Draft for consultation

Annual Business Plan 2024-25

Adelaide Hills COUNCIL

Welcome

This is our Annual Business Plan for 2024-25 which outlines how we plan to achieve our goals over the next financial year. These goals are linked directly to our *Strategic Plan 2020-24 – A Brighter Future*, but also come from our other plans and strategies. Our priorities for this year will be refined through the community consultation process held in May and June 2024.

The Annual Business Plan meets the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1999*, and also provides relevant information for our community.

This publication is provided for our ratepayers, residents, business operators, visitors, government agencies and other interested people.

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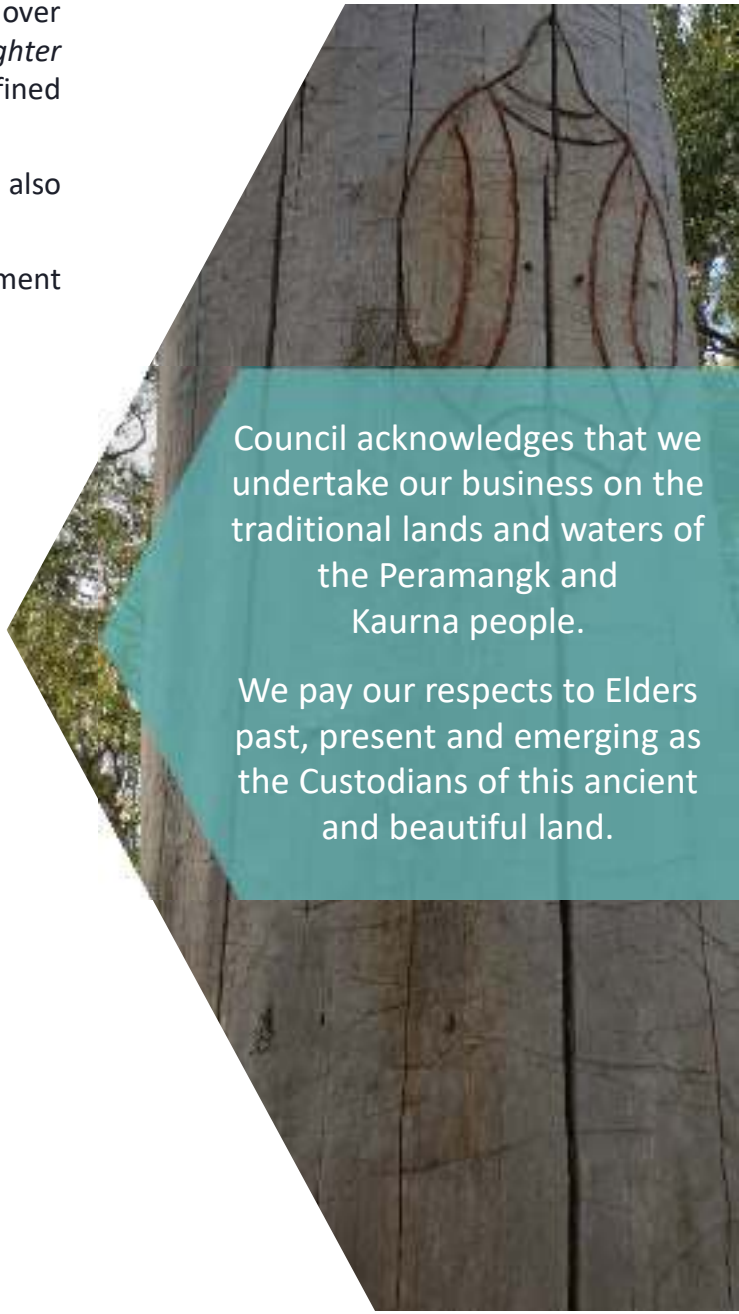


Council acknowledges that we undertake our business on the traditional lands and waters of the Peramangk and Kaurna people.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging as the Custodians of this ancient and beautiful land.

Overview

The *Annual Business Plan 2024-25* shows our services, programs and projects for this financial year. It also shows how we will allocate our resources to achieve the goals we set out in our *Strategic Plan 2020-24 – A Brighter Future,* while ensuring Council's long term financial sustainability.

Our focus in 2024-25 is on supporting and strengthening our community, environment and region by developing a responsible budget which recognises our unique constraints and is geared towards delivering essential services, prudent resource management, and sustainability.

Some key projects and activities we will be undertaking include:

- Extending the Amy Gillett Bikeway from Mount Torrens to Birdwood
- Implementing technology upgrades to improve the customer experience
- Setting goals and a pathway to achieving net zero corporate carbon emissions
- Installing a splash park at the Adelaide Hills War Memorial Swimming Centre

The key elements of the Annual Business Plan are outlined in the table to the right and explained in more detail throughout this document.

Planned Activities	• In addition to our regular service delivery, our strategic initiatives contribute towards achieving our long term goals. These include:
	  • **8** capital initiatives ($4.34m)
	  • **19** operating initiatives ($7.07m)

Capital Budget	• **$4.3m** for capital expenditure on new or upgraded assets • **$11.8m** for capital expenditure on renewal of existing assets
Operating Budget	• Proposed Operating Surplus of **$365k** which is necessary to fund the Amy Gillett Bike Path and key internal systems development.
Borrowing	• Net Borrowings of **$0.7m**, resulting in forecast total borrowings at 30 June 2025 of **$25.1m**
Rates	• Average increase in general residential rates of **5.78%** which will allow for continued financial sustainability, maintain our much-needed services and fund new initiatives For an average value residential property this equates to an annual increase of approximately $142
Financial Sustainability	• Adjusted operating surplus ratio of **0.6**% which is just outside of Council's target of 1% to 5% Surplus. • Net financial liabilities ratio **55%** in line with Council's target of 25% to 75% • Asset sustainability ratio **100%** in line with Council's target of 95% to 105%

We Are Unique

The size of a Regional Council with the expenses and population of a City Council

618km of Sealed Roads
399km of Unsealed Roads

124km of Footpath

3 Libraries
3 Community Centres

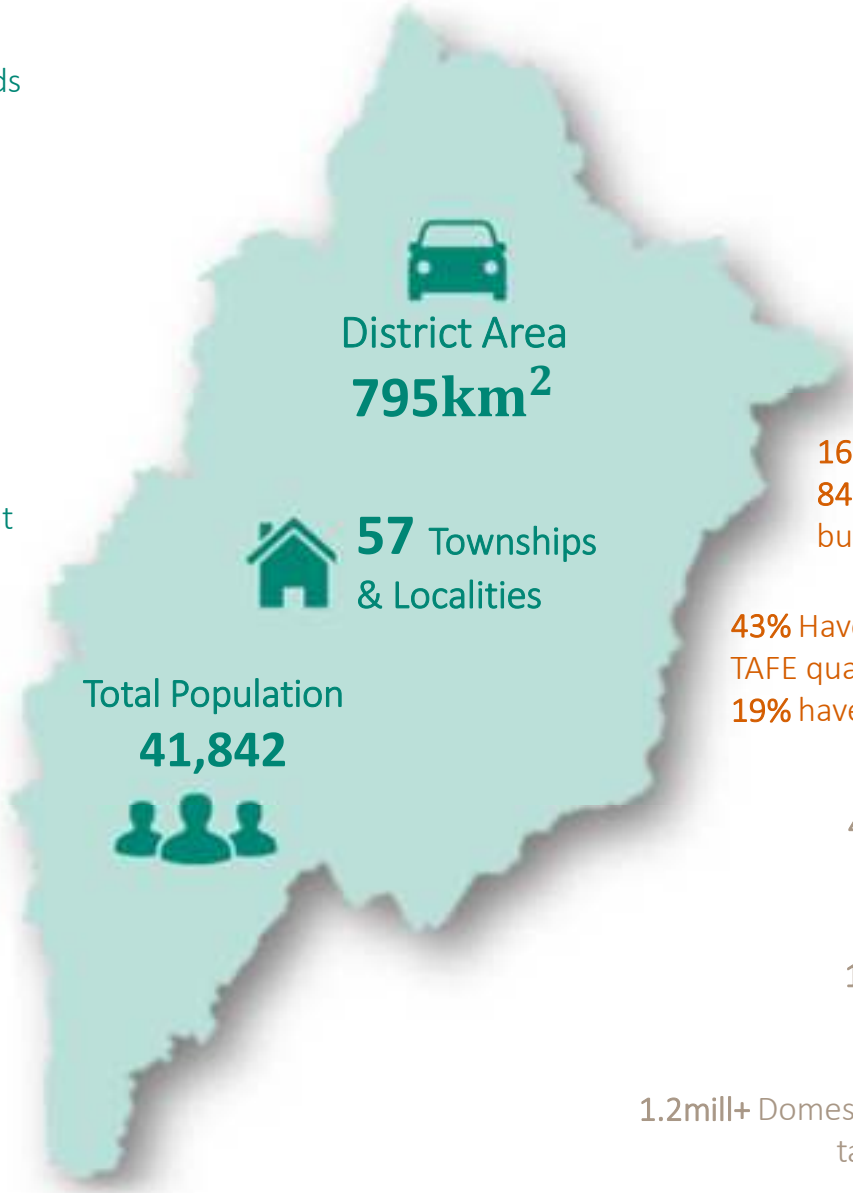
39 Playgrounds
100+ Pieces of equipment

Inspect approx.
12,200 properties
(bushfire prevention)

309 Council Owned Buildings

Waste and Recycling cost over $5.5m

8,437 Dog Registrations
1,426 Cat Registrations



Median Age
44

Volunteers
30% of population

3.8% Need help at home

16,267 Households
84% Own or are buying a home

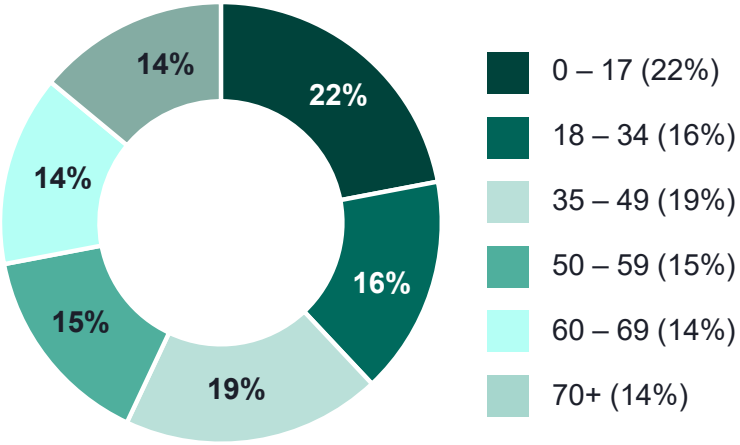
43% Have a university or TAFE qualification
19% have a trade qualification

4,243 Businesses

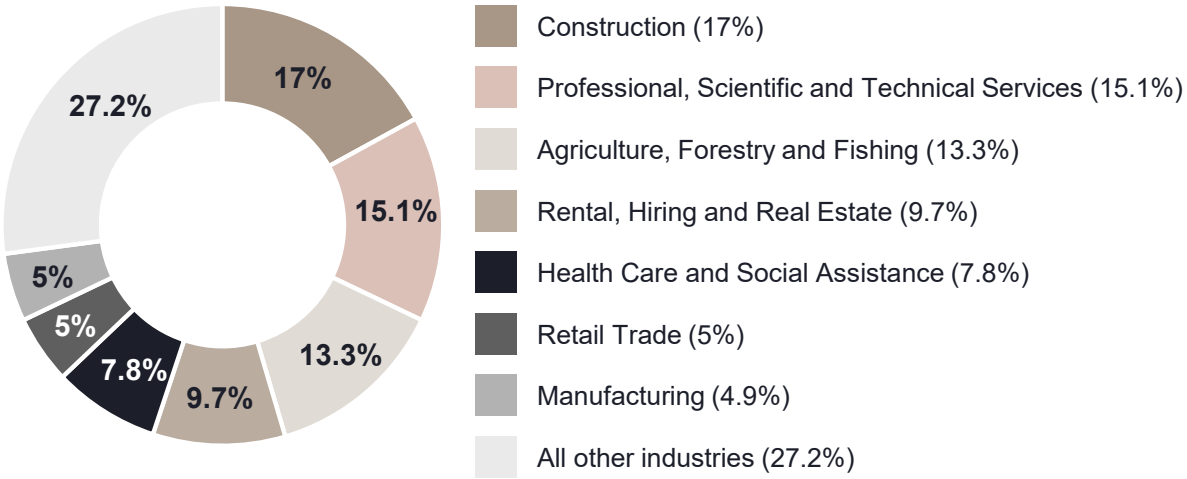
12,037 Local jobs

1.2mill+ Domestic Day Trips were taken in our region

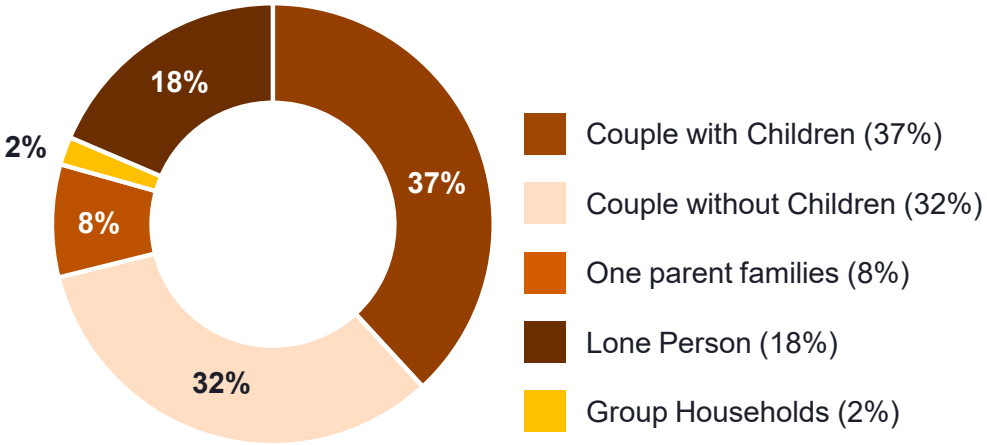
Age Profile of the Adelaide Hills



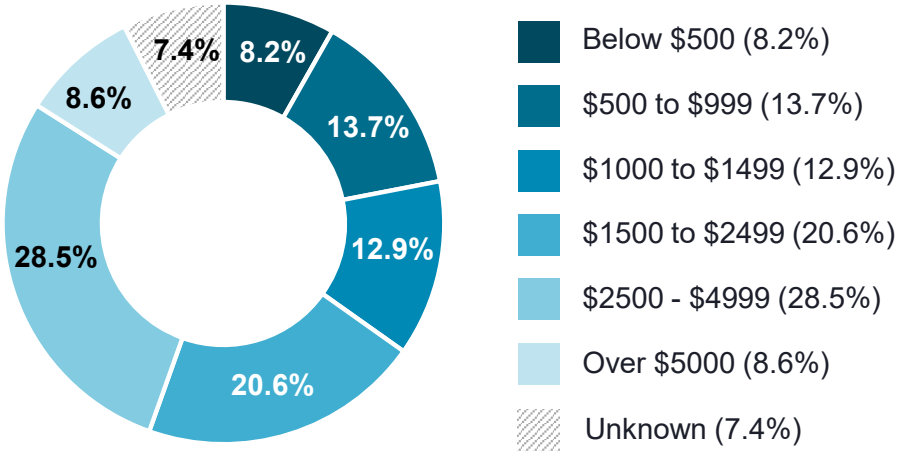
Number of registered businesses by industry



Household Types



Weekly Household Income



Data Source: *ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016, and ABS Count of Australian Business 2021*

About us

Council and Committees

The Elected Council's role is to provide for the governance and stewardship of the Council. It does this through representing the interests of the community; providing and coordinating public services and facilities; encouraging and developing initiatives to improve the community's quality of life; and exercising its functions under legislation and its strategic management plans.

