

Myths vs Facts

New Hervey Bay Library, Council Administration Centre and Public Plaza.

Developing Hervey Bay's City Centre – The Facts

There have been a lot of myths and misinformation spread about the revitalisation of the Hervey Bay City Centre.

It's important everyone is aware of the facts and what the project is actually all about.

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

Fact: More than three quarters of the development will be community space. There will be a new public plaza and flexible community spaces that can be used day and night.

A key element of this project is a new library, which will be double the size of the current library to cater for our growing population and help lift our region's overall education standards.

The new Library and Council Administration Centre will be a community hub where individuals, professionals and families can come to learn, socialise and benefit from centralised Council services.

This is about revitalising the Hervey Bay City Centre and growing our local economy.

It's about creating a social, economic and cultural heart in Hervey Bay, and paving the way and setting the standard for more business investment in the city centre.

Council staff are currently scattered across about 50 locations. Bringing more staff together in one location will mean better collaboration between staff and more efficient services for the community.

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.

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

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 will develop a new car park near the current library site and the Hervey Bay PCYC.

Council is also in discussions with a third party on a joint venture project to deliver a multi-storey car park in the Hervey Bay City Centre.

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

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, nor would it provide for 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, it's supported by local business groups 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: *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: Council is receiving \$40 million from the Australian Government towards this project through the Hinkler Regional Deal. The rest of the project will be funded through a combination of Council's general revenue, land sales and borrowings.

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.

The project is affordable as Council has reduced its debt from more than \$174m in 2013 to less than \$50 million in 2022. Council's debt levels in 2022 are equivalent to someone with a \$400,000 house having less than \$7000 left to pay on their mortgage.

Even with new borrowings for this project, Council's debt levels will still be around half of what they were ten years ago.

Myth: *This project is going to end up costing \$150-200 million as building costs are going through the roof.*

Fact: The total estimated cost of the Hervey Bay City Centre redevelopment is just over \$100 million, with \$40 million of this being provided from the Australian Government specifically for the Hinkler Regional Deal.

The total budget includes funding for the Hervey Bay City Centre Master Plan, the new Library & Administration Centre (incorporating Disaster Resilience Centre), and funding for public space and traffic management planning.

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.

Council is working closely with Savills (Project Management) and the specialist consultant team to continually address market conditions and to ensure the costs are in line with the approved project budget.

The Library & Administration Centre (incorporating DRCC) project is using what is known as an Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) model. This means that the main contractor will be involved from an earlier stage of the project. This approach aims to save time and costs as the project moves forward.

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: Council's extensive flood modelling will be taken into account in the building's design and construction, with the building to be designed to sit above a one in 500-year flood.

The site did not flood in a severe weather event in May 2022 that saw more than 100mm fall in Hervey Bay in less than 24 hours, as the site has a flood detention basin behind it to hold back rain surges.

It's important to understand that a Disaster Resilience Centre is used primarily for training, education, and planning for disaster events. Responses to disasters will be coordinated from the centre when appropriate, and at other times, may be coordinated through virtual video conferencing.

Log on to Council's Engagement Hub website to find out more and to stay informed.

**[www.frasercoast.engagementhub.com.au/
hervey-bay-library-administration-centre-inc-
disaster-resilience-centre](http://www.frasercoast.engagementhub.com.au/hervey-bay-library-administration-centre-inc-disaster-resilience-centre)**

