastal Management
Animal Management	Communications
Aquatic Centres	Community and Cultural Development
Art Gallery	Community Buildings
Auditoriums	Community Grants
Biodiversity Management	Community Services
Building Certification	Contact Centre
Bushland Management	Council Offices
Catchment Management	Design Services
Cemeteries	Development and Subdivision Assessment
Civic Business and Governance	

*For the full list of Council services, see page 47 of Council's Fit for the Future submission at www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture



Services Council provides

“Over the next 18 months Council will be having conversations with our communities which we haven’t had before, about the level of services and infrastructure ratepayers and residents prefer,” Council’s Director Corporate Services, Liz Collyer, said.

“It’s a conversation we haven’t had to date and it is crucial in determining what services the community would prefer Council to deliver and to what levels,” Council’s Director Corporate Services, Liz Collyer, said.

“When it comes to Council’s built assets and infrastructure an example could be while many of us would love to drive on seamless smooth surfaces on all our roads, we have to be able to afford them, so there will also be financial implications to consider.

We will be providing a number of scenarios relating to our assets for the community to have a look at and consider within budget constraints,” she said.

For example, would you prefer footpaths that look like this:

Or this:

If you chose the first photo, then you may need to consider what Council services and/or infrastructure / assets you would be willing to pay more for, do without, or have less of, for the installation and ongoing maintenance of this quality footpath.

“This is a simplified example but it does give an insight into some of the scenarios Council will be working through with the community through ‘Tweed the Future is Ours’,” Ms Collyer said.

“We really want to hear what residents think and make sure we’re planning the right future for everyone in the Tweed.”

Room for improvement

While Tweed Shire Council can demonstrate it is in a good position, there is always room for improvement.

Asset management is an area of focus, according to Council’s Manager Financial Services, Michael Chorlton.

“When you own a car, you know you need to do maintenance from time to time to ensure the vehicle remains roadworthy, safe and comfortable,” Mr Chorlton said.

“If you don’t set aside enough money for maintenance, you run the risk of the car breaking down or costing you more to fix in the longer term.

“Council needs to consider similar issues for Council’s assets.

“For example, how much do we need to spend each year to ensure a public swimming pool is maintained at a level which is safe and meets community expectations? At what point should our planning indicate that we renew the asset or replace it?

As mentioned before, Council is currently conducting a thorough review of Council controlled assets.

“Once this process is completed in the next few months, we will then be in a better position to talk to the community about their preferences.

“Part of this process is increasing community understanding of Council assets so residents are interested and can make informed choices.

“We want to know if the assets are adequately delivering the services the community wants,” he said.

Talking with the community

Community engagement on ‘Tweed the Future is Ours’ has already started.

Representative and randomly-selected focus groups were held at Banora Point, Kingscliff and Murwillumbah in May to gain a sense of community knowledge of - and current satisfaction with - Council services and assets.

Participants also discussed the ways they like to communicate and engage with Council, providing great feedback on the most effective ways to conduct the ‘Tweed The Future is Ours’ community engagement.

“One of the strong messages which came through the focus groups is that people want us to come to where they are with Council information and that’s what we’ll be doing with ‘Tweed The Future is Ours’.



Tweed the Future is Ours

“We want to build relationships with the community, so the engagement will be conducted by Council staff from across the organisation, not consultants,” Council’s Director Corporate Services, Liz Collyer, said.

“You’ll see us out and about at community events, markets and shopping centres over the next 18 months, so please come and say hello and have a chat,” she said.

“We want to present to the community a clear, simple and understandable picture of the current state of Council’s infrastructure, services and financial position.

“But don’t let that scare you off – we’ll be having a lot of fun too.”

There will also be a strong online engagement component through Council’s community engagement portal, www.yoursaytweed.com.au, as well as ongoing printed information in the Tweed Link.

Fast facts about the Tweed:

The following information is taken from Council’s submission for the Fit for the Future process. For the full information, see ‘2.1 About your Local Government Area’ on page 11 at www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture

Population and development:

- At the 2011 Census, Tweed’s population was approximately 89,000 people.
- Forecasts predict the Tweed’s population will reach 125,000 by 2031.
- The major proportion of residential development over the next 10 to 20 years is expected at the Kings Forest and Cobaki development sites, with more than 5000 residential lots for each development.
- The Tweed Heads City Centre is expected to have an increase in population of 7000 people by 2031, with 3000 new jobs created.
- Other infill development and subdivision activity is occurring at: Salt, Casuarina, Seaside City near Kingscliff, Seabreeze at Pottsville on the Tweed Coast, and Hundred Hills and Riva Vue in Murwillumbah.
- Future housing estate investigations are earmarked for Dunloe Park (south of Pottsville) and Bilambil.

Economy:

- The Tweed has two public hospitals, 39 primary schools, eleven secondary schools, three public libraries, two TAFE campuses, Southern Cross University and parts of Gold Coast Airport.
- Major industries in the Tweed Shire include health care and social assistance, retail, tourism and agriculture.

Social factors:

- The unemployment rate for the Shire is 7.7 per cent (December quarter).
- Tweed Shire consistently ranks higher for housing stress, mortgage stress and rental stress in comparison to regional, state and federal averages.

About Tweed Shire Council:

- With an annual budget to \$194 million, Council is the largest employer in the Tweed.
- Council is guided by seven councillors elected by the community for a term of four years, with the Mayor elected by the Councillors in September each year for a 12-month term.

Want to find out more?

Tweed Fit for the Future response: www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture

NSW Government Fit for the Future: www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au

Local government reform background: www.localgovernmentreview.nsw.gov.au

Tweed demographic information: www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/communityprofiles

