

2026/27 RATES BENCHMARKING

F&BS | 63/2/14-01 | #7909976

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council notes the 2026/27 Rates Benchmarking report.

INTERESTED PARTIES:

Not applicable

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report provides a comparison of rates and utility charges for a selection of property types in the Cairns Regional Council area against the charges which would be applicable in other local government areas. Two benchmarking comparisons are included in this report:

- 1) Queensland Local Government Areas with a population greater than 100,000; and
- 2) Neighbouring local councils.

The results of the comparison indicate rates and utility charges within the Cairns Regional Council area are at the lower end of the comparison to other local government areas. Since the “Local Government Areas over 100,000 population” benchmarking began in 2016/17, Cairns has been the lowest in the Residential by Median Valuation category.

The “neighbouring local councils” benchmarking, which began in 2021/22, shows Cairns Regional Council has the lowest charges for the Residential Minimum, Strata Minimum and Residential by Median Valuation categories.

COMMENT:

The graphs and tables included in the attachments provide a comparison of rates and utility charges for a selection of property types in the Cairns Regional Council area against the charges which would be applicable in other local government areas.

The other local governments used for comparison are:

- 1) Queensland Local Government Areas with a population greater than 100,000; and
- 2) Neighbouring local councils.

The sample property types chosen were:

- A residential property (excluding strata and flats) paying the minimum rate – this represents 20% of residential properties in the Cairns Regional Council area;
- A residential property (excluding strata and flats) with the median valuation within its own local government area; and
- A strata title property paying the minimum rate – this represents 87% of strata title properties in the Cairns Regional Council area.

Care has been taken to ensure a "like-with-like" comparison by accounting for the varying rates and charges structures across councils. This comparison includes total annual property-related charges and a level of water usage consistent with the average Cairns ratepayer. For councils without direct water and sewerage services (Brisbane, Sunshine Coast, Ipswich, and Moreton Bay), we have factored in the relevant utility charges separately.

Where applicable, the following key assumptions have been made:

- General rates are based on Principal Place of Residence;
- Where strata rates differ based on high or low rise, the low-rise option has been shown; and
- All rates are shown net of early payment discounts.

OPTIONS:

Option 1 (recommended):

That Council notes the 2026/27 Rates Benchmarking report.

Option 2:

That Council seeks additional clarification or information.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: 2026/27 Rates Benchmarking – QLD Councils with Population > 100,000

Attachment 2: 2026/27 Rates Benchmarking – Neighbouring Councils



Jason Ritchie
Executive Manager Finance



Lisa Whitton
Chief Financial Officer

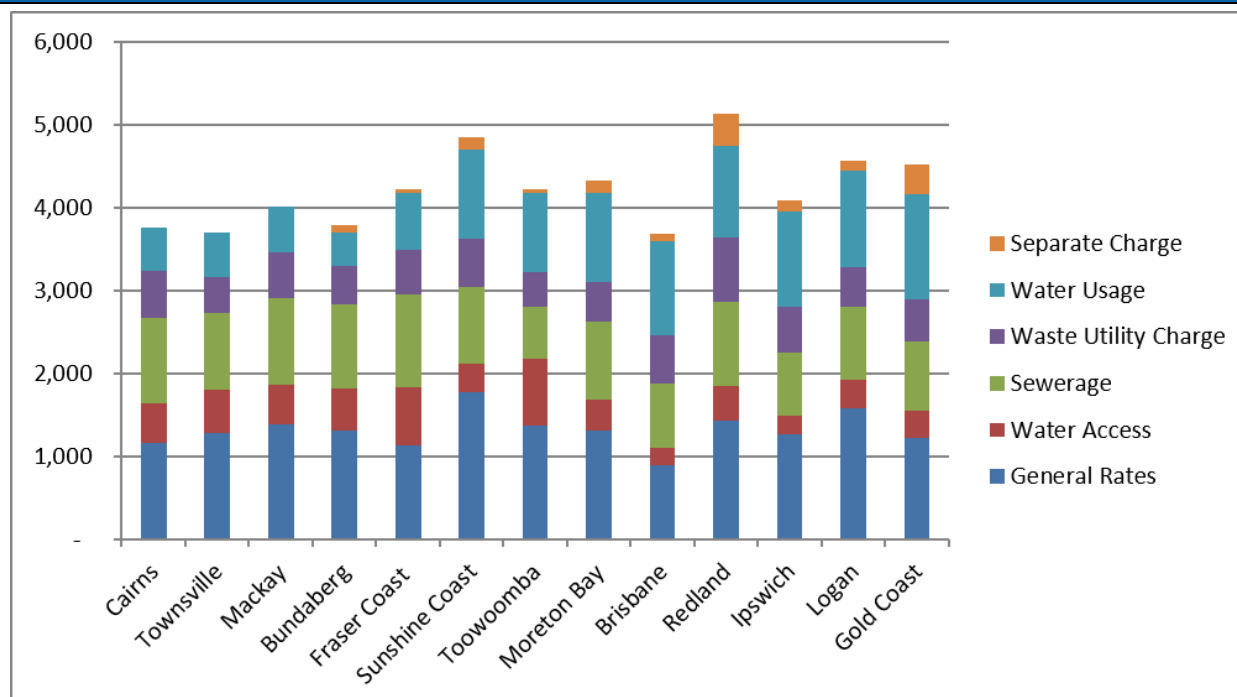
Attachment 1: 2026/27 Rates Benchmarking – QLD Councils with Population > 100,000

