

HOUSEHOLD 'PLEBISCITE' SURVEY - FAQs

Dear Scenic Rim Residents

As you may be aware, a private 'plebiscite' survey is asking Tamborine Mountain residents to indicate their preference to belong in either the Scenic Rim Regional Council or City of Gold Coast.

In response to claims in the media and questions regarding this survey to Council Officers, as well as to the Mayor and Councillors, we have prepared some questions and answers that may be helpful to residents. These questions and answers are also available on Council's website and will be updated as necessary.

Regards

Jon Gibbons

Chief Executive Officer | Scenic Rim Regional Council

1. If I vote YES, will Tamborine Mountain automatically become part of the City of Gold Coast?

No. The private 'plebiscite' survey is not a formal government process and is not being limited or checked against the electoral roll or conducted in accordance with s268A of the *Local Government Act*. Under the Act, only the Minister may propose a change to boundaries for a local government area. If this was the case, a proper legislative process would then take place via the independent Local Government Change Commission to assess the proposal and consider if the change is in the public's interest, consistent with the Local Government Act, and has regard to other important matters such as communities of interest, town planning considerations and providing for a sufficient resource base.

This can be a lengthy and expensive process that would also impact communities across the Scenic Rim. It could also mean many Council resources would be diverted to supporting this process and potentially taken away from delivery of services, which support the ongoing development of the region.

2. If Tamborine Mountain was to become part of the City of Gold Coast, would residents' rates automatically be cheaper by more than \$1,000 per year on average, as claimed in media reports¹?

Every property owner would have a different outcome, depending on their property value and land use category. Some people might find themselves worse off. Residents should consider the rates categories that apply for the Gold Coast compared to the Scenic Rim.

It should also be recognised that there has been no discussion to date about the costs and how such a transition would be funded. This will require investigation, including the potential need for changes to rates and charges for properties to fund the transition.

In a previous local government boundary change review², it was reported that the Commission did not find that residents seeking a decrease in rates to be a relevant consideration in determining if the proposal was in the public interest.

3. If Tamborine Mountain was to become part of the City of Gold Coast, the campaign suggests the township would get improved infrastructure and facilities³. Is this true?

This would be a matter for the City of Gold Coast, and there is a lot to consider, including the treatment of assets and liabilities.

At a minimum, there would need to be consideration of the transfer of Scenic Rim Regional Council's Tamborine Mountain-based assets (initial estimated value of approximately \$80 million), a need to take on any liability against these assets, and associated costs for maintaining these assets on an ongoing basis.

4. The campaign claims Tamborine Mountain's community of interest is with the Gold Coast rather than the rest of the Scenic Rim⁴. Is this true?

This is an individual view; however the Scenic Rim is about spectacular natural landscapes, mountains, waterfalls, fresh local produce, and a richness of character. It is a place of nature and nurture, where people can breathe fresh air, enjoy the natural environment and escape city life.

5. Would Tamborine Mountain get its own division if it were to become part of the City of Gold Coast?

Council and divisional boundaries are determined at a Queensland Government level by the Local Government Change Commission. It is possible that Tamborine Mountain would be integrated into one or more of the City of Gold Coast's existing 14 divisions. In the Scenic Rim Regional Council, the majority of Tamborine Mountain residents are represented in one division out of a total of six divisions.

6. There are claims in the media⁵ that Scenic Rim Regional Council has only spent four per cent of the annual \$60 million dollar plus capital budget on Tamborine Mountain. Is this true?

Council's annual capital budget is not \$60 million. Over the past five years, the average capital budget for Scenic Rim Regional Council has been \$32.35 million (not including disaster funding received to rebuild essential infrastructure).

Beyond capital expenditure, there's a wide range of operational expenditure that Council undertakes each year for operations and maintenance of facilities such as Vonda Youngman Community Centre, Tamborine Mountain Library, Tamborine Mountain Swimming Pool, parks, gardens and the environment, as well as ongoing contribution to the Tamborine Mountain Botanic Gardens.

This financial year alone, Council has budgeted around \$3.16 million for capital projects on Tamborine Mountain (representing around 6.25% of the capital program) and has also included operational funding for the Tamborine Mountain Visitor Information Centre and Gallery Walk Pedestrian Boulevard and Amenity Improvements Project. More than \$4.36 million will be invested on works associated with important community infrastructure - the Vonda Youngman Community Centre and the Tamborine Mountain Library - with \$2.7 million of this being jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments.

7. Has Scenic Rim Regional Council really announced upward of \$35 million⁶ of capital works in the town of Beaudesert this year?

For this financial year, Council has only announced a total of \$3.5 million of capital improvements in Beaudesert and \$2.8 million of this is tied grant funding, which means only \$732,650 is being used from general revenue.

While there are other capital projects announced in the previous financial year, it's important to note that Council has successfully secured grant funding for 68% of the \$19.1 million expenditure for the Beaudesert Enterprise Precinct development and the Beaudesert Town Centre Revitalisation.

The Beaudesert Enterprise Precinct is expected to generate jobs and revenue from land sales with proceeds benefiting communities across the Scenic Rim. Council has applied for Australian Government grant funding for the Beaudesert Library and Community Hub, and continues to seek opportunities for further funding for this project to minimise impact on general revenue.

8. There are claims in the media⁷ that Scenic Rim Regional Council has spent \$200 million fixing up timber bridges and roads that are not on Tamborine Mountain. Is this true?

Council is unsure how the calculation of \$200 million was achieved, or the time span that these claims are made against. However, on timber bridges alone, it's important to note that since the 2016-2017 financial year, Council can confirm it has invested \$38.96 million, of which \$15.97 million was grant funded. This has been achieved under the Australian Government's long-term Bridges Renewal Program, which aims to upgrade and replace sub-standard bridge infrastructure with reliable modern structures to enhance access for local communities and facilitate economic productivity.

9. The campaign talks about transport being critical for the health of the Tamborine Mountain community⁸ and suggests a public transport network is achievable with the City of Gold Coast. Is this true?

As public transport is a Queensland Government responsibility, Scenic Rim Regional Council has continued to advocate for services for the Tamborine Mountain community. The City of Gold Coast would also need to consider this and commit to advocating to the Queensland Government for this service.

10. The campaign claims that roads on the mountain would be better off with the City of Gold Coast⁹. Is this true?

The Department of Transport and Main Roads is responsible for all the road infrastructure to and from Tamborine Mountain, as well as the main roads that traverse the plateau and Gallery Walk. While Scenic Rim Regional Council continues to advocate for additional improvements, the Department determines the standard of improvement and maintenance that is applied to their roads.



For more FAQs visit
scenicrim.qld.gov.au/get-the-facts

^{1,3,5} 'Tamborine Mountain launches 'REXIT' from Scenic Rim', *Fassifern Guardian and Tribune*, 19 May 2021

² *The Hills District and Bunya Report on a proposed boundary change between the Brisbane City Council and the Moreton Bay Regional Council*, Local Government Change Commission Queensland, March 2013

^{4,6} Advertisement, *Scenic News*, 8 April 2021

^{7,9} ABC Gold Coast, 20 May 2021

⁸ Advertisement, *Scenic News*, 13 May 2021