A number of committees have been established in accordance with legislation to assist the Council and the Administration to discharge their responsibilities in specific areas. These are the Audit Committee, the Chief Executive Officer Performance Review Panel, the Council Assessment Panel, the Boundary Change Committee, the Building Fire Safety Committee and the Health & Safety Committee.

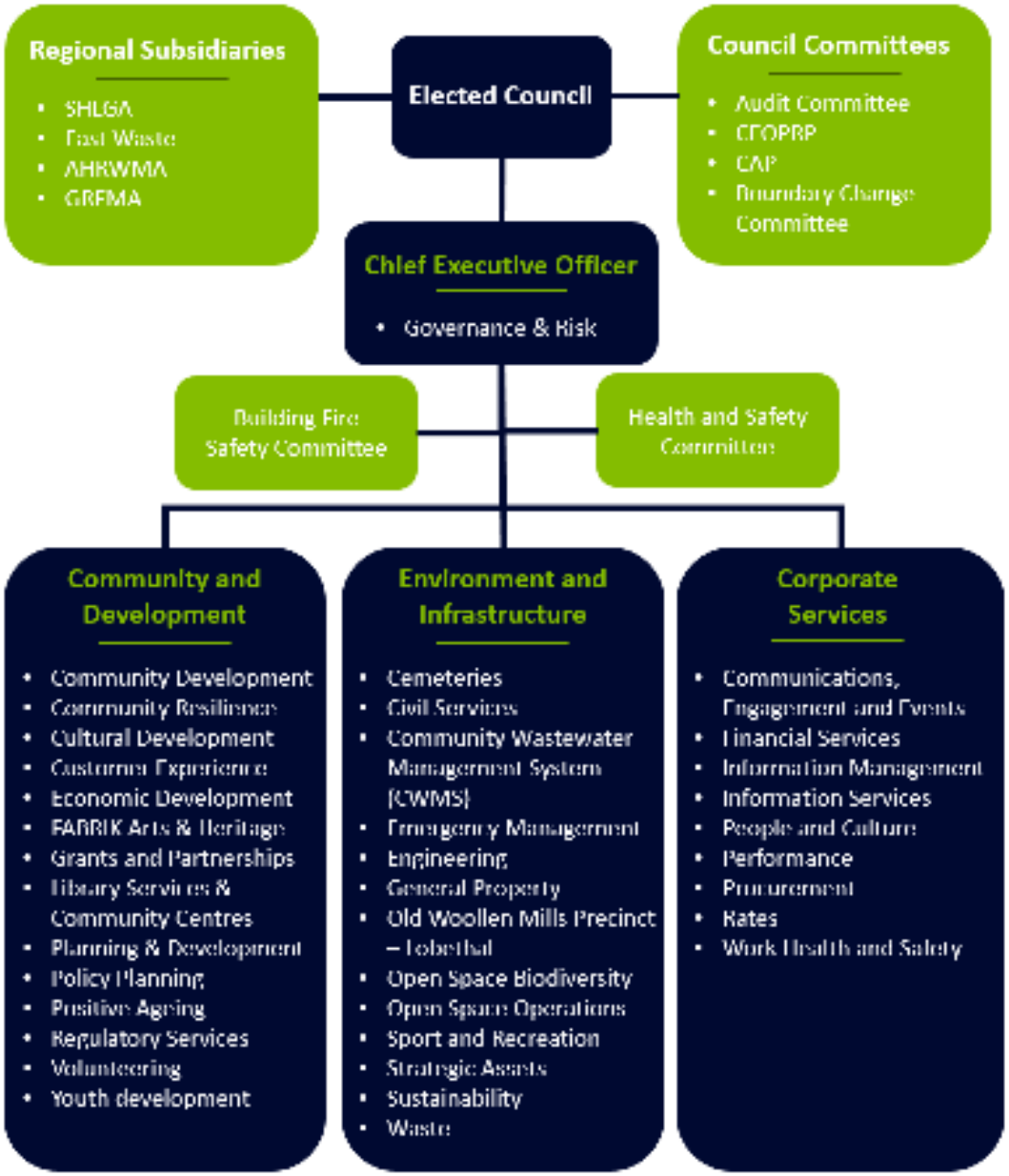
Regional Subsidiaries

Council is a member of four regional subsidiaries which assist in the strategic planning and service delivery activities. The subsidiaries are the Southern and Hills Local Government Association, the Eastern Waste Management Authority (East Waste), the Adelaide Hills Region Waste Management Authority, and the Gawler River Floodplain Management Authority.

Administration

The Council's Administration is led by a Chief Executive Officer appointed by the Council.

The Chief Executive Officer appoints staff and engages other resources to carry out the functions and duties delegated to them and to implement Council decisions. The Administration is organised into directorates, each with a specific area of focus and functional responsibilities. The arrangement of the directorates provides for the separation of the regulatory activities, as far as practicable, from the other activities of the Council.



Our Goals

The Annual Business Plan has been developed to align with our *Strategic Plan 2020-24 – A Brighter Future,* which was adopted by Council on 28 April 2020 and sets out what we wanted to achieve over the four year period. These goals and objectives are listed in the table below. Over the following pages we will show how our day to day activities, recovery efforts and strategic initiatives will help us to deliver each of these long term goals.

A functional Built Environment

B1 Our district is easily accessible for community, our businesses and visitors

B2 Preserve and enhance the unique character of the Hills for current and future generations

B3 Consider external influences in our long term asset management and adaptation planning

B4 Sustainable management of our built assets ensures a safe, functional and well serviced community

Community Wellbeing

C1 A community for everyone - that is inclusive, welcoming and accessible

C2 A connected, engaged and supported community

C3 A community that grows together

C4 An active, healthy, thriving and resilient community

C5 Respect for Aboriginal Culture and values

C6 Celebrate our community's unique culture through arts, heritage and events

A prosperous Economy

E1 Support and grow our region's existing and emerging industries

E2 Provide local infrastructure to drive growth and productivity

E3 Encourage, attract and retain a creative, talented and skilled workforce in our region

E4 Cultivate a clear, unique and consistent regional identity that can be leveraged to attract national and international attention

A valued Natural Environment

N1 Conserve and enhance the regional natural landscape character and amenity values of our region

N2 Recognise the benefits of ecosystem services and improve environmental resilience by reducing environmental impacts

N3 Nurture valuable partnerships and collaborations and engage the local community in the management of our natural environment

N4 Reduce the impact of waste to landfill by maintaining a robust waste and resource management framework

N5 Assist our community to reduce the impact of waste to landfill on the environment

A progressive Organisation

O1 We have the right people with the right knowledge and skills in the right jobs and they are supported and developed

O2 Our customers find it easier to interact and do business with Council and have an improved customer experience

O3 Our organisation is financially sustainable for both current and future generations

O4 We actively represent our community

O5 We are accountable, informed, and make decisions in the best interests of the whole community

O6 Technology and innovation is utilised to better meet our community's expectations and deliver value for money

Our Services

The services and day to day activities we provide are our main method of delivering on our long-term goals and objectives. Over 2024-25, our skilled and agile workforce will continue in our commitment to deliver cost effective and efficient services in support of our community.

- **Animal Management** - Promoting responsible dog and cat ownership, responding to nuisance and hazards caused by other animals including livestock, eradicating European wasp nests and conducting a Feral Cat Study.
- **Cemeteries** – Ongoing maintenance and management of 16 Council owned cemeteries within the region.
- **Civil Services** – Ongoing management, maintenance and replacement planning of public infrastructure including roads, bridges, signage, stormwater, kerbs and footpaths.
- **Community Centres** – Providing opportunities to improve health and wellbeing, participate in lifelong learning and sharing skills with others.
- **Communications, Engagement and Events** –Ensuring communication between the Council and community is accurate, relevant, valuable and engaging. Promoting and supporting community events which have social and economic benefits to the district.
- **Community Development** – Overseeing community wellbeing and disability access and inclusion programs, as well as a number of regional support programs, including provision of funding to The Hut Community Centre and the Adelaide Hills Community Passenger Transport Network.
- **Community Wastewater Management Systems (CWMS)** – Management of CWMS and associated infrastructure e.g. septic tanks, treatment ponds.
- **Customer Experience** – Driving organisational improvement and innovation to improve the customer experience.
- **Customer Services** – Providing ready access to Council services and responding to customer enquiries through three physical service centres, a phone contact centre and an online request portal.
- **Cultural Development** – Focusing on cultural diversity, Aboriginal respect and recognition, and the arts in all its forms.
- **Economic Development** - Supporting and promoting our business community by:
  - Promoting tourism and supporting operators, through funding the work of Adelaide Hills Tourism,
  - Identifying and promoting local regional development opportunities through funding to the local Regional Development Australia board,
  - Responding to the needs of established or potential local business operators,
  - Identifying and promoting opportunities for government investment, and
  - Undertaking niche projects to address particular needs.

Biodiversity staff at Lobethal Bushland Park

Our Services

- **Emergency Management** – Working collaboratively to prevent, prepare, respond and recover from natural disasters and other hazards.
- **Fabrik Arts and Heritage Hub –** Providing community exhibitions, workshops and events. Establishing a thriving arts and heritage hub to support creative industries and the broader local economy through increased tourism, and continuing to promote and preserve our vibrant cultural and historical hub
- **Financial services –** Providing accounting and financial activities including procurement support, payments, collection of rates and debt recovery, treasury management and support to Council in financial decision making.
- **Fire Prevention** – Legislative function of ensuring identified properties are prepared for the bushfire season. Assessing the extent of bushfire hazards within the Council area and providing advice to land owners in respect of bushfire prevention and management.
- **Governance –** Supporting the Mayor, Councillors, CEO, the Administration and community with their legislated roles and responsibilities including coordination of Council & Committee meetings, elections, risk management, audit and review activities, and corporate planning and reporting activities.
- **Grants & Partnerships –** Grant giving programs supporting community-based initiatives. Partnerships with stakeholders to deliver local and regional outcomes.
- **Information, Communication and Technology** – Providing support for over 1300 devices, 250 system users and 100 public access devices for libraries and community centres. Manages system security, asset maintenance and renewal.
- **Information Systems** – Systems for the capture, dissemination, storage, security, accessibility and management of information received and generated by Council.
- **Libraries -** Providing access to information resources for learning or leisure. Providing opportunities for community to engage, learn and connect.
- **Open Space Operations** –Maintaining parks and reserves, biodiversity activities, and fire breaks/ tracks.
- **Open Space Biodiversity –** Undertaking activities such as weed management, habitat conservation and expansion, research and knowledge development, and supporting community in their related activities**.**
- **Organisational Development and Work Health & Safety –** Providing support to our people covering organisational development, human resource management, work health and safety and payroll.
- **Parking and By-law Enforcement** – Monitoring and regulating parking and particular public activities to ensure safe and accessible environments.
- **Planning & Development** – Assessment of development applications and activities within the region. Inspection of approved buildings and swimming pools and taking compliance action where required . Reviewing safety of publicly accessible buildings.

Our Services

- **Policy Planning** – undertaking policy and project work such as amendments to the new Planning and Design Code, and preparation of urban design guidelines.
- **Positive Ageing** – Providing home and social support, particularly under the Commonwealth funded Commonwealth Home Support Program. Developing and implementing targeted strategies and programs in our region.
- **Property Services** – Facilitating appropriate events, outdoor dining, roadside trading and mobile food vans on Council managed land and roads. Ongoing maintenance and management of Council's service centres, community facilities and Council's real estate assets including some 380+ parcels of land and 180+ buildings.
- **Public Health** – Inspections of food businesses, waste water and public swimming pools to provide safe public environments. Providing clinics to enable the community to access vaccinations easily.
- **Sport & Recreation Planning –** Management and utilisation of Council's sport, recreation and open space assets; and support of clubs and the community's recreational activities throughout the region.
- **Strategic Assets** – Develops and refines the Asset Management Plans and the future renewal Capital Works Programs. Manages Council's Geographic Information Systems and associated corporate data.
- **Sustainability –** Including climate change considerations into Council decision making, providing strategies for carbon neutrality, water management and renewable energy in response to climate change impacts.
- **Volunteering** – Encouraging voluntary participation across the Adelaide Hills through provision of opportunities, training and support for volunteer involving groups.
- **Waste -** Providing waste collections and recycling services to 16,500 properties, green waste organics kerbside collections in townships, 'at call' hard waste collection, and operates the Heathfield Resource Recovery Centre for community use.
- **Wastewater Systems Compliance** – Working with landowners to ensure their on-site wastewater systems are compliant and operating correctly to minimise impact on the water catchment.
- **Youth Development** – Providing a range of programs and activities to support and develop youth in our community.

Our focus for 2024-25

Council's focus for the year is on supporting and strengthening our community, environment and region by developing a responsible budget which recognises our unique constraints and is geared towards delivering essential services, prudent resource management, and sustainability.

Some of the highlights include:

- Setting goals and a pathway to achieving net zero corporate carbon emissions
- Implementing technology upgrades with a new CRM to improve the customer experience
- Extending the Amy Gillett Bikeway from Mount Torrens to Birdwood
- Installing a splash park at the Adelaide Hills War Memorial Swimming Centre, Woodside
- Developing a new Biodiversity Strategy and Tree Strategy
- Continuing to implement actions from the Our Watch's "Prevention Toolkit for Local Government"
- Activating the Fabrik Arts and Heritage Hub following its completed redevelopment
- Delivering road safety initiatives under the federally funded black spot program
- Implementing further actions in the Towards Community Led Resilience Program
- Increasing community connections through forums
- Collaborating with Adelaide Hills Tourism to promote and support tourism across our region.
- Advocating for key economic development issues in the region with other levels of government
- Reviewing the outcomes of our rural areas organics waste collection trial
- Conducting a legislated representation review to determine whether the Adelaide Hills Community would benefit from an alteration to its composition or ward structure

How we measure our success

Our success will be demonstrated through service based performance measures and customer feedback in delivering what our community needs and what we aspire to achieve under our programs and services.

As an organisation, our internal measures of success include service-driven performance measures, achievement of financial targets, evidence of our corporate governance, implementation of innovative processes and technology, and organisational development achievements.

The details of these measures are included in the suite of Corporate Performance Indicators (*Annexure C*) which will be used in our performance reporting to Council each quarter, and in our Annual report for 2024-25.