ASSUMPTIONS

Where applicable, the following key assumptions have been made:

- General rates are based on Principal Place of Residence;
- Where strata rates differ based on high or low rise, the low-rise option has been shown; and
- All rates are shown net of early payment discounts.

RATES BENCHMARKING – RESIDENTIAL – MINIMUM

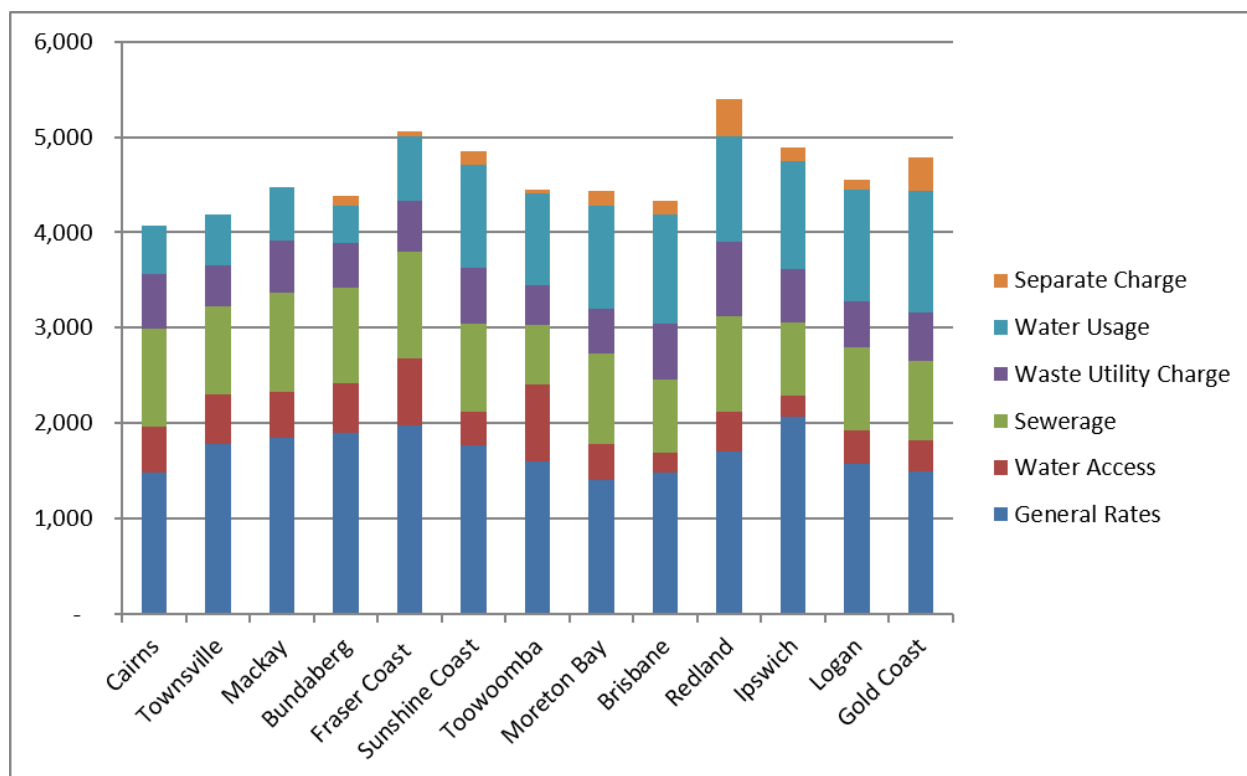


The below table shows the total rates charges (including water usage) for the Minimum Residential ratepayer in each local government area.

