Draft Annual Business Plan 2026-27 and Budget

Community Engagement Outcomes Report

July 2026

Adelaide Hills
COUNCIL

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1. Introduction

This report presents feedback received during community consultation with residents between 15 June and 6 July 2026 regarding our Draft Annual Business Plan 2026-27 (ABP). This report will be made available to those who participated in the consultation on Council's Engagement Platform after the final Annual Business Plan is adopted.

The consultation included the opportunity for the community to provide feedback via hardcopy and online feedback form, email, letter, phone contact and presentation at a public Council Meeting held at 6.30pm Tuesday 23 June 2026, at the Summit Community Centre. A copy of information provided on Council's Engagement Platform and feedback form is available in Appendix D.

A total of 133 participants provided formal feedback on Council's Draft ABP 2026-27. 104 respondents provided their feedback by online or hardcopy submission form. A further 30 participants provided a response by email or in writing with five of these also completing another form of feedback and one respondent providing two email submissions on behalf of community groups. Six participants presented their feedback at the Council Meeting on 23 June with three of these presenters also completing another form of feedback.

All online and hardcopy feedback responses are provided in Appendix A.

All email and letter submissions are provided in Appendix B.

All public presentation submissions are provided in Appendix C.

A copy of information provided on Council's Engagement Platform and feedback form is available in Appendix D.

Social media posts, email blasts and advertisements are provided in Appendix E.

2. Summary of Engagement

Engagement approach

The purpose of the engagement was to assist council to understand the communities' level of support for the Draft ABP 2026-27.

A community engagement plan was developed, and community engagement was undertaken between 15 June and 6 July 2026.

Our engagement approach aimed to provide detail about the role of the ABP, Council's focuses for the upcoming year and provide an overview of the projects and initiatives included in the proposed budget and the proposed rate adjustment.

Questions were asked to determine participants level of support for the Draft ABP, level of support for different operating and capital projects included in the plan, views and priorities surrounding the proposed rate adjustment and demographic information.

A feedback form was developed and provided online and in hardcopy format. It contained both closed and open style questions.

Feedback could be provided via any of the following options:

- Online - complete our online feedback form.
- Hardcopy feedback - collect a hardcopy feedback form from any of our libraries or customer service centres or print your own from our engagement platform.
- In writing - submit feedback in writing via email (engage@ahc.sa.gov.au) or via letter addressed to 63 Mount Barker Rd, Stirling SA 5152.
- Present – Present your feedback at the public Council Meeting on 23 June.
- Face to face – Attend the Mylor Community Forum or request a meeting with Director Corporate Services or another member of the project team.
- Ask a question – use the public Q&A tool on Adelaide Hills Engagement Hub to ask the project team a question.
- Phone – give us a call to share your feedback or seek support to submit your feedback.

Distribution and promotion

The opportunity to provide feedback was promoted through the following channels:

- Notices posted on Council's website and engagement platform.
- Courier Advertisement on 27 May 2026.
- Hills Voice E-newsletter.
- Email to engagement subscribers with relevant categories of interest.
- Email campaign to community and stakeholder groups.
- Information and hardcopy feedback forms available at libraries/customer service centres at Gumeracha, Stirling, Norton Summit and Woodside.
- Social media promotion.
- Messages on hold.
- Engagement activities throughout June and July.

Email and social media promotion statistics are presented in Table 1 Promotional Statistics.

Table 1 Promotional Statistics

Media	Number of posts / emails	Reach	Engagement (reaction, comment, share or opened link)
Adelaide Hills Council Facebook	1 post	4,300 views	10 interactions, 27 link clicks
Adelaide Hills Council Instagram	1 post	174 views	3 interactions
Hills Voice June e-Newsletter	1 email	4,428 emails sent 1,622 emails opened	550 email clicks
Adelaide Hills Engagement Hub email	2 emails	4,649 emails sent, 1,967 emails opened	231 email clicks
Email campaign to community groups and representatives	1 email	496 emails sent, 260 emails opened	29 email clicks
Adelaide Hills Engagement Hub page	NA	2,157 views, 1,118 visitors	102 contributors, 54 followers and 575 ABP document downloads

3. Participants

This section provides details about participation during the engagement period including an overview of the different ways that community engagement feedback was captured.

Participation source

The following table displays how participants provided feedback or were involved in discussions, during the engagement period.

Table 2 Participation Source

Formal feedback responses	Total number	Reviewed number
Online feedback form submissions *1 respondent completed survey twice	100	99
Hardcopy feedback form submissions	5	5
Written responses – email, letter *6 respondents completed multiple submissions	32	26
Public forum presentations *3 respondents completed other forms of feedback	6	3
Total formal feedback responses (with duplicates removed)	**143**	**133**
Informal feedback		
Adelaide Hills Engagement Hub Q&A tool 7 questions asked by 2 community members with 1 added by admin.		
Mylor Community Forum 53 community members in attendance, 6 members involved in ABP discussions.		

Participant characteristics

Demographic data was collected from respondents on the suburb/township in which they lived and their connection to the Adelaide Hills.

Respondents Suburb

Respondents were asked to provide the suburb/township in which they resided. This was a mandatory question within the feedback survey resulting in 104 submission responses. Suburbs could also be identified for all email, letter and presentation submissions.

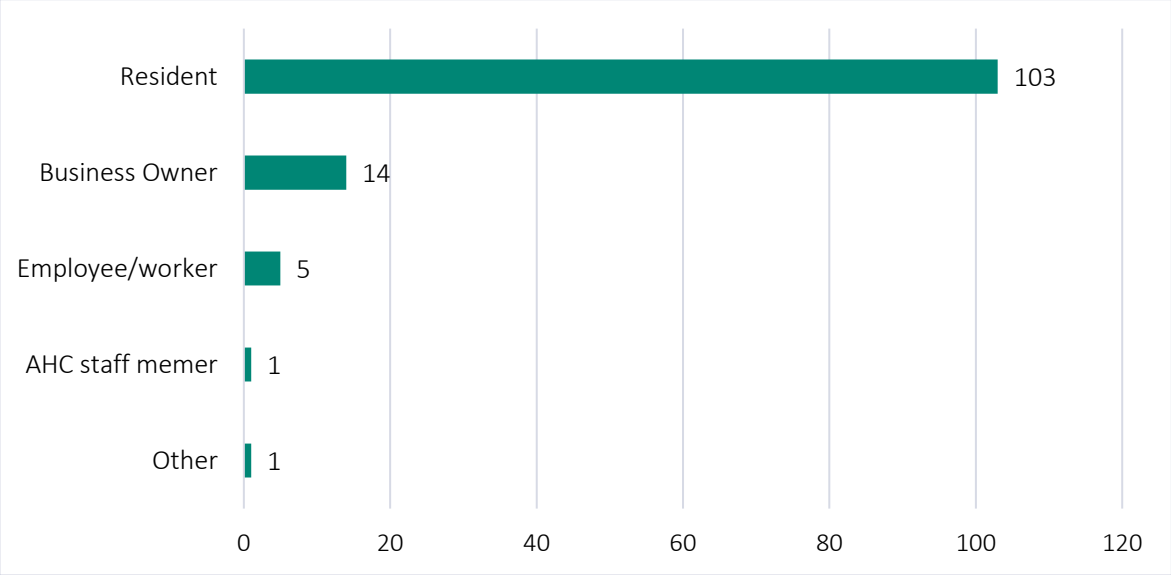
Table 3 *Participants Suburbs*

Suburb / Township	No. of participants
Gumeracha	13
Bridgewater	12
Woodside	9
Paracombe	8
Birdwood	6
Crafers	6
Houghton	6
Kersbrook	6
Mylor	6
Aldgate	5
Balhannah	6
Oakbank	5
Mount Torrens	5
Inglewood	4
Crafers West	3
Cudlee Creek	3
Foreston	3
Lobethal	3
Carey Gully	2
Kenton Valley	2
Lower Hermitage	2
Stirling	2
Upper Hermitage	2
Uraidla	2
Outside of the council area	2
Suburbs with 1 respondent: Ashton, Basket Range, Charleston, Heathfield, Millbrook, Norton Summit, Teringie, Upper Sturt, Verdun, Woodforde.	10
Total	133

Respondents connection to the Hills

Respondents were asked what their connection was to the Hills. This was a mandatory multiple choice question within the feedback form with 104 submission responses. As seen below most respondents (n=103) were residents of the Adelaide Hills Council area.

Chart 1 Connection to the Hills



4. Online and Hardcopy Feedback

104 individual online and hardcopy feedback responses were received as part of this consultation. Analysis of questions within the submission form on the Draft ABP are provided below.

Who read the Draft Annual Business Plan 2026-27?

Respondents were asked if they had read the Draft ABP. This was a mandatory question with 104 respondents. Responses are presented below:

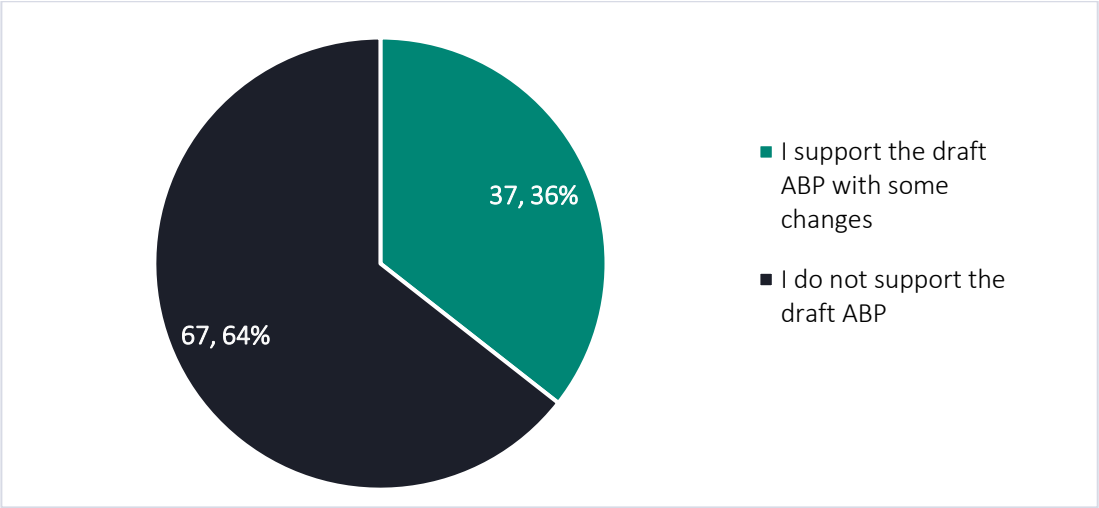
- Yes, I have had a thorough read - 72% (n=75)
- Yes, I have had a quick glance – 27% (n=28)
- No, I have not read the draft Plan – 1% (n=1)

Level of support for the Draft Annual Business Plan 2026-27

Respondents were asked to what extent they supported the Draft ABP. This was a mandatory question with 104 respondents. Responses are presented below:

- 0% (n=0) said they fully supported the Draft ABP.
- 36% (n=37) supported the Draft ABP with some changes
- 64% (n=67) did not support the Draft ABP

Chart 2 Level of Support for the Draft ABP



Provide more detail about your response

Respondents were asked to tell us more about their level of support for the Draft ABP. This was an optional question with 93 respondents choosing to provide comments, and these comments have been broken down into themes below.

Commentary from respondents who answered that they supported the Draft ABP with some changes and those who did not support the Draft ABP have not been separated as responses where very similar.

Table 4 Comment Themes – Level of Support for Draft ABP

Theme	Count
Rate rise is too high / don't support the proposed rate rise	56
Cost of living pressures residents and business owners are currently facing	31
Council should improve efficiencies, look at cost saving, improve financial practices	28
Rate rise should be in line with CPI	24
Council should concentrate on delivering core services / prioritise core services	23
Equity of distribution of council spending across the council region	17
Question of value of money for rates or stating that they are currently not receiving value for money	16
Concern regarding councils operating deficit and / or increasing debt	14
Council should defer any non-essential projects. Including references to individual projects	14
Support/increase spending on physical infrastructure upgrades / manage existing assets	10

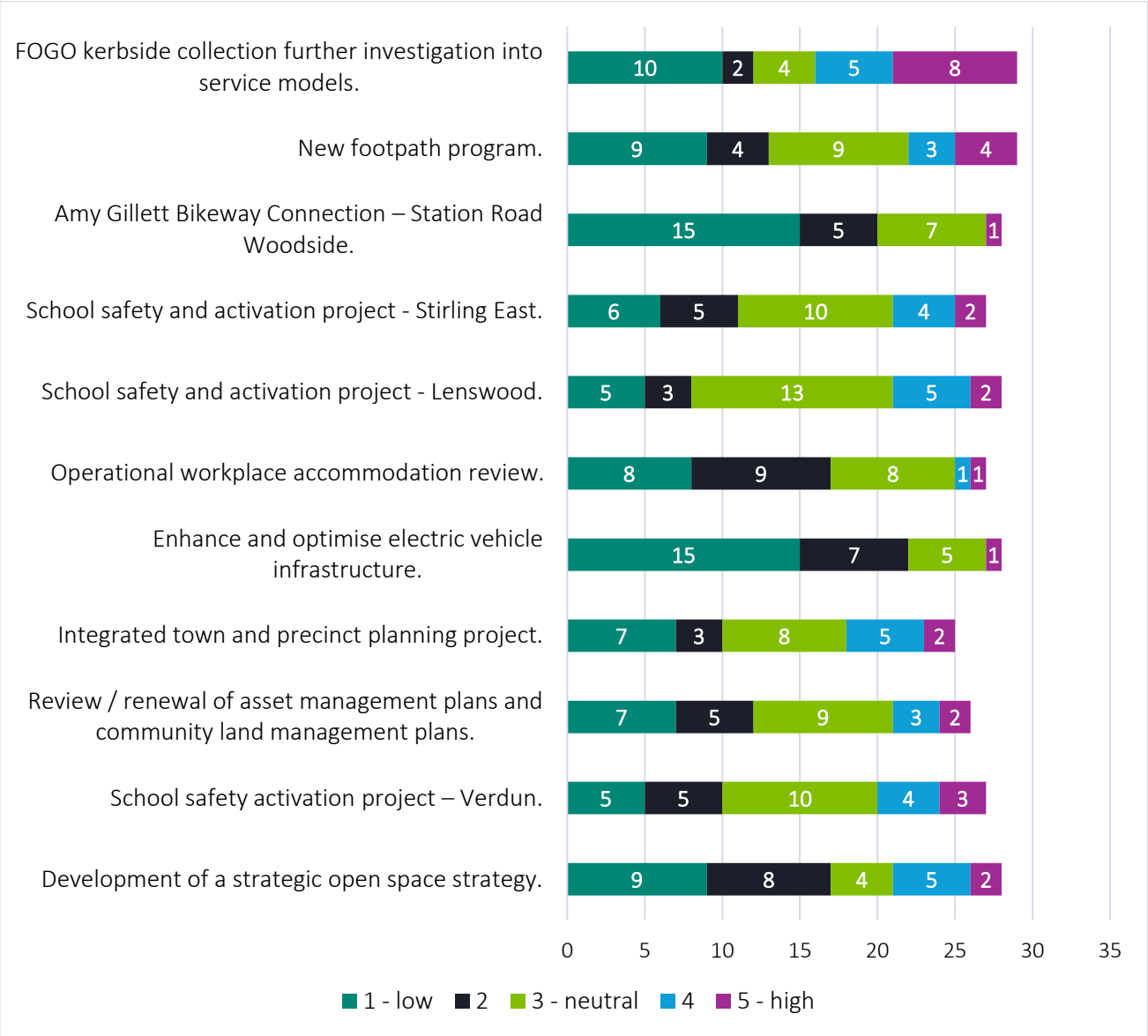
Requests for increased roadside maintenance or commentary about roadside maintenance	9
Concern or complaint that council services are decreasing / general complaint about services	9
Requests for or complaints about not receiving green waste kerbside collection or about improving waste collection.	8
More transparency around ABP projects and measures and council operations	8
Commentary that Fabrik spending is too high or around operational sustainability	8
Poor quality of roads / importance of road maintenance / road safety	8
Concern about increased property valuations and this leading to further increases in rates	7
More funding / larger focus on bushfire prevention	7
Council mismanagement.	7
Employee costs are too high / take up too much of the overall budget.	7
Requests for new footpath or footpath maintenance	6
Preference for focus on pedestrian access and safety	4
Question or complaint about Enterprise Resource Planning	4

Operating and Capital Projects

Respondents were asked if they would like to rate their level of support for a range of operating and capital projects featured in the Draft ABP 2026-27. Respondents could rate the project on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being low or no support and 5 being high support.

28 respondents chose to answer this question, and their support levels are shown in the chart below.

Chart 3 Level of Support for Operating and Capital Projects



Feedback on a specific project or initiative

Respondents were asked if they would like to provide feedback on a specific project or initiative. 20 respondents chose to answer this question.

