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Media Release

Mount Barker popular with first home-buyers

A report released by the National Australia Bank last week confirmed that Mount Barker continued to be one of the top locations in South Australia for first home-buyers heading into 2023.

The council's own data indicates that the township of Mount Barker, along with Littlehampton and Nairne is experiencing high and sustained growth that is likely to continue for many years.

The township of Mount Barker operates as a regional service centre providing education, retail, commercial, institutional and business activities and services.

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.

The council's general manager planning and community, Marc Voortman said: "Mount Barker has a vibrant and growing community expected to reach 60,000 in around 15 years and ultimately between 75,000 and 80,000. The district has good access to facilities with a new hospital and plans for a new school recently being announced by the state government.

"Mount Barker has spectacular surrounds and is the state's fastest growing region with booming sales of 'well-located affordable housing', putting it on track to making it the second largest city in SA.," Mr Voortman said.

The council has recently completed a new regional sports hub – Summit Sport and Recreation Park – which has been announced as the regional venue for the AFL's

inaugural 'Gather Round ... A Festival of Footy' in April 2023, and is investing many tens of millions of dollars into wastewater infrastructure, the city centre and recreational facilities.

"Replacing the ageing Mountain Pool facility, the regional aquatic and leisure centre will be a destination that the whole community can enjoy," Mr Voortman said.

"This facility is being delivered through a staged approach, recognising that Mount Barker is only at the beginning of its major population growth.

"The proposed Town Square is being designed as a place for small to medium events and day-to-day use. It aims to provide a catalyst for the surrounding retail, commercial, civic, and accommodation precinct and provide a valuable place where Mount Barker's diverse community can gather, recreate, and spend time."

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

Between July and the end of December 2022, 630 development applications had been submitted with the council. The council is expecting to receive 1,260 applications this financial year compared to the historical average of 1,276 per year.

"There is no indication that a major slowdown in development and allotment creation is coming," Mr Voortman said.

"Mount Barker remains a popular area for first home-buyers within the South Australian housing market."

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