Council	Annual Charge (\$)	Variance to Cairns (\$)	Variance to Cairns (%)
Brisbane*	3,688	(65)	-2%
Townsville	3,691	(63)	-2%
Cairns	3,753	-	0%
Bundaberg	3,794	41	1%
Mackay	4,016	263	7%
Ipswich*	4,082	329	9%
Fraser Coast	4,213	460	12%
Toowoomba	4,226	472	13%
Moreton Bay*	4,327	574	16%
Gold Coast	4,518	765	21%
Logan	4,556	803	22%
Sunshine Coast*	4,848	1,095	30%
Redland	5,129	1,376	37%

* Water and Sewerage provided by separate water utility

RATES BENCHMARKING – RESIDENTIAL – MEDIAN VALUATION

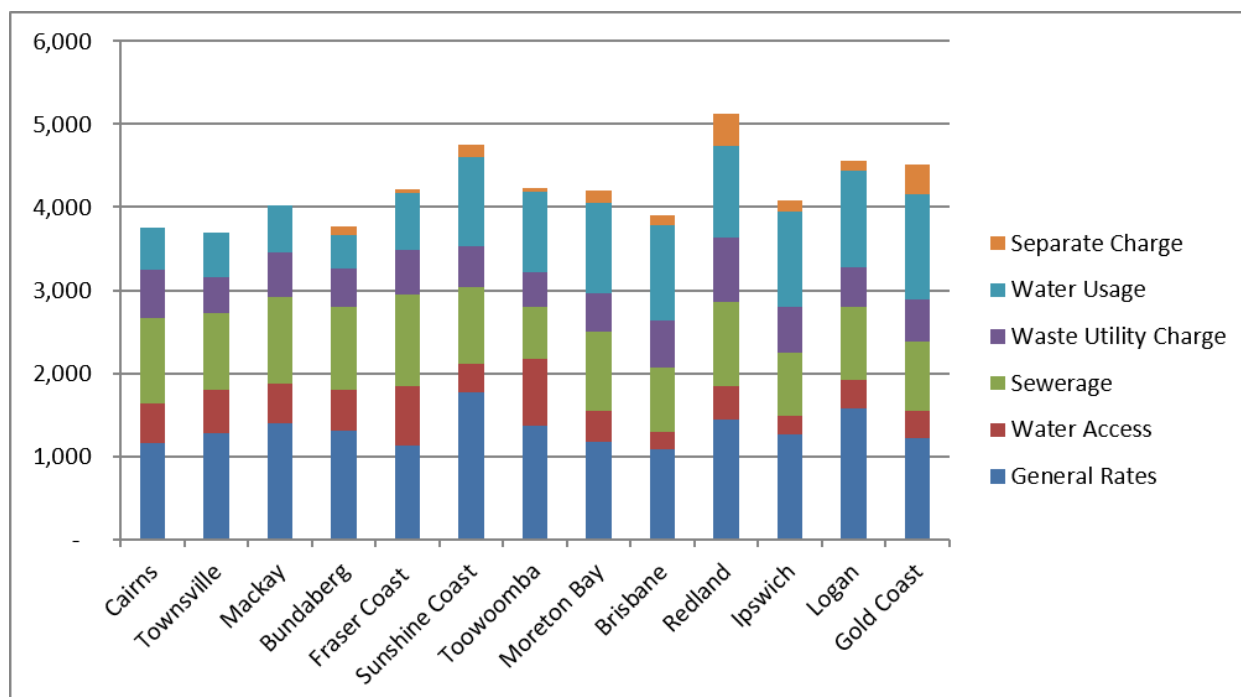


The below table shows the median valuation and total rates charges (including water usage) for the Median Residential ratepayer in each Local Government Area.