Table 5 Comment Themes –Operating and Capital Projects

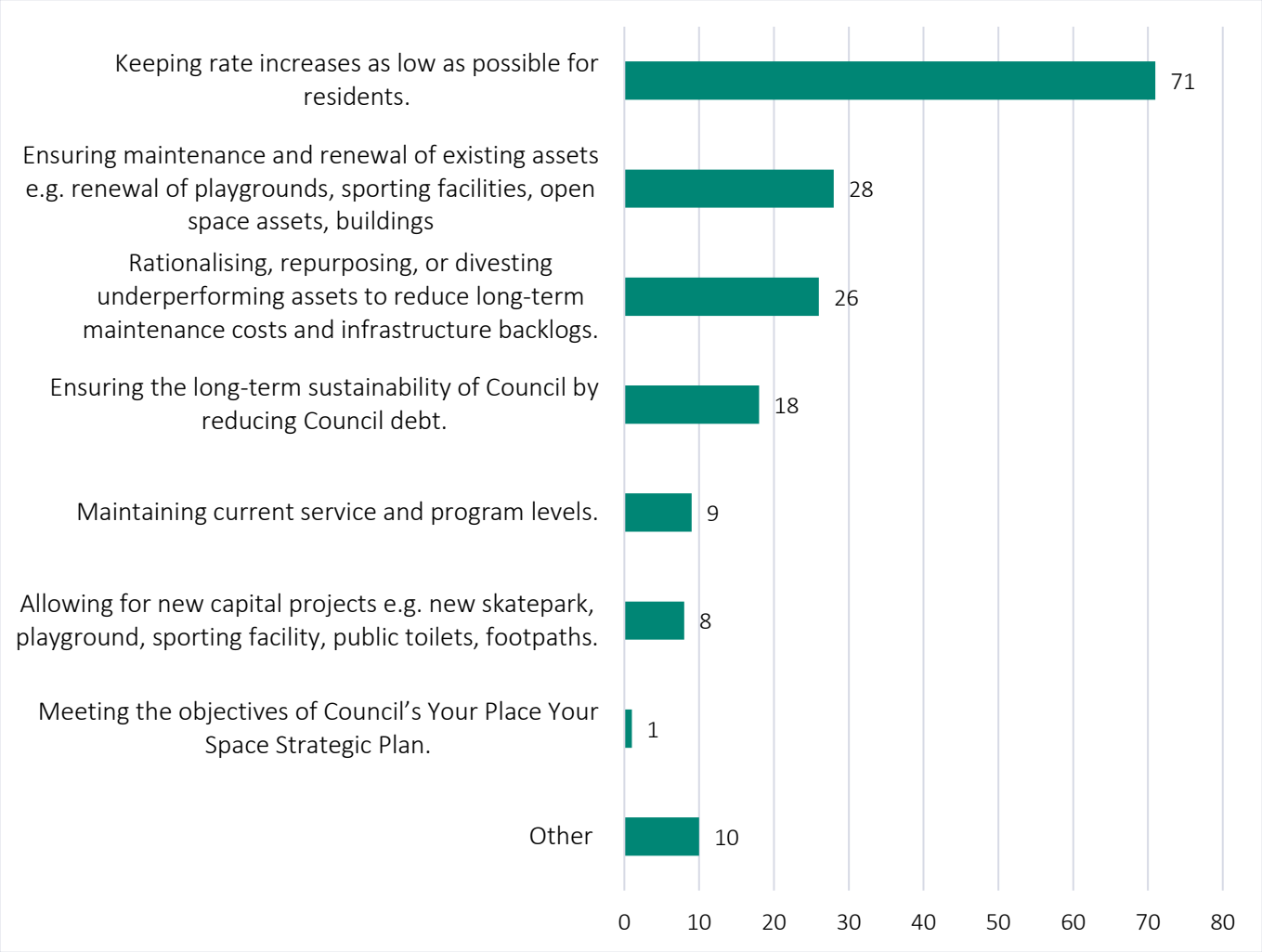
Theme	Count
Preference to defer the Amy Gillett Bikeway connection at Woodside or reduce spending on this project	6
Comments about whether electric vehicle charging infrastructure should be a council responsibility and whether there is a benefit to residents	5
Commentary that school safety is a state government responsibility	3

Preference to postpone new footpaths	3
Support given for school safety projects	3
Questions about or preference for deferral of Coventry Library cladding project	3
Commentary that Fabrik spending is too high or around operational sustainability of the facility	2
Requests for additional footpath works	2
Considerations / care provided for elderly	2
Operational projects should use existing staffing (don't support use of consultants)	2

Rate Rise Considerations

Respondents were asked if they would like to prioritise a list of factors based on what is most important for Council to consider when setting the rate rise for the 2026-27 Financial Year. Respondents could select up to three choices. 73 respondents chose to answer this question.

Chart 4 Prioritising Rate Rise Considerations



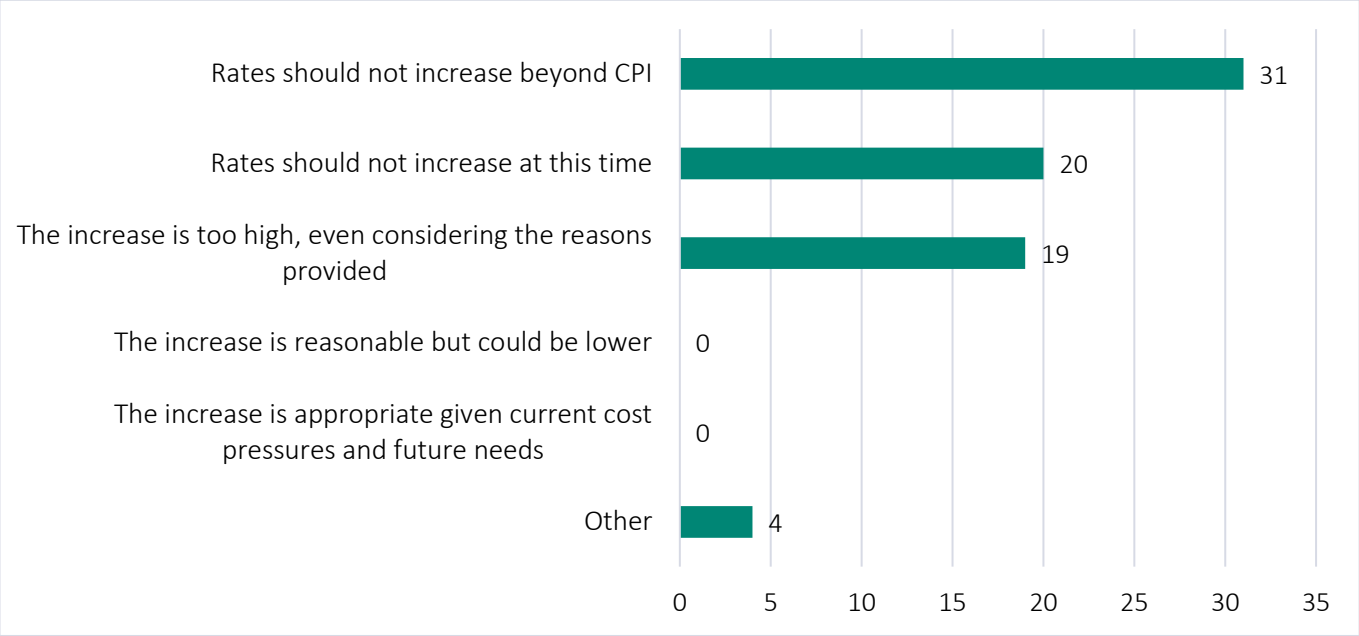
Respondents that selected 'other' provided comments about:

- Spending within your means in challenging times / balanced approach.
- Reducing staffing.
- Allowing more subdivision.
- Reducing mismanagement and wastage of rate payer funds.
- Concentrating on core services.
- Effects on residents.

Respondents' Views About the Proposed Rate Rise

Respondents were asked to select which of the statements provided best reflected their views about the proposed rate rise or to add their own statement. 73 respondents chose to answer this question. One person selected more than one option.

Chart 5 Views About Proposed Rate Rise



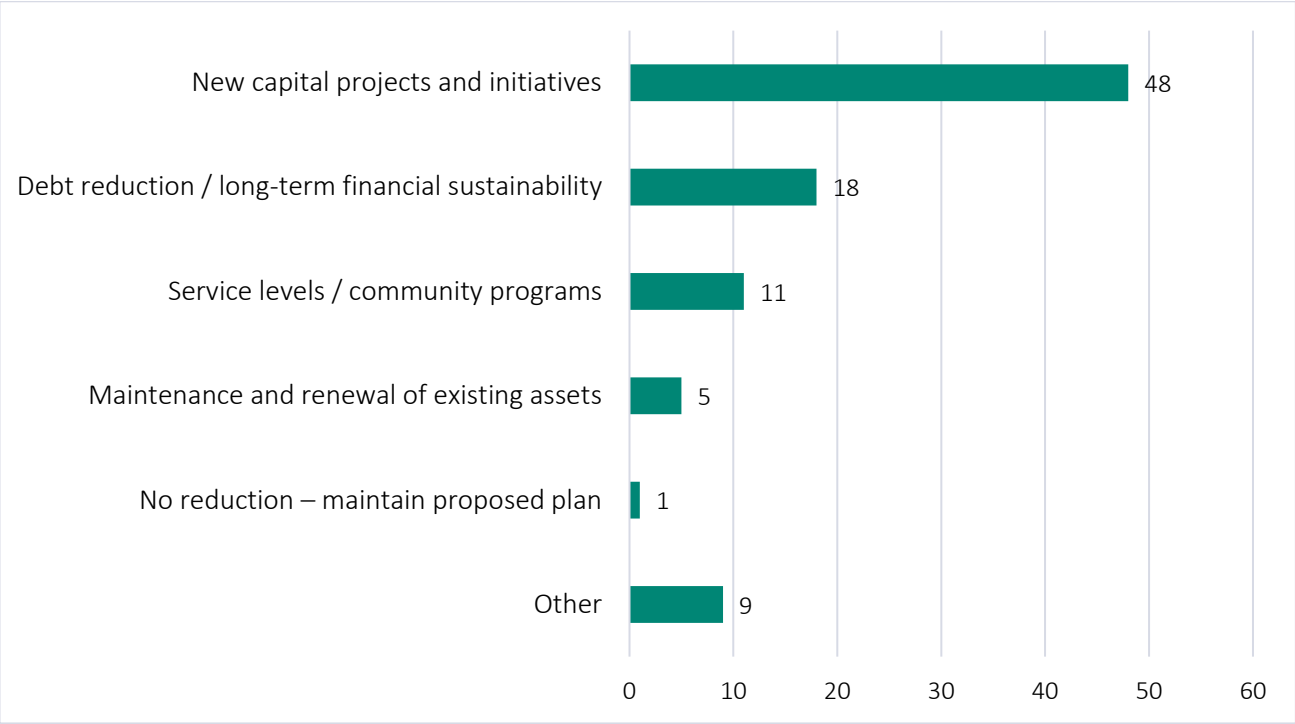
Respondents that selected 'other' provided comments about:

- The continual rate rise above CPI reflecting either poor management or loose spending.
- Rates not increasing above CPI.
- Council removing underperforming or excessive levels of staff, assets and cutting wastage.
- The continual rate rise being very stressful for residents living off pension/super.

Areas Prioritised for Reduction or Delay

Respondents were asked if the rate increase was reduced, which areas should be prioritised for reduction or delay. Respondents could choose one or two options from the provided list or add their own. 72 respondents chose to answer the question.

Chart 6 Areas Prioritised for Reduction or Delay



Respondents that selected 'other' provided comments about:

- Concentrating on core services, those within council core functions.
- Considering the effectiveness and reach of community programs and rationalizing.
- Maintaining critical infrastructure i.e. roads and footpaths.
- More information being provided about employee cost increases or suggested a reduction in employee roles.
- Improving financial practices.

Any Further Comments About Rate Setting and the Proposed Rate Rise

Respondents were asked if they would like to provide any additional feedback about rate setting and the proposed rate increase. 46 respondents chose to answer this question. The themes of comments provided can be seen in the table below.

Table 5 Comment Themes – Rate Setting and Proposed Rate Rise

Theme	Count
Concern/reference of about cost of living pressures	14
The rate rise is too high / don't support rate rise	14
Council should improve efficiencies, look at cost saving, improve financial practices	14
The rate rise should be in line with CPI	10
Council should concentrate on delivering core services / prioritise core services.	8
Concern or complaint about equity of distribution of council funding/works	7

Commentary that rates offer no or very little value for money	7
More transparency around ABP projects and measures and council operations	5
Commentary around council mismanagement	5
Concern that recent property valuations will result in additional rate increases	4
Support/increase spending on physical infrastructure upgrades / manage existing assets.	4
Council employee costs are too high	4
Concern or complaint that council services are decreasing / general complaint about services	3
Priorities of council don't match priorities of community members	2
Question, concern or complaint about Fabrik's operational budget and / or ongoing running costs	2
Council should defer any non-essential projects. Including references to individual projects.	2
Concern regarding councils operating deficit and / or increasing debt	2
Increase housing development to increase revenue	2
No rate increases at all	2

Engagement Questions received via the Q&A tool

Seven questions were received via the online question and answer tool with one additional question added by staff based on a reoccurring question received through written feedback.

These questions and the responses from council staff, were publicly available on Adelaide Hills Engagement Hub.

Table 6 Engagement Hub Question and Answer Tool

Community Question	Council response
Amy Gillett Bikeway, Woodside I am wondering if the $675k for this project includes the grant or does it exclude grants? If this project was removed from the 26/27 budget, how much % could that lower the proposed rate rise?	The amount of $675 allocated in the Draft ABP 2026-27 for the Amy Gillett Bikeway connection at Station Road, Woodside does not include any grant funding. Council will continue to investigate funding opportunities to offset the costs for this section of the Amy Gillett Bikeway as well as any future extensions of the bikeway. Due to the capital nature of this project, it does not have a direct impact on the rate rise. Removal of this project will lower the amount of borrowings Council requires, which in turn will result in a saving in finance costs.
Footpath query - Lobethal	The Woodside Road, Lobethal projects identified in the Draft Capital Works Plan are footpath renewal

The Draft Capital Works Plan shows footpath projects at the following locations - +Woodside Rd Jeffrey St to Lobethal Rd LOBETHAL +Woodside Rd Main St to No 5 Woodside Rd LOBETHAL These footpaths at face value appear in ok condition and are already sealed on both sides of the road - my queries - 1) What does this project entail? 2) Why does this project take priority over other footpath upgrades (e.g. even the Main Street of Gumeracha has an unmade footpath on one side, even outside a kindy)	projects. These works involve replacing sections of existing footpath that have been identified through Council's condition assessment process as being in poor condition and of a safety concern. Council prioritises renewal works based on factors including asset condition, safety, accessibility, pedestrian usage. Based on field assessment sections of these footpaths in the renewal are programmed for replacement, meaning some sections of the nominated paths may remain unchanged where they are still performing satisfactorily. The footpath adjacent to the childcare centre in Gumeracha is a different type of project, being a potential new footpath upgrade rather than a renewal. New footpath upgrades are funded through a separate budget program and prioritised independently of renewal works. We have noted this location for consideration as part of future planning and subject to Council approval through the annual budget process.
Increase in employee costs I would like a more detailed breakdown of the 3m increase in employment costs.	Staff salary increases are provided under the Adelaide Hills Council's Office and Field Enterprise Bargaining Agreements. These agreements are negotiated every 3 years through the formal industrial bargaining process and include provisions for annual salary increases that Council is obligated to implement. The Enterprise Agreements, including the applicable salary schedules, are publicly available and accessible through the South Australian Employment Tribunal.
Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system A new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system is highlighted in the draft ABP as a proposed $600k spend - one of AHC's proposed largest single projects. What is an ERP system? What are its benefits? What ongoing costs (e.g. licensing) are anticipated?	An Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system is the core technology platform that supports Council's key business functions, including finance, payroll, property and rating, infringements, and human resources. It brings together information from multiple systems into one integrated platform, making it easier to manage and use. Council's current systems are over 14 years old and were not designed for modern integration, reporting or security needs. A new ERP will streamline processes, reduce manual work and improve efficiency across the organisation. Importantly, it provides a strong foundation for the future, bringing data together enabling the introduction of new technologies over time, improving the tools used for decision making. As the project is currently in the tender phase, Council is unable to comment on specific licensing or ongoing costs. This ensures the procurement process remains fair, transparent and probity-compliant.
What are you doing for Northern Hills communities eg Kersbrook, Forreston,	Adelaide Hills Council, through its ward representations, endeavours to balance service delivery throughout its entire district. A more

Paracombe to warrant the rise? Can engagement team explain?
 	
Please explain what AHC is doing for Northern Hills area communities, eg Kersbrook, Forreston, Gumeracha, Paracombe, etc to warrant the rate rise - we dont even currently get nature strips weeded, dead trees removed, pot holes fixed - other than bin collection and an occasional green waste day very little is provided compared to other Hills areas SO can someone explain what extra services for the charge can we expect in this area as it doesnt appear to be much in the current plan.
	balanced perspective comes from looking at multiple years of investment. For example, in the 2025-26 program, some major and minor works occurred in the northern wards, as outlined below:
	
	• Amy Gillett Bikeway Extension Mount Torrens to Birdwood $5.7M
	• Birdwood Institute Renewal $180K
	• Kenton (Randell's Workers Cottage) Fencing $19K
	• Highercombe Golf Course Drainage Works $15K
	• Houghton Square Irrigation Upgrades $56K
	• Central Irrigation Control System Upgrade Gumeracha, Birdwood, and Kersbrook Cemeteries $51K
	• Federation Park, Gumeracha Swing Sets $18K
	• Federation Park BBQ and Bench Upgrade $5K
	
	Other capital works that have been undertaken in our northern suburbs over the last few years include:
	
	• Public toilet upgrades between 2022 - 2024
	  o Birdwood: $150K
	  o Gumeracha Oval: $300K
	  o Gumeracha Federation Park: $245K
	• Cemetery Shelters 2020 – 2024
	  o Birdwood: $15K
	  o Kersbrook: $15K
	  o Mt Torrens: $28K
	• Houghton Cemetery Expansion 2021: $40K
	• Kersbrook Natural Burial Ground 2023: $28K
	• Birdwood CWMS Solar System 2023: $20K
	
	2026-27 Operating and Capital Projects
	
	Looking at the proposed works for 2026-27 that will occur alongside ongoing services that are provided to residents throughout the district (such as verge mowing and reserve maintenance, waste collection, health services, maintenance of community buildings and facilities, libraries and community wellbeing services) there are several capital renewal projects proposed to happen around our northern suburbs and townships.
	