Strategic Initiatives

Strategic Initiatives are specially funded and priority activities, projects and programs of work that are planned for 2024-25. “Operating“ initiatives are related to administrative projects, community programs and other activities and tasks.

Project ID	Operating initiatives	Area	Objective and/or Priority*	Budget 2024-25 ($’000)
B1008	Amy Gillet Bikeway net contribution (Grant funding of $5.2 million)	Environment & Infrastructure	B1.1	$5,700,000
B2008	Local Heritage (Privately Owned) Planning and Design Code Amendment	Community & Development	B2.4	$30,000
B2010	Adelaide Hills Subzone Code Amendment	Community & Development	B2.3	$30,000
B3014	Review of carbon management plan	Environment & Infrastructure	B3.1	$30,000
B4043	Hamilton Hill - Dunfield Estate & Crest Maintenance	Environment & Infrastructure	B4	$61,000
C4012	Continue to adapt to climate change with an all hazards emergency management approach to support the community and the emergency services	Environment & Infrastructure	C4	$30,000
C4022	Towards Community Led Resilience Program (Fully grant funded)	Community & Development	C4.5	$300,000
C4025	Continue Towards Community Led Resilience Work	Community & Development	C4.5	$30,000
C4042	Implement activities from Our Watch's "Prevention Toolkit for Local Government"	Community & Development	C4	$15,000
C6006	Tour Down Under	Corporate Services	C6	$76,000

**Strategic Goals, Objectives and priorities are listed in Annexure F*

Strategic Initiatives *cont…*

Strategic Initiatives are specially funded and priority activities, projects and programs of work that are planned for 2024-25. “Operating“ initiatives are related to administrative projects, community programs and other activities and tasks.

Project ID	Operating initiatives	Area	Objective and/or Priority*	Budget 2024-25 ($’000)
E1004	Stirling main street support	Community & Development	E1.5	$23,000
E4001	Additional Tree safety work required to support the Tour Down Under	Environment & Infrastructure	E4	$31,000
N1006	Best practice procedure for maintenance of AHC riparian zones	Environment & Infrastructure	N1	$6,000
N1007	Implementation of the Tree Strategy	Environment & Infrastructure	N1.1	$20,000
N4002	Kerbside bin system collection frequency change and rural FOGO trial	Environment & Infrastructure	N4	$60,000
N4003	Ashton Landfill Short Term Project Management	Environment & Infrastructure	N4	$175,000
O4005	Representation Review	CEOs Office	O4	$15,000
O5007	Customer Relationship Management (CRM) renewal	Corporate Services	O5	$586,000
O6008	Digital Transformation Program	Corporate Services	O6	$150,000

**Strategic Goals, Objectives and priorities are listed in Annexure F*

Strategic Initiatives *cont…*

Strategic Initiatives are specially funded and priority activities, projects and programs of work that are planned for 2024-25. “Capital” initiatives are generally related to new physical assets and infrastructure investment.

Project ID	Capital initiatives	Area	Objective and/or Priority*	Budget 2024-25 ($’000)
B1004	New and upgraded footpaths	Environment & Infrastructure	B1	$ 292,000
B3005	Carbon Management Plan - Energy Upgrades, Battery & Efficiency Actions	Environment & Infrastructure	B3	$ 50,000
B4009	Norton Summit land purchase	Environment & Infrastructure	B4	$130,000
B4014	Road Safety Program including co-contribution to Road Blackspot (Grant Funded)	Environment & Infrastructure	B4	$ 1,844,000
B4045	Stormwater projects	Environment & Infrastructure	B4	$ 544,000
B4053	Automated External Defibrillator Project	Environment & Infrastructure	B4	$90,000
C1006	Splash park at the Adelaide Hills War Memorial Swimming Centre ($600k Grant funded)	Environment & Infrastructure	C1.1	$750,000
C4021	Community & Recreation Facilities Framework Implementation (Operating and capital)	Environment & Infrastructure	C4	$ 162,000

**Strategic Goals, Objectives and priorities are listed in Annexure F*

Financial Overview

Key financial information for 2024-25 is summarised below:

Budget Summary	$'000
Rates Income	51,442
All Other Operating Income (including initiatives)	13,597
Total Operating Income	**65,039**
Core Operating Expenses (excluding Initiatives)	57,606
Operating Initiatives	7,068
Total Operating Expenditure	**64,674**
Operating Surplus	**365**
Gross Capital Renewal Program Expenditure	11,842
Gross capital expenditure on new /upgraded assets	4,340
Total Gross Capital Expenditure	**16,182**
Estimated New Borrowings	1,460

Council's projected operating income is sufficient to meet projected operating expenses and means Council is financially sustainable.

Elements of the Budget: Income and Expenses

Income

Rate revenue accounts for approximately 85% of Council's operating income, while grants, fees and charges make up the majority of the other operating income. We continue to pursue grant income and partnerships with external funders where possible to minimise the requirement for revenue via rates.

Fees and Charges

Section 188 of the *Local Government Act 1999* sets out how fees and charges are managed in Council. Council reviews its fees and charges each year, in conjunction with the development of the annual budget to ensure that the fees proposed:

- reflect (or move progressively toward) the cost of the services' provision
- are comparable with market rates, where appropriate
- take into account benefit derived by users of community facilities
- are consistent with Council directions articulated through existing policy or plans
- are consistent with Council's LTFP assumptions

Generally, this has resulted in proposed fee increases that are in line with CPI, insofar as this is practicable.

Expenses

39% of the Council's operating expenditure is attributable to the payment of salaries and wages and around 40% is applied to materials, contracts and other expenses.

Key financial targets and financial sustainability

Financial sustainability is considered with reference to Council's agreed target ranges in three key ratios:

Indicator	Adopted Target	2024-25 Budget
Operating Surplus Ratio	1 - 5%	**0.56%**
Net Financial Liabilities Ratio	25 - 75%	**55%**
Asset Renewal Funding Ratio	95– 105%	**100%**

Council's alignment to the targets for all ratios provides a level of certainty to the community that financial sustainability will be maintained over the long term.

Council's Operating Surplus is important to financial sustainability as it improves Council's ability to absorb the expenditure impacts from unexpected events such as bushfires, floods, or pandemics. It also provides capacity to reduce our liabilities (borrowings) by funding a proportion of new capital / upgrade expenditure.

Impact on ratepayers

The overall amount existing ratepayers will pay in general rates will increase on average by 5.78%. For a residential property of average value, this equates to an increase of approximately $142 for the 2024-25 year. Rate increases may vary from the average where there has been new development, capital improvements or other significant change to the value of the property.

To reduce the impact of significant valuation changes for 2024-25 Council proposes:

- Applying a rate rebate to limit the maximum general rate increase to 15% across residential and primary production land use categories
- Make the rebate automatic (similar to the 2023-24 financial year) but also retaining an application process
- Retaining the exclusion of the cap for valuation increases due to improvements, changes in land use and rateability
- Adjusting the exclusion of change of ownership properties to those properties sold after 30 June 2023

Significant influences for the 2024-25 budget

A number of factors have influenced the preparation of Council's *2024-25 Annual Business Plan*. These include:

- Major projects being undertaken by Council will have a significant impact on the budget. Council has lobbied for the completion of the Amy Gillett bike path Stage 4 and this is expected to come to fruition in 2024/25, with Council managing the project and both State and Federal Government supplying funding towards its completion. Additionally, Council is replacing ageing systems to improve customer service levels to the community. Neither of these financial pressures will be ongoing but do increase the costs in 2024/25.
- Inflationary pressures continue to push costs up. Whilst there maybe some light at the end of the tunnel with the slowing of these pressures they will remain influential on Councils expense base in the immediate future.
- Increasing construction costs over recent years have led to higher replacement cost valuations of Councils existing asset base which in turn increases the depreciation cost. Accurately capturing these is important to ensure Councils sustainability.
- Provision for Enterprise Development Agreements for staff which determines conditions of employment and provide for annual salary and wages increases, largely based on CPI and a separate increase of 0.5% in the Superannuation Guarantee levy.
- Maintaining asset management (renewal) expenditure at a sufficient level to ensure long term maintenance of Council infrastructure, property and IT assets.
- Increased maintenance requirements due to an increase in capital works and construction of new assets over recent years.
- A hardening insurance market resulting in premiums increasing significantly in excess of CPI.

The Boundary Commissions Inquiry into Campbelltown City Council's (CCC) Woodforde/Rostrevor boundary reform proposal is currently underway. If this reform proposal is successful, it has the potential to materially impact Council's financial sustainability. No financial or resource implications have been built into the 2024-25 budget at this stage.

Delivering the right services at the right price

The current savings initiatives are forecast to save Council $792k pa in 2023/24 and they are ongoing in 2024/25.

Additional savings have been achieved through detailed reviews conducted in the current year which will create further savings.

While Council must continue to look for efficiencies in the service delivery model, after several years of this focus there are fewer opportunities to reduce the expenses without directly impacting on the service level.

The next step is to review our services to ensure that Councils resources are allocated in accordance with the communities needs and expectations.

Additional costs included in the 2024-25 budget

In addition to the major projects being funded in 2024/25 there are other ongoing cost pressures that continue to impact on Council's Operating Surplus including:

- Higher interest rate costs for borrowings and Council's cash advance debenture
- Insurance premium increases & distribution reductions
- Fuel costs and in particular diesel.
- Electricity costs relating to community facilities and street lighting
- Increase in depreciation as a result of revaluations largely relating to cost escalation in infrastructure and building costs

These costs have been included in the *Annual Business Plan 2023-24* together with the financial impact of the following strategies that have been costed and included in the 2023-24 Budget:

- Additional Community & Recreation Facilities Framework implementation costs
- Further maintenance costs from new development at Hamilton Hill, Dunfield and The Crest
- Kerbside bin system collection frequency change and rural Food and Garden Organics (FOGO) trial
- Costs relating to the Towards Community Led Resilience Program noting that this program is wholly externally funded

Other Service changes undertaken in recent years impacting on costs

Over the years Council has increased its services and related service levels in many areas including:

- Tree Management / Horticultural program
- Playground/park furniture/cemeteries resourcing
- Sport & Recreation Planning
- Waste including impact of recyclables due to China Sword
- FABRIK Arts & Culture Hub development
- Economic Development resources to support the business community
- Disability and Community Well Being support
- Community Centre resourcing
- Digital Literacy
- CWMS oversight and operational support
- Emergency Management – COVID & Fires
- Other support area resourcing including Procurement, Governance and Event Management

These have resulted in offsetting savings implemented over a number of years to ensure that Council has maintained an Operating Surplus in line with the adopted LTFP and financial sustainability indicators.

For the 2024-25 financial year Council has implemented specific saving strategies in the order of $830k to assist in keeping rate increases to the minimum possible whilst also implementing agreed new strategies.

Borrowings

Borrowing is an important funding source, especially for expenditure relating to new Capital and is undertaken in accordance with Council's *Treasury Policy*. The key objective of the Policy is to manage the finances of the Council holistically in accordance with the overall financial sustainability strategies and targets.

An independent local government report on financial sustainability encourages the increased use of borrowings to promote intergenerational equity. This involves spreading costs in relation to significant capital expenditure based on the pattern of benefits over time so that one generation is not excessively subsidising another.

Forecasted levels of borrowing are dependent on the accuracy of the budget. In particular changes to the delivery of the capital works program has the capacity to change the level of borrowings required. The forecast below assume that all capital projects will be delivered by the end of 2024/25.

Estimated increase in Total Borrowings as shown in the following table for 2024-25 is $1.644m.

Borrowing	$'000
Forecast Opening Balance of Borrowings July 2024	**24,410**
Estimated New Borrowing for 2024-25	6,300
Repayment of principal for 2024-25	(5,586)
Estimated movement in Cash Advance Debenture for 2024-25	(20)
Forecast Closing Balance of Borrowings June 2025	**25,105**
Split as follows:	
Cash Advance Debenture (Short Term Borrowings)	6,924
Fixed Term Borrowings	17,984
Lease Liabilities	197
Forecast Closing Balance of all Borrowings June 2025	**25,105**

Operating Budget by Directorate and Function

Directorate	Function	Revenue			Expenditure			Net Cost / (Revenue)	Staff FTE 2024-25 Budget
		2024-25 LTFP Target $'000	2024-25 Budget $'000	Variance Fav/(Unfav) $'000	2024-25 LTFP Target $'000	2024-25 Budget $'000	Variance Fav/(Unfav) $'000	2024-25 Budget $'000	
CEO	CEO Office	0	0	0	399	471	(72)	471	2.0
	Governance and Performance	37	37	0	1,998	2,227	(229)	2,190	3.0
	CEO Total	**37**	**37**	**0**	**2,397**	**2,697**	**(300)**	**2,661**	**5.0**
Community and Development	C&D Director's Office	0	0	0	422	369	53	369	2.0
	Policy Planning	0	0	0	197	355	(157)	355	2.0
	Economic Development	110	110	0	623	630	(7)	520	2.0
	Environmental Health	179	181	2	596	597	(2)	416	3.8
	Fire Prevention	115	30	(85)	178	217	(38)	187	1.6
	Animal Management	550	555	5	531	490	41	(66)	2.6
	Parking and By-Laws	95	95	0	128	165	(38)	70	1.1
	Development Assessment & Compliance	652	691	39	2,341	2,653	(313)	1,962	18.0
	Community Management	0	0	0	442	467	(24)	467	2.3
	Community Grants	0	0	0	215	209	5	209	0.0
	Community Centres - TSCC	16	16	0	211	220	(9)	204	1.6
	Community Centres - TVCC	40	24	(16)	209	220	(11)	195	1.6
	Community Programs	72	117	45	72	126	(54)	9	0.6
	Community Resilience	533	300	(233)	973	510	463	210	3.3
	Cultural Development	0	0	0	195	202	(7)	202	1.0
	Positive Ageing (Collaborative)	90	93	3	139	94	44	1	0.6
	Positive Ageing (Home Support)	1,152	1,196	44	1,197	1,246	(49)	50	5.9
	Volunteering	0	0	0	96	100	(4)	100	0.7
	Youth Development	3	3	0	189	188	1	186	1.0
	Customer Experience	0	0	0	235	738	(503)	738	1.0
	Customer Service	0	0	0	925	1,010	(85)	1,010	9.0
	Libraries	346	346	(0)	2,102	2,151	(50)	1,806	15.1
	FABRIK	95	158	63	498	552	(53)	393	2.9
	Community and Development Total	**4,049**	**3,916**	**(133)**	**12,713**	**13,510**	**(797)**	**9,593**	**79.7**

