



15 May 2023
Media Release

Annual Business Plan – Building SA’s second largest city

At the special council meeting on Monday 15 May, Mount Barker District Council endorsed the *2023/24 Draft Annual Business Plan, Budget and Rating Policy* for public consultation.

The draft plan includes a proposed 5.6 per cent rate increase with \$40.2 million of the planned \$131.7 million expenditure to be raised from general rates.

In commending the draft plan and budget for consideration by the elected body, the council’s Chief Executive Officer, Mr Andrew Stuart said that “the draft annual business plan and budget for the next financial year demonstrates sound financial management principles aligned to our Long Term Financial Plan.”

“Included in the draft annual business plan is a three year rate strategy to ease the impact on ratepayers in the 2023/24 financial year arising from forecast significant increases in council costs as reflected by the Consumer Price Index (CPI),” Mr Stuart said.

The Mount Barker Long Term Financial Plan 2023-2033, which proposed a 3-year rating strategy from next financial year, was endorsed by the council in March and was out for public consultation between December last year and February this year.

The proposed general rate increase of 5.6 per cent in the Annual Business Plan is 2.3 per cent lower than the March 2023 Adelaide CPI rate increase of 7.9 per cent. Growth from new development and property improvements is expected to bring in an additional revenue of 4.4 per cent.

While the council’s rate increase will be lower than CPI in the next financial year, general rate increases in the following two years are proposed to be greater than CPI with the objective being for general rate income to be increased by no more than CPI averaged over a 3 year period.

Mount Barker Council Mayor, David Leach said “The draft plan outlines a \$131.7 million spend, including \$50.8 million on renewing, upgrading and building new assets such as roads, footpaths, stormwater drainage, street trees, sporting facilities, open space, and other council properties.”

“We’ll be putting more resources on the ground to get on top of the maintenance needs of our existing and new assets resulting from growth,” Mayor Leach said.

“Council is also establishing a new Biodiversity team to provide on-ground outcomes for improved biodiversity, waterways, natural areas, revegetation sites, wetlands and trees.”

The council also plans to spend \$40.2 million on the continuation of existing services such as waste management, library services, development assessment and planning, community development, immunisation and public health, and community transport and support services.

A further \$20.3 million is proposed for major wastewater and recycled water improvements. A proposed increase of 8.2 per cent to the annual service charge for sewer and the Community Wastewater Management System (CWMS) is included to sustainably maintain ongoing operations including increasing power and chemical costs.

“Council continues to work hard to secure funding contributions for major projects from the federal and state governments, and developers so that rates are not the only revenue we have to fund projects and services for the community,” Mayor Leach said.

“The Regional Aquatic and Leisure Centre, bushfire recovery and resilience programs, town square and road resurfacing programs are all examples of projects and programs that have benefitted from, or made possible through state and federal government funding.

“Council has always held the view that the cost of growth should not be borne by ratepayers alone and it expects developers that benefit from this growth to assist in delivering the infrastructure required.

“Following feedback from the recent engagement on the Long Term Financial Plan and priorities identified by Council members, a significant effort has been made to present a realistic budget that ensures we can sustainably fund services, existing infrastructure and new facilities which have been identified as so very important to the economic and social well-being of the community we serve.”

In previous years, the council has released a single Annual Business Plan with proposed budgets for both the operations of the council and wastewater service. This year, they have developed two plans: one for the wastewater service and a consolidated plan inclusive of the council operations and the wastewater service.

Public consultation on both Annual Business Plans commence 9am on Tuesday 16 May 2023 and closes 5pm Tuesday 6 June 2023. Online submission forms are available on Council’s community engagement website: yoursay.mountbarker.sa.gov.au

Hard copies of the plans are available to read at the Mount Barker Community Library, Dumas Street, Mount Barker, and Local Government Centre, 6 Dutton Road, Mount Barker.

- ENDS -

MEDIA CONTACT:

Mount Barker District Council Manager Communications and Engagement, Ian Hildebrand
P: (08) 8393 6470 | E: ihildebrand@mountbarker.sa.gov.au