	These projects include:
	
	• Community Wastewater Management System dual pipe renewal at Kersbrook Oval and tank upgrades and generator renewal in Birdwood.
	• Road resealing - Forreston Rd, Forreston and Gumeracha.
	• Surface renewal of unsealed roads - Bonython Rd, Deloraine Rd and Kersbrook Forrest Rd in Kersbrook.
	• Surface renewal of unsealed road - Mellers Rd, Birdwood.
	• Surface renewal of unsealed road - Pitman Rd in Inglewood and Paracombe.

	If you see an issue that requires council maintenance, such as a pothole or dead tree along an AHC road, please submit a customer service request and staff will response to the issue.
Public Forum for Annual Business Plan Tuesday 23/6/26. Hello - is it possible to publish some more detail re the public forum that is part of Council's consultation process. Noting that the public forum appears to be within the formal Council meeting, it would be good to clarify how long does each ratepayer have to speak; is it anticipated to be a Q&A session (or just ratepayers presenting their concerns); and is it possible for ratepayers to hand out photos/do a powerpoint presentation etc?	The Public Forum will be right at the beginning of the Council Meeting starting very close to 6.30pm. Each community member wanting to present will have a maximum of 5 minutes. The Public Forum usually goes for 10 minutes in total, however the Council can resolve to extend this in line with the number of people wanting to present. Given there may be a number of people wishing to speak, it is likely that leave of the meeting will be sought to ensure everyone has an opportunity. Due to the short time allocation and potential number of presenters, PowerPoint presentations will not be available however presenters are welcome to bring handouts with them. The Public Forum is not intended to be a Q&A session but rather an opportunity for community members to present their feedback on the Draft ABP 2026-27.
Council staffing Hello, I note last year's ABP process provided a breakdown of staffing (FTE) - refer page 26 here –(link to document) I can't find anything similar this year? Is it possible to publish this information as part of this year's ABP?	The presentation and overall layout of the Annual Business Plan was reviewed this year to improve engagement and accessibility for a broad audience. As part of this process, some technical detail was streamlined to improve readability of the document. Regarding Council positions/staffing, all South Australian councils are required to have a publicly available Salary Register. This information can be accessed on the Adelaide Hills Council Website.
Woodforde Boundary Reform The AHC ABP contains this statement below, however AHC reported in 2024 that total rates received from the area was $1.932 million (3.76% of the AHC rate base) - is this figure still correct? - "The Boundary Commission's Inquiry into Campbelltown City Council's Woodforde/Rostrevor boundary reform proposal is ongoing. Should the reform proposal be successful, it may materially impact Council's financial sustainability. No financial or resource implications have been built into the 2026-27 budget.	The figure referenced is correct and has been consistently used in Council's formal submissions and advocacy material to illustrate the financial significance of the area to the broader Council community. In relation to the Annual Business Plan, it is important to note that the Inquiry process remains ongoing and no final determination has been made. As a result, no financial impacts (including potential loss of rate revenue) have been incorporated into the 2026–27 budget at this stage. Council has outlined in its submissions that, should the proposal proceed, transitional and compensation arrangements would need to be considered as part of any implementation, noting the material and ongoing impact on Council's revenue base.

5. Emails and written feedback

32 feedback responses were received via email and letter during the engagement period from residents and community associations or groups.

Six respondents submitted multiple forms of feedback (multiple emails or an email and feedback form). The table below shows key themes across all emails and letters received. Duplicates from the same respondent have been removed when shown in Table 9 under 7. Conclusion.

Eight emails / letters were submitted on behalf of a community group or association, and one email was submitted on behalf of a group of individual community members with joint interests.

Table 7 Themes of Email and Letter Feedback Responses

Theme	Count
Rate rise is too high / don't support the proposed rate rise	14
Cost of living pressures residents and business owners are currently facing	8
Questioning value of money for rates or stating that they are currently not receiving value for money	7
Support / increase spending on physical infrastructure upgrades / manage existing assets	7
Concern or complaint that council services are decreasing / general complaint about services	6
Council should improve efficiencies, look at cost saving, improve financial practices	6
Rate rise should be in line with CPI	5
Concern regarding councils operating deficit and / or increasing debt	5
Complaint about council mismanagement	4
Requests for new footpath or footpath maintenance, planning	3
Value of the natural beauty of the Hills / Hills way of living	3
Council should concentrate on delivering core services	2
Equity of distribution of council spending across the council region	2
Council should defer any non-essential projects. Including references to individual projects	2
Importance of community facilities	2
More transparency around ABP projects and measures and council operations	2

Land and asset reduction / sales to reduce maintenance costs	2
Requests for more funding for sporting facilities (includes individual project requests)	5
Feedback about specific projects or initiatives	**Count**
Question, concern or complaint about Fabrik's operational budget and / or ongoing running costs	4
Requests / support for funding to resurface Mylor Courts	4
Questions about State Government Election Commitments	2
Support for A100 walking trail completion	2

Verbatim responses can be seen in Appendix B.

6. Public presentations

An opportunity was promoted for members of the community to present feedback at the Ordinary Council Meeting held on Tuesday 23 June 2026, at the Summit Community Centre. There were six public presentation received at Council Meeting.

Table 8 Summary of Information Shared at the 23 June Public Forum

Presenter	Notes
Presenter 1 - Gumeracha	• Rate increase is too high during a cost-of-living crisis and unfair on the community. • Capital expenditure focused in the southern area and little happening in the northern areas of the district. • Excessive amount for Amy Gillett Bikeway connection in Woodside. Can this amount be refined and lowered where possible. • Footpaths – limited spread and mostly focused on school areas and the amount has been reduced from original 500k proposed. • Fabrik – concerned about ongoing cost and money could be better spent elsewhere (on other community centres). • Expenditure on trails is limited. • Concern about limited allocation to parks or playgrounds in the budget and lack of planning for this. • Investigate opportunities for council to generate new income e.g. commercial signage.
Presenter 2 – Bridgewater	• Presented that an opportunity existed to raise council revenue by hiring a part-time biodiversity grants officer. • Council has had recent success with biodiversity external grant funding, such as Cox Creek and this could continue and grow with a designated resource to organise funding applications. • The Biodiversity Team are a small and effective team, if they had a dedicated resource to focus on grant writing 1-2 days a week they could cover costs of position plus bring more funding in for community projects.

	• Cox creek is a good example of a project that provides stewardship of an important biodiversity site and reduces pressure on adjoining land holders.
Presenter 3 - Teringie	• Concerned about council debt and the reliability of council's financial figures. • Will run for council at the next election and will focus on financial issues. • Rejects 7.6% rate increase due to cost-of-living crisis and due to the aging/low income demographic in areas of the hills. • Discussed asset disposal and spoke to Council's inability to repay debt and their concern about this being passed on to future generations.
Presenter 4 – Mount Torrens	• Asked questions regarding the boundary reform (Campbelltown Boundary Change Proposal) and how much rate income AHC currently collects from these residents and would be set to lose if the boundary proposal goes ahead. • Spoke about 91% of Council's debt currently be at a variable interest rate and with the budget already being so tight and overspent in a number of areas, how council would manage if the rate increased.
Presenter 5 – Mount Torrens	• 7.6% is too high in a cost-of-living crisis. Yes everything has gone up but CPI is supposed to cover this. Not everyone's salary has gone up with CPI including people living off the land. • Deferring projects until future years to reduce costs. • Looking for savings is not easy, but it is reality. FABRIK extra costs may need to be deferred. • Couldn't see any inclusion of efficiencies using AI. • Legal fees have been reduced but still too high. • No initiatives to retain employees. • No planning for renewal of playgrounds especially for ones at Gumeracha and Mount Torrens. Maybe not this year but planning needs to be in place for it to occur. • Lowering speed on back roads where there isn't a budget for new footpaths.
Presenter 6 – Mount Torrens	• Knew of people who wanted to come to the Public Forum tonight but didn't because of the drive here – treacherous roads. • Objects to 7.6% rate rise. • Receives low to no services where they live and poor responses to service requests. • Little / no infrastructure investments in their area. • Asked question about why the project management costs and contingency budget are combined. • Asked about current years capital renewal budget and how it is tracking.

Written feedback / notes provided by presenters are available in Appendix C.

7. Community Forum

The Mylor Community Forum was held on Tuesday 30 June in the middle of the Draft ABP community consultation period. There were 53 community members in attendance at the forum and an opportunity was provided for community members to share their feedback and questions on the Draft ABP 2026-27 during the forum breakout session.

A group of 6 community members chose to speak to staff and elected members about the Draft ABP. These discussions included questions and feedback about:

- Council's current debt level and whether the proposed 7.6% increase in rates will clear this debt.
- The recent property valuations and whether this would also affect rate prices for residents.
- The percentage of resident that are on the pension and how the increased rates coupled with increased cost of living expenses could affect these residents.
- The challenges of funding infrastructure across the council area between townships and population bases with a relatively small rate base.
- The upcoming strategic asset and land management review and how decisions may be made about underperforming assets and any divestment of land or assets.
- Residents value the hills way of living and don't want to see a dramatic increase in development, but this means we also can't expect to see an increase in rates revenue through new residents.
- Use of Hills sporting facilities by non-residents and the positive and negative impacts of this.
- The price of council rates for the services received e.g. in some areas there is no common effluent, mains water, footpaths and low maintenance of roadside vegetation.

8. Conclusion

A total of 133 community members participated in providing formal feedback on our Draft ABP 2026-27.

Of the 104 participants who completed the feedback form, 64% (n=67) did not support the Draft ABP and 36% (n=37) supported the Draft ABP with some changes. No respondents stated that they fully supported the Draft ABP.

Throughout feedback received across different mediums, there were reoccurring themes of responses shown in Table 9 below. These themes relate to a lack of support for the proposed rate adjustment and concerns about the effect the proposed increase will have on residents alongside other increasing cost of living expenses.

There is a level of support or understanding for a rate increase in line with CPI but concern or lack of understanding why the additional rate increase is required. Respondents are asking council to look for opportunities to reduce costs and find efficiencies and there is a level of support for deferring any non-essential works and / or concentrating on core services, until council can find these efficiencies.

Some residents are struggling to see the value in the rates they are paying, and this leads to questions and commentary about equity of distribution of works and services across the

council district. Respondents also commented that they felt their council services were decreasing or provided a general complaint about the services they had received.

There is a level of support for spending on infrastructure renewal and maintenance of key community infrastructure such as roads, footpaths, stormwater and reserves and some key community sporting/recreation facilities.

There were reoccurring requests for additional information and more transparency around proposed operating and capital works and council finances.

Table 9 Themes of Comments Across All Feedback Streams

Theme	Count
Rate rise is too high / don't support the proposed rate rise	70
Cost of living pressures residents and business owners are currently facing	49
Council should improve efficiencies / find savings / improve financial practices	44
Rate rise should be in line with CPI	37
Questioning value of money for rates or stating that they are currently not receiving value for money	27
Council should concentrate on delivering core services	27
Equity of distribution of council spending across the council region	26
Council should defer any non-essential projects - including references to individual projects	21
Support / increase spending on physical infrastructure upgrades / manage existing assets	19
Concern or complaint that council services are decreasing / general complaint about services	19
Complaint about council mismanagement	17
Concern regarding councils operating deficit and / or increasing debt	16
Employee costs are too high / take up too much of the overall budget	12
More transparency around ABP projects and measures and council operations	12
Concern about increased property valuations and this leading to further increases to rates	11
Requests for new footpath or footpath maintenance and forward planning	11
Requests for increased roadside maintenance or commentary about roadside maintenance	10

Poor quality of roads / importance of road maintenance / road safety	10
Requests for or complaints about not receiving green waste kerbside collection or about improving waste collection	10
More funding / larger focus on bushfire prevention	9
Preference for focus on pedestrian access and safety	6
Complaint or enquiry about council spending on legal fees	6
Priorities of council don't match priorities of community members	5
Land and asset reduction / sales to reduce maintenance costs	5
Feedback about specific projects or initiatives	**Count**
Question, concern or complaint about Fabrik's operational budget and / or ongoing running costs	16
Comments about whether electric vehicle charging infrastructure should be a council responsibility and whether there is a benefit to residents	8
Preferences to defer the Amy Gillett Bikeway connection at Woodside or reduce spending for project	8
Requests for more funding for sporting facilities - including individual project requests	8
Questions and / or requests for deferral of Coventry Library cladding project	7
Question or complaint about Enterprise Resource Planning	5
Requests / support for funding to resurface Mylor Courts	5
Requests for funding to upgrade Federation Park Playground	4
Support for school safety initiatives	4
Reduce or postpone council fleet vehicle spending	4
Commentary that school safety is a state government responsibility	3

Feedback and proposed actions will be presented at the Special Council Workshop on 9 July 2026. Subsequently the final Draft ABP 2026-27 with changes will be presented in the Council Report for adopting the Annual Business Plan 2026-27 and Budget at the 14 July 2026 Council Meeting.

9. Appendices

Appendix A - Verbatim comments from online and hardcopy feedback form

Can you tell us more about your answer (level of support for draft ABP 2026-27)
I support the Draft ABP with some changes
Understand dilema of limited resources/income and extent of obligations for services and facilities but need to manage within reasonable means and loans.
The proposed works sound reasonable, but I'm sure the council could find ways to save money. In this economic climate, you should not be putting extra pressure on residents who are already struggling with the cost of living.
Fabrik is not paying its way. Ratepayers cannot continue to subsidize the operations at the expense of other proven community service providers such as The Hut and Community centers. Consider transferring ownership to a proven operator who can run it commercially. Is Fabrik really a core service of council? Ratepayer money is not unlimited. It is public money. More respect should be considered before spending it. Cut the size of the light fleet. If the council wanted to be transparent then every council vehicle would have the AHC logo on it so ratepayers can see how many cars they are paying for! No real plans to sell non performing assets. How many more “strategic asset” reviews do we need to undertake?
I don't think Council's draft is focussing on what most rate payers I know, want. We know that Council is in debt and that you are trying to appease as many of us as you can while being frugal, but I feel you should focus on the basics for now. You know - the old wants - rubbish, roads, playgrounds, maintain streets with lovely old trees, libraries, community centres, free dog poo bags at the time of registration. Add to this - communication. sending proactive emails re: what Council is doing in my street. Feeling listened to. Being told 'Let's work this out together'. The things that help build a strong community. I think you do need to consider there are still a lot of us who don't live via social media and do need words written by a human. The job number open/closed system you are using is appalling.
In this economic climate, rate payers should not have to wear an increase of this size. CPI only, neither of the two additional 1.5% increases. Cut some of the "nice to have" items and focus on the "need to have". >$2m for "governance"? $800k for the Stirling library cladding? $75k for electric car charging? $675k for the Amy Gillett bike track? All things that don't have to happen this year, at this cost, if they have to happen at all.
The Adelaide Hills Council consistently lists the natural environment as one of its main priority areas, but allocates only a very tiny amount of its recurrent expenditure, and almost none of its capital expenditure, on maintaining and enhancing the natural hills environment. The beautiful Hills environment is by far the most important capital asset the Council has custody of, but it is neither identified nor valued (other than through vague 'motherhood' statements) in the Draft ABP. The annual recurrent expenditure on managing the Council's biodiversity (particularly bushcare) is apparently too small an amount to appear as a line item in the Draft ABP at all. The Council needs to put its money where its mouth is on the environment - the AHC needs to maintain a permanent bush regeneration crew (eg. about six trained specialist bush regeneration staff) to work full-time maintaining and restoring the large areas of natural bushland for which the Council is responsible (reserves, road verges and other areas). At the moment the Council relies on volunteers, grants and a small budget for external contractors to maintain the natural environment. The Draft ABP lists 'Natural Environment' as top of its Key Priorities, yet allocates only a tiny proportion of its recurrent budget to maintaining this critical asset. Many of the

'Natural Environment' areas owned by the Council are deteriorating rapidly due to declining funding, and this draft ABP does nothing to address this. My understanding is that the AHC's natural area management budget is roughly $120,000 per year, which is completely inadequate to manage the 30% of community lands which are classified as environmental areas.
The rate increase is excessive and at a time when many residents will be struggling with cost of living pressures, the council needs to show constraint 2 reign in expenditure. Spend within your means
at a time of increasing costs to everyone, you need to cut your cloth to suit your budget. There are items in the budget that do not need to be done this financial year. I do NOT support rate increase to the level that you have suggested.
I do not support a rate rise of CPI plus 1.5%. Residents are already struggling with inflation costs and wages are not going to increase at even CPI levels. An increase in rates at the proposed level is going to result in increased financial stress on residents.
The proposed rate increase for the coming year is unreasonable. I do not receive a green waste bin service. While I can access the free green waste facility at Gumeracha, I have been turned away on several occasions because the material I was disposing of did not meet the accepted criteria. As a result, I am required to travel to Totness and pay to dispose of it. It would be fair and beneficial if I were entitled to a green waste bin service like other ratepayers. I also disagree with the principle that property value should determine council rates. I do not live in a town, yet I am effectively penalised because my property's value is higher than that of some town properties, despite receiving no greater level of service. Furthermore, the cost of living continues to rise, with significant increases in electricity, groceries, and fuel. At the same time, wages are not keeping pace with these rising costs. Given these financial pressures, the proposed rate increase places an additional burden on residents who are already struggling with higher everyday expenses
Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Annual Business Plan 2026-27. While I appreciate the services Council provide and all the hard work everyone is doing for our communities I just like to say a big Thankyou very much to all those involved I have concerns regarding the proposed 7.6% rates increase. Many residents including myself are already facing significant cost-of-living pressures, including rising food, energy, insurance, housing, and other essential expenses and costs At a time when many households are under financial strain, I believe Council should carefully review spending and seek efficiencies wherever possible before imposing further increases on ratepayers. I would encourage Council to keep any rate increases to the minimum necessary and ensure that value for money is being delivered to residents. More broadly, I would like to see the Adelaide Hills protected from excessive development and urban sprawl. Future growth should be carefully managed and supported by appropriate infrastructure, while preserving productive farmland, natural landscapes, wildlife habitat, and the unique character that makes the Hills such a special place to live. The Adelaide Hills are valued for their natural environment, open spaces, rural identity, and sense of community. These qualities should remain a priority when planning for the future. Growth and development should not come at the expense of the environment, productive agricultural land, or the character of existing communities. I also believe ongoing investment in maintaining local roads, footpaths, public spaces, and roadside areas (Rubbish weeds ect) is important to ensuring the Hills remain safe, attractive, and enjoyable for residents and visitors alike.
I appreciate council's consideration of Any Gillet bikeway connections and improved and maintained infrastructure. However, I cannot understand why the rates are increasing well beyond inflation. AHC proposed rate increase is one of the steepest in South Australia but our council rates are also very very high for what many people who live outside of township should pay. I do not agree with the exorbitant rate increase that has been proposed.

