



WHEN IT COMES TO FUNDING OUR WATER SUPPLY, YOUR COUNCIL IS 100% UNITED

WE NEED IT NOW

As a Council, we don't always agree on all things all of the time. But when it comes to how important access to a sufficient and reliable water supply is for our community, we're 100% united.

Most of our current water supply comes from Copperlode Falls Dam. Built in 1976, that dam has served us well, but it won't be able to meet the water needs of a growing population (our population – residents and visitors – has more than tripled since Copperlode was built). **Without action now, there is the real risk of a drinking water shortfall by 2026.**

Our community has already done its bit, with a 38% reduction in water usage per person over the past 15 years. We should all be proud of the work we have done. However, water conservation measures can't solve this problem on their own. **We need an additional water supply and we need it now.**

That new supply will be delivered by the \$215 million Cairns Water Security – Stage 1 project. Extensively planned and developed, the project will take water from the Mulgrave River, treat it and deliver it throughout the Cairns Water Network from Palm Cove in the north to Aloomba in the south. It gives us extra water capacity like a dam, but at a fraction of the cost and with a much smaller environmental footprint.

But who should pay for it? **Council (our community) shouldn't have to take on a \$215 million debt to fund this project.** Servicing such a debt means difficult choices would have to be made such as increasing rates or putting off other worthy community projects and services. This approach places the burden squarely on the people of Cairns at the very time when many in our community continue to experience financial hardship as a result of COVID-19.

Cairns simply shouldn't have to make these choices when at this very moment, **State and Federal Governments are investing hundreds of millions of dollars in water projects for other parts of Queensland** - over \$400 million for the Houghton Pipeline

in Townsville, \$367 million for the Rookwood Weir in Central Queensland. It's a fair ask that Cairns gets a similar level of investment as those other regions to secure our water needs when the problem was ultimately caused by decades long underinvestment in regional water capacity. Let's not forget that only recently, both the State and Federal governments decided not to commit the funds needed to build Nullinga Dam.

Council is calling on the State and Federal governments to jointly fund (\$107.5 million each) the Cairns Water Security – Stage 1 project. Formal budget submissions have been lodged and direct advocacy to relevant State and Federal ministers (and shadows) has been ongoing over many months. It is critical that funding commitments be made in the upcoming State and Federal budgets and in the lead up to the 2022 Federal election. Our local members support this project – but now we need a solid commitment.

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO FIGHT FOR A FAIR SHARE FOR CAIRNS.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Spread the word with family and friends about how important this project is.
- Write to, email, or speak with your local State and Federal member of parliament to express your support for the project.
- If you own a business, join other local businesses (more than 225 already) by uploading your logo as a show of support (cairns.qld.gov.au/watersecurity).

These small actions can make a big difference. Together we have a strong voice and can deliver the positive outcome Cairns not only needs but also deserves!

For more information on the **Cairns Water Security Stage 1 project**
www.cairns.qld.gov.au/watersecurity

