

Boroondara Council 2024-2025 Budget Aims To Uphold The Voices Of The People

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The Boroondara Council released their draft for the 2024-2025 local budget to the public last Wednesday evening at the weekly council meeting. The budget's key focus is the improvement of relationships between the council and residents in the area, as well as an improved effort for more attention to the environmental preservation of the council region.

The main clause of the budget draft aims to uphold 'responsible planning and ensure a strong financial position' for the Boroondara area. The council aims to uphold these promises through a series of multi-year projects that focus on 'health and well-being', as well as ensuring to maintain the community's priorities that have been raised within numerous council meetings.

The renewal of the 'Boroondara Community Plan' is one of the key aspects of this budget, with the council promising to improve their 'engagement process' with a focus to 'align' the council decision making with the attitudes of their residents.

Boroondara Cotham Ward councillor Felicity Sinfield when asked, identified this new budget draft as "a leap into fulfilling community expectations". Sinfield also as the Deputy mayor of the council, states she feels a strong sense of 'overall responsibility' to uphold the promises made to the people in their residential area, saying 'the Boroondara area mainly attracts and houses people with families and/or young children', thus the council have an onus on them to ensure the preservation of the area 'for their future'.

Sinfield has lived within the Boroondara council area for majority of her life, thus feeling not only a political obligation, but also a personal connection to ensure the 'prosperity of the council region'. Also as a member of the Urban planning committee for the Boroondara she is 'dedicated to the development of the area, allowed for in this budget draft'.

Environmental activist and member of the Lighter Footprints groups Lynn Franks offered an opposing view to the council's budget draft, saying that 'whilst the council is making efforts to improve environmental sustainability in the area, a token action is not enough'. Franks has continually placed pressure on the council to invoke serious, large scale change to improve how both the council and the residents within the area interact with their environment. As a member of the Greens political party, Franks believes that the positive progress of environmental attitudes and actions should be the 'top priority' for this local council, continually stating that they are 'too focused on development rather than sustaining what is already available'.

The 2024-2025 budget draft highlights a projection of a surplus of \$13.00 million, a fall from the previous year, in which projected \$9.43 million in the 2023-2024 forecast, stated by Councillor Sinfield is due to the 'continuation of projects from the 2023-2024 budget'.

The council's budget aims to remain within the confines of the State Government rate caps for local councils with their continuation and integration of specific endeavours to improve the area.

The budget is available to the public via the Boroondara Council website from the 22nd of May 2024 until the 5th of June 2024.