I have great concern about the waste of money within council. There should be a review of total wages paid as council appears to be very top heavy in senior staff payments. Mismanagement of finances in previous years should not be part of the reason for such a ludicrous increase in rates.
The Rate rises have not been justified adequately and there are multiple levels of rate hikes. Council has increased estimated house prices by 9.5%, then increased rates by inflation, plus 1.5% for Management/Initiatives and additional 1.5% for a not well justified financial stability cost. I'm sure rate payers are concerned about their own stability also. Funds going to Kersbrook area are disproportionate to other suburbs, queries are going un answered, some issues are not followed up in the community.
Irrigation of Gumeracha Oval has completely dropped out of the budget - despite being a project several years ago. Support of upkeep of this facility has been very poor, relying on volunteers to fund maintenance and improvements through goodwill and a passion for their community, which is not (to my knowledge) acknowledged at council level i.e., completely taken for granted. The community has also strongly advocated for an upgrade to the Federation Park playground for many years. Given the number of visitors this park draws, an up-to-date facility is warranted.
You say we are paying increased interest on borrowings yet are proposing borrowing more. How about nor spending beyond our means.
The rate hike is too high considering its offering very little to some towns Kersbrook has been waiting for a number of trees to be replaced on glover st after the removal of the previous trees which has left the footpath exposed to summer heat and almost unusable. We have other footpaths that are underwater most of winter and a slip hazard as the water subsides that again are unusable for parts of the year. We have a council run playground with no shade that's unusable during the hotter summer months as the metal equipment is a burn hazard. We have roads so full of pot holes that they damage your car. So I would like to see some stuff in the budget for those small towns that seem to be forgotten by the AHC.
Residents can't keep getting these sort of rate rises and as a part pensioner most of our money goes to rates and insurance . In the 26 years living in Birdwood I have seen footpath upgrade the occasional street sweeper and rubbish pick up on Olivedale street . Our rates keep rising but our pensions can't keep up.
The changes to rates are inappropriate given current cost of living pressures and the inequity of provisions for the Northern Adelaide Hills. Again - there is very little information about what will be done for the Northern Adelaide Hills and I would hate to be in Woodforde and Rostrevor as they seem to miss out too. They would be better off with Campbelltown Council as previously
Rates should not increase more than CPI especially since the value of properties are predicted to decrease over the next two years.
Council has the fundamental duty to balance the accounts, not run a deficit. A saving of over $1m could be achieved from having no deficit borrowings. Continuing to raise rates inline with inflation is OK but the council needs to understand that it is responsible to operate within its means. STOP overspending, balance the books and stop burning our money on feel good, frivolous & woke project's...
It is not clear if other options have been considered prior to a % increase in rates, like cut backs the Council can make instead, ie offering cars to staff, projects that are 'nice to have', narrowing Council's scope instead of being all things to all people
"The 7.6% rate increase is too high in the current cost of living crisis. Local Councils (https://www.localcouncils.sa.gov.au/how-councils-work/council-rates) state that South Australian households pay on average around $39 per week in council rates. By my calculations, this increase would bring the average Adelaide Hills household to $63.71 per week for rate payments, almost 40% above the state's average. Secondly, the ABP does not go far enough in supporting the management of green waste. We live in one of the most bushfire prone areas in South Australia and yet the majority of us do not have access to green waste removal or equitable and transparent

decision-making in relation to this issue. For example, there are a cluster of 12 households in Paracombe (not in the FOGO serviced area) who have received special permission from AH Council to have a green waste bin and yet we live several kilometres away near the route with many neighbours who would also like access to this service. When we have enquired with (Council's waste Officer) and provided her with East Waste's map, we have been met with a persistent refusal to address our inquiries. Despite multiple emails and phone conversations, (Council's waste Officer) has declined to provide substantive answers, stating only that any response would merely prompt further questions from us. The community deserve better and professional behaviour from the AH Council in managing such a significant issue. Although the median age (according to ABS data 2021) for the area is 47 years old, 32.6% of Paracombe's population are 60 and over. The reliance on green waste depots, which require access to a trailer and a vehicle to tow it, are physically and logistically demanding. For an aging demographic where nearly a third of the Paracombe population is over 60, lifting heavy branches and managing trailers is simply unfeasible. This reliance creates an unfair physical burden on older residents who want to maintain fire-safe properties but lack the physical capacity to transport bulk waste. Providing curbside green waste bins is not just a logistical convenience, but a necessary safety measure that respects the demographic realities of our community."
The increase is of 7.6% is completely unreasonable and unjust in the current economic climate. Young working family's will struggle even more than they already are. I would rather see a reduction in the employee costs to at least $20 million or less. There is no need for more than a third of the budget to be going to employee cost in a council of our size. I also find it ridiculous to be providing an art centre upwards of $800,000, yet fire prevention is only being allocated $180,000 when we are heading toward what could be one of the hottest and driest summers on record. Gumeracha can't even get useable footpath the full length of King Fisher Street. Putting young children and the elderly who like to walk a town loop at risk of speeding cars. The priorities of the council are completely out of touch with what people in the community actually want.
I do not agree with increasing rates above CPI.
A rate increase of almost double the rate of inflation is not acceptable. An increase in the amount of indebtedness is not acceptable. Limit the rate increase. Repay some of the debt and save a fortune in interest. Spend money on only those things which must be done.
As president of the Johnston Memorial Park Committee (JMPC) the controlling body of the JMP at Balhannah, I am very disappointed that the proposed project to knock down and rebuild the currently outdated and inadequate football clubrooms at the JMP complex was not supported in the budget in some way. The AHC previously encouraged and funded the entire program ($35,000.00) to professionally plan, design and cost the proposal to a point where it was essentially "shovel ready" only to have walked away without any further commitment to the project. Putting the money issue aside, AHC has now made the task of seeking funds from Federal and State Governments very difficult when they see local council withdrawing it's support from the project. The entire community, public and sporting groups, has got behind this project in an effort to move, what was just a football club in the past, into a new era of community involvement. (The Onkaparinga Valley Community Sporting Complex) The old clubrooms are now totally inadequate and do not comply with any current sporting standards. Netball, Cricket, Tennis and Football have significant increases in participation in all ages, in particular juniors, they increasingly lack the facilities to accommodate their needs.

There is a need in the Onkaparinga Valley region for a modern, large capacity function centre, this project does address that. The proposal will also provide "state of the art" facilities for CFS in the event of community disasters (as was the case with Cudlee Creek Fires in 2019)
The JMPC, a community inclusive group, spends thousands of dollars of community raised funds each year in the management of the JMP, providing Council with a community asset highly regarded in the Hills.
I understand the amount of funding required is significant, however, I struggle to understand why AHC would drop the project completely without any negotiation with the project team.
For this reason I cannot support the draft plan without AHC at least committing something to the project.
[redacted]

As a resident, employee and small business owner within the Adelaide Hills Council area, I would like to see a stronger focus on destination marketing and promotion across the region within the ABP.

While I am aware that tourism marketing may be shared with, or led by, the South Australian Tourism Commission, I believe that AHC should have a strong fucus on marketing the area that it derives its income from. In the draft ABP the only attraction mentioned is Fabrik, while current marketing efforts often highlight wineries and periodic events such as markets, which certainly have value they are not all inclusive of what the region has to offer. As a small business owner who invests year-round in rent, insurance, utilities and council rates, I would welcome greater emphasis on attracting visitors to our towns every day of the year, rather than only on weekends or during specific events.

Permanent attractions, retail precincts, hospitality venues and local experiences are available seven days a week and provide ongoing economic benefits to communities. Marketing that encourages year-round visitation offers stronger value for money and supports the many businesses that operate continuously throughout the region.

I also believe every town within the Adelaide Hills has a clearly identified point of interest or unique attraction that can be promoted to visitors. Equally important is fostering local pride by helping residents discover what exists in their own communities. When locals are informed and engaged, they become ambassadors for the region, encouraging friends and family to visit and supporting local businesses themselves.

In addition to owning a small business, I work at the National Motor Museum in Birdwood. It is an attraction that I feel is often overlooked in broader Adelaide Hills tourism promotion. The museum attracts local, interstate and international visitors almost every day of the year, yet it rarely features in marketing campaigns unless those advertisements are funded directly by the History Trust of South Australia. Take your draft ABP - no images from the museum are included, yet during the winter months it is a perfect indoor destination.

While some may perceive the museum as a destination primarily for motoring enthusiasts, feedback from visitors consistently demonstrates a much broader appeal. Many people, particularly women and families, leave pleasantly surprised by how much they enjoyed the experience and the memories it evoked. Given its national significance and year-round visitation, I believe the National Motor Museum deserves a much higher profile in Adelaide Hills tourism marketing, comparable to the attention given to destinations such as Hahndorf or the Big Rocking Horse.

Finally, our family is heavily involved in the local community through sport, church and the Birdwood Community Pantry. In this regard, I would like to acknowledge the positive support provided by Adelaide Hills Council through its grants program. The grants are well promoted, straightforward to apply for and provide valuable assistance to a range of worthwhile community initiatives. I strongly encourage Council to continue investing in and expanding this important area of support and thank you for the support already given.

Increase in rates in not in line with other LGA's.
Increase over and above CPI.
Obscene amount spent on employee costs.

I am confused with the following statement about council rates setting. "An additional 1.5 per cent is proposed as the Council continues the process of ensuring long term financial sustainability. This is reflective of the cost of maintaining legacy infrastructure, higher depreciation and increased finance costs against a background of challenging economic and geopolitical conditions."
It is not clear to me that this 1.5% levy is a one-off levy for 2026/7 or it will be a continuing levy that will be added to future base rate increases in ongoing years.
Your early response to this would be much appreciated.

I don't support the Draft ABP

I am very tired of the large yearly increases in rates, equivalent to paying compound interest but at huge levels.
I suggest that new builds and similar are put on hold until markets recover.
Once we pay more than 5% extra year on year, the rates we pay can never reduce, and never stay the same.
Government entities are the only ones with the right of income increase each year, we don't get that so every year it's doing more with less, because of uncontrollable government expenses

Proposing rate increases well above the CPI rate is irresponsible. Many households are already struggling with significant cost of living pressures and council seems to have lost sight of the financial constraints of their ratepayers. Many are retired and on fixed incomes and don't have the capacity to pay additional rates.
Proposed council expenditure needs to be reined in so that rate rises are kept well below CPI. Whilst some capital projects may have some merit they may need to be deferred until debt is reduced or services reduced elsewhere to offset the cost. Council rates are not good value for money with a lot of money spent on noncore expenditure.

Submission on the Adelaide Hills Council 2026/27 Annual Business Plan and Budget

To whom it may concern,

I wish to object to the proposed Annual Business Plan and Budget, particularly the proposed average rate increase of 7.6%.

This increase is significantly above inflation and comes at a time when many households continue to face cost of living pressures. Ratepayers rightly expect Council to demonstrate strong financial discipline before asking residents to contribute substantially more each year.

My primary concern is not any single project or budget line, but the overall direction of Council's financial management.

Council appears to have accumulated a substantial debt burden, and rather than addressing the underlying causes of this position through improved financial discipline and prioritisation, the burden is increasingly being transferred to ratepayers through above-inflation rate increases.

Local government should focus on delivering its core responsibilities efficiently and sustainably. Residents expect well-maintained roads, footpaths, parks, waste collection, community facilities and essential local services. They also expect Council to distinguish clearly between its statutory role and broader political or ideological campaigns.

I am concerned that Council continues to devote resources to matters that fall well outside its core functions, including advocacy on contentious political and cultural issues. Recent examples include Council's opposition to Santos' sponsorship of the Tour Down Under and positions relating to Australia Day. Regardless of where individuals stand on these issues, many ratepayers do not expect their council rates to fund political advocacy on divisive national debates that have little connection to the delivery of local government services.

When Council is asking residents to absorb a 7.6% rate increase, every discretionary expenditure should be carefully scrutinised. The priority should be improving efficiency, reducing waste, reviewing non-essential programs, and restoring long-term financial sustainability before seeking additional revenue from the community.

I acknowledge that councils face genuine cost pressures. However, those pressures do not remove the responsibility to make difficult decisions about priorities and to demonstrate that every reasonable opportunity has been taken to reduce expenditure before imposing above-inflation increases on ratepayers.

Accordingly, I urge Council to:

* Reduce the proposed rate increase to a level more closely aligned with inflation wherever reasonably possible.
* Undertake a comprehensive review of discretionary expenditure and non-core activities.
* Develop a credible long-term strategy to reduce debt and improve Council's financial sustainability.
* Refocus Council's efforts on delivering efficient, high-quality local government services rather than engaging in divisive political or ideological advocacy.

Ratepayers deserve confidence that Council is living within its means, focusing on its core responsibilities, and respecting the financial pressures faced by the community.

Regards,
[redacted]

The Draft needs to contain expenditure to reflect current family budgets

The draft plan does not have sufficient detail into any items of capital expenditure to be able to comment on the validity to the council. What is the $3m being spent on? Also given previous significant expenditure on CRM I find it hard to see why there is more particularly when you can purchase off the shelf for significantly less.

I do not support an operating deficit to essentially fund renewals and depreciation. Taking out loans should be for exciting or really needed, generational capital works not standard operating. Particularly when your LTFP over recent years has talked about a return to surplus. Not OK to ask for such a rate rise above CPI without delivering improved value for the community, or without a plan for how this won't be required in subsequent years (e.g. rate smoothing). Non-rateable revenue should meet this shortfall - capitalising/liquidating some property assets, for example. I feel perhaps the Council Members are not being set up for success here with getting all the information and options with enough time to consider them before this budget was prepared and ultimately presented to the community. Which links to my next comment - I don't appreciate consultation so late in the process - with adoption of a budget more than a month into the financial year in potentially August? You can't set up an organisation for sustained success if staff don't know what they're working with for the first month to two months of a financial year.

The proposed increase in rates is irresponsible in the current financial climate. Council should be able to provide services within the current budget especially as AHC residents receive far less for their rates than other Adelaide Council residents

About the 7.6% rate rise is absolutely unfair and unreasonable in the current climate and as a resident of paracombe we get nothing but a bin empty

Sadly we live in a time of excessive cost of living expense increases for everyone. Whilst I am sure the ABP contains many worthwhile projects, in my mind the reality is that many ratepayers can not afford the proposed rate increase. I presume the valuation of our properties will also increase, which will mean a real dollar increase greater than the proposed 7.6%. I therefore believe the rate increase should be capped at the current inflation rate. My thoughts are that it is time for us to live within our means during these difficult financial periods.

Why is there virtually no investment for Bridgewater when so much needs doing?

Running at a deficit when the amount of paid employees throughout Council should seriously be considered!