Operating Budget by Directorate and Function

Directorate	Function	Revenue 2024-25 LTFP Target $'000	Revenue 2024-25 Budget $'000	Revenue Variance Fav/(Unfav) $'000	Expenditure 2024-25 LTFP Target $'000	Expenditure 2024-25 Budget $'000	Expenditure Variance Fav/(Unfav) $'000	Net Cost / (Revenue) 2024-25 Budget $'000	Staff FTE 2024-25 Budget
Corporate Services	CS Director's Office	6	6	0	376	392	(16)	387	1.9
	Communications, Engagement & Events	0	0	0	788	804	(16)	804	4.2
	Corporate	1,121	1,124	4	1,050	666	384	(459)	0.0
	Finance Operations	0	0	0	1,187	1,447	(260)	1,447	9.8
	Rates	46,661	49,724	3,062	2,011	1,994	17	(47,729)	0.0
	ICT	0	0	0	979	1,069	(90)	1,069	4.3
	Information Management	0	0	0	543	571	(28)	571	4.3
	Information Systems	0	0	0	1,246	1,719	(473)	1,719	4.3
	People and Culture & WHS	0	0	0	807	675	133	675	5.0
	Corporate Services Total	**47,788**	**50,854**	**3,066**	**8,988**	**9,338**	**(350)**	**(41,515)**	**33.8**
Environment and Infrastructure	E&I Director's Office	0	0	0	377	23	354	23	0.0
	Civil Services - Management	2	2	0	556	575	(19)	573	9.2
	Civil Services - Maintenance	2,055	2,278	223	5,064	5,349	(285)	3,071	35.0
	Civil Services - Private Works	6	6	0	4	4	(0)	(2)	0.0
	Property Management	212	75	(137)	1,735	1,880	(145)	1,806	9.0
	Sport & Recreation	11	11	0	1,053	931	122	919	3.4
	AHBTC	343	348	5	245	299	(54)	(49)	0.0
	Cemeteries	369	385	16	170	174	(3)	(211)	1.0
	Retirement Villages	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
	Manager Open Space	0	5,200	5,200	349	6,071	(5,722)	871	2.0
	Open Space - Management	175	0	(175)	1,003	1,046	(43)	1,046	6.8
	Open Space - Maintenance	83	0	(83)	3,629	3,620	9	3,620	18.0
	Open Space - Stores	0	0	0	(716)	(947)	231	(947)	1.0
	Open Space - Biodiversity	0	0	0	810	868	(58)	868	3.8
	CWMS	1,743	1,735	(7)	970	1,014	(44)	(721)	1.2
	Strategic Assets	0	0	0	387	380	7	380	3.8
	Emergency Management	0	0	0	90	80	10	80	0.2
	Sustainability	0	0	0	338	355	(17)	355	1.4
	Waste	192	192	0	5,651	5,954	(302)	5,762	1.4
	Depreciation	0	0	0	10,674	11,452	(778)	11,452	0.0
	Infrastructure & Operations Total	**5,191**	**10,233**	**5,042**	**32,391**	**39,128**	**(6,737)**	**28,896**	**97.2**
	ORGANISATION TOTAL	**57,065**	**65,039**	**7,974**	**56,489**	**64,674**	**(8,185)**	**(365)**	**215.7**

Capital Budget Overview

The 2024-25 Capital Budget continues to focus on the renewal of infrastructure. The Council has in excess of $600m (Current Replacement Values) of infrastructure assets that it manages, to ensure that our current and future communities have access to the ongoing services these assets provide.

This year our capital works program will include:

- **$11.842m** Capital renewal detailed in the Capital Expenditure Renewal Summary Table (to the right)
- **$4.340m** in capital expenditure on new or upgraded assets, detailed in the strategic initiative pages

The total of $16.18m for the capital works program is more than the Long Term Financial Plan target of $15.600m and is considered to be the appropriate level of sustainable investment to meet the Council strategic goal to have a proactive long term view regarding the renewal and maintenance of its infrastructure.

As in previous years, a significant portion of the program is applied to road works, with buildings, footpaths, stormwater and plant accounting for a large proportion of the remaining allocation.

Capital Expenditure Renewal Summary

Asset Category	2024-25 Allocation $'000	LTFP Target Renewal $'000	Variance to LTFP Fav/(Unfav) $'000
Bridges	1,118	145	(973)
Buildings	381	378	(3)
CWMS	152	737	585
Footpaths	518	478	(40)
Kerb & Water	117	79	(38)
Other*	269	229	(40)
Road Pavement	1,397	1,286	(111)
Road Seal	2,342	2,487	145
Shoulders	344	329	(15)
Sport and Recreation (including Playgrounds)	375	347	(28)
Stormwater	141	131	(10)
Unsealed Roads	978	1,467	489
Plant and Fleet	2,282	1,630	(652)
Information, Communication & Technology	1,309	771	(538)
Minor Plant & Equipment (including Library)	70	72	2
Cemeteries	49	47	(2)
Carry forwards	0	745	745
RENEWALS	**11,842**	**11,358**	**(484)**

**Other includes Guardrail, Retaining Walls, Street Furniture, and Traffic Control*

Rates Overview

Rates are a form of property taxation, and property values determine how much each property contributes. This system of taxation means that the rates paid may not directly relate to the services used by each ratepayer.

The base increase in Rates is 5.78% which is to cover the effect of inflation on Councils costs. This has been derived from the March South Australian CPI figure of 4.3% and allows for some cost elements that have risen by more than core CPI.

The new development (budgeted at 0.7% mentioned above) is defined as capital improvements to existing properties and changes to value as a result of land divisions. This is primarily related to the Woodforde, Mount Torrens and Inverbrackie developments.

This year's valuation of the Council area by the Valuer-General has continued to show variability in valuation increases across all land uses. As such, Council will continue to reduce the impact of significant valuation changes for 2024-25 by:

- Differentiating all land uses to enable differences in valuation for land use categories to be taken into account
- Setting the maximum general rate increase at 15%
- Applying a rate rebate to residential and primary production land use categories where the increase exceeds 15%
- Make the rebate automatic (similar to the 2023-24 financial year) but also retaining an application process
- Excluding the rebate on properties where there is any change of rateability, land use, improvements or change in ownership of properties from the previous year

The table below provides a summary of the average residential rate increases that have been applied in recent years as well as the proposed increase for 2024-25 as discussed above.

Description	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Average residential rate increase	2.4%	1.5%	4.7%	6.9%	**4.3%**
To fund increased capital renewal	0.55%	1.0%	0.2%	-	**-**
Increase in Depreciation	-	-	-	-	**1%**
Major projects (not ongoing)	-	-	-	-	**0.48%**
TOTAL INCREASE	**2.95%**	**2.5%**	**4.9%**	**6.9%**	**5.78%**

Summary Basis of Rating (*Rating Policy*)

Key elements of the Policy include:

Rating Structure

- The Council is proposing that differential rates be applied to all rateable properties based on their predominant land use. This is a change in rating structure from previous years and will allow Council to ensure that the proposed average rate increase for existing ratepayers is consistent across all land uses before other factors relating to the cost of services and comparability to other councils are considered for individual land uses.
- A fixed charge rating structure that includes a fixed charge applying to all properties. This charge is to increase from $784 to $830 which represents a 5.78% increase in line with the average increase previously highlighted.

Stirling Separate Rate

- A separate rate for businesses in Stirling that generates $110k [increased from $95k per Stirling Business Association (SBA) request] that is distributed to the SBA to promote Stirling as a destination, the "Gateway to the Hills“ through a new funding agreement. Council also sets a maximum amount (‘top’) and a minimum amount (‘tail’) per property each financial year for this separate rate.
- Council also proposes in accord with Council’s taxation principles to increase the top and tail of the separate rate in line with CPI to better maintain an even distribution across all separate ratepayers.

Regional Landscape Levy

The Regional Landscape (RL) Levy is a State Tax paid by all ratepayers and is collected by Council on behalf of the Hills and Fleurieu Regional Landscape Board. For 2024-25 there is a modest increase of 2.05% in this tax imposed on Council’s ratepayers by the Board.

Help when you need it

An empathetic and individually tailored approach is provided to ratepayers who are experiencing financial difficulties through the provision of a number of alternative arrangements made available to ratepayers including:

- smaller, more regular payment options
- acceptance of reduced payments toward Council Rates arrangement
- deferment or postponement of payment of rates in whole or in part for an agreed period
- consideration of the waiving of fines & interest where appropriate

The *Rating Policy* also includes a number of options to address financial hardship specifically targeted to those ratepayers that have been significantly and permanently impacted by events such as the current financial climate, COVID and bushfires.

Rate Statistics

Council has just over **19,155** assessments split by land use as follows:

13 850
Residential

658
Commercial and Industrial Light

45
Industrial Other

3,000 +
Primary production

595
Vacant

173
Other

834
Non-rateable

Rates Modelling

The valuation of the Council area by the Valuer-General has been completed and information provided to reflects an average increase of over 13% in valuation for existing properties.

Analysis indicates that:

- Residential properties, representing 73% of total assessments, have had an average valuation **increase** of 9.10%
- Primary production properties, representing 16% of total assessments, have had an average valuation **increase** of 9.08%
- Commercial and Industrial Light properties have had an average valuation **increase** of 3.42%
- Industrial Other properties have had an average valuation **increase** of 2.92%
- Vacant land properties have had an average valuation **increase** of 3.08%

The percentage of total rate revenue required from each land use category takes into account the proposed rating structure changes to phase in higher differential rates in relation to Commercial, Industrial and Vacant Land use categories across a three-year period and this breakup is used to determine the rate in the dollar (differential rate) for each category to provide an overall increase in general rate revenue of 5.78% excluding new development.

Allocation of Rates

The Council uses the capital value method of valuing properties. This method values the land and all improvements on the land. It is the most widely-used method across South Australian councils.

Council considers this valuation method the most equitable method to spread rates across the measure of wealth within the Adelaide Hills Council area. It equates to the taxation principle that people should contribute to community, social and physical infrastructure in accordance with their capacity to pay as measured by property wealth.

Further, in determining how rates are applied, and the rate in the dollar, Council has also made specific policy choices in relation to the use of differential rating for each land use category and a fixed charge rather than a minimum rate to allocate the rates burden across the community.

Differential Rates

Section 153 of *Local Government Act 1999* (the "Act") allows councils to 'differentiate' rates based on the use of the land, the locality of the land, the use and locality of the land or on some other basis determined by the council. The application of a Differential General Rate is generally intended to alter the amount payable by particular land uses.

In formulating the rating structure, Council has considered issues of consistency and comparability of other councils and across council areas in the imposition of rates on various sectors of the business and wider community. Currently Council's average residential rate is high by comparison to other councils whereas the average commercial and industrial rate is low.

In 2023-24 financial year Council adopted a change in rating structure with higher differential rates for some categories being applied as set out below.

- Properties categorised as "Commercial" or "Industrial Light" will pay a higher differential rate in the dollar than residential with a phased increase of 35% relative to the current differential rate.
- Properties categorised as "Industrial Other" will pay a higher differential rate in the dollar than residential with a phased increase of 60% relative to the current differential rate.
- Properties categorised as "Vacant Land" within township zones as defined by Council will pay a higher differential rate in the dollar than residential with a phased increase of 30% relative to the current differential rate.

These changes are being applied over a three year period, with 2024-25 being the second year of the process.

The percentage of total rate revenue required from each land use category after taking into account the proposed rating structure changes will be used to determine the rate in the dollar (differential rate) for each category.

Fixed Charge

Under the Act, Council has some mechanisms available to enable all ratepayers to contribute more equitably to the administration of Council's services and the development and maintenance of the community's infrastructure. Council considers a fixed charge (applying equally to all rateable properties) to be the most fair and equitable means of achieving this.

For the 2024-25 year, it is proposed to increase the fixed charge from $784 to $830, representing a 5.78% increase in line with the overall average increase in rates.

Community Wastewater Management System (CWMS)

The Council provides Community Wastewater Management System (CWMS) to some areas within the Council district. To fund the provision of this service Council imposes an annual service charge to recover the cost to the Council of establishing, operating, maintaining, improving and replacing infrastructure (taking into account depreciation of any assets and including future capital works).

Council undertakes an annual detailed assessment of the cost of providing CWMS services, in accordance with the guidelines set by the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA). For the 2024-25 financial year, the CWMS service charges have been retained at the same level as the previous year to achieve the full cost recovery.

Annexure A: Budgeted Financial Statements

Adelaide Hills Council

BUDGETED UNIFORM PRESENTATION OF FINANCES

2024-25 Draft Budget

	2023-24 Revised Budget $'000	2024-25 Proposed Budget $'000
INCOME		
Rates	48,407	51,442
Statutory charges	1,490	1,523
User charges	1,005	1,033
Grants, subsidies and contributions - Capital	788	298
Grants, subsidies and contributions -Operating	4,493	10,018
Investment income	25	26
Reimbursements	281	202
Other income	518	394
Net gain - equity accounted Council businesses	100	103
Total Income	57,106	65,039
EXPENSES		
Employee costs	22,868	24,466
Materials, contracts & other expenses	22,081	27,828
Depreciation, amortisation & impairment	11,004	11,798
Finance costs	582	582
Net loss - equity accounted Council businesses	0	0
Total Expenses	56,535	64,674
NET BUDGETED SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) BEFORE CAPITAL AMOUNTS	571	365
Net Outlays on Existing Assets		
Capital Expenditure on Renewal and Replacement of Existing Assets	(14,006)	(11,842)
Proceeds from Sale of Replaced Assets	899	645
Depreciation	11,004	11,798
NET OUTLAYS ON EXISTING ASSETS	(2,103)	601
Net Outlays on New and Upgraded Assets		
Capital Expenditure on New and Upgraded Assets & Remediation costs	(10,905)	(3,760)
Capital Grants and Monetary Contributions for New and Upgraded Assets	3,821	2,897
Proceeds from Sale of Surplus Assets	124	40
NET OUTLAYS ON NEW AND UPGRADED ASSETS	(6,960)	(823)
NET LENDING/ (BORROWING) RESULT FOR FINANCIAL YEAR	(8,492)	143
Net Financial Liabilities at Beginning of Year	(22,836)	(31,868)
Decrease / (increase) in Other	(440)	(200)
Non Cash Equity Movement	(100)	(103)
Net Financial Liabilities at End of Year	(31,868)	(32,029)

It should be noted that the figures in this appendix have been rounded and consequently individual sub-totals, whilst being correct, may differ slightly from the sum of the rounded amounts.

