

Myths vs Facts

New Hervey Bay Library, Council Administration Centre and Public Plaza

Developing Hervey Bay's City Centre – The Facts

There have been many myths and inaccuracies spread about the revitalisation of the Hervey Bay City Centre redevelopment. It's important the facts and correct details about the project are available to enable informed opinion.

Myth: Council can't afford to redevelop the Hervey Bay City Centre and build a new Library and Administration Centre. This will mean higher rates.

Fact: No rate rise can be attributed to one project. Council develops its budget each year after determining the overall level of community services and facilities to provide.

We are facing challenges with our operational budget – the day-to-day costs of running Council, and the new building has no impact on this year's operational budget.

Council is receiving \$40 million from the Australian Government towards this project through the Hinkler Regional Deal. The rest of this important capital works project will be funded through a combination of Council's general revenue and land sales.

A report by independent economic consultants, the AEC Group, found that there was a "clear need for change" and doing nothing was not an option.

AEC Group found that constructing a new library and administration building will cost the Council and the community less than upgrading existing facilities. It also delivers the most economic and social benefits.

Fact: Building more offices in a residential suburb doesn't help revitalise the Hervey Bay City Centre, it doesn't deal with the fact that our current library is not big enough for our growing population, and it wouldn't allow the university to expand.

The sale of the Tavistock Street site will help offset the costs of the new centre and potentially help address the housing availability crisis in our region. About 50 residential housing blocks, up to 200 units or about 120 homes in an over-50s lifestyle community development could be built on the site.

The relocation has been on the drawing board since 2001, local business groups support it as the number one project to help grow the economy, and the Australian Government funding through the Hinkler Regional Deal means it can finally become a reality.

Myth: It would cost less to expand on the existing site rather than construct a new building

Fact: An independent economic report found that constructing a new building would cost less than upgrading existing facilities.



Myth: Council should just build more offices at Tavistock Street in Torquay.

For more information visit
www.frasercoast.qld.gov.au



Building better communities together.

AEC Group's analysis found that building a new library and administration centre is between \$42.5 million and \$53.6 million cheaper than the alternative option.

Myth: This project is just about a new building for Councillors and Council staff

Fact: The new building will be a community and civic hub where individuals, professionals and families can come to learn, socialise and benefit from centralised Council services.

More than three-quarters of the development will be community space. There will be a new outdoor public plaza where there could be events, markets and live music, while there will also be flexible community spaces that can be used day and night. The new library will be double the current library's size to cater to our growing population and help lift our region's overall education standards.

Myth: We don't need a new Hervey Bay Library. The existing library is good enough.

Fact: The current library has about 225,000 visitations a year and is only half the size it should be to meet Australian and Queensland library building standards.

By improving the library's floor space and design, we can build on our programs, cater for our growing population and help improve education outcomes in our region.

The new library provides an opportunity to ensure that collection items are reachable without excessive bending or stretching, and to provide suitable space for wheelchairs, mobility aids and prams to manoeuvre between aisles.

By building a new library in a new location, the university will have the opportunity to expand into the existing library space and potentially offer more courses.

Myth: With all the challenges facing the building industry, the cost of this project going to keep blowing out.

Fact: Building contractors and tradies have been under pressure for many years.

This pressure has increased since COVID-19 surfaced with supply chain challenges, materials/labour shortages and global events like the war in Ukraine all leading to increased costs for the building industry.

This has led to some increases since the early estimates from November 2021, but the contract has now been awarded for a price of \$108.7 million, with the project funded by a \$40 million Australian Government commitment, Council's general revenue and land sales.

The contract has been awarded as a Guaranteed Maximum Price tender, which provides costs certainty and protects against future cost overruns.

Council will also share in any cost savings if the cost falls below the Guaranteed Maximum Price.

Myth: There won't be enough car parking at the new Library and Council Administration Centre

Fact: While parking studies have shown there are a significant number of existing community car parks in the area, Council is investigating additional on-street parking options and has developed a new car park near the current library site and the Hervey Bay PCYC.

Council is also actively exploring additional parking options within the Hervey Bay City Centre.

Myth: It's silly to be building a Council building with a Disaster Resilience Centre in an area that is prone to flash flooding

Fact: The building is designed with flood resistance in mind. Based on Council's extensive flood modelling, the ground floor sits above a one-in-500-year flood level.

While the building is still under construction, the site - like many areas in Hervey Bay - experienced flash flooding during an extreme rain event in March 2025. Only the basement was affected, which occurred due to the incomplete construction works.

The Disaster Resilience Centre will primarily be used for training, planning and education. Disaster responses may be coordinated from the centre, or virtually, depending on the situation.