

6 May 2011

## \$33 million budget sets steady course for 2011-12

Indigo Shire Mayor Cr Ali Pockley said today that the Council's draft budget was again underpinned by sound financial management practices and set a steady course for the coming year.

"Indigo Council is in a sound financial position, which the Victorian Auditor General has endorsed in his 2010 report, and this budget continues to provide services like home care, meals on wheels, libraries, swimming pools, weed management, waste collection, community grants, tourism and marketing, roads and bridges and pathways, to our residents and meet the goals in our Council Plan," Cr Pockley said.

"The likely increases in fuel and energy prices caused by the continuing unrest in the Middle East and predicted diminishing supplies, the unprecedented floods last year, and our continuing struggle to fund the maintenance of our ageing, historic infrastructure with less grant money, have been taken into account in developing this draft budget," Cr Pockley said.

The \$33.1 million draft budget will be adopted at the Council meeting in Tangambalanga next Tuesday, 10 May, and then be made available for public comment for 28 days.

"The budget is based on a 6% increase in rates and charges, which means the average residential ratepayer will pay \$71.02 a year more. However, domestic waste charges have been increased due to another increase in charges for Indigo Council at the Albury landfill centre," Cr Pockley said.

"These will increase 25% next financial year, after a 35% increase this year which Council absorbed. We can't absorb this increase again and it means there will be an increase in domestic waste charges of \$34.65," Cr Pockley said.

The \$8.2 capital works program includes:

- Storm and flood restoration work at Chiltern and Rutherglen.
- Kerb and channel work in Chiltern, Yackandandah, Beechworth and Kiewa.
- Storm water drainage improvements in Chiltern, Stanley and Beechworth.
- New customer service kiosks at several smaller centres.
- Continuation of annual resealing and gravel roads re-sheeting program.

Cr Pockley said the Council will continue private civil works managing Buller Gas and the Wodonga Swimming Pool, but the contract to manage East Gippsland Shire waste will end in June, which means less revenue for Indigo Council.

"However, we will continue to make savings through innovative use of resources and identifying new revenue sources where possible. Contract labour will be minimised and the real savings in expenditure identified this current financial year will continue where possible," Cr Pockley said.

Cr Pockley said Indigo Shire Council is still one of the lowest rating small, rural shires in the North East. The average rates per assessment still remains below the average for small shire councils, the majority of surrounding shires and the overall State average.

The draft budget and agenda for Tuesday's Council meeting are on Council's website at [www.indigoshire.vic.gov.au](http://www.indigoshire.vic.gov.au)

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More information:  
Mayor, Cr Ali Pockley  
0448 803 411