You claim 30% of the population are volunteers, alot more of the paid positions could in fact be volunteer run and a major saving could be achieved. A big shake up within paid employees is needed, to keep continuing as normal with too many paid employees and then to increase rates as a solution is just losing Community trust. Living and owning a business in the Adelaide Hills will be almost impossible because of this mismanagement! Why dont the higher paid Council members take a pay cut in lieu of a rate rise to show they actually care about the Adelaide Hills and its people?
I do not support the draft ABP at all - the proposed increase of 7.6% to our rates is insane. This increase puts an additional strain on families who are already struggling. Living in Kenton Valley I see an increase in fees with little that actually helps our community. Looking at the draft operating projects there are massive amounts of money being spent on things that I do not feel add back enough value. What even is Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System and WHY would it cost tax payers $600,000??? This seems to be a huge waste of money. I also feel that $350,000 for the election costs is too much. Is this so high because of all the bits of paper we received in the mail?? You are also hosting a public meeting on a week night at 6.30pm - your location is a full 45 minutes from where we live. There is no way that we would be able to attend this meeting as a family with young children so we are cut out of this form of feedback. Could it be that you are hosting it at the Summit to be closer to the rich retirees in Stirling, I wonder?? You are neglecting the smaller towns that are seemingly 'out of sight, out of mind'. I feel strongly that you are wasting money and that the rates are far too high as they are (we don't even get a green bin but that doesn't reduce our rates).
The rate set is unreasonable. Year after year the rates rise and residents feel that they are little more than deep pockets to fund the AHC. 7.1% rise is too much for what is popularly and erroneously seen as being for bin collection. I might point out that in Woodside footpaths are in a parlous state of inconsistent construction and design. Examples being on the Southern side of the Valley rd between Moffet st and St Marks Drive. I defy any mother or father to push a pram in a straight line. It is difficult to walk along there. On the North west side of the Valley rd between Langbein st and Freshford place the footpath is appalling. Some in mobility vehicles use the road as it is safer! Freshford place, like many other streets does not have a footpath so Council is off the hook, Residents walk on the road. Now I have been here for 23 years and in Balhannah for 28 years and I have seen very little to impress. But credit where credit is due, the Library is great. The main roads and bridges are a great improvement but that was not Council that was DTI with Commonwealth funding. I and many others think 7.1% increase is right over the top and should be pegged at the CPI not at some whimsical figure. I do note that despite my request to modify parking bays on the Valley rd and to lower the speed limit from 60 to 50 South from Verco road to Langein avenue no action was taken whatsoever and vehicles still speed. But wait.....action was taken on the corner of Freshford place.....A yellow line was painted to stop parking on the corner and making turning traffic safer. A 20 metre yellow line which would cost a few dollars and less than 30 minutes to do. I could have done that myself. It is now covered by leaves and people still park there. Now that's what I mean. What do the taxpayers see but minimalism.
Once again the Northern end of the AHC residents zone are paying around 3K per year for what seems like only a rubbish bin emptying service. Our main roads are in poor shape by 3rd world standards, yet an art exhibition hall in Lobethal has an 800k allocation for an established premises? The recent correction of a small section of Paracombe Roads was appreciated, particularly as road crews made it significantly worse than it already was in around 2017. Assuming Paracombe Road is a DIT road, perhaps forwarding concerns from residents with some urgency would be helpful. Green waste removal service for the entirety of Paracombe would be good, instead of restricting availability to a small percentage of residents on Paracombe Road. Raining rates 30% over the last 5 years seems outrageously disproportionate to inflation.
Unfortunately the northern Adelaide Hills miss out once again with minimal to no allocation of funds. It is disappointing and to make things worse - another increase in

rates?!
Paying over $3000 a year is a lot to pay for waste service- and that doesn't even include green waste collection or hard rubbish collection! Not even a kitchen bench green waste container! Just the basic blue and yellow bins.
There doesn't seem to be much else my rates are going towards in the local Paracombe community apart from a handful of street lights and Paracombe oval maintenance.
There was a recent small section of Paracombe Road resurfaced, however there is more to be done. Paracombe Rd is a fairly high traffic road, not only for residents but for people accessing Gorge Rd via Torrens Hill Rd. An upgrade of the road would be warranted.
It seems that even when residents alert council of concerns ie. extremely long grass on Torrens Hill Rd (which was a fire hazard) there is no urgency - this grass has only been recently cut - in winter, when the threat has passed. I wonder what will happen next fire season? Will the grass be cut then or next winter again?
I do also question the amount of money going to Fabrik - over $800,000! A breakdown of those costs would be justifiable for rate payers. It's a huge cost, when only $178,000 is put towards bushfire prevention for the entire Adelaide Hills.
I love the Adelaide Hills and where I live, but feel like the northern Adelaide Hills are always forgotten about in these budgets 😞

Bridgewater seems to be missing out.
We need footpaths in this township and a decent dog park.

There is no consideration of the affect of the AHC Rates proposed increase to residents who are struggling with the cost of living.
The AHC cannot continue to provide less and less services or poorer quality services while charging more and more from the council ratepayers.
This type of gouging leads people to wanting to see the local government system disbanded and absorbed by State government departments.

Yes costs have increased , and thats what CPI increases covers.
The plan does not detail the increases in costs that have lead or will lead to the additional increases of 1.5 + 1.5, nor does it state if these are one offs or will be compounded next year.
There is no talk of saving initatives.
There is no inititives to retain staff/volunteers to keep and build on knowledge within the organisation, and to see projects to completion.
I note that legal fees planned to decrease, looking for further decreases, please detail what are issues that are main drivers of seeking legal advice, and is the level AHC is seeking legal advice similar to same size Councils?
For 1.5% increases please give details of what this is for (without details I do not support this increase) including what community projects are costing/increasing more than CPI?
Please detail what cladding Stirling library has that requires urgent action
There is no planning for renewal of main playgrounds at Gumeracha(I do acknowledge that following community lobbying seats on swings have been replaced) and Woodside, yes these are significant expenses , and they need to be planning for.

How can you justify 3% over all national indexes? Plant replacement needs to be deferred and use as a budget line to save money.

Please concentrate on Flipping Bins, Fixing Potholes and Filling the libraries with (normal) books.... please concentrate on the minimum ratepayer needs (particularly those in the north) and stop wasting money on needless left wing focused programmes.

My feedback regarding the proposed 7.6% rate increase and how it affects my family and life.

I understand that costs go up and that Council needs revenue to provide services and maintain infrastructure. However, I find it difficult to support a rate increase of this size when some of the most basic services in our area continue to be neglected.

My biggest concern is the state of our roads. Every winter the potholes appear, Council comes out and fills them, it rains again, and within days we're back to where we started. This has been happening for as long as we've lived here - around 11 years.

At some point, surely it makes sense to stop spending money on the same temporary fix and start looking at a more permanent solution. I appreciate that properly repairing or

sealing roads is expensive, but so is repeatedly sending crews, trucks and machinery out to patch the same holes year after year. As a ratepayer, it feels like we're stuck in an endless cycle that delivers very little long-term benefit.

Another issue is roadside maintenance. During the warmer months, verges are often left overgrown, particularly around corners and intersections where visibility is important. Apart from looking untidy, it creates genuine safety concerns and provides cover for snakes, foxes and other pests.

What many residents want to know is simple: what are we getting for an extra 7.6%? If rates are increasing at that level, I would expect to see noticeable improvements in the services and infrastructure that affect us every day.

I would encourage Council to focus on long-term solutions rather than continuing to spend money on short-term fixes that clearly aren't working. The condition of our roads alone is enough to make many ratepayers question where their money is going.

Thank you for considering my feedback.

I can't speak for other suburbs in the Hills region but I feel Houghton is also a totally forgotten part of the Council. There are no walking paths through the suburb, local member of the community are putting in their own time and money to build a community (which boggles my mind that people in the community have to do that for something to be built), north east road is artrocious considering it's used as a tourist spot (anstey hill and the quarry). Anstey hill from an ecological perspective is distinguishing, it's barren, full of weeds and pest plants and is a dumping ground at any of the pull off points for people waste.

I feel the community would fall apart if it wasn't for volunteers. I'd support a council rate increase under the proviso that the community gets the bare minimum that you would expect a 185 year township to have

From our community perspective, we feel like we get nothing out of being part of the hill council other than bins being emptied and an occasional tree trim.

As a Kersbrook resident, I struggle to see the value already being delivered for the rates we currently pay compared with residents in other areas of the council.

In our area, the primary service we receive is weekly rubbish collection. Meanwhile, roads are deteriorating with crumbling edges and numerous potholes, there is no street lighting, hard rubbish collection comes at an additional cost, and the limited stormwater drainage infrastructure is both inadequate and poorly maintained, with drains frequently blocked.

There are also ongoing concerns regarding vegetation management. Road verges are not consistently maintained, including ahead of bushfire season, and there appears to be insufficient preparation and maintenance of surrounding forested areas to reduce fire risk.

Given the current cost-of-living pressures facing households, I do not support a rates increase. I would prefer to see Council focus on improving financial management, reducing debt, and delivering the core services and infrastructure that residents reasonably expect before seeking additional revenue from ratepayers.

Residents should be able to see clear evidence that existing rates are being invested effectively and that basic services and maintenance standards are being met before any increase is considered.

The proposal for a 7.6% rates increase is completely unacceptable and the council need to look at savings within their current budget. It is unacceptable to push a further burden onto residents without first proving you are tidying up your own back yard. There is $3m for fleet upgrades, which includes 17 light vehicles. How many of these are genuinely at the point of needing to be upgraded and how many are being upgraded just to change to electric vehicles which will then add costs with infrastructure etc too? When you look at the funding for Fabrik, what percentage of that funding is for

employees, and what return does Fabrik provide in revenue? Is there a budget and revenue forecast plan since it's conception and what is the difference between the plan and what it is actually returning?
Total bushfire prevention and emergency management has a budget of $175k. In 2025/26, Torrens Hill Road had grass up to the edge of the road and over 1.5m tall. This was reported to Rangers early in the season and has only just been cut this winter. With the proposed budget I don't see any hope of maintance pior to the summer again.
Another point which i didn't notice in the budget is the huge amount of legal fees for both last FY and then again budgeted for this FY. I seriously urge the AHC to get their priorities right, cut wastage and focus on core services for their rate payers. If this means shrinking or reprioritising workforce and projects to become sustainable, it may be worth investigating. The AHC can't continue to borrow money and get to the point where those funds are not available or exhausted when they are really needed.

Council needs to be much more restrained on its expenditure. Times are tough for everyone.
Effort needs to be directed to managing existing assets, not creating any further new assets until the financial situation is more manageable. Operating Projects (excluding school safety) amount to about $400K (I assume external consultancy) should be accommodated In-house with existing staff resources. The ERP contract ($600K) is excessive and needs to be properly justified - is the current cladding a significant risk to the public ? and if so, demonstrate it and stage it over 3 years. The rate rise of 7.6% is outrageous. My street, like many, many others cost the council little (no kerbing, no footpaths, no street lighting, no stormwater, once a year street sweep and I can't get the numerous dead trees, ivy and blackberry removed from my verge despite numerous requests. It's time for council to take a reset and concentrate its efforts on its core responsibilities. [redacted]

I would like to address my anger and annoyance re the proposed increase in rates.
With what the council waste the money on and severe lack of services I find it astonishing that they have the audacity to try and bluff the general public that elect the councilors into office.
Roadside maintenance and mowing seem to be at an all-time low. Rubbish collection is just a joke. I have not spoken to anyone that thinks the trial was a success but yet the Council in their wisdom continues to punish the rate payers.
People are forced to do extra dump runs just to cope with the lack of rubbish pick up. And therefore, incurring dumping fees are just astronomical.
I would have thought the Council have been picking up exorbitant amounts of money in rates already.

Why don't the Council maybe give back a little of the profits to the rate payers?
Not by putting in sculptures etc that nobody likes, but buy by reducing fees and rates.

I wish to express my concern regarding the proposed 7.6% rates increase outlined in the Draft 2026–27 Annual Business Plan and Budget.
I understand that Council faces increasing costs and has a responsibility to maintain essential infrastructure and services. However, many Adelaide Hills residents are also experiencing ongoing cost-of-living pressures. A rates increase that exceeds CPI by an additional 3% places a significant burden on households at a time when many families are already struggling to absorb rising expenses.
I am particularly concerned that this increase is proposed despite Council forecasting an operating deficit and increasing borrowings. It appears that residents are being asked to contribute substantially more while Council continues to fund projects and organisational initiatives that may not be considered essential by the broader community.
For example, the draft budget includes significant expenditure on initiatives such as the $600,000 Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) transition, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and workplace accommodation reviews. While these projects may have merit, I question whether they should take priority at a time when Council is asking ratepayers to accept a rates increase well above CPI. Before imposing a rise of this magnitude, Council should clearly demonstrate that every opportunity has been explored to reduce internal costs, improve efficiencies, defer non-essential projects, and prioritise spending on core services.
I also ask Council to consider whether the benefits of its spending are being distributed fairly across the district.

I live in Houghton, on the very outskirts of the Adelaide Hills Council boundary. Like many residents in the outer areas, we pay the same increasing rates but rarely get to enjoy the facilities and improvements that seem to be concentrated in the more popular townships. Places such as Birdwood, Woodside, Lobethal and Hahndorf understandably attract investment due to tourism and population, but it often feels as though communities like ours are overlooked.
In Houghton, we do not even have a local playground or a usable park where families can gather and children can play. We contribute financially to the Council just like every other ratepayer, yet the return on that contribution is difficult to see in our day-to-day lives. If Council is seeking support for substantial rate increases, there also needs to be a stronger commitment to ensuring that all communities, including those on the fringes of the district, receive a fair share of investment and accessible local amenities.
I support responsible financial management and recognise the importance of maintaining roads, infrastructure and essential community services. However, I do not support asking ratepayers to shoulder a 7.6% increase without clearer evidence that alternative savings measures have been exhausted, discretionary expenditure has been critically reviewed, and the distribution of community investment across the district has been carefully considered.
I encourage Council to reconsider the proposed increase and explore options to limit any rise to a level closer to CPI while continuing the necessary work of achieving long-term financial sustainability. I also urge Council to consider the needs of smaller and outer communities when determining future priorities, so that all residents can see and experience the benefits of the rates they pay.

While I understand the council faces external financial pressures, I am deeply concerned by the proposed 7.6% rate increase and the projected $3.4 million operating deficit. At a time when households are navigating severe cost-of-living pressures, the council must prioritize core services and aggressively reduce discretionary spending. This I believe is the highest proposed rate hike of any metropolitan council. To add 3% above CPI is unfair on rate payers also struggling with increased costs,

I urge the council to consider trimming back or delaying expenditures in the following "luxury" or non-essential areas to lower the final rate burden on the community:
Consultants & Strategic Planning: Delay the $80,000 allocated for Regional Open Space strategic planning and the $120,000 for developing the Strategic Asset Management Plan. External advisory fees and service reform consultants should be minimized, utilizing internal staff expertise instead.

Non-Essential Cultural Operations: Review and reduce the ongoing operational and staffing funding for Fabrik Arts + Heritage. While valuable, stand-alone cultural hubs are discretionary and should move toward self-funding models during financial deficits.
Aesthetic & Streetscape Maintenance: Reduce the frequency of cosmetic landscaping, specialized main-street beautification, and roadside verge mowing to save immediate labor and fuel costs.

Deferring Fleet & Tech Upgrades: Defer a portion of the $3.088 million plant and fleet replacement program. Extending the lifecycle of existing council vehicles and delaying non-critical internal ICT software updates ($166,000) would significantly lower immediate capital outlays. Perhaps cutting back on fuel running costs associated with council vehicles sitting with engines kept running unnecessarily while not engaged in actual work related activity.

New Recreational Extensions: Pause allocations for new decorative footpaths, specialized trails, or minor sport infrastructure, focusing capital strictly on heavy-use civil roads and bridges.

Ratepayers expect a "back-to-basics" budget that focuses strictly on statutory duties like waste collection, public safety, and essential road upkeep until the council's financial trajectory stabilizes.

Thank you

I don’t agree with a 3% increase over CPI. I think the 1.5% is appropriate. Anything above this amount should be considered within the proposed expenses. Possibly extend the

timeframe around renewing plant & equipment or looking at land that could be sold to improve income.
I will say that the sale of possible land holdings is of specific interest for me as I have been looking to relocate within the council area for the last 2 1/2 years and the lack of land release makes it really hard. I also am mindful of keeping our farming and water retention areas secure for future generations.

Dear Adelaide Hills Council,
I am writing to strongly object to multiple areas of wasteful spending in the Draft 2026-27 Annual Business Plan and Budget. Ratepayers are already facing a 7.6% rate increase plus rising borrowings that will reach $37.2 million by June 2027. Enough is enough.

1. Bloated Employee Costs
Your proposed $28.082 million in employee costs is excessive for a council serving only 42,368 people. This works out to roughly $140,000+ per employee, which is 30–40% higher than the Australian average full-time salary of around $106,657. Why are ratepayers funding well-above-average public sector salaries while you still demand more money from us?
2. Excessive Cultural and Arts Spending
You are pouring $861,012 this year alone into FABRIK Arts + Heritage, plus hundreds of thousands more on Community Development ($434k), Region and Place/placemaking ($1.06M), and Events ($875k). This is not a core council responsibility. The market and private operators can run arts, heritage, festivals and tourism experiences. Council should not be playing arts patron with our money.
3. Unnecessary EV Charging Infrastructure
On top of that, you are wasting $75,000 on “enhancing” electric vehicle charging infrastructure and developing related policy (page 30), plus replacing chargers in the fleet. This has nothing to do with core services. If there is real demand, the private market (petrol stations, shopping centres, businesses) will install chargers. Council has no business subsidising this. Leave it to the market.
You are using ratepayer funds and massive borrowings to support above-average wages that fund non-essential cultural programs and green virtue-signalling projects like EV chargers, while basic infrastructure (roads, footpaths, stormwater) continues to need serious attention.
I demand you take the following actions before adopting the final plan:

Significantly cut the overall employee cost budget and reduce staff numbers in non-essential areas.
Drastically reduce or eliminate the $861k+ spending on Fabrik Arts + Heritage and related cultural/placemaking activities.
Completely remove the $75,000 EV charging project and any related initiatives.
Redirect all savings to core services and keep the rate rise as low as possible.

This is classic council overreach — growing bureaucracy and pet projects while the fundamentals suffer. Ratepayers expect roads, waste, stormwater, and planning — not subsidised art hubs and EV stations.
I dont expect this feedback to be formally recorded and properly considered. You will most likely progress your woke agenda as the voice of few is louder than the voice of the many.
As a coucil you want to enchance your appeal and branding, then stop wasting our money. Do better.

The draft ABP for 2026-27 fails to protect the interests of ratepayers by failing to address reducing borrowings and taking the budget towards break even or surplus over the coming years.
Costs must be cut in areas that do not impact core front line Council services.
Projects that Council can ill afford need to be reviewed and shelved until such time they can be afforded.
Rates must not increase year after year above CPI. The proposed rate increase of 7.6% together with increased Valuer General property valuations will likely see many ratepayers paying 15% higher rates in 2026-27 than for the 2025-26 year.

