



**Media Release**

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## Mount Barker growth - no sign of slowing down

For the second year in a row, there have been record numbers of development and dwelling applications lodged with Mount Barker District Council.

The council has had its second biggest growth year on record during the 2021/22 financial year following its biggest year in 2020/21.

Last financial year, 675 dwelling applications were lodged with the council and planning consent granted to 532 of the applications.

The impact of the HomeBuilder boom coupled with record low interest rates and other positive factors such as strong increases to household savings have significantly boosted activity in the housing market.

To supply land for this increase in dwelling activity, developers released 571 allotments in the Mount Barker growth area. This is just 37 allotments short of the previous year's record of 608 allotments.

To date, just over 17 percent of the 1300 hectares of land in Mount Barker that was rezoned by the state government in 2010 has been developed. Almost 10 percent of this area is private property with the rest being made up of roads and reserves.

Mount Barker District Council CEO, Andrew Stuart said: "This growth is significant and has broad impacts across Council's services. With this increased growth comes increased servicing and maintenance obligations."

"Over 30 kilometres of infrastructure (footpaths, kerbing, sealed roads, stormwater drains, wastewater pipes) along with 4.5 hectares of public reserve and 634 street trees were gifted to the council last financial year, Mr Stuart said.

"This is a significant increase in assets under Council ownership leading to an increase in maintenance and operations such as mowing, weed spraying, cleaning and repairs that must be factored into future annual budgets.

"As growth continues, the need for significant infrastructure such as the completion of the remainder of the connector road - Heysen Boulevard - becomes increasingly important given its critical function in supporting the communities safe and convenient movement through the growth area.

“The state government model for the delivery of the connector road in a piece meal fashion by multiple developers has seen a number of sections built that are ‘no through roads’. In 12 years, a total of 53 percent of the connector road had been constructed with a further 6 percent under construction leaving 41 percent (almost 4 km) still to be built.

“This situation continues to hurt our communities and poses risks to public safety as well as having a negative effect on our retail and commercial traders, our tourism offerings, and everyday interactions with education and work are all affected by sub-optimal transport solutions.

“The state government needs to commit to providing the required cash flow for the completion of Heysen Boulevard,” Mr Stuart said.

Despite the Reserve Bank of Australia’s increases to interest rates since May 2022, housing activity has remained strong into the current financial year.

Between July and October, 328 development applications have been lodged with the council. If this trend continues, the council is expecting to receive 1,312 applications this financial year compared to the historical average of 1,276 per year.

“There is no indication that a slowdown in development and allotment creation is coming,” Mr Stuart said.

“Although HomeBuilder has finished, development interest is still very strong and Mount Barker remains a popular growth area within the South Australian housing market.

“Continuing interest rate rises may start to have an impact towards the end of the financial year, but we’re not seeing it yet.”

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