Council	Median Valuation (\$)	Annual Charge (\$)	Variance to Cairns (\$)	Variance to Cairns (%)
Cairns	280,000	4,074	-	0%
Townsville	192,500	4,190	116	3%
Brisbane*	720,000	4,333	259	6%
Bundaberg	165,000	4,383	310	8%
Moreton Bay*	415,000	4,428	354	9%
Toowoomba	265,000	4,451	377	9%
Mackay	167,500	4,470	397	10%
Logan	375,000	4,556	483	12%
Gold Coast	720,000	4,789	716	18%
Sunshine Coast*	570,000	4,848	774	19%
Ipswich*	430,000	4,888	814	20%
Fraser Coast	227,500	5,055	981	24%
Redland	610,000	5,395	1,321	32%

* Water and Sewerage provided by separate water utility

RATES BENCHMARKING – STRATA – MINIMUM



The below table shows the total rates charges (including water usage) for the Minimum Strata ratepayer in each Local Government Area.

Council	Annual Charge (\$)	Variance to Cairns (\$)	Variance to Cairns (%)
Townsville	3,691	(63)	-2%
Cairns	3,753	-	0%
Bundaberg	3,768	15	0%
Brisbane*	3,896	142	4%
Mackay	4,016	263	7%
Ipswich*	4,082	329	9%
Moreton Bay*	4,197	443	12%
Fraser Coast	4,213	460	12%
Toowoomba	4,226	472	13%
Gold Coast	4,518	765	20%
Logan	4,556	803	21%
Sunshine Coast*	4,752	999	27%
Redland	5,129	1,376	37%

* Water and Sewerage provided by separate water utility

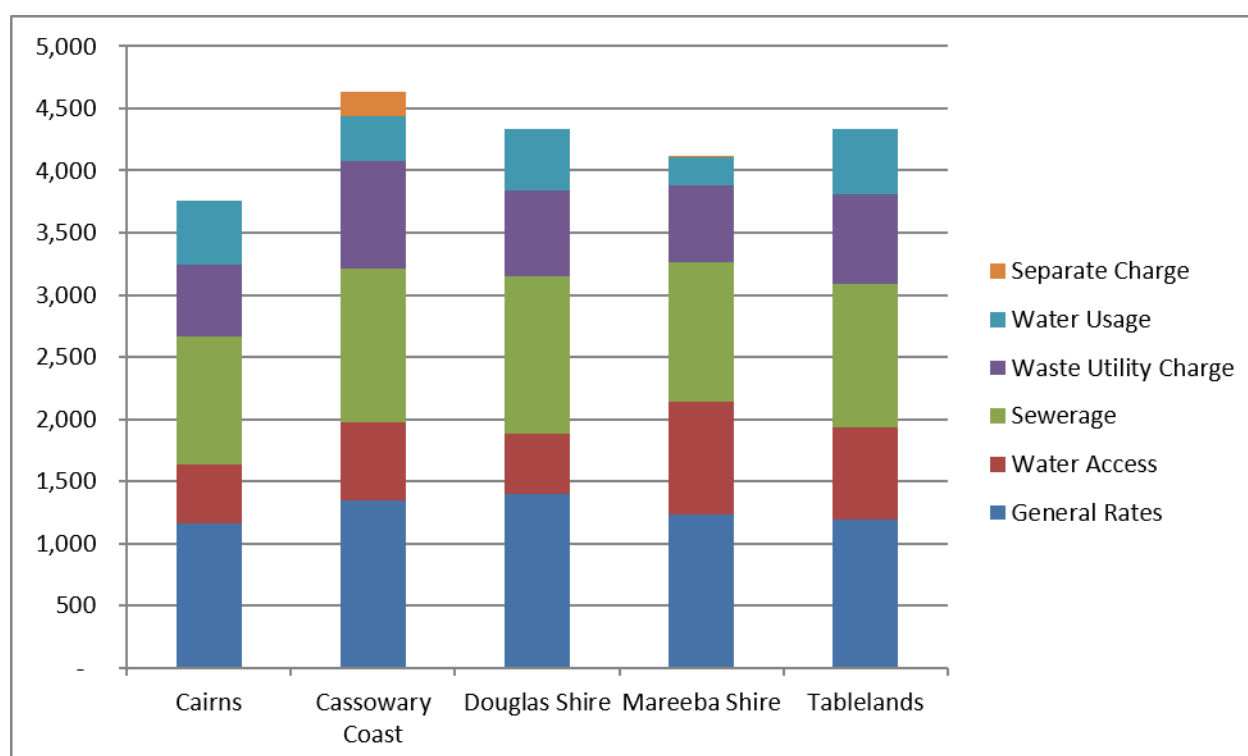
Attachment 2: 2026/27 Rate Benchmarking – Neighbouring Councils