Like every household, we cannot spend beyond our means or continually indulge in "feel-good" projects and inclusive activities when essential priorities must come first. The same principle should apply to Council spending.

Council's primary responsibility should be to look after its residents by focusing on core services, maintaining infrastructure and ensuring effective bushfire mitigation measures are in place. In a Hills community, bushfire preparedness and risk reduction are not optional extras; they are essential responsibilities that directly impact the safety and wellbeing of all residents.
At a time when many households are facing increasing financial pressures, Council should carefully prioritise expenditure and distinguish between essential services and discretionary "feel good" projects. Ratepayers expect their contributions to be directed towards fundamental community needs' before funding initiatives that, while desirable, fun and inclusive are not essential.
Long-term residents should not be continually asked to absorb rising costs when many are already facing significant financial strain. The value of properties have increased exponentially, leaving many asset rich, but with ever decreasing or fixed incomes. Responsible financial management, prudent spending and a clear focus on core priorities are needed to ensure Council remains sustainable while preserving the liveability and safety of our community.
In the 41 years I have lived in the Hills, I have never seen so many empty local shops or witnessed so many essential retailers leaving our communities. This is a concerning indicator of the increasing financial pressures being experienced by both businesses and residents. Thriving local shopping precincts are vital to the health and sustainability of our communities, particularly for older residents who rely on accessible local services.
Council should be mindful that rising costs and financial pressures can have a cumulative effect, impacting not only households but also the viability of local businesses. Protecting and supporting vibrant local villages should be a priority if we are to maintain the liveability, character and sense of community that have long defined the Adelaide Hills. Sevice should be provided for the local community. In the past 41 years I have lived in Crafers, livabilty has declined, front doors and gardens were once a feature, now is becoming a streetscape of garage doors.

I wish to express my strong opposition to the proposed 7.6% rate increase contained within the 2026-27 Draft Budget.

While I acknowledge that councils face increasing costs in delivering services and maintaining infrastructure, a rate increase significantly above the Consumer Price Index (CPI) places an unfair burden on residents and businesses already struggling with rising household costs, insurance premiums, electricity prices, fuel costs, and interest rates.

The proposal indicates that 4.6% is attributed to CPI increases, with an additional 3.0% being sought to manage assets, deliver initiatives, and improve Council's long-term financial sustainability. In my view, Council should be required to operate within CPI increases wherever possible, just as households and businesses are expected to do.

Many Adelaide Hills residents receive limited direct services from Council. For a significant number of ratepayers, particularly those in rural and semi-rural areas, the primary service received is rubbish collection, while residents are often responsible for maintaining large properties, managing vegetation, maintaining private driveways, and addressing bushfire risks at their own expense.

A rate increase of approximately $223 per year for an average residential property may appear modest when viewed in isolation, however it comes on top of numerous other rising costs faced by households. For pensioners, retirees, young families, farmers, and small businesses, these cumulative increases are becoming increasingly difficult to absorb.

I am particularly concerned that property valuation increases are being used to support additional revenue collection. Rising property values do not necessarily reflect an increase in a resident's ability to pay. Many long-term residents have experienced significant increases in property valuations while their incomes have remained largely unchanged.

I believe Council should:

• Limit any general rate increase to CPI only.

• Review discretionary spending and non-essential projects before seeking additional revenue from ratepayers.
• Improve transparency around asset management and long-term financial sustainability programs.
• Demonstrate measurable efficiency savings before imposing increases above CPI.
• Recognise that many Hills residents receive fewer services than ratepayers in metropolitan council areas while often paying comparable or higher rates.

Council must remember that ratepayers are not an unlimited source of revenue. The focus should be on responsible financial management, delivering core services efficiently, and ensuring that rate increases remain affordable and justified.

I respectfully request that Council reconsider the proposed 7.6% increase and reduce any increase to CPI only.

I write to express my concern regarding the recent announcement that the Electoral Commission of South Australia has requested the postponement of the 2026 Local Government Elections until 2027 following the significant issues experienced during the March 2026 State Election. The South Australian Government has indicated its support for legislation to delay these elections.

Given these extraordinary circumstances, I believe Adelaide Hills Council should exercise caution and restraint when considering any new spending initiatives, major capital projects, borrowing commitments, or rate increases beyond those necessary to maintain essential services.

The postponement of council elections means that ratepayers will be denied the opportunity to vote on the future direction of their local council at the time originally scheduled. In my view, it would be inappropriate for councils across South Australia to commit their communities to substantial new expenditure or increased financial burdens while elected members remain in office beyond the term that voters expected.

I acknowledge that Council must continue to provide essential services and meet its statutory obligations. However, I respectfully submit that Council should:

• Freeze all discretionary spending not essential to service delivery.
• Defer any major new capital projects until after the next council election.
• Avoid any rate increase above the minimum required to maintain core services.
• Review all planned expenditure to identify savings opportunities.
• Ensure that any significant financial decisions are deferred until ratepayers have had the opportunity to elect their representatives.

At a time when households and businesses throughout the Adelaide Hills continue to face cost-of-living pressures, Council should demonstrate financial prudence and respect for the democratic process.

I therefore request that Adelaide Hills Council reconsider any proposed rate increases and major spending initiatives within the 2026-27 budget and instead adopt a fiscally conservative approach until elections are held and the community has had the opportunity to determine the future composition of Council.

I ask that this correspondence be circulated to all elected members and tabled at the next available Council meeting.I strongly oppose the proposed 7.6% rate increase in the Adelaide Hills Council Draft Annual Business Plan 2026–27. While Council cites rising costs and financial sustainability as reasons for the increase, ratepayers are being asked to bear the burden of previous financial management failures, including the well-publicised multi-million-dollar budget reporting errors that significantly understated the Council's operating deficit. At a time when households are already facing significant cost-of-living pressures, it is unreasonable to impose one of the highest rate increases in metropolitan Adelaide while Council continues to carry substantial debt and fund projects that many residents do not consider essential. Before seeking additional revenue from ratepayers, Council should demonstrate stronger financial discipline, reduce discretionary spending, improve governance and accountability, and prioritise

core services such as roads, infrastructure maintenance, fire prevention, and community safety. I therefore request that the proposed rate increase be rejected or substantially reduced until Council can provide greater confidence that existing funds are being managed efficiently and responsibly.
I would like a more detailed breakdown of the 3m increase in employment costs.
More needs to be done on roadside verges out of townships , as many owners work full time to pay for on going costs associated with their properties and do not or wish to spend weekends to slash or spray verges along busy roads which is also unsafe . Plus use their own tools and chemicals to spray for bushfire safety, road side blindspots coming out of driveways or seeing ongoing traffic at high speeds and kids school bus drop offs or recreational runners , bike riding needing to use the road instead . Also every land owner regardless of dwellings on their property should be allowed council bins red , yellow and green waste as there is always waste even out of hay sheds , or storage sheds in general and even if they live in a area where they can burn off but what happens between Nov to April ,,,there is alway green waste that many cannot store due to combustion etc so simple prunings could be nice as green council drop offs are not beneficial for some as they don't take all clippings ...eg rose clippings .
I do not support any rate increase. Stick to the basics Roads and Rubbish and forget the rest
Yet again the majority of the spending is centralised around Stirling.
Any increase over CPI in the current financial climate is unjustified. Council needs to look at improving efficiencies within and save cost. Services offered from council seem to be getting less and we're paying more.
Everyone is already stretched with money. That is a huge rate rise that people won't be able to afford. Its not ok to have such a big rise especially with how everything is going and interest rates continuing to rise.
I believe the rate increase is way above the sates average and it needs to be re considered
Where was the consultation about these projects. The school safety upgrades are very limited. Who asked other schools what is needed. Where is council promotion of struggling hospo businesses. Works and events seem to ignore large areas of the council.
I don't know where you think families are going to get this extra money from for the increase in council rates but I can assure you we will all be struggling to pay. The sacrifices we already have to make with the cost of living right now is already putting a huge strain on families! It's our children who miss out... miss out on a trip to the rocking horse, gorge wildlife park or a family lunch at a local cafe because these things are now luxuries with inflation.
I oppose to rates being increased
To the Adelaide Hills Council I strongly oppose the activities outlined in the draft business plan and the proposed 7.6% rate increase outlined in the Draft Annual Business Plan. Households across the Adelaide Hills are already facing significant cost-of-living pressures. Mortgage repayments, insurance premiums, electricity, groceries, fuel, and other essential expenses have all risen substantially in recent years. Many residents have not seen their incomes increase at the same rate as inflation, yet Council appears to be proposing a rates increase that exceeds what many households can reasonably absorb. The proposal includes a 4.6% increase linked to CPI. While inflation undoubtedly affects Council costs, residents do not have the ability to automatically increase their incomes to match inflation. Before passing rising costs directly onto ratepayers, Council should demonstrate that it has thoroughly examined opportunities to improve efficiency, reduce discretionary spending, and prioritise essential services. The additional 1.5% increase for "long-term financial sustainability" is particularly concerning. Financial sustainability should be achieved through disciplined budgeting, prudent financial management, and careful prioritisation of expenditure. Ratepayers deserve a clear explanation of why existing revenue and spending arrangements are

insufficient, what measures have been taken to control costs, and why a further increase is necessary. The further 1.5% increase to fund additional projects raises similar concerns. Council's primary responsibility is to provide core local government services and maintain community infrastructure. At a time when residents are under financial pressure, discretionary projects should be carefully reviewed and, where appropriate, deferred rather than funded through higher rates. I urge Council to reconsider this proposal and place greater emphasis on expenditure restraint, operational efficiency, and prioritisation of essential services. Any rate increase should be kept to the absolute minimum necessary and supported by transparent evidence that all reasonable alternatives have been explored. Residents expect Council to manage public funds responsibly and to recognise the financial pressures facing the community it serves not empound and punish everyone further with very little tangible justification for the increases.
I think a 7.5 % rate rise is ridiculous as with the prices of housing already making money on the current rates as housing alone has nearly doubled in 4 yrs. The waste of money that is wasted in this council area is appalling Randell Tce has been have resurfaced and is worse than before it was done. New street signs what purpose waste of money
I am extremely concerned about the proposed rate changes. I understand they are to go up at least 7%. In a cost of living crisis, when we already have the highest in the state? How can this be justified... CPI, well okay, but I also understand the AHC had adjusted the rates well above CPI in recent years anyway? And then to cover overspending and legal fees? I think all your rate payers agree, we'd rather you just cut back on the projects then for now.
I am concerned that council rates are already extremely high and are becoming increasingly difficult for many residents to afford, particularly during a period of ongoing cost-of-living pressures and inflation. Many households are struggling to meet basic expenses, and some are at risk of financial hardship, losing their homes, or experiencing homelessness. I believe council should focus on core responsibilities and essential services before committing ratepayer funds to non-essential projects or upgrades to council-owned buildings. Community safety and basic infrastructure should be higher priorities. In particular, I would like to see greater investment in: Road maintenance, especially in the hills where road conditions are poor. Maintenance of road verges and public spaces. Bushfire prevention and risk reduction measures to improve community safety. Essential infrastructure and services that directly benefit residents. I support improvements to community facilities such as playgrounds and community-use buildings where they provide a clear benefit to residents. However, I do not believe ratepayers should bear the cost of unnecessary council building upgrades while important infrastructure and safety issues remain unaddressed. Council should also review its spending priorities, operating costs, and staffing expenses to ensure public funds are being used efficiently and that expenditure is proportionate to the benefits delivered to the community. Greater financial responsibility and a stronger focus on essential services would better reflect the needs of local residents.
Obviously I oppose the proposed increase to Council Rates. I don't see any value for money in what the council provides considering our garbage collection has been significantly reduced to reduce costs.
Any rate increase above CPI is completely unacceptable in these incredibly challenging financial times. With spiralling costs of mortgages due to interest rate rises, cost of fuel and living expenses out of control now is not the time to smash Adelaide Hills householders with a nearly 10% rate rise. In this climate, council needs to rationalise, focus on delivery of essential services and not burden it's ratepayers with a laundry list of non essential works to be done. This is irresponsible and out of touch.
I do not support raising of rates above the official inflation rate. With all costs of living rising rapidly due to a war our own country does not support it is unfair to further stress primary producers who are already being hit by increased fuel costs and the

supermarket monopoly also passing on fuel increases to the grower. We are already set to make a loss this year and increased council rates will make it even harder to make a living in farming.
You can not be serious in putting forth a rate rise! Cut spending first before you go TAKING more money from us.
I do not support the Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2026-27 in its current form. While I acknowledge the Council's focus on asset renewal and appreciate the relatively restrained approach to new capital projects, I remain concerned about the overall financial position presented in the Plan. Council proposes a 7.6% rate increase, comprising CPI plus an additional 3%, while simultaneously forecasting an operating deficit and increased borrowings. The Plan states that the additional rate increase is required to ensure long-term financial sustainability, however the proposed budget does not appear to achieve that outcome. In effect, ratepayers are being asked to contribute significantly more while Council continues to spend beyond its means. The Plan contains repeated references to efficiency, sustainability, transformation and improved service delivery. However, it provides very few measurable performance targets demonstrating how these outcomes will be achieved. There is limited information regarding productivity improvements, operational efficiencies, service benchmarking, or expected returns from major organisational investments. As a ratepayer, I would like to see a stronger focus on demonstrating value for money. If additional revenue is required, Council should clearly explain what measurable improvements residents can expect to receive in return and how success will be assessed. I support investment in essential infrastructure renewal and prudent long-term planning. However, before seeking ongoing above-inflation rate increases, Council should provide greater transparency regarding organisational efficiency, service performance, and the pathway to achieving a genuinely sustainable financial position.
It is disappointing that as Woodside residents and a local business owner all you seem to care about your profit margin and exorbitant rises! It's ok for council employees who don't have to loose sleep wondering if mortgage payments will be met.
4.5% rate rise plus 3% of levies is simply inappropriate. Temporary levies have a habit of sticking. You have 1000s of new rate payers coming in yet the totally injust levies are proposed. Tell me what long-term cuts if the council are so financially stricken are you making. How many reworks occur? What reviews of wasteful spending has been undertaken instead of hitting up the residents. As always the outer lying regions and wards hardly feature with all proposed projects closer to central hills or dare I say mt barker.
I do not support the rate rise, please see below.
This plan has very little for the Northern regional areas. The only service I am provided which is useful by the council is the bin collection - literally nothing else is done to justify ridiculous high rates which are charged. The infrequently of your green dump days is deplorable considering the fire risk nature of the area. I have had to spend nearly $1000 this year on twice having to repair damaged car wheels and tyres due to the severe pot holes in the roads. These roads which seem to have the speed limits lowered rather basic safety improvements done, ie road repair and lighting.
Highest rate rise in the hills for the least services... no footpaths.. no recognition of the 30% increase in trucks through our township... no signs requesting the trucks respect the town redidents and Slow Down and not use their noisy brakes What is the rise for.... 1 street sweep per year... no police presence to combat the speeds and irresponsible drivers. No to the rate rose totally outrageous
Increases over CPI do not reflect council having an awareness of the cost of living crisis.

I see little in the ABP directed to the smaller townships of Houghton, Inglewood and Hermitage.
As a business an increase of above inflation is absurd. You need to cut costs or decrease spending, as a business I find the council badly managed.
While there are some good elements to this budget, there is a lot to be critical of. First of all, the increase in rates far above CPI is a disgrace. This is an unsustainable practice and in a cost of living crises for everyone it is an unacceptable strategy. Where does this end? If this were the correct strategy then in the years to come the rates amount would be higher than someone's income? The lines intersect at some point. It is lazy budgeting and current ratepayers should not have to pay for the previous or current mismanagement of the budget by AHC. While 4.6% would be in line with CPI, the additional charges amount to a money grab by council to fund former and current poor performance. The total increase for most residents will be far beyond 7.6%, as the valuer generals re-calculations are sure to increase as well. Increasing debt again is also a poor strategy. Not only is this pushing out any chance of repayment of the debt, it is increasing funding costs year on year and increasing operating costs unnecessarily. There are so many line items that need addressing in the expenditure, it is hard to comprehend that anyone looking to cut costs and improve efficiency has actually looked at it. Positives are always expenditure on roads and general infrastructure, necessary and something that needs to be kept up with. One line that stands out as absurd, among others, is $861, 012 for FABRIK Arts and Heritage. You'd think that reducing costs such as this would provide a much better outcome that slugging residents with higher rates. It feels like the priorities of AHC are misguided and someone needs to take a serious look at the operating expenditure. I read through the influences posted in the report and these are things that every business needs to consider...not just blindly responding by increasing rates. I'm looking forward to council elections later this year...it feels like it's time to have people with good business acumen and experience helping steer the council.
I do not support the extremely high rate rise due to council's mismanagement. The rate needs to reflect the CPI and be adjusted down to align with this. There needs to be greater consideration given to pedestrians & pedestrian access & safety on roads. The council currently gives very little consideration to this & it's extremely dangerous to walk on many on the roads in this council area as there's no maintained verge to avoid walking on the road.
There is insufficient information to make a reasoned response. My detailed comments are in the body of the document.

