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*Please attribute the information below to Shire President, Cr David Roe.*

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Shire of Gingin Adopts Lowest Rates Rise in Decades

At a special council meeting last week, the Shire of Gingin council adopted a 1.75% rates increase as part of its annual budget for 2017-18 financial year. As well as being the lowest rates rise in almost 30 years, it was also the third consecutive year with no increase in waste charges, and will include the rollout of a new recycling bin service to town sites and rural living areas within the Shire at no additional cost to ratepayers.

“While the economic outlook is unknown, we believe this rate increase is a balanced approach for businesses and community,” said Shire of Gingin President, Cr David Roe. “Even with a 1.75% rates rise, we are still able to provide and manage the expectation of high quality service delivery, and contributions toward community infrastructure such as foreshore and sporting facilities. As opportunities for grant funding are diminishing, we as a council need to respond accordingly.”

The Shire’s 2017-18 Budget has been set at \$20.3 million and, in addition to providing core services, is expected to deliver:

- \$7.5 million Capital Works Program to include the following projects:
  - Hinchcliffe Hill Staircase, Ramp, Car Park and Pathway in Lancelin (to include assisted wheelchair access) - \$240,000
  - Solar initiatives for Guilderton Caravan Park - \$34,000
  - New skate bowl at Lancelin - \$126,000
  - Nilgen Fire Shed replacement - \$100,000 (ESL)
  - Lancelin Golf Club bore and pump - \$100,000
  - Footpath upgrades across Shire - \$100,000
- \$4 million Roads Program
- \$815,000 Plant Replacement Program
- \$106,000 funding for community events in partnership with Bendigo Bank
- \$185,000 planning and concept design work eg, tourism strategy, asset management and long term financial management planning, service planning, fair value roads and parks, policy review and others.
- General asset improvements for existing infrastructure across the Shire.

The 2017-18 Budget also incorporates increases from public utilities such as Western Power (10%), Water Corporation (6%), and vehicle registrations (2.5%), and has absorbed staffing increases due to a recent restructuring of the organisation.

“The 2017-18 budget contains a good mixture of projects across the Shire and even with the minor rate increase we will be able to do so without compromising our high service standards,” said Cr Roe.

Cr Roe added: “The last 12 months have seen us deliver approximately 93% of our planned capital works and operating budget, including a raft of services and events.

“We also subjected ourselves to a range of independent review processes such as an external review conducted by the Public Sector Commission, a Community Perceptions Survey, an Internal Leadership Processes Review, Governance Review by the Institute of Company Directors, and statutory reviews being the Compliance Audit Return and interim and final audit conducted by the Shire’s auditors. In addition, LGIS undertook a process review of two major Shire contracts.

“All in all 2016-17 was a good financial year and a sound platform to build upon for the forthcoming 2017-18 financial year.”

The Shire’s rate increase of 1.75% makes it the lowest among the majority of other country local governments.

More details of the Shire’s 2017-18 budget, including details on the forthcoming new recycling bin service, will be published in the coming weeks.

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