



3 July 2023  
**Media Release**

## Annual Business Plan – Building SA’s second largest city

Mount Barker District Council has adopted its *2023/24 Draft Annual Business Plan, Budget and Rating Policy* with a general rate increase of 5.6 per cent which is 2.3 per cent lower than the March 2023 Adelaide CPI. Growth from new development and property improvements will bring in additional revenue of 3.96 per cent.

Funding of the council’s planned \$131.7 million expenditure in 2023/4 will include \$39.8 million from general rates; \$26.4 million from grants and developer contributions; and \$39.8 million from cash, loans and asset sales.

Mt Barker Mayor, David Leach said “the annual business plan and budget for the next financial year demonstrates sound financial management principles aligned to our Long Term Financial Plan.”

Sixty written submissions were received by the council during consultation on the *draft 2023 - 2024 Annual Business Plan* with over half of them referencing the need to increase connectivity via footpaths and trails within and between townships.

“We’ve allocated over \$2.6 million for footpaths, which includes \$1.2 million for new footpaths,” Mayor Leach said. “Feedback from the annual business plan consultation and from specific future consultations will be incorporated into the district wide *Open Space and Trails Strategy* to be developed this financial year,”

The council’s annual business plan outlines a \$131.7 million spend, including the Regional Aquatic and Leisure Centre, design work for the City Centre town square and complete upgrading the play space at Keith Stephenson Park.

\$50.8 million will go towards renewing, upgrading and building new assets such as roads, footpaths, stormwater drainage, street trees, sporting facilities, open space, and 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 for ongoing services such as waste management, library services, arts, events, community and environmental grants, immunisation and public health, and community transport and support services.

A further \$20.3 million is allocated for major wastewater and recycled water improvements. An 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 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,” Mayor Leach said.

An increase of \$750 per allotment for the recreation and sport separate rate to start on 1 January 2024 is included in the adopted Annual Business Plan. This special rate on developers will contribute to funding of recreational and sporting facilities in the district including the Regional Aquatic and Leisure Centre.

“Council continues to work hard to secure supplementary 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.”

- ENDS -

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

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