Would you like to provide feedback about a specific project or initiative?
I am very tired of the large yearly increases in rates, equivalent to paying compound interest but at huge levels. I suggest that new builds and similar are put on hold until markets recover. Once we pay more than 5% extra year on year, the rates we pay can never reduce, and never stay the same. Government entities are the only ones with the right of income increase each year, we don't get that so every year it's doing more with less, because of uncontrollable government expenses
Investment for greatest benefit is logical aim. Safety is a priority with schools and some key road maintenance but in difficult times less fundamental nice things may have to wait. In saying that certain other facilities are the cornerstone of townships and their community. As a member and player of tennis and pickleball at Mylor courts I see this facility as such a cornerstone for the social interaction and physical activity of the local and wider community. Together with netball, tennis and particularly now the booming sport of pickleball attracts a large participation and

diverse demographic profile of gender and ages.
The courts have been a key feature of township for many years. The nature of such courts require regular cleaning, resurfacing and occassional reconstruction. Resurfacing occurred a number of years ago and is reaching the end of useful life, but most critically the surrounding trees are causing increasing damage to their structural integrity and loss of use. The trees contribution to the environment and playing amenity means they cannot be removed. Consequently the courts need to be managed and reconstructed to realise their potential.
It is not understood how $46,000 across the district can maintain these assets. Lack of investment and delay will lead to further escalation of damage and greater loss of usability. Increased investment is required, in the Mylor case of around $100,000 to complement current $70,000 in State and $80,000 in Club contribution, to address ever increasing deterioration and costs. In budget terms these are choices in lieu of other less critical matters, and/or for loans, against future community value and reduced long-term asset damage.
The Mylor courts have been a cornerstone of the Mylor community and now a broading demographic through becoming the Pickleball hub for the Adelaide Hills, as well as the hub for spring night netball. The four courts linear configuration, modern clubrooms, natural setting and availability of adjacent large carparking area leads to it being such a suitable hub. Reconstruction and renewal of this asset would underpin the high and diverse local activity, and create an attractive venue for regional and State summer outdoor tournaments.
A review of asset renewal is requested to prioritise such community assets, and these in particular given their local value and status in the Adelaide Hills.

Electric vehicle infrastructure should be provided by private enterprise not councils.
New bikeway and footpath expenditure should be deferred until debt and expenditure reduced.
Funding for Fabrik Arts and Heritage seems excessive .

Re No. 9 - Stirling East primary School
This is a perfect example of not keeping residents in the loop. I contacted Council to ask what the new orange survey mark next to my driveway was for, as it will probably affect me and my neighbours. I am rather sensitive given the greatly intrusive building of the childcare next door. My enquiry was passed on the team, but I never heard back. it was only when I read this draft today that I figured what it could be for. I then automatically dreaded the thought of losing the trees along the side of the path as I moved to Stirling for the trees.
Anyway, back to the project -
1. will this address the unsafe areas that I have previously contacted Council about? That is a) the northern side of the Yam St/Old Mount Barker (OMB) Rd intersection where we have had to walk on the road, with ongoing traffic speeding from behind us and b) Paratoo and Old Mount Barker Road intersection. People walking north must stand on the road to see oncoming cars on Paratoo Road because the vegetation from no. 142 is blocking clear sight. This isn't too bad if the car is old, playing loud music or has the headlights on but the increasing number of silent E.Vs is making it very difficult. I have contacted Council for both. Nothing happened with Yam St, even though the ranger could see the problem. Not long after one of the road signs, right where pedestrians walk, was hit by a vehicle. The road sign was changed quickly but nothing was done regarding the hedge. Not long ago I spoke to the council worker who was replacing the No Entry sign on Paratoo Rd outside no 142. OMB Rd about not being able to see oncoming easily. He could see the problem, saying the vegetation was over the road and told me that Council was drawing up a list of work to be done and that he'd ring that person - which he did while I was there. Nothing happened. I am assuming that related to the recent automatic email telling me that case was closed and something about not being a designated path.
2. Will this address the erosion of my driveway, caused by school parents who are constantly digging up my driveway to access the verge or blocking my drive completely? Years ago, I asked the bloke supervising the work on the Paratoo footpath, what could be done about this problem. He told me it was my problem. I couldn't work out how damage from unknown third parties was my problem. When I asked him what Council was responsible for - he ran his toe along the lowest point between my drive and the road - a width of about a centimetre! He must have thought about it as a ranger

turned up to put in one of those white poles. This was driven over by a parent and thrown into the bushes. Does Council have a spare rock that can go in its place?
Development of an Open Space Strategy can wait a year or two. CLMP and Asset management plans should have expertise in house rather than requiring consultants. Is there a plan B where aspects can be delivered in house, with more specialty outsourced? Acknowledge they are legislated and/or and required to have. It is unclear if this project includes a Property Review and I think it's high time Council considers disposal of some property assets. Noting NOT community halls or spaces which are at capacity and needed. Very supportive of any safety work around schools. Very supportive of an increase in the footpath program but only when we have the money for it. Which is not now. Currently you are showing me if we installed new footpaths today, you would need to borrow more in 7 years to renew that footpath. It just doesn't make sense. I have an EV, and am all for electrification. I think this program can wait a year. We are OK for charging with Stirling, Bridgewater and Mt Barker sites available via the private sector with some public investment. I'm not actually sure Council needs to play a role here, except sometimes in providing the space. Advocacy for sure - charging infra in Stirling could be quadrupled with demand exceeding supply. Support any investment in FOGO as it saves us money in the long run and is so important in reducing emissions. Amy Gillet is awesome but it can wait until we're not so poor.
Of the $12.1 million allocated in the ABP for Capital Renewal Expenditure, a total of $0 is allocated to the Natural Environment - despite the Natural Environment being the top Key Priority overall for the AHC. The only identified environmental capital expenditure is electric car charging - there is no capital money at all allocated to the Natural Environment.
Please see my email for feedback. Thankyou very much [redacted]
we need safe road crossings and safe footpaths for children in Bridgewater
"I notice that you haven't actually included all of your projects here? Specifically the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System is not included??? Are you limiting the feedback you get for this huge waste of money?. $800,000 for cladding, in you guessed it, Stirling. The building is 18 years old, get your money back from the shoddy work you commissioned in the first place. If you are concerned about the safety and compliance of community facilities you would be replacing the soft fall in the Gumeracha playground that falls incredibly short of the Australian Standards."
For School safety initative it should be about working together, State gov, parents and Council, keep within budget allocated. For Amy Gillett connection defer to next year , look to lower speed limit on that road in the meantime. New footpath program needs to be very strategic, captial works is blowing out, so footpaths that address safety issues would be what should be considered.
Electric vehicles are being seen to be green but are wasteful and not required by Councils.
When you say "New footpath Program" what you actually mean is for the south... It is Stirling, Bridgewater, Crafers, Aldgate or nothing... We can put our kids on a bus, because there is no safe way to get to Inglewood From Tilmouth Rd... and because it is only a few pesky northerners there is no effort whatsoever. You talk about community, yet Inglewood oval does not count and the comunity around it dont count, yet you jack up rates incessantly... When we bought (Pre-covid), we stretched ourselves ragged to buy into the affordable north, just because land values are indexed by AHC does not our salaries are, we are in the middle of a cost of living crisis and the rates are a fundamental part of that.

"Operational Project reviews should be undertaken using existing resources only and if insufficient, target the most critical in year 1 the Library recladding needs to be thoroughly justified, why is it deficient now when the building is still relatively new. No new asset construction until you're on top of maintaining what we already have."
I live on Victoria Street which is one of the main thoroughfares to Lobethal. It is also one of the main walking routes for many of the residents in Gumeracha. The footpath is and has been in need of repair for as many years as I have resided in Gumeracha. (since 2016) The footpath itself is very undulating in many parts, and I am very surprised there have not been some serious injury to walkers. Of particular concern is there are a number of elderly people who chose to walk on a daily basis clearly long-term residents and it would be a huge encouragement for them to continue their routines having a greater confidence on a pathway that is overdue for renewing. Council must concentrate on physical infrastructure upgrades, school safety & care for our elderly citizens
Expenditure on the Fabrik precinct at Lobethal should be ceased until Council is in a better financial position. Expenditure on the Amy Gillett bikeway should be reduced until Council is in a better financial position and future outlays should be based only on State and Federal grants being received. Bitumen road resurfacing funds should be halved. What a waste of funds for resurfacing Forreston Rd from Albert St to Alan St at Gumeracha was this year when it was still in serviceable order. Cease funding to the TDU. This is a State Government responsibility. If they take the races elsewhere it would free up our roads and have negligible effect on the illusory and fictional financial benefits to the businesses of the Adelaide Hills. Cosmetic maintenance of the Coventry Library must be postponed. New footpaths must be postponed.
School safety programs should be the responsibility of the SA Govt and if requested carried out by council then funding should come from the minister of Education not council funds Curbside collection is the worst offered in some areas by a council in my opinion
General feedback: I support Council's prioritisation of asset renewal over the construction of new assets. Maintaining existing roads, infrastructure and community facilities is generally a more responsible use of public funds than expanding the asset base and creating additional future liabilities. However, I would like to see greater transparency regarding the expected outcomes and benefits of several major projects. For example, the proposed Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) project represents a significant investment. While the Plan outlines implementation activities such as training, process mapping and change management, it does not clearly identify the expected operational benefits, annual savings, productivity improvements, or anticipated payback period. Similar concerns apply to several strategic planning and consultancy projects. Future Annual Business Plans should place greater emphasis on measurable outcomes. For each significant project, Council should clearly identify the problem being solved, the expected benefits, the performance measures that will be used to assess success, and the anticipated return on investment. Ratepayers should be able to understand not only what Council intends to spend money on, but also what value that expenditure is expected to deliver.
What actual benefits does electric vehicle infrastructure provide for residents, absolutely nothing. The region is not that big that people travelling here need charging stations when visiting, residents will charge their own vehicles at home. It is purely

"feel good" waste like this, whilst hiking residents rates for no benefit to them that shows how completely out of touch this council is. This bike way connection is another example, this is the type of useless thing that should be cut, not spent if the council wants to reduce its debt, which by the way is the councils fault - not residents yet we foot the bill with rate hikes.
Strategic Asset Management Plan - Motherhood statement! More detailed information is required in order to rate this initiative. Integrated Town and Precinct Planning project - Ditto. All bureaucratic language with no real information. The asset management plans and community land management plans need a great deal more detailed information in order to provide intelligent feedback. These are extremely important initiatives, and it is insulting to ratepayers to provide such banal statements. Similarly the Integrated Town and Precinct Planning Project. "Placemaking Framework" appears to have become the new buzzword. Again, it is insulting to present this without detailed information. What it entails. The new footpath program is vital. There are many areas with sub-standard footpaths (or none at all), and this needs to be addresses urgently.

Would you like to provide any additional feedback about rate setting and the proposed rate increase?
The AHC have increased rates well above CPI since we moved here in 2013. It is not reasonable to keep milking residents if the council is unable to operate in a financially sustainable manner. I do not feel like we are getting value for money in this council area. Please look at ways to minimise operating costs and debt for the future.
You cannot keep sticking ratepayers with higher and higher rates when little is being done to control costs in house. Legal fees are out of control. You have highly paid educated staff. Use them. Invest in their opinions and allow them to make decisions. There should be less reliance on consultants/contractors to do the work that existing staff can do. Stop new capital projects which increase depreciation costs and need to then be maintained. Seriously look at selling assets that are not being used. Use the proceeds and create a future fund to be used to purchase income generating assets. Yes there will be pushback but people will get over it when they see the benefits. You have a Comms team to sell the messaging. How many staff continue to WFH? Get them back to work. This is public money! There are no productivity gains for ratepayers from staff not at work. Do we even know what they are doing?
See question 11. I did have one thought, is it feasible to "employ" volunteers to get jobs done and 'pay' them by reduced rates? I'm thinking jobs like clearing vegetation from footpaths and roadways etc. I know there would be lots of hoops to jump through but it could take pressure off staff and help residents.
Please see above. Many thanks for the chance to comment.
See earlier commentary.
- many roads are listed for both "Major Patch Future Reseals" & "Reseal" - why don't they get 1 or the other - explain why "Replace/relocate 6 electric vehicle chargers" as they aren't very old. - given that the latest figures show a decrease in CPI to 4.2%, I would support a 5.7% increase only
I just don't feel we get value for money for the rates we pay
I note that an average 7.6% increase in rates sees no expenditure on anything in the Gumeracha region besides the council-owned depot and a road reseal. Presumably with the marked increase in house valuations in Gumeracha due to recent sales, the rate increase will actually well exceed 7.6%.
Rates do not need to increase if you don't waste money on council red tape nonsense. Cut out the admin and all of the things that waste time and money - then you can continue with projects that actually matter and add value to the community and to

residents. This increase needs a thorough review and going above the CPI is wild at a time where most people are doing it tough.
Stop ripping people off with rates. We already pay well above other council areas and some towns get nothing other then bin collection. Do better with your spending. Reduce some services that aren't a necessity in more affluent areas and spread some of the money to areas that need basics like usable footpaths. Better road maintenance and replacement of old infrastructure. Perhaps replace some of the trees you removed
To assist with planning when consulting with community needs to be understanding that its not an "open chequebook" , as residents they will be paying for initatives. More details of which roads/etc are planned for renewal. More detailed financials for consideration of cost pressures.
Keep the teams in charge of potholes and grading the roads, and reduce all other headcounts by at least half.... Start with anyone in charge of chasing net zero, get rid of them, the green communities team, they can go, anyone chasing climate crap... all of it, what we need is a few Adelaide hills staff to look after the Orchardist and Primary industry. As for communities teams, we have an issue of Farm folk, and retired agribuisness folk dealing with isolation and mental pressures related to costs (including rates) yet unsupported in community infrastructure (in the north - recall Inglewood Oval community centre) Actual residents, but instead we concentrate on left wing woke perceived cultural injustices, and privileges southern guilt assuaging. The worst thing that ever happened was the takeover of the District council of Gumeracha by Adelaide Hills.... you take our rates and do nothing for us with them...
As a Kersbrook resident, I struggle to see the value already being delivered for the rates we currently pay compared with residents in other areas of the council. In our area, the primary service we receive is weekly rubbish collection. Meanwhile, roads are deteriorating with crumbling edges and numerous potholes, there is no street lighting, hard rubbish collection comes at an additional cost, and the limited stormwater drainage infrastructure is both inadequate and poorly maintained, with drains frequently blocked. There are also ongoing concerns regarding vegetation management. Road verges are not consistently maintained, including ahead of bushfire season, and there appears to be insufficient preparation and maintenance of surrounding forested areas to reduce fire risk. Given the current cost-of-living pressures facing households, I do not support a rates increase. I would prefer to see Council focus on improving financial management, reducing debt, and delivering the core services and infrastructure that residents reasonably expect before seeking additional revenue from ratepayers. Residents should be able to see clear evidence that existing rates are being invested effectively and that basic services and maintenance standards are being met before any increase is considered.
The rate increase is extreme. House valuations will be increased for 26/27 where you will receive higher rates income. The council should be run as though it is your money that you are spending, if you can't afford, don't spend, spend within your limits and don't expect "handouts" from those that feed you. Residents don't receive higher wages only because they give a higher account to the employer. Consider this difficult time with the cost of living crisis, don't make it more difficult for all in your and our community. CPI increase is understandable but not two extra add ons!!
I firmly believe it's time LG got rid of some of the superfluous services and the cost shifting services from the State Government. It would be useful to benchmark your rates against other councils, ie the rates payable for a $1M property to see where you sit.

My wife and I are full pensioners, asset rich and cash poor. Another $200 pa for Council rates on top of all the other increase in health insurance, electricity, shopping and everything else for the limited, minimal services we get from council is just another blow.
Council needs to grow to provide services. The difference here is the amount of wasted resources and money with projects that look good on the surface but are not what the general public agree with
Rates should not increase more than CPI especially since the value of properties are predicted to decrease over the next two years.
See above
I am concerned that rates in this council area are significantly higher (over $800) than those charged by the City of Charles Sturt for our investment property in West Lakes, despite that property having a slightly higher valuation. The primary reason appears to be the Council's Fixed Charge component. In my view, the Fixed Charge places a disproportionate burden on ratepayers and reduces the relationship between property value and rates payable. As a result, properties with lower valuations can end up paying rates that are not reflective of their relative value or capacity to pay. The Fixed Charge appears excessive and functions more as a revenue-raising mechanism than a fair allocation of costs.
Feedback on Draft 2026–27 Annual Business Plan and Budget I am concerned by the proposed 7.6% rate increase, comprising 4.6% CPI plus an additional 3% attributed to asset management, key initiatives and long-term financial sustainability. While I understand that councils face increasing costs and have obligations to maintain assets and remain financially sustainable, the draft does not clearly explain what ratepayers will receive in return for the additional increase above CPI. The proposal identifies an additional 1.5% for community assets and key initiatives and a further 1.5% for long-term financial sustainability, however there is insufficient detail regarding the specific outcomes, service improvements or measurable benefits that will result from this additional revenue. As a resident of a low-service area of the Adelaide Hills, I find it difficult to reconcile a rate increase above inflation with the level of services available to my community. Our area has no footpaths, no street lighting and no mains sewerage infrastructure, with residents responsible for the ongoing maintenance and replacement of private septic systems. While I acknowledge that council rates fund services and infrastructure across the municipality as a whole, the reality is that many residents in outer and semi-rural areas experience relatively limited direct service provision. My concern is not that rates are increasing in line with inflation, but that they are increasing significantly above inflation without a clear explanation of what additional value or service level improvements residents should expect. From a ratepayer perspective, there appears to be no corresponding increase in service levels. In fact, my own experience has been difficulty obtaining responses to relatively simple service requests, including enquiries relating to waste services. I am also concerned that the consultation draft does not include the detailed Statement of Expected Rate Revenue and Rating Policy, which are noted as being included in the final document for adoption. Given that the proposed rate increase is one of the most significant elements of the Annual Business Plan, ratepayers should have access to this information during the consultation process, not after it. I request that Council provide greater transparency regarding: * The specific purpose of the additional 1.5% increase for long-term financial sustainability. * The financial indicators or targets that this additional revenue is intended to improve. * The service improvements, asset outcomes or community benefits expected to result

from the additional 3% above CPI. * Alternative options considered to reduce expenditure or limit the increase before seeking additional revenue from ratepayers. Without this information, it is difficult to assess whether the proposed increase represents value for money for residents or whether it is justified in the current economic environment.
Reduce council spending to reduce/eliminate council debt. Stop raising rates above CPI. Start treating rate payers money as if it was your own ie. Balance the books
The combination of increased rates by 7.6 % together with increases in Valuer General property valuations of around 10% will see many ratepayers paying around 15% more in dollar terms through 2026-27 compared to the previous year. This increase is creating hardship for ratepayers on low or fixed incomes such as Aged Pensioners. The bureaucracy of Council must be trimmed. The salary and wages paid as a total proportion of rates income must be reduced. Spending on Community Wellbeing must be reduced along with all other non-core Council initiatives. It is time to get back to basics, and not evolve council functions into areas that can not be afforded and that have limited benefit to the broader community.
In the current economic climate, demanding such an increase from residents is inappropriate.
Raising the council rates well above the cpi is ridiculous. I live on a major road that has pot holes. I have 2 dead trees on council land in front of my property that you haven't removed even though they drop branches onto a major road apparently they are on the list and have been for years. To be honest the only thing the council does for me is remove my rubbish. 5 minutes down the hill we would get free council pick up. You have been terrible at managing your finances and want to slug the tax payer. Instead of slugging the tax payer why don't you allow more people to subdivide large blocks to get more rate payers into the area, but you don't allow that either, so instead of allowing that you go to court and spend millions fighting the cases, money that could be spent better else where. So instead of allowing people to do that you have a black hole that you want the rate payer to pay for. You talk about new investments and projects, nothing new comes to the stirling area we just have to put up with markets and tour down under, we find some of these things that's a total waste of money. Use some common sense like your house hold, if you can't afford it don't get it or bring other revenue into the house hold.
Every business has increased costs but they continue to make a profit by only increasing their cost to the public when it is absolutely necessary If your management team cant at least stick to a CPI increase with out cutting ESSENTIAL service then you obviously wasting money on too many NON essential items slow your spend so that you only delver CPI increases its not hard to do its basic business practices Spending on Fabric should cease and be made to survive on its own you have poured heaps of good money into it and its time to face up to the situation You cant keep bleeding money from ratepayers time to manage our money as it should be and not as a cash cow if you were in a private business the board would be very disappointed in your performance slow down on Non essential and stick to cpi increases
Too high for many landowners whom have more than one property to fulfill their primary productions,
I disagree with the 7.6% proposed rate increase. People are all ready struggling with the cost of living increases across all areas of life, small business is majorly struggling with price increases. I implore Council to look at other ways to cut back spending etc and just keep to bare basics until the cost of living and inflation reduces. This could potentially tip some families into poverty very easily.
DO NOT INCREASE RATES
Potentially look at wages within the executive levels of council, working for council and public servants shouldn't be to line pockets, but better communities.
Your survey is not set up properly and does not allow selection of two items above on an iPhone therefore you are not getting accurate data.

We pay enough rates, with cost of living and already having extremely Hight rates. Call on Labour government to subside or give Mt Barker the money they promised years ago instead of getting it through the already struggling community. Alternatively the investors as well as another source of income. Not the poor community. No way!!!! Not to increase at all. More like decrease.
We don't want new fancy projects if that is the cost
I support investment in community facilities such as community buildings and playground upgrades. However, I believe council should also focus on generating sustainable revenue and managing costs responsibly to fund its own obligations and reduce debt. In particular, I would like to see greater scrutiny of operating expenses, including staff wages and administration costs, to ensure they are proportionate to the benefits delivered to the community. A balanced approach that invests in community assets while improving financial sustainability would be my preferred option.
Primary producers are being hit by the fall out from the war in the form of increased fuel and fertiliser costs, we cannot afford further cost increases
Stop. Just stop. You will slowly force residents into selling homes.
I am concerned by the proposed 7.6% rate increase, particularly given that Council is still forecasting an operating deficit and increasing borrowings. The Plan justifies part of the increase on the basis of long-term financial sustainability. However, the budget itself indicates that Council remains outside its own operating surplus target and has not yet achieved a sustainable operating position. I acknowledge that inflation, infrastructure costs and asset renewal pressures are real challenges. However, rate increases alone cannot be the long-term solution. Financial sustainability ultimately requires improvements in organisational productivity and service efficiency alongside revenue growth. I would encourage Council to provide greater transparency regarding the efficiency measures being undertaken internally. This could include reporting on service delivery costs, productivity improvements, customer response times, development assessment performance, technology-enabled savings, and other measurable indicators demonstrating that Council is actively managing costs within its control. I also question the application of the principle of intergenerational equity where borrowings are being justified on the basis of maintaining current service levels. Borrowing is appropriate where future generations will benefit from long-life infrastructure assets. It is less clear that future ratepayers should bear the cost of services consumed by current residents. Before above-inflation rate increases are proposed, Council should demonstrate a clear and measurable pathway toward both financial sustainability and improved organisational efficiency.
People are struggling, even with two of us on a decent wage and minimal debt save for car loans and mortgage, we still live week to week with three kids. Rate rises in the current economic climate reflect that the council couldn't care less if people can't pay their mortgages and lose homes. Shame on you all for evenconsidering raising above CPI when families are struggling.
Given the current cost-of-living pressures facing many households, I do not support a rate increase above CPI. This is a particularly challenging time to ask residents to contribute additional funds to support council financial sustainability and new projects. As a resident living in one of the outer areas of the council region, I rarely see the direct benefits of these investments. The majority of infrastructure upgrades, capital works and community projects appear to be concentrated within township areas located more than 20 minutes from where I live. As a result, it is difficult to justify paying increased rates when there is limited access to, or benefit from, the services and projects being funded. I believe any proposed rate increase should more closely reflect CPI and take into

consideration the financial pressures currently being experienced by residents, particularly those in outlying communities who may not receive an equitable share of council investment.

I say again capital projects etc wait until your continual increase in rate paying residents catches up. No one can afford 7.6% . The financial stability need or ask suggests mismanagement. What's the three year cash flow plan look like? Budget for the priorities around maintenance etc but take a real hard look at the feel good capital . I could go all day on finance

Dear Adelaide Hills Council,
I am writing to express my strong concern regarding the proposed 7.6% rate increase outlined in the Draft 2026-27 Annual Business Plan and Budget.

While I understand that councils face increasing costs and financial pressures, I believe this proposed increase places an unfair burden on residents at a time when many households are already struggling with the rising cost of living. Families are facing significant increases in mortgage repayments, rent, electricity, insurance, fuel, groceries and everyday essentials. Many residents are being forced to make difficult financial decisions simply to maintain their standard of living.

Council's own document acknowledges the challenging economic environment and inflationary pressures currently affecting the community. However, a 7.6% increase is well above inflation and comes at a time when many households have seen little or no equivalent increase in their income.

What is particularly frustrating for residents in areas such as mine is that we receive very little visible return for the rates we pay. Beyond waste collection services, there is little evidence of ongoing infrastructure investment, maintenance or service improvements in our local area. Roads remain neglected, community facilities are limited, footpaths are absent, and residents often feel overlooked when compared with other suburbs receiving substantial investment.

Council notes that ratepayers are already the primary source of Council funding. Asking residents to contribute even more during a cost of living crisis requires stronger justification than has been provided in the draft plan. I respectfully ask Council to reconsider the proposed 7.6% increase.

At a bare minimum, I ask Council to provide greater transparency regarding what tangible benefits residents in under-serviced areas will receive in exchange for this substantial increase. Ratepayers deserve confidence that their contributions are delivering measurable improvements to their local communities.

I urge Council to listen carefully to community feedback before adopting the final budget and to pursue a more balanced approach that recognises the financial reality facing ratepayers.

Regards,
[redacted]
Inglewood

How about a box to tick for reduction in your staffing costs, looking at the draft information that is where an enormous amount of spending is going, with the cost of living expenses these days council should be prioritising services which provide real world practical results which residents can see the benefits of. Not "community inclusion" waste projects when basical things like road lighting, kerbing, proper drainage of water etc arent even being provided.
Everyone has to tighten their spending except the council which wants to impose an insanely high rate rise for no tangible benefit to residents at all - if you need to cut dept do it like the everyone else and cut spending on unnecessary areas.

Too much money has been wasted over the years for zero benefit to the community. It needs to stop. We cannot afford to pay you more in a cost of living crisis

Fabrik is a great asset however has it a business plan, if it cant cover costs shut it down. Need to work with a sustainable budget.

As above. Sounds like the council needs a forensic audit because money is wasted.
Council needs to listen to its ratepayers, this excessively high rate rise is appalling and needs to be reversed - particularly when taking into consideration property values & how much extra money council has received in the past few years on property values rising alone. Do better.
May CPI is 4.0% 2026 it is coming down. Should be no more than 6%. Stop wasting money on legal fees!! What do you want? 2 options or one answer only? Did anyone proof-read the document?

Appendix B – Email and written responses

	Email / letter verbatim feedback
1	Dear councillors and Mr Greg Georgopoulos I am deeply disappointed with the continued gouging of rates from the residents within the Adelaide hills district. I accept that wealthy owners have moved in to this area over the years due to housing demand for this beautiful region, but that doesn't mean long standing residents are any richer, or necessarily able to pay for these extraordinary year on year increases. It has to stop. I have owned my house since April 1997, when the rates were $479.55pa They are now over $3600pa, a compounded increase of over %7 pa year on year for 29 years, almost triple the CPI inflation rate. Truly extraordinary ! I urge you to stop pandering to the rich residents who demand more and more gentrification and more services. Like many other residents, I'm here for the natural beauty of the area and am unimpressed by the continuous plundering of ratepayers money. Please cut your spending or find a way to separately change those people who are demanding more from your services. I do not consent to further increases. Kind regards [redacted]
2	"re excessive rate rises raises the question of financial competence,council should consider eating baked beans for a few years and be more in tune with ratepayers ability to afford these rates already high and absolutely are not value for money. Resist the temptation of empire building. Hang on to vehicles a bit longer . Don't always slug ratepayers for mistakes made. Look internally for remedies. Sell assets to reduce debt Run council as a business,reduce overheads. Weed out woke greenies away with the fairies ,they just cost ! No pain no gain,it is too easy to slug ratepayers Looking forward to a reduction of the proposed rate rise. Regards [redacted]
3	Hi Melissa & AHC team Just a quick email to say thank you to you and the team for including the Draft Capital Works Plan in the ABP package from the outset this year (as per our

	previous discussions, the Draft Capital Works Plan has been delayed in the past few years). I am also very impressed with the layout of the consultation page - it's very user friendly and I like the 'bite size' chunks of information under the 'Quick Look' tab, such as per below - it definitely makes it much more user friendly and digestible for the average community member (especially for those who don't want to deep dive into the larger documents). Great work :-)
4	You would have to be stark raving mad to provide that amount of money to Fabrik & heritage against what is proposed for Bushfire Prevention! Look up the fire history of the area & the debt that you created by doing nothing. Have you not learnt? It is no wonder you are so broke & have to raise rates by so much. You lot have lost the plot. Total incompetence.
5	Reconciliation According to the 2021 Census, the population of the Adelaide Hills Council area was 40,879 people. Indigenous status Number Percentage Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander 281 0.7% Non-Indigenous 38,986 95.4% Not stated 1,611 3.9% It is interesting that the Adelaide Hills Council area has a much lower proportion of Indigenous residents (0.7%) than South Australia as a whole (2.4%) and Australia overall (3.2%). Yet we have a Reconciliation Action Plan, created and maintained at some cost to ratepayers . I ask: What did it cost to establish the Reconciliation Action Plan? What are the annual costs to maintain it? How many of the 281 Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islanders have brought forward an issue that needs reconciliation? What are those issues? Were they successfully reconciled? [redacted]
6	I’ve looked over the new budget and it doesn’t impress me at all. By the sounds of it you new more tax payers in the area but you won’t let anyone subdivide there land that they own l, so instead of getting more tax payers you want bill the existing tax payer more because you can’t manage your finances. I live in stirling and have 2 dead trees on council land in front of my house that have been on the waiting list for years. I have pot holes down my road. The basic necessities aren’t being look after and you want to raise council rates. It doesn’t make sense and seems like a scam to me When is the council netting to discuss this issue?

7	Don't bite the hand that feeds you with pointless, woke and inaccurate commentary undermining the feasibility and value of the Tour Down Under by castigating its sponsorship. Shameful action by the Council! (Angry) Ratepayer, [redacted]
8	Hello, I would like to address my anger and annoyance re the proposed increase in rates. With what the council waste the money on and severe lack of services I find it astonishing that they have the audacity to try and bluff the general public that elect the councilors into office. Roadside maintenance and mowing seem to be at an all-time low. Rubbish collection is just a joke. I have not spoken to anyone that thinks the trial was a success but yet the Council in their wisdom continues to punish the rate payers. People are forced to do extra dump runs just to cope with the lack of rubbish pick up. And therefore, incurring dumping fees are just astronomical. With the massive extensions happening in Mt Barker, I would have thought the Council have been picking up exorbitant amounts of money in rates already. Why don't the Council maybe give back a little of the profits to the rate payers? Not by putting in sculptures etc that nobody likes, but buy by reducing fees and rates. Regards [redacted] Balhannah resident.
9	Att Adelaide Hills Council, I am writing to provide feedback on the Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2026–27. I am disappointed to see that there do not appear to be any significant new playground upgrades budgeted across the Adelaide Hills Council area for the coming financial year. In particular, I would like to highlight the need for investment in the playground at Gumeracha. The current playground is approaching 20 years old and has not for many years been meeting the needs of local families. Much of the equipment is difficult for younger children to use, and compared to modern playgrounds in surrounding regions, it feels outdated and lacking in both accessibility and play value. With the kindy opposite and the school at high levels of enrolment .. I just don't understand how this isn't being updated. GUMERACHA is one of the largest and most well-utilised community parks within the Adelaide Hills Council area. It already offers excellent facilities and attracts families, sporting groups, and visitors, yet the playground itself is arguably one of the poorest in the Hills.

	When comparing our facilities with those being planned by smaller councils, such as Port Pirie, it is difficult to understand why Adelaide Hills Council is not prioritising playground renewal. Port Pirie Council has a significantly smaller population and budget, yet is delivering exciting, modern playground projects that support families and encourage community use. I encourage Council to consider prioritising a substantial upgrade of the Gumeracha Park playground in future budgets and strategic planning. Investing in quality play spaces is an investment in families, children's development, community wellbeing, and regional liveability. Thank you for considering this feedback. Kind regards, [redacted]
10	To Whom it may concern, I wish to raise concern about thes rate rise every year. Iam semi retired pensioner and at the rate rises are happening I soon will have to sell my property which I like in Birdwood . I cannot see in these current conditions these continual rises people living on the edge will be able to afford this for much longer. The other thing that gets under my skin is we pay rates and never see anything done at our end off Birdwood Olivedale street except Rubbish pick up and some weed spraying as we are not Stirling . I have asked for the last 2 years to have a coating put on the bridge on Olivedale street through our local Councilor as when we walk in the morning on cold wet days we have nearly fell over several times as it becomes very slippery as the non slip surface has worn off. Regards [redacted]
11	Dear Mayor, Nathan Daniell and CEO, Greg Georgopolous, At a time when households are already under significant financial pressure, such an increase demands clear justification and transparent communication. The Council has advised residents that there is no funding allocated in forward budgets for Woodforde. Despite this, our community continues to contribute substantial rates revenue without seeing meaningful investment returned to our area. With the proposed rate rise, residents are entitled to ask — what exactly will Woodforde receive in the next financial year that directly addresses our local needs? Woodforde residents have long advocated for improved infrastructure, safer roads, better footpaths, enhanced stormwater management, and equitable access to community services. Yet year after year, these priorities appear absent from Council's capital works programs and budget allocations. The proposed rate increase raises serious questions about financial stewardship. If the Council is seeking a 7.6% rise, residents deserve a clear explanation of: 1. How the additional revenue will be spent, 2. What proportion will be allocated to overdue works in Woodforde, and 3. What steps the Council is taking to manage debt and improve long term financial sustainability.

	A pattern of rising rates without corresponding investment in all suburbs risks undermining public confidence. While we do not allege wrongdoing, the lack of forward planning for Woodforde — combined with escalating rates — may indicate poor financial prioritisation or administrative oversight that warrants scrutiny. The Woodforde community is not asking for special treatment. We are asking for fairness, transparency, and accountability. If residents are expected to shoulder a significant rate increase, then Council must clearly articulate what tangible benefits Woodforde will receive in return. We request that the Adelaide Hills Council provide, in writing: • A list of specific projects planned for Woodforde in the 2026–27 financial year, • The budget allocations for each project, and • An explanation of how the proposed rate increase will improve services and infrastructure for our community. The WRA looks forward to a prompt and detailed response. Our residents deserve clarity before being asked to pay more. Woodforde Residents Association CC: WRA Committee Yours Sincerely, [redacted] – Secretary WRA
12	To whom it may concern, As an Adelaide Hills Council rate payer, who's fees are ever increasing yet my value is not, I'm quite concerned over the proposed budget and rake hike. Let's stop spending on unnecessary areas to ensure rates do not go up. Fabrik should have no further funding if rates are required to go up to support it. Look after the entire Council area first. Roadside maintenance in regards to fire prevention and roadways should be top priority yet they seem to have slipped from focus from where I witness the work not being done. An aim to ease rates should be a high priority. Therefore unnecessary spending must come to a halt. Regards, [redacted] Lower Hermitage
13	Dear