Annexure C: Corporate Performance Indicators

ID	Corporate Performance Indicator	Target	Strategic Objective	Reporting Frequency
Goal 1: A functional Built Environment				
CPI-B01	Inspections of footpaths in high priority zones	100%	B1	Annually
CPI-B02	Delivery of capital works program	90%	B1	Quarterly
CPI-B03	Compliance inspections after development completion notification, completed within 10 business days.	100%	B2	Quarterly
CPI-B04	Compliance inspections completed within 5 business days of notification of alleged unlawful development	80%	B2	Biannually
CPI-B05	Comparison of Council's Energy Usage (Kwh) against previous financial year	Less than previous financial year	B3	Annually
CPI-B06	Tonnes of recycled plastic content in products purchased by Council	25	B3	Annually
CPI-B07	Operational tasks completed within the Civil Zone Maintenance Program	80%	B4	Quarterly
Goal 2: Community Wellbeing				
CPI-C01	Positive ageing wellbeing score	7 Average	C2	Quarterly
CPI-C02	Community Centre participants who feel better connected to others or community	85%	C2	Bi-annual
CPI-C03	Community centre participants who would use the knowledge/skills gained in the future	80%	C3	Bi-annual
CPI-C04	Number of volunteer hours contributed to AHC programs each year	3500	C3	Quarterly
CPI-C05	Library visits per capita compared with Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) Standards	exceed the enhanced ALIA target	C3	Annually
CPI-C06	Library loans per capita compared with Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) Standards	exceed the enhanced ALIA target	C3	Annually
CPI-C07	Attendance at programs, events and workshops at Fabrik Arts and Heritage Hub	8,000	C6	Annually
CPI-C08	Percent of available studio spaces occupied	50	C6	Annually
CPI-C09	Number of events and programs celebrating cultural diversity	8	C6	Annually

ID	Corporate Performance Indicator	Target	Strategic Objective	Reporting Frequency
Goal 3: A prosperous Economy				
CPI-E01	Net Easy Score of respondents who rated ease of getting assistance from Council as Easy or Very Easy v Difficult or Very Difficult	>0	E1	Every 2 Years
CPI-E02	Visitor numbers (visitor domestic day trips)	1.2mil	E1	Annually
CPI-E03	Average number of days for Building Consents	20 business days	E2	Quarterly
CPI-E04	Percentage of new development application decisions upheld in Council/CAPs favour under appeal	85%	E2	Quarterly
CPI-E05	Percentage of Planning Consents completed within statutory timeframes	85%	E2	Quarterly
CPI-E06	Number of local jobs in AHC area compared to previous financial year	Maintain 2019-20 Financial Year = 11200	E3	Annually
Goal 4: A valued Natural Environment				
CPI-N01	Number of biodiversity sites monitored using the BushRAT methodology (actual versus planned)	60 NVMS sites (14% of total) per annum and 5 reserves	N2	Annually
CPI-N02	Weed Control in biodiversity sites - no. of sites complete (actual versus planned)	31 sites per annum	N2	Annually
CPI-N03	Percent of nuisance and litter queries resolved	90%	N2	Quarterly
CPI-N04	Percent of private properties inspected prior to bushfire season that comply with fuel load management requirements	At least 90%	N2	Annually
CPI-N05	Tonnes of green organics collected on Green organic days	150	N4	Quarterly
CPI-N06	Percentage change in tonnes of waste disposed to landfill compared to previous financial year	Reduction in waste percentage	N5	Annual
CPI-N07	Number of community education actions delivered (Waste Management Strategy 2016-2021) – Actioned vs Planned	6	N5	Quarterly

ID	Corporate Performance Indicator	Target	Strategic Objective	Reporting Frequency
Goal 5: A progressive Organisation				
CPI-O01	Number of Lost time injuries	0	O1	Quarterly
CPI-O02	Customer Net Ease Score (NES)	50	O2	Bi-annual
CPI-O03	Overall customer satisfaction	75%	O2	Bi-annual
CPI-O04	Operating Surplus Ratio	1-5%	O3	Annually
CPI-O05	Net Financial Liabilities Ratio	25-75%	O3	Annually
CPI-O06	Asset Sustainability Ratio	95-105%	O3	Annually
CPI-O07	Decisions (Council resolutions) considered in open Ordinary & Special Council meetings during the reporting period	90%	O4	Quarterly
CPI-O08	Council member attendance at Ordinary & Special meetings	90%	O4	Quarterly
CPI-O09	Freedom of Information (FOI) requests received, in progress and completed within the legislated timeframe	100%	O6	Quarterly
CPI-O10	FOI External reviews upholding Council's decisions	100%	O6	Quarterly
CPI-O11	Employee Turnover	7-15%	O1	Quarterly

Annexure D: Rating Policy

COUNCIL POLICY

Adelaide Hills COUNCIL	**RATING**

Policy Number:	**FIN-02**
Responsible Department(s):	**Financial Services**
Other Relevant Policies:	**None**
Relevant Procedure(s):	**None**
Relevant Legislation:	***Local Government Act 1999*** ***Valuation of Land Act 1971*** ***Landscape South Australia Act 2019*** ***Aged Care Act 1997 (Commonwealth)*** ***Community Housing Providers (National Law) (South Australia) Act 2013*** ***Community Titles Act 1996*** ***Education and Childrens Act 2019*** ***Health Care Act 2008***
Policies and Procedures Superseded by this policy on its Adoption:	**Version 8.0 Rating Policy 27 June 2023, Item 12.3 1.11, 173/23**
Adoption Authority:	**Council**
Date of Adoption:	
Effective From:	**1 July 2024**
Minute Reference for Adoption:	
Next Review:	**June 2025**

Version Control

Version No.	Date of Effect	Description of Change(s)	Approval
1.0	**01/07/16**	**Update to Rating Policy, minor changes only**	**Council Res 122/16 28 June 2016 Item 14.9, 1.11**
2.0	**01/07/17**	**Update to Rating Policy, minor changes only**	**Council Res 130/17 27 June 2017 Item 14.3, 1.11**
3.0	**01/07/18**	**Update to Rating Policy, minor changes only**	**Council Res 138/18 26 June 2018 Item 12.3, 1.11**
4.0	**01/07/19**	**Update to Rating Policy Section 4.5 Rebates of Rates** Update of Discretionary Rate Rebate Position	**Council Res 156/19 25 June 2019 Item 12.2, 1.11**
4.1	**25/02/2020**	**Amendments to clause 3.10 to provide consistency with changes to Council Petitions Policy**	**Council - Res 47/20 25 Feb 2020**
5.0	**01/07/2020**	**Update to Rating Policy Section 4.3 Components of Rates** Update to reflect change from NRM Levy to Regional Landscape Levy **Section 4.6 Rate Relief** Updated to highlight Council options available to address financial hardship	**Council Res 124/20 30 June 2020 Item 7.1, 1.11**
6.0	**01/07/2021**	**Update to Rating Policy Section 4.4 Rates Capping** Not apply a rates cap under Section 153(3) principal place of residence and replace with discretionary rate rebate under Section 166 (1) (l) for all land uses **Section 4.5 Rebate of Rates** Implement a Revaluation Relief Rebate Special Discretionary Rebate under Section 166 (1) (l) **Section 6 Delegations** Updated for discretionary rate rebate delegations	**Council Res 123/21 22 June 2021 Item 12.6, 1.11**
7.0	**01/07/2022**	**Update to Rating Policy, minor changes** Included renumbering of Sections	**Council Res 152/22 28 June 2022 Item 12.2, 1.11**
8.0	**01/07/2023**	**Update to Rating Policy including: Section 9 Compoments of Rates** **C**hange in Rating Structure for Differential Rating **Section 11 Rate Rebates** Special Discretionary Rebate Section 166 (1)(l) changed to residential and primary production only Changes to Rate Rebates CWMS for Community Halls offering public toilet facilities **Section 12 Rate Relief** Minor changes to Senior Postponement Postponement of Rates on a long term basis section added	**Council Res 173/23 27 June 2023 Item 12.3, 1.11**

9.0	**01/07/2024**	**Update to Rating Policy, minor changes only** Removal of the Separate Rate for Verrall Road. The 10 year period of operation ended in 2023-24.	**Council Res XXX/24** **DD MM 2024** **Item XX.X, 1.11**

RATING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Delivering services and facilities relies on the rates collected from ratepayers within a council's boundaries. Council rates are a form of property taxation, and as the main source of funding for councils, rates are essential in enabling council to deliver all the services and facilities that the community relies on.

Rates are administered by each council in line with the *Local Government Act 1999* (the Act) which allows council some flexibility to make decisions that suit its local community.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline Council's approach towards rating its community in line with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1999* (SA) (the Act).

Section 123 of the Act requires Council to have a rating policy that must be prepared and adopted as part of the Annual Business Plan each financial year in conjunction with the declaration of rates.

3. DEFINITIONS

Act refers to the *Local Government Act 1999* (SA).

CADR refers to the cash advance debenture rate for that financial year.

Capital value refers to the value of the land including improvements.

Community need refers to those services and activities that are aligned to the achievement of one or more of Council's strategies resulting in a direct benefit to the residents of Adelaide Hills Council and a significant proportion of users are Adelaide Hills residents.

Council refers to the elected Council body.

CWMS refers to the Community Wastewater Management System within the Council area.

Disadvantaged persons refers to persons who are disadvantaged by reason of poverty, illness, frailty, or mental, intellectual or physical disability.

Differential rate refers to a rate that may be applied to a category of land that is different to the rate applied to other land categories.

Disadvantaged persons refers to persons who are disadvantaged by reason of poverty, illness, frailty, or mental, intellectual or physical disability.

Exemption refers to free from an obligation or liability to which others are subject to.

Fixed charge refers to a charge that must apply equally to each separate piece of rateable land in the area under Section 152(1) of the Act.

General rate refers to a rate that applies to rateable land.

Prescribed percentage (P) is calculated as $P = \frac{CADR + 3\%}{12}$

Rebate refers to an amount paid by way of reduction, return or refund on what has already been paid or contributed.

Separate rate refers to a charge levied on ratepayers in addition to general rates and used to fund specific activities.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

Council's powers to raise rates are found in Chapter 10 of the Act which provides the framework within which the Council must operate, but also leaves room for the Council to make a range of policy choices.

At all times, the rating policy should be fair and equitable, recognising that all ratepayers have access to core goods and services and should contribute towards the costs.

This Council's policy directions are guided by the theme "A brighter future" and is central to achieving our vision for:

- A prosperous economy
- A functional built environment
- A valued natural environment
- Community wellbeing
- A progressive organisation

5. PRINCIPLES OF TAXATION

Rates are not fees for services. They constitute a system of taxation on the community for Local Government purposes.

This Policy represents the Council's commitment to balancing the five main principles of taxation with the need to raise revenue for the purpose of providing the goods and services the community requires.

Benefits received – ratepayers who receive more benefits (services provided, or resources consumed) should pay a higher share of tax.

Capacity to Pay – a ratepayer who has less capacity to pay should pay less, and ratepayers of similar means should pay similar amounts.

Administrative simplicity **–** minimal costs are involved in applying and collecting the tax and the tax is difficult to avoid.

Economic efficiency – whether or not the tax distorts economic behaviour.

Policy consistency – the tax should be internally consistent, and based on transparent, predictable rules that are easily understood and accepted by ratepayers.

In applying these principles, any decision with respect to rating should consider:

- the financial effects of the decisions made today on the future generations of tomorrow.
- the achievement of Council's policy outcomes as referenced in Council's adopted policies.

A Council's operating deficit implies that today's ratepayers are paying less than the cost of the services they are consuming, and this is inequitable to the ratepayers of the future.

6. VALUATION OF LAND

Council is permitted to adopt one of three valuation methodologies to value the properties in its area (Section 151 of the Act):

- **Capital Value** – the value of land, buildings and other improvements.
- **Site Value** – the value of the land excluding structural improvements.
- **Annual Value** – the value of the rental potential of the property.

The Council has adopted the use of capital value as the basis for valuing land. Council considers that this method provides the fairest way to distribute the rates burden across all ratepayers on the following basis:

- the 'capacity to pay' principle of taxation requires that ratepayers of similar wealth pay similar taxes and ratepayers of greater wealth pay more tax than ratepayers of lesser wealth;
- the 'property value' is a relatively good indicator of wealth (when lifetime incomes, including incomes from capital gains, are taken into account). Capital value approximates the market value of a property and provides the best indicator of overall property value.

Council does not determine property valuations but chooses to exercise the right under Section 167 of the Act to adopt the capital valuations as assessed by the Valuer-General through the State Valuation Office.

7. OBJECTIONS TO VALUATION

Ratepayers who wish to dispute the valuation of their property may lodge an objection in writing to the Valuer-General within 60 days after the date of service of the first rates notice.

The Valuer-General may extend the 60 day objection period where it can be shown there is reasonable cause to do so by the person making the objection.

Council plays no role in the objection process. It is important to note that the lodgement of an objection to the valuation does not change the due date for the payment of rates.

8. EXEMPTIONS

Council's practice is to identify and value all land in the council area. Once identified, each separate piece of land is assessed for rateability. Section 147 of the Act specifies those types of property which will be exempt from council rates.

- Crown Land – public properties used or held by the Crown for a public purpose,
- University Land – properties occupied by a University,
- Recreation Grounds – properties satisfying the criteria set out in the *Recreation Grounds Rates and Taxes Exemption Act 1981*,
- Council Land – public properties occupied or held by the Council,
- Emergency Services – properties satisfying the criteria set out in the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005*,
- Another Act – properties specifically exempt from council rates by virtue of another Act (either Commonwealth or State).

Council is mindful that wherever properties become exempt from paying council rates, or where a rebate is applied, those rates foregone must be contributed by the rest of the ratepayer community.

The principles of equity dictate that Council remains diligent in only awarding exemptions where they are warranted.

It is Council's practice to adopt valuations for all exempt properties. Where an exempt property becomes rateable part way through the financial year, rates will be calculated and recovered.

9. COMPONENTS OF RATES

Fixed Charge or Minimum Rate

Council has discretion to apply either (but not both):

- a fixed charge (applying equally to all rateable properties); or
- a minimum rate (to lower-value properties)

Adelaide Hills Council will apply a fixed charge this financial year as in previous years.

Council considers a fixed charge to be the most fair and equitable means of ensuring that all ratepayers contribute equally to the administration of council's services and the development and maintenance of the community's infrastructure.

In addition, the fixed charge provides a mechanism to adjust the rates contributions across high and low valued properties. This redresses the balance and equity of the rates system.

Council is unable to raise more than 50% of total rate revenue by the imposition of a fixed charge component of general rates as per Section 151(10) of the Act.

Differential Rating

The largest component of rates levied is calculated by reference to the value of property. Property values reflect, among other things, the relative availability of, and access to council services. This applies to all types of land use, and to land in all locations.

The Act allows Council to 'differentiate' rates based on the use of the land, locality of the land, the use and locality of the land or on some other basis determined by Council.

The Council is proposing that differential rates be applied to all rateable properties based on their predominant land use. This is a change in rating structure from previous years where Council had a separate higher differential rate for Commercial and Industrial that was based on the differential rate for Residential, Primary Production, Vacant Land and Other land uses. This change to differentially rate each land use separately will allow Council to ensure that the proposed average rate increase for existing ratepayers is consistent across all land uses before other factors relating to the cost of services for individual land uses are considered.

In formulating the rating structure, Council has considered issues of consistency and comparability of other Councils and across council areas in the imposition of rates on various sectors of the business and wider community. Currently Council's average residential rate is high by comparison to other Councils whereas the average commercial, industrial and vacant rate is low. As a result Council proposes phasing in higher differential rates in relation to Commercial, Industrial and Vacant Land land use categories across a three year period.

The percentage of total rate revenue required from each land use category will be used to determine the rate in the dollar (differential rate) for each category.

Definitions of the use of the land are prescribed by regulation and are categorised as:

- Residential
- Commercial – Shop
- Commercial – Office
- Commercial - Other
- Industrial – Light
- Industrial - Other
- Primary Production
- Vacant Land
- Other

In accordance with Section 148 of the Act, Council assesses any piece or section of land subject to separate ownership or separate occupation.

If a ratepayer believes that a particular property has been wrongly classified as to its land use, then an objection may be made with Council.