ASSUMPTIONS

Where applicable, the following key assumptions have been made:

- General rates are based on Principal Place of Residence.
- Where strata rates differ based on high or low rise, the low-rise option has been shown.
- All rates are shown net of early payment discounts.

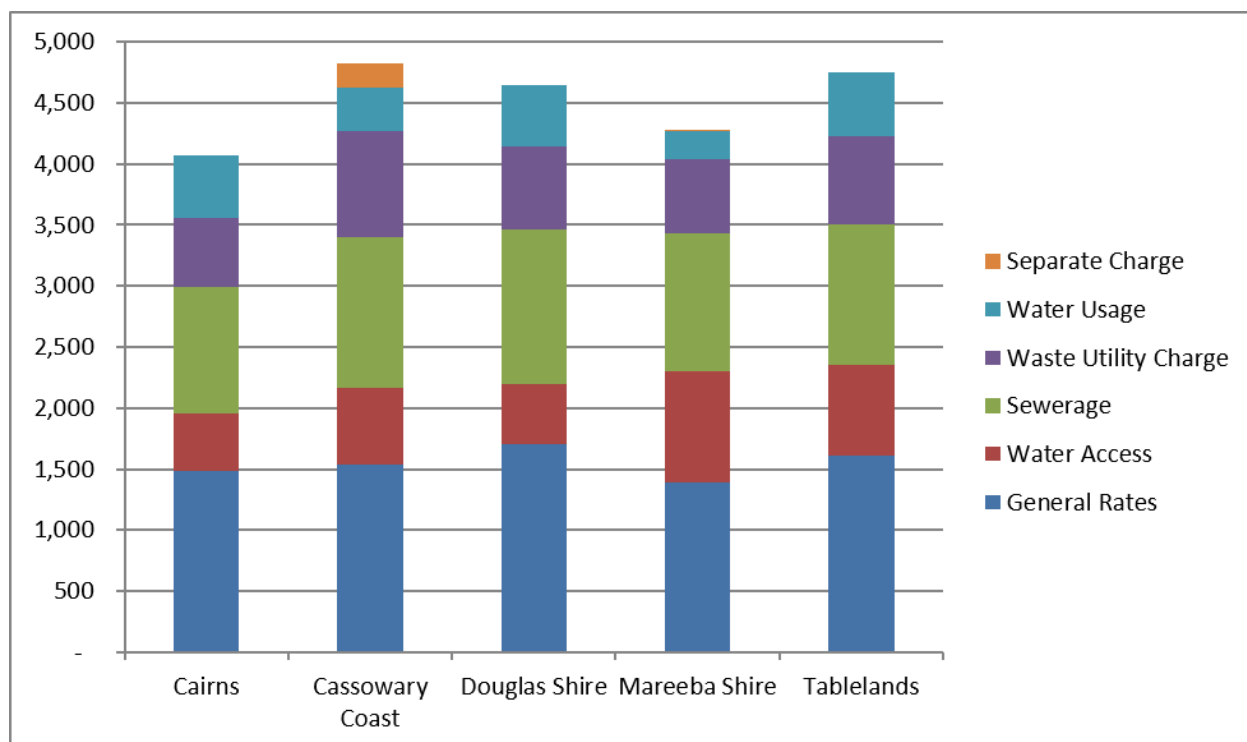
RATES BENCHMARKING – RESIDENTIAL – MINIMUM



The below table shows the total rates charges (including water usage) for the Minimum Residential ratepayer in each neighbouring local council.

