



# MEDIA RELEASE

26 JUNE 2009

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## COUNCIL SETS 09/10 BUDGET

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Road construction and community infrastructure programmes are some of the big winners in the Huon Valley Council's budget for 2009-10.

The 2009-10 budget will be \$19.1 million, \$15.7 million of which forms the Council's recurrent budget, used in the maintenance of municipal assets and services; meeting Council's statutory responsibilities; and providing additional services, such as street lighting and township beautification activities carried out by the various township development committees throughout the Huon Valley.

The \$19.1 million budget includes a \$3.4 million capital allocation with the following key elements:

- \$2.1 million for major road works
- \$450,000 for bridge works
- \$160,000 for recreational facilities
- \$125,000 for child care facilities
- \$100,000 for walking tracks
- \$75,000 for community halls
- \$60,000 for public toilets
- \$50,000 for the new Huon Valley Planning Scheme
- \$30,000 for marine facilities
- \$5,000 for bus shelters

The Huon Valley Council is determined that it will not be the cause of unnecessary hardship on household budgets in these uncertain economic times. To this end, the Council's budget will provide for the full reduction of water and sewerage charges from rates levied by the Council from 1 July 2009. Ratepayers in the Huon Valley municipal area who have previously been charged for water and sewerage will receive the full reduction. From 1 July 2009, water and sewerage charges will instead be levied by the new authority responsible for the provision of those services in the Huon Valley, Southern Water.

Announced at last week's Council meeting, the budget also includes a modest increase of 3.5% in the overall General Rate collection.

The Council's budget has been framed in recognition of significant financial impact from external forces and costs. These include:

- Aurora increase in charges - 15%
- Water and sewerage charges increase - 10%
- The Tasmanian Local Government Association's inflation index - 4.3%
- Consumer Price Index - 3.3%
- State Government land tax increase

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To keep the increase in the general rate down to 3.5%, a number of these costs have been absorbed and efficiencies gained across the Council's operations. The rates increase is consistent with the Council's policy of keeping rate rises to a minimum without compromising the delivery of essential services to Huon Valley ratepayers.

While the Council has made every effort to keep rates rises to an absolute minimum, there will be some ratepayers who will experience rises greater than 3.5% due to external influences outside of Council's control. The recent revaluation of Huon Valley properties conducted by the Valuer General has seen the Assessed Annual Value (AAV) of some properties increase significantly. The AAV is used by Councils throughout Tasmania in determining rate levies.

The Council is confident that its budget for 2009-10 provides responsible fiscal management of the Huon Valley's financial resources in what can best be described as an uncertain global economic environment. The Council's determination to keep the 2009-10 rates rise to a minimum is matched by its determination that residents of the Huon Valley should continue to enjoy the same level of services and infrastructure they have come to expect from their Council.

**ends**

**For additional comments, please contact:**

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