Commercial and Industrial Light Differential Rate

It is proposed that those properties categorised as commercial or industrial light will pay a higher differential rate in the dollar than residential with the increase of 35% relative to the current differential rate to be phased in over three years (2023-2024 15%, 2024-2025 an additional 10% and 2025-2026 an additional 10%).

Council has considered the higher amount payable by the commercial and industrial light sectors with reference to the commercial and industrial light differential rates of other councils, costs of the economic development function as well as the services and activities that the sector does not regularly use.

Industrial Other Differential Rate

It is proposed that those properties categorised as Industrial Other will pay a higher differential rate in the dollar than residential with an increase of 60% relative to the current differential rate to be phased in equally over three years (2023-2024 20%, 2024-2025 an additional 20% and 2025-2026 an additional 20%).

Council has considered the higher amount payable by the Industrial Other land use with reference to the industrial differential rates of other councils, costs of the economic development function, increased environmental impact as well as the higher impact on Council infrastructure.

Vacant Land (within townships) Differential Rate

It is proposed that those properties categorised as Vacant Land within township zones as defined by Council will pay a higher differential rate in the dollar than residential with an increase of 30% relative to the current differential rate to be phased in equally over three years (2023-2024 10%, 2024-2025 an additional 10% and 2025-2026 an additional 10%).

Council has considered the higher amount payable by Vacant Land within township zones with reference to the vacant land differential rates of other councils and discouraging ratepayers from long-term speculating (seeking future commercial gains) rather than developing the land for the benefit of the whole community.

Separate Rate

Under Section 154 of the Act, a Council may declare a separate rate on rateable land within a part of the area of the council for the purpose of planning, carrying out, making available, supporting, maintaining or improving an activity that is, or is intended to be, of particular benefit to the land, or the occupiers of the land, within that part of the area, or to visitors to that part of the area.

Council has determined that the use of the separate rate provisions of the Act will be limited to the use of a separate rate for:

- Marketing and promoting the Stirling Business Area
- Recovery of the funding requirements of the Hills Fleurieu Regional Landscape Board

Stirling Business Separate Rate

A separate rate for businesses in Stirling will be applied to carry out the activity of promoting and enhancing business viability, profitability, trade and commerce within the zone.

This rate is levied on all properties within the precinct known as the Stirling Suburban Mainstreet Zone, as defined, excluding land attributed a land use category (residential) and government owned land.

Council also sets a maximum amount ('top') and a minimum amount ('tail') per property each financial year for this separate rate with the top and tail adjusted each year with reference to the Consumer Price Index.

The amount raised is distributed to the Stirling Business Association to promote Stirling as a destination, the 'Gateway to the Hills'.

Regional Landscape Levy

On 1 July 2020, the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* came into effect replacing the former *Natural Resources Management Act 2004*. Natural Resource Management (NRM) levies have been replaced with Regional Landscape (RL) levies.

The levy helps to fund the operations of regional landscape boards that have responsibility for the management of the State's natural resources. These responsibilities include regional landscape planning, water allocation planning, community capacity building, education and compliance activities.

The Regional Landscape (RL) Levy is a state tax paid by all ratepayers and is collected on behalf of the Hills and Fleurieu Regional Landscape Board by the Department for Environment and Water who will invoice council quarterly for the respective share of the levy.

The levy applies to all rateable land in the council area and is fixed and calculated to raise exactly the same amount as the council's share to be contributed.

Community Wastewater Management System

Council provides Community Wastewater Management Systems (CWMS) to some areas within the council district. Under Section 155 of the Act, the treatment or provision of water, is a prescribed service.

To fund the provision of this service Council imposes a service charge to recover the cost to the council of establishing, operating, maintaining, improving and replacing the infrastructure in its area (including future capital works and depreciation of any assets).

Annually, an independent consultant is engaged to provide a review of:

- Council's compliance with the Essential Services Commission' (ESCOSA) Minor to Intermediate Retailers Price Determination and the National Water Initiative (NWI) Pricing Principles,
- The pricing model for future CWMS price setting.

This review includes the annual service charge for both occupied and vacant properties.

10. MAXIMUM INCREASE IN GENERAL RATES CHARGES

Council's valuations used for rating purposes are undertaken by the Office of the Valuer-General.

In terms of legislation, Section 153(3) of the Act requires a council to decide each year whether to apply a maximum rate increase to a ratepayer's principal place of residence.

As Council considers that rate relief is required across some land uses and therefore more than a ratepayers principal place of residence, Council will not apply a maximum under Section 153(3) but rather maintain a discretionary rate rebate under Section 166 (1) (l) as referenced below.

11. RATE REBATES

The Act provides for ratepayers to apply for a mandatory and/or discretionary rebate on council rates as follows:

Mandatory rebates

A rebate of rates will be granted to ratepayers who satisfy the eligibility criteria for a mandatory rebate under Section 159 to Section 165 of the Act.

A 100% rebate must be applied to land used for:

- Health services
- Religious purposes
- Public cemeteries
- The Royal Zoological Society.

A 75% rebate must be applied to land used by:

- Community services
- Educational purposes.

Where a "community services organisation" is eligible for the mandatory rebate, and Council has declared a distinct residential rate, then the residential rate must be applied to the land to which the rebate applies in accordance with Section 161(2) of the Act.

Where the Council is satisfied from its own records, or from other sources, that a person or body meets the necessary criteria for a mandatory rate rebate, the Council will grant the rebate accordingly.

Where the Council is not satisfied based upon the information in its possession or otherwise does not hold relevant information it will require the person or body to lodge an application form with such information as stipulated and any other information that the Council may reasonably require.

Applicants who satisfy the criteria for a mandatory rebate will be granted the rebate at any time provided the application is lodged prior to 30 June of the rating year and entitlement to the rebate existed at 1 July of the rating year.

Council will confirm the continuation of a person or body's eligibility for a mandatory rebate on a regular basis (at least biennially) to ensure that rebates are only granted where they are warranted.

This will require the relevant person or body to lodge another application form with such information as stipulated and any other information that the Council may reasonably require to confirm the continuation of eligibility.

Where applications do not meet the eligibility criteria for a mandatory rebate, an applicant may apply for a rebate of rates under the discretionary rebate criteria.

Discretionary rebates

As identified in Section 166 of the Act, Council may grant a discretionary rebate of rates up to and including 100% of the relevant rates under a number of criteria and for a period not exceeding the timeframes.

Having considered this, Council is of the view that except in very specific circumstances outlined below, the maximum discretionary rebate should be 75% to ensure ratepayers contribute an amount towards basic service provision.

Section 166 covers a large number of different rebate categories, referred to as cases in the Act. Council in determining its rates structure has considered the following cases are relevant in setting its policy position.

Assisting or supporting a business in its area.

Council has determined pursuant to Section 166(1)(b) that those primary production properties genuinely in the business of primary production but not benefitting from a notional capital value for their property can apply for a 10% rebate on the differential rate.

Council considers this primary production rebate as part of its Annual Business Plan and Budget process.

As this rebate was implemented in 2008-09 to address the removal of a primary production differential rate, it is considered that this rebate should continue to be made to those ratepayers in the business of primary production who do not have a notional capital value assessment of their property and who have applied for and been granted this rebate in the previous year.

Community Service or Need or Disadvantaged Persons

Section 166(1) identifies a number of discretionary rebates of rates made under Section 166(1)(d) to (j) covering activities linked to community services, need or assistance or relief to disadvantaged persons.

Council has determined that applications in relation to those rebates identified under Section 166(1) should be brought to Council for decision and also that Council would receive a listing of these discretionary rate rebates for the next rating period annually.

Council in accordance with Section 166(1) will take the following matters into account in deciding whether to grant a discretionary rebate for land uses covered by Section 166 (1) (d to j):

(a) the nature and extent of Council services provided in respect of the land for which the rebate is sought in comparison to similar services provided elsewhere in the Council's area; and

(b) the community need that is being met by activities carried out on the land for which the rebate is sought; and

(c) the extent to which activities carried out on the land for which the rebate is sought provides assistance or relief to disadvantaged persons and

(d) specific policy positions considered relevant by Council.

Council's specific policy positions to meet discretionary rate rebates eligibility are as follows:

- An organisation needs to meet one of the criteria listed under Section 166 d) to j).
- An organisation needs to be not-for-profit.
- A rebate of 100% will only be granted where a community organisation seeking a rebate provides a service that would be required to be provided by Council if not undertaken by the organisation.
- A rebate of 75% will be granted if the organisation provides a community service that supports the disadvantaged or sections of the community that require assistance, as defined,
- Where an organisation does not meet the above criteria, it is still eligible for a 75% rebate where it meets all of the following criteria:
    - limited capacity to raise funds;
    - meets a "community need", as defined; and
    - undertakes services and activities that are not primarily the responsibility of Federal or State Government.

Special Discretionary Rebate

Council can use a discretionary rate rebate to address properties with substantial valuation increases under Section 166 (1)(l) of the Act where the rebate is considered by the Council to be appropriate to provide relief against what would otherwise amount to a substantial change in rates payable by a ratepayer due to:

(i) a redistribution of the rates burden within the community arising from a change to the basis or structure of the council's rates; or

(ii) a change to the basis on which land is valued for the purpose of rating, rapid changes in valuations, or anomalies in valuations.

Council has determined that a rebate will be applied to cap any increase in the general rates payable at 15% subject to specific criteria:

- The rebate applies to only residential and primary production land use categories.
- The rebate will be automatically applied to eligible assessments in order to minimise the administrative effort required.
- Adjusting the exclusion of change of ownership properties (excluding family transfers) to those properties sold after 30 June 2023.

The rebate will not apply where the increase in rates payable is the result of:

- An increase in valuation relating to new development, alteration or improvement made to the property since the 2023-24 valuation being those properties with a valuation change as a result of a Revisit Growth, Creation or Cancellation as defined by the Valuer-General (regardless of when the development was undertaken), unless the ratepayer is located within the Cudlee Creek bushfire scar or the January 2021 Cherry Gardens Bushfire scar as determined by Council or,
- Where there has been a change in land use of the property or,
- A change in ownership or licence to occupy during the previous financial year.

A capital improvement includes any addition, alteration or new development on the property.

As per the Act, a rebate may be granted for a period exceeding one year, but not exceeding three years. After three years, the rebate will be removed and the rates payable will reset to levels that would ordinarily apply in the absence of the rebate.

All Discretionary Rate Rebates

Persons who, or bodies which, seek a discretionary rebate will be required to submit an application form to the Council and provide the necessary supporting documentation.

All persons who or bodies which wish to apply to the council for a discretionary rebate of rates must do so on or before 30 April prior to the rating year unless the application is a result of a change in eligibility for a mandatory rebate or rate exemption.

In those circumstances where an application relates to a change in rebate/rate exemption in a relevant rating year, then the application will be applied for the full rating year if received within 2 months of the change in rebate/exemption being advised. The Council reserves the right to refuse to consider applications received after the specified date.

Persons or bodies who previously received a discretionary rebate greater than 75% may apply for a phasing in period (up to 2 years) in circumstances where the above change impacts significantly on the persons or bodies' financial capacity. In these circumstances, an application will be considered if received within 2 months of the change in rebate being advised. The Council reserves the right to refuse to consider applications received after the specified date.

Where there is no maximum timeframe specified for a rebate provided under Section 166, Council will grant a discretionary rebate to the last rating period commencing within a Council term to allow for a regular review of discretionary rate rebates.

A summary of all discretionary rebates applied for under Section 166 (1) (d) to (j), including whether they have been successful or not and the associated reasons will be reported to Council on an annual basis.

Each rebate that is granted either reduces the Council's revenue and hence its capacity to provide services, or else it effectively increases the amount that must be collected from other ratepayers. The principles of equity dictate that Council remains diligent in only awarding rebates and exemptions where they are warranted.

If a ratepayer wishes to apply for a discretionary rate rebate, they may apply by contacting the Council's Rate Administrator.

CWMS Service Charges

Council's CWMS service charges are set to recover the cost to the council of establishing, operating, maintaining, improving and replacing infrastructure (taking into account depreciation of any assets and including future capital works). As such, no rebates are provided by Council except for the very limited circumstances where the CWMS service charge relates to toilets used by the general public for Community Halls. In these circumstances a 100% rebate will be granted upon application.

All rebates

If an entitlement to a rebate ceases or no longer applies during the course of a financial year, council will recover rates proportionate to the remaining part of the financial year.

If a person or body has the benefit of a rebate of rates and the grounds on which the rebate has been granted cease to exist, the person or body must immediately inform the Council of that fact and (whether or not the Council is so informed) the entitlement to a rebate ceases.

If a person or body fails to do so that person or body is guilty of an offence.

The Council will, in writing, advise an applicant for the rebate of its determination of that application. The advice will state:

- if the application has been granted, the amount of the rebate; or
- if the application has not been granted, the reasons why.

Any person or body who is aggrieved by a determination of the delegated officer in respect of an application for a rebate may seek a review of that decision in accordance with Council's Internal Review of Council Decisions Policy.

Single Farming Enterprise

The Local Government Act 1999 provides that "if two or more pieces of rateable land within the area of the Council constitute a single farm enterprise, only one fixed charge may be imposed against the whole of the land".

A Single Farm Enterprise is defined in the Local Government Act -

> *"A reference to a single farm enterprise is a reference to two or more pieces of rateable land*

(a) which –

(i) are farm land; and

(ii) are farmed as a single enterprise; and

(iii) are occupied by the same person or persons,

whether or not the pieces of land are contiguous; or

(b) which –

(i) as to all the pieces except one, are farm land farmed as a single enterprise occupied by the same person or persons; and

(ii) as to one piece contiguous with at least one of the other pieces, is the principal place of residence of that person or one of those persons."

In effect, this means that land can be recognised as a "single farming enterprise" and not attract a fixed charge to each of the assessments, provided:

- that if the occupier of all the land concerned is the same person, (this means that if there is a house being occupied that is not the principal place of residence, it cannot be part of the single farm enterprise)
- all of the land is used to carry on the business of primary production, and
- managed as a single unit for that purpose,

Primary producers can apply to the Council for the 'single farming enterprise' provisions of the Local Government Act.

Ratepayers should also be aware that if the grounds on which they have applied for a single farm enterprise cease to exist, the person or body who have the benefit of the provisions must immediately inform the Council of the fact.

12. RATE RELIEF

Council applies rate remissions and postponement in accordance with the Act.

Senior Postponement

In accordance with Section 182A of the Act, eligible Seniors Card holders can apply to postpone any part or all of their annual council rates in excess of $500 on a long-term basis. The deferred amount is subject to a monthly interest charge, with the accrued debt being payable on the transfer or sale of the property. In addition, and pursuant to Section 182A(3)(b) of the Act, Council may consider—where financial hardship provisions apply—an applicant's request to include a postponement of the payment of arrears rates if they are eligible for Seniors Postponement.

Postponement is similar to a reverse mortgage by relying on the equity in the property. A ratepayer who has a Seniors Card may apply for a postponement on the property they own if it is their principal place of residence and if no other person, other than their spouse/partner has an interest as owner of the property and there is sufficient equity available.