Council	Annual Charge (\$)	Variance to Cairns (\$)	Variance to Cairns (%)
Cairns	3,753	-	0%
Mareeba Shire	4,112	359	10%
Tablelands	4,335	582	15%
Douglas Shire	4,339	586	16%
Cassowary Coast	4,631	878	23%

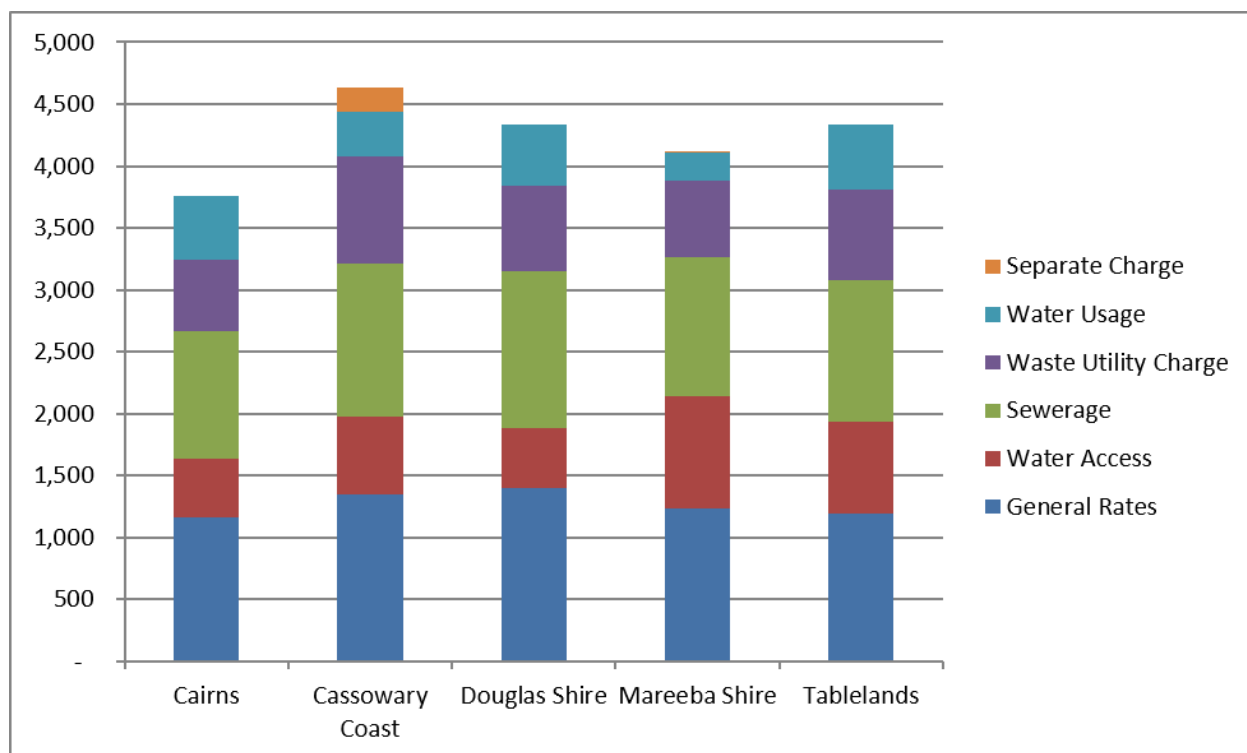
RATES BENCHMARKING – RESIDENTIAL – MEDIAN VALUATION



The below table shows the total rates charges (including water usage) for the Median Residential ratepayer in each neighbouring local council.

Council	Median Valuation (\$)	Annual Charge (\$)	Variance to Cairns (\$)	Variance to Cairns (%)
Cairns	280,000	4,074	-	0%
Mareeba Shire	125,000	4,272	198	5%
Douglas Shire	270,000	4,647	573	14%
Tablelands	165,000	4,755	681	17%
Cassowary Coast	101,000	4,821	747	18%

RATES BENCHMARKING – STRATA – MINIMUM



The below table shows the total rates charges (including water usage) for the Minimum Strata ratepayer in each neighbouring local council.

Council	Annual Charge (\$)	Variance to Cairns (\$)	Variance to Cairns (%)
Cairns	3,753	-	0%
Mareeba Shire	4,112	359	10%
Tablelands	4,335	582	15%
Douglas Shire	4,339	586	16%
Cassowary Coast	4,631	878	23%