Where an application for postponement under Section 182A is granted, a presumption of on-going annual postponement will be assumed.

However, some, or all of the debt outstanding may be paid at any time at owner's discretion.

Financial Hardship

Ratepayers who are suffering financial hardship should contact Council's Rates Administrator to discuss the matter. All enquiries are treated confidentially and any application will be considered on its merits. Options to address financial hardship can include:

Flexible payment options

In addition to quarterly instalments, ratepayers can arrange with Council to pay their rates weekly, fortnightly or monthly to provide for a smaller, more regular payment option via BPAY, phone or internet.

Waiving of Fines and Interest

When a ratepayer has committed to a payment plan and adheres to a regular payment, Council may consider the waiving of fines and interest.

Discretionary Postponement of Rates for a Period

A ratepayer may apply to council to postpone the payment of rates in whole, or in part for a period of time. Any such application must be made in writing and outline the reasons why postponement is requested.

Postponement enables ratepayers to defer payment of rates until such time as the property is sold or their circumstances change. Discretionary postponements are only intended to provide temporary, flexible support to those experiencing hardship.

If a postponement is granted, council may consider the waiving of fines and interest for the same period.

As postponement may only delay financial hardship for a period of time, options involving a regular payment plan are more likely to be beneficial for ratepayers to assist in reducing rates balances outstanding over time.

Postponement of Rates on a long term basis

Under Section 182 of the Local Government Act a council may also consider the postponement of rates on a long-term basis with the accrued debt being payable on the transfer or sale of the property or any other conditions as determined by the council. Such a postponement may, if the council thinks fit, be granted on condition that the ratepayer pay interest on the amount affected by the postponement at a rate fixed by the council (but not exceeding the cash advance debenture rate).

As such Council will consider postponement of rates on a long term basis in the rare circumstances where a ratepayer has demonstrated serious and long term hardship and where there is no chance of improvement in the ratepayers' financial circumstances. Any such application must be made in writing and will require the ratepayer to undertake financial counselling as part of the application process. If granted, Council may require regular financial counselling to confirm that the ratepayers' financial circumstances has not changed.

Remission of rates

Council has the discretion to partially or wholly remit (i.e. waive) rates on the basis of hardship.

Council has a charge over the land under Section 177 of the Act and therefore is likely to be able to recover rates outstanding upon sale. The granting of a remission forgoes this right and therefore is only considered as an option in circumstances where the ratepayer has demonstrated serious and long term hardship and where there is no chance of improvement in the ratepayers' financial circumstances.

Consideration must also be given to the tax burden redistribution effect on other rate payers of any remission.

For these reasons, and given the importance of ensuring fairness to other ratepayers, remission will only be considered as a last resort and only where there is no chance of improvement in the ratepayer's financial circumstances. As such, it is likely that postponement of payment of rates due to hardship has been occurred for some period to confirm the permanency of the ratepayer's situation.

13. PAYMENT OF RATES

Rates are declared annually, and may be paid, at your discretion, either in one lump sum, or in quarterly instalments that fall due in September, December, March and June.

14. LATE PAYMENT OF RATES

Council has determined that penalties for late payments will be imposed in accordance with the provisions of S181(8) of the Act.

Fines and interest for late payment are levied in accordance with the provisions of S181(8) and S181(17) of the Act.

If an instalment of rates is not paid on or before the date on which it falls due:

- the instalment will be regarded as being in arrears
- a fine of 2% of the amount of the instalment is payable
- on the expiration of each full month from that date, interest of the prescribed percentage of the amount in arrears (including the amount of any previous unpaid fine and interest from any previous month) accrues.

Council may take legal action to recover any overdue amounts, fines and interest.

If an amount payable by way of rates in respect of land has been in arrears for three or more years, Council may sell the land in accordance with Section 184 of the Act.

When Council receives a payment in respect of overdue rates Council applies the money received in accordance with the Act as follows:

- First – to satisfy any costs awarded in connection with court proceedings;
- Second – to satisfy any interest costs;

- Third – in payment of any fines imposed;
- Fourth – in payment of rates, in chronological order (starting with the oldest account first).

15. NON- PAYMENT OF RATES

A separate Debt Recovery Policy has been adopted by Council and is available for review on the Adelaide Hills Council website.

It should be noted that under Section 184(1) of the Act, if an amount payable by way of rates has been in arrears for three years or more the council may sell the property.

16. CONTACTING COUNCIL'S RATES ADMINISTRATOR

If you believe that Council has failed to properly apply this policy, you should contact the Council's Rates Administrator to discuss the matter.

If you are still dissatisfied then you should write to the Council's Chief Executive Officer at 63 Mt Barker Road, Stirling, SA, 5152.

For further information, queries, or to lodge an application for a rate rebate, rate postponement or remission please contact the Council's Rates Administrator on:

Phone: 8408 0400
E-mail: mail@ahc.sa.gov.au
Post: 63 Mt Barker Road, Stirling, SA, 5152

17. DELEGATIONS

As highlighted in this policy, Council has determined a policy position in relation to discretionary rates pursuant to Section 166(1) (b) relating to a primary production rebate and a revaluation relief special discretionary rate rebate under Section 166 (1)(l) of the Act to reduce the impact of significant valuation changes for 2024-25.

These policy positions and the application of the relevant rebates will be actioned accordingly by the Administration under delegation as part of the rates generation process where Council considers that the ratepayer meets the eligibility criteria or upon receipt of an application from the ratepayer.

The delegation for discretionary rate rebates as identified in Section 166 (1a) covering a number of discretionary rebates of rates made under Section 166(1)(d) to (j) relating to activities linked to community services or community need or assistance or relief to disadvantaged persons has not been delegated by Council and as such these applications will be brought to Council for decision.

The Chief Executive Officer has the delegation to:

- Approve, amend and review any procedures that shall be consistent with this Policy; and
- Make any formatting, nomenclature or other minor changes to the Policy during the period of its currency.

18. AVAILABILITY OF THE POLICY

This Policy will be available for inspection at the Council's Offices during ordinary business hours and via the Council's website www.ahc.sa.gov.au. Copies will also be provided to the public upon request, and upon payment of a fee in accordance with the Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.

Appendix 1

Fixed Charge

Under the *Local Government Act 1999* (the Act), Council has some mechanisms available to enable all ratepayers to contribute more equitably to the administration of Council's services and the development and maintenance of the community's infrastructure.

Council considers a fixed charge (applying equally to all rateable properties) to be the most fair and equitable means of achieving this.

The Council is unable to raise more than 50% of total rate revenue by the imposition of a fixed charge component of general rates as per Section 151(10) of the Act.

Council has applied the following fixed charges across recent years as part of the total rate levied against an assessment:

Financial Year	Fixed Charge	Increase from Previous Year	% of General Rate Revenue
2024-25	$830	5.87%	30.6%
2023-24	$784	6.90%	31.3%
2022-23	$733	4.90%	31.5%
2021-22	$699	2.50%	31.5%
2020-21	$682	2.95%	31.9%
2019-20	$662	2.8% + $10	32.0%
2018-19	$634	3.3%	31.8%
2017-18	$613.50	2.25%	31.8%
2016-17	$600	n/a	31.8%

Annexure E: ESCOSA Report And Council Response

ESCOSA Report And Council Response

The Essential Services Commission, South Australia's independent economic regulator and advisory body, has been given a role by the State Government to provide advice on material changes proposed by local councils in relation to elements of their strategic management plans and on the proposed revenue sources, including rates, which underpin those plans.

One of the main purposes of the Local Government Advice Scheme (advice or the scheme) is to support councils to make 'financially sustainable' decisions relating to their annual business plans and budgets in the context of their long-term financial plans (LTFPs) and infrastructure and asset management plans.

The first cycle of the scheme extends over four years from 2022-23 to 2025-26, and Council is obliged to publish the findings within each Annual Business Plan that the advice relates to.

The mandatory cost to Adelaide Hills Council to be part of the scheme is $40,000 ($10,000 per year of the cycle).

The following pages highlight the advice provided from the Commission and Council's response including planned actions over the next four financial years.

ESCOSA Recommendations and Council Response

Recommendation & Response	Implementation Activities	Implementation Timeline 2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Recommendation 1 - Continue to review its inflation forecasts in its budget each year					
Each year, a key part of the development of Council's Long Term Financial Plan is to update all economic forecasts and assumptions including inflation forecasts. Council then uses these forecasts to help model future expense forecasts. This in turn enables Council to project future income needs to meet its financial sustainability targets.	Continue to use most recent and applicable inflation forecasts in Budget and Long Term Financial Plan modelling	☺	☺	✓	✓
Recommendation 2 - Focus on constraining cost growth in its budgeting, where possible, particularly related to employee expenses					
As part of the Long Term Financial Plan and Budget processes, Council considers forecasts and calculations showing how expenses and income will change based on existing service levels and cost escalation assumptions. Council then considers how best to remain financially sustainable while balancing the community's expectations against their willingness and ability to pay. Employee numbers, and therefore employee costs, have increased in recent years due to: 1. Decisions to embark on new or changed strategic priorities such as economic development, recreation and trails, disability planning and the development of an arts centre. These have all been considered in the context of the Council's Long Term Financial Plan and financial sustainability indicator targets. 2. To undertake work in part or fully funded programs such as the Community (Disaster) Resilience Program. In these cases, additional grant income offsets the additional staff costs. 3. To insource activities previously outsourced as an efficiency initiative, such as tree management work. It is also noted that employee salaries are linked to Enterprise Agreements which are normally negotiated on a 3 yearly basis. The current agreement ends in June 2025.	Continue to consider and adjust human resource levels in response to adopted service level requirements and in light of decisions to undertake new or changed activities and within Council's financial sustainability targets.	☺	☺	✓	✓
	Negotiate new Enterprise Agreement in 2024-25 FY		✓	✓	
	Continue to responsibly manage cost growth for maintaining service levels and meeting community expectations while minimising the financial impact to ratepayers.	☺	☺	✓	✓

Legend: ☺ = Complete ✓ = Planned / In progress

ESCOSA Recommendations and Council Response

Recommendation & Response	Implementation Activities	Implementation Timeline			
		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Recommendation 3 - Complete the asset management plan for building assets and consider potentially other assets not currently covered by a plan (such as sport and recreation facilities), with consideration of desired service levels, as appropriate.					
Council has completed a full condition audit of it Building Asset stock in March 2023 and is progressing this information as a basis of the Building Asset Management Plan	Continue to progress the Building Asset Management Plan	☺	✓		
	Develop a Sport and Recreation Facilities Asset Management Plan		✓		
Recommendation 4 - Complete its planned Stormwater Asset Management Plan, with consideration of desired service levels, as appropriate.					
Council is currently completing a Stormwater Management Plan for the Aldgate Creek in conjunction with the Stormwater Management Authority and this document will be a key reference for the Council Stormwater Asset Management Plan that will include desired service levels.	Develop a draft plan and incorporate findings from the Stormwater Management Plan of the Aldgate Creek and other stormwater investigations including the Balhannah Drainage Study – Investigations and Proposed Upgrades	✓	✓		
Recommendation 5 - Finalise its Community Wastewater Management System Asset Management Plan and reflect related cost changes in the 2023-24 Long-term Financial Plan, to include input from the community, including desired service levels					
The Community Wastewater Management System Asset Management Plan was presented to Council and endorsed at its meeting of 14 March 2023. Operational costs are reflected in the Draft Long Term Financial Plan and final capital program timing changes will be included for consideration by Council in adopting the 2023/24 LTFP.	No further action – Asset Management Plan has been finalized in 2022-23FY and implemented into LTFP.	☺			

Legend: ☺ = Complete ✓ = Planned / In progress

ESCOSA Recommendations and Council Response

Recommendation & Response	Implementation Activities	Implementation Timeline			
		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Recommendation 6 - Report its actual and projected cost savings in its annual budget, to provide evidence of constraining cost growth and achieving efficiency across its operations and service delivery.					
Council endeavours to provide transparency to the community to show where savings are being made and therefore the continued commitment to offset rising costs while minimising rate increases. Page 30 of the *2022-23 Annual Business Plan* details the saving strategies implemented in the 2022-23 budget with an estimated value of $650,000 per year ongoing savings. The progress of actual savings realised against this target is reported in the Quarterly Council Performance Report and published to Council's website. Page 29 of the *2023-24 Annual Business Plan* details the savings strategies implemented for the 2023-24 budget with an estimated value of $830,000, and the results against this target will continue to be reported on in Councils Quarterly Performance reports.	Continue to include a savings strategy page within the Annual Business Plan	☺	☺	✓	✓
	Continue to report on the progress of actual savings achieved in the Quarterly Performance Reports	☺	✓	✓	✓
Recommendation 7 - Review the estimates of asset lives and valuations feeding into the forecast rate of asset consumption in its long-term financial plan and asset management plans.					
Council undertakes a yearly review of asset lives as part of the revaluation and end of financial year capitalisation.	Continue to review the asset lives and valuations on an annual basis, and as part of standard asset revaluation as needed.	☺	☺	✓	✓

Legend: ☺ = Complete ✓ = Planned / In progress

ESCOSA Recommendations and Council Response

Recommendation & Response	Implementation Activities	Implementation Timeline			
		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Recommendation 8 - Review and consider limiting future increases above inflation on its residential rates to help reduce any emerging affordability risk in the community.					
Each year, Council updates all economic forecasts and assumptions including inflation forecasts as part of the development of the Long Term Financial Plan and Budget processes. Council then uses these forecasts to help extrapolate future expenses to assess Council's overall financial position and future financial sustainability and determine appropriate income needs. Rate revenue accounts for approximately 80% of Council's operating income, and so Council carefully considers the average rate increase to balance the need to continue to deliver services, meet community expectation and maintain financial sustainability, while keeping the impact to ratepayers to an acceptable level. Page 34 of the *2023-24 Annual Business Plan* details the rate increases over the past financial years. In the past, the rate revenue target was built with "CPI plus 1%" in order to fund increased capital renewal, maintain financial sustainability, and provide a modest Operating surplus ratio which would help Council's ability to absorb the expenditure impacts from unexpected events such as bushfires, floods, or pandemics. This financial year, the rate increase has been set at 0.5% below the estimated 12-month Local Government Price Index (LGPI) increase to ensure that the increase is below forecast CPI increases.	Continue to responsibly manage cost growth for maintaining service levels and meeting community expectations while minimising the financial impact to ratepayers.	☺	☺	✓	✓

Legend: ☺ = Complete ✓ = Planned / In progress

ESCOSA Recommendations and Council Response

Recommendation & Response	Implementation Activities	Implementation Timeline			
		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Recommendation 9 - Review the rationale for the quantum of any maximum rate increase (or cap) it seeks to impose (currently at 15 percent) in its next annual business plan, with consideration of the community's capacity to pay for higher increases.					
Council reviews its rating policy annually as part of the Long Term Financial Plan and Budget process, which includes the consideration of the rating cap and its impact both positive and negative on its ratepayers. This requires a careful assessment as a cap means that the majority of ratepayers will pay more than they would be required in order to subsidise those who are entitled to receive the rate cap. A ratepayer's capacity to pay for their rates is something Council is not easily able to assess. To assist those who don't have the capacity to pay, Council has alternative arrangements that are tailored to the individual's financial situation as covered in Council's *Rating Policy* (Annexure D of *2023-24 Annual Business Plan)*	Continue to review the rating cap and Council's rating policy when considering the annual rate increase in the Long Term Financial Plan and Budget process	☺	☺	✓	✓

Legend: ☺ = Complete ✓ = Planned / In progress

Annexure F: Our Strategic plan Goals and Objectives

Strategic Plan Goals

A functional Built Environment

B1 Our district is easily accessible for community, our businesses and visitors

B2 Preserve and enhance the unique character of the Hills for current and future generations

B3 Consider external influences in our long term asset management and adaptation planning

B4 Sustainable management of our built assets ensures a safe, functional and well serviced community

Community Wellbeing

C1 A community for everyone - that is inclusive, welcoming and accessible

C2 A connected, engaged and supported community

C3 A community that grows together

C4 An active, healthy, thriving and resilient community

C5 Respect for Aboriginal Culture and values

C6 Celebrate our community's unique culture through arts, heritage and events

A prosperous Economy

E1 Support and grow our region's existing and emerging industries

E2 Provide local infrastructure to drive growth and productivity

E3 Encourage, attract and retain a creative, talented and skilled workforce in our region

E4 Cultivate a clear, unique and consistent regional identity that can be leveraged to attract national and international attention

A valued Natural Environment

N1 Conserve and enhance the regional natural landscape character and amenity values of our region

N2 Recognise the benefits of ecosystem services and improve environmental resilience by reducing environmental impacts

N3 Nurture valuable partnerships and collaborations and engage the local community in the management of our natural environment

N4 Reduce the impact of waste to landfill by maintaining a robust waste and resource management framework

N5 Assist our community to reduce the impact of waste to landfill on the environment

A progressive Organisation

O1 We have the right people with the right knowledge and skills in the right jobs and they are supported and developed

O2 Our customers find it easier to interact and do business with Council and have an improved customer experience

O3 Our organisation is financially sustainable for both current and future generations

O4 We actively represent our community

O5 We are accountable, informed, and make decisions in the best interests of the whole community

O6 Technology and innovation is utilised to better meet our community's expectations and deliver value for money

Our Objectives and Priorities

Objectives

Priorities

B1 Our district is easily accessible for community, our businesses and visitors

B1.1 Increase accessibility to our district though the development and delivery of high priority trails and routes for all cyclists (on-road, off road, commuters, recreational) and pedestrians

B1.2 Improve outcomes for the elderly by incorporating Council's Age Friendly Strategic Plan into built environment design and delivery

B1.3 Progress state-wide and inter-regional connectivity of cyclist routes by partnering with neighbouring councils

B1.4 Ensure that the key road network is accessible for heavy vehicles used by the primary production, tourism and construction sectors through engagement with industry and Government

B1.5 Provide accessibility for the full range of users by ensuring Council's road, footpath and trails network is adequately maintained and service levels for all users are developed and considered

B2 Preserve and enhance the unique character of the Hills for current and future generations

B2.1 Continue to embrace and support community led public place revitalisation across our district

B2.2 Incorporate Water Sensitive Urban Design principles within Council developments and projects and advocate for other developments within the region to do the same

B2.3 Proactively work with developers to ensure that built form complements or enhances existing local character whilst preserving the character and amenity of our towns, historic buildings and scenic environment

B2.4 Ensure our planning framework, council policies and guidelines support privately owned local heritage places

B2.5 Continue to collaborate with other councils and stakeholders in pursuing our World Heritage Bid to protect the landscapes, sites and facilities that represent the State's aboriginal and early colonial history

B2.6 Support communities recovering from natural disasters with expedited development assessment services

B3 Consider external influences in our long term asset management and adaptation planning

B3.1 Improve water security by maximising water reuse opportunities, reducing reliance on ground water and improving water efficiencies for open space irrigation and building facilities

B3.2 Aim to achieve 100% renewable energy use for our corporate operations and strive towards carbon neutrality

B3.3 Investigate and source recyclable materials for asset renewal projects wherever practical and in doing so promote the circular economy

B3.4 Proactively adapt our built environment to changes in social and environmental factors to minimise the impact from natural hazards such and fire and flood

B4 Sustainable management of our built assets ensures a safe, functional and well serviced community

B4.1 Ensure the long term management of the built form and public spaces occurs in consideration of the relevant financial, social and environmental management matters

B4.2 Embrace innovative and new technology solutions to proactively maintain our built assets that further enhance the provision of efficient services to the community

B4.3 Ensure Council owned or managed assets, including staff accommodation, are functional and adaptive to meet service requirements. Also, where appropriate and endorsed by Council, equitably assist community owned site (halls and recreation sites) to ensure their facilities are functional and meet service standards

B4.4 Improve road safety through a safe system approach to road design, construction and maintenance including on-going applications to the State and Federal Road Blackspot program

B4.5 Explore and provide the infrastructure to support Electric Vehicles (EV) and investigate infrastructure requirements for emerging technological transport such as Connected and Automated Vehicles (CAV)

Our Objectives and Priorities

Objectives	C1 - A community for everyone that is inclusive, welcoming and accessible	C2 - A connected, engaged and supported community	C3 - A community that grows together	C4 - An active, healthy, thriving and resilient community	C5 - Respect for Aboriginal Culture & values	C6 - Celebrate our community's unique culture through arts, heritage & events
Priorities	C1.1 Provide welcoming spaces and places for the community through our libraries, community centres, and Council and community facilities	C2.1 - Work with community to provide a range of programs and opportunities to connect and engage around shared interests	C3.1 - Provide and support programs and services that encourage and enhance personal growth, lifelong learning and professional development	C4.1 - Support community wellbeing through our contribution to public health planning, disaster recovery activities and the implementation of strategies that aim to measure and enhance wellbeing.	C5.1 - Partner with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to develop our second Reconciliation Action Plan (Innovate) and actively participate in Reconciliation Week	C6.1 - Develop Fabrik as a vibrant cultural hub for the Adelaide Hills, fostering community connections and creativity and presenting the significant history of the Woollen Mill site
	C1.2 Support and promote opportunities for social inclusion and celebration of our cultural diversity	C2.2 - Support our ageing community to access services and continue to participate and contribute to community life	C3.2 - Support volunteering both organisationally and in the community as an essential element in delivering community outcomes and building wellbeing	C4.2 - Support the provision of formal and informal sport, recreation and play spaces for the community to enjoy	C5.2 - Celebrate and recognise Aboriginal culture and heritage through participation in and the delivery of programs and activities that engage our community in cultural experience and learning	C6.2 - Develop, support or bring events to our district that have social, cultural, environmental or economic benefits
	C1.3 Make the district more accessible and welcoming for all with a focus on youth participation, positive ageing, disability inclusion and multiculturalism	C2.3 - Facilitate opportunities for our youth to develop skills, build resilience and be actively involved in and connected to their community.	C3.3 - Empower our community groups and leaders to shape and determine change in their community through the provision of training opportunities, grants that meet strategic priorities, building relationships and supporting communities to be cohesive in progressing local projects.	C4.3 - Recognise that trails are a destination in their own right and support both commuter and recreational trail opportunities		C6.3 - Recognise, encourage and support artists, emerging artists, writers and performers through promotion of the Arts and supporting opportunities to exhibit and perform
	C1.4 Advocate and Seek opportunities to improve transport options for those who need it most	C2.4 - Increase participation from the broadest range of our community and engage with them to shape policies, places and decisions that affect them	C3.4 - Build partnerships with community and other stakeholders to enhance our capacity to provide and support opportunities for them to thrive	C4.4 - Support clubs and groups to continue to provide sport and recreation activities to the community		C6.4 - Foster the development of Public Art that adds value to public spaces and supports place making in our community
	C1.5 - Encourage more housing opportunities where provided for in the Development Plan	C2.5 - Continue to work with government agencies and non-governmental organisations to support the community recovery from natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic.		C4.5 - Take an all hazards approach to emergency management so we can support the emergency services and the community before, during and after disaster events.		

Our Objectives and Priorities

Objectives	E1 - Support and grow our region's existing and emerging industries	E2 - Provide local infrastructure to drive growth and productivity	E3 - Encourage, attract and retain a creative, talented and skilled workforce in our region	E4 - Cultivate a clear, unique and consistent regional identity that can be leveraged to attract national and international attention
Priorities	E1.1 - Support and encourage local and international tourists to visit the Adelaide Hills	E2.1 - Work with all levels of Government to ensure the region's infrastructure needs are understood and prioritised	E3.1 - Attract and encourage professional and business development and networking activities	E4.1 - Work with key stakeholders to develop a realistic, yet inspiring, collective vision to connect the region and its industries
	E1.2 - Take advantage of the full potential of our region's primary production and associated value adding activities	E2.2 - Explore and advocate for the opportunities that new technologies could bring to our region	E3.2 - Understand the nature of skills our region's businesses will require to prosper into the future	E4.2 - Work with our communities and businesses to encourage co-ordinated and strategic regional projects that enhance and support the regional identity
	E1.3 - Support and encourage the growth and development of our region's creative industry micro businesses	E2.3 - Support changes to planning and development that leverages and encourages sustainable economic development	E3.3 - Work with our local communities and businesses to create active, attractive and vibrant places	E4.3 - Support and encourage events that supports the region's identity and generates social, cultural and economic benefits
	E1.4 – Promote, support and encourage our existing and emerging businesses to respond to economic changes by being creative, innovative, productive and resilient to unexpected impacts.	E2.4 - Manage and maintain Council assets to maximise their utilisation and benefit to the community	E3.4 - Enable start-ups and home based business through services, information and networking opportunities	E4.4 - Support the continued development and community engagement for the World Heritage nomination of the region
	E1.5 - Engage and assist our region's key business and industry groups to be resilient, proactive and successful			
	E1.6 - Encourage and facilitate local supplier participation in all level of Government tendering processes			

Our Objectives and Priorities

Objectives	N1 - Conserve and enhance the regional natural landscape character and amenity values of our region	N2 - Recognise the benefits of ecosystem services and improve environmental resilience by reducing environmental impacts	N3 - Nurture valuable partnerships and collaborations and engage the local community in the management of our natural environment	N4 - Reduce the impact of waste to landfill by maintaining a robust waste and resource management framework	N5 - Assist our community to reduce the impact of waste to landfill on the environment
Priorities	N1.1 - Enhance and manage horticultural amenity, including succession planning for street trees that contribute to and reinforce our distinctive streetscapes and villages	N2.1 - Monitor and manage areas of high biodiversity or habitat value on Council reserves and Native Vegetation Marker Scheme (NVMS) sites using best practice methodologies	N3.1 - Increase knowledge and environmental awareness within the community through engagement and education	N4.1 - We will work with partners to analyse the benefits and feasibility of introducing a fee incentive to property owners to produce less waste in relation to the kerbside bin service	N5.1 - Encourage and educate the community to help minimise the generation of household waste by advocating the principles of the Waste Management Hierarchy to avoid, reduce and reuse
	N1.2 - Manage reserves and open space to support the community, whilst balancing biodiversity conservation, resource use and environmental impacts	N2.2 - Explore opportunities and take appropriate actions to monitor current and emerging threats to biodiversity including feral cats and Phytophthora	N3.2 - Collaborate and engage with public and private organisations, schools and community members (including the Aboriginal community as the first nation peoples), to improve biodiversity outcomes and land management practices.	N4.2 - We will explore more Green Organics options to achieve improved environmental and financial outcomes.	N5.2 - Support and assist the community to prevent valuable resources going to landfill and reduce contamination in kerbside recycling bins
		N2.3 - Mitigate bushfire risks across the landscape by undertaking fuel reduction activities including woody weed control, maintenance of asset protection zones and educate & enforcement to reduce fuels on private property	N3.3 - Continue to work in partnership with the Resilient Hills and Coasts region to build Council and community resilience to the impacts of climate change	N4.3 - We will provide specific education to the community to increase their level of food scrap recycling	
		N2.4 - Work with supporting organisations and agencies to foster the restoration of native flora and fauna habitat following the 2019-20 bushfire		N4.4 - Implement new or improved waste service opportunities whilst continuing to provide ongoing resource recovery and waste service to our community	

Our Objectives and Priorities

Objectives	O1 - We have the right people with the right knowledge and skills in the right jobs and they are supported and developed	O2 - Our customers find it easier to interact and do business with Council and have an improved customer experience	O3 - Our organisation is financially sustainable for both current and future generations	O4 - We actively represent our community	O5 - We are accountable, informed, and make decisions in the best interests of the whole community	O6 - Technology and innovation is utilised to better meet our community's expectations and deliver value for money
Priorities	O1.1 - Progressively enhance our safe systems of work to maintain emotional and physical safety of our people	O2.1 - Develop our digital channels to better meet customers' current and future needs	O3.1 - Ensure the delivery of agreed strategic plan requirements whilst meeting endorsed long-term targets for a sustainable operating surplus and level of debt	O4.1 - Optimise opportunities for the community to access and provide input into the decision-making processes	O5.1 - Enhance governance structures and systems to prudently adapt to changing circumstances and meet our legislative obligations	O6.1 - Progressively strengthen Council's systems security to minimise the impact of cyber attack
	O1.2 - Continue to develop a positive culture through supporting an equitable, diverse and continuously improving work environment	O2.2 - Modernise our services and enhance the customer experience by making service delivery faster, more convenient and more proactive	O3.2 - Ensure that renewal of assets and the associated maintenance is based on current asset management plans which consider reviewed service levels and whole of life costing	O4.2 - Attract and develop a diverse and capable elected body that represents, promotes and reflects the composition of the community	O5.2 - Make evidence-based decisions and prudently assess the risks and opportunities to our community before taking action.	O6.2 - Utilise technology to enable more evidence based and efficient delivery of services to the community
	O1.3 - Support our people leaders in further developing the skills necessary to lead engaged and productive teams	O2.3 - Build the capabilities of our people through a focus on two-way communication, cooperation and placing customers at the centre of everything we do	O3.3 - Actively pursue alternative funding opportunities to reduce reliance on rates income	O4.3 - Advocate to, and exert influence with, our stakeholders on behalf of our community to promote the needs and ambitions of the region	O5.3 - Demonstrate accountability through robust corporate planning and reporting that enhances performance, is relevant and easily accessible by the community	O6.3 - Provide more resilient business systems by utilising cloud technologies where appropriate
	O1.4 - Continue to support all staff through training, mentoring, coaching and development to enable the achievement of organisational and community goals	O2.4 - Continuously strive to measure and improve performance and service delivery across all functions	O3.4 - Assess the range and level of services undertaken to ensure they fulfil Council's legislative and strategic intent	O4.4 - Explore council boundary reform options that best serve the community		O6.4 - Utilise our online engagement tools to reach a wider range of community members to obtain their views and input.
						O6.5 - Support the delivery of services to the community through improved utilisation and connectivity of existing business systems
						O6.6 - Ensure the way in which we provide our digital services delivers an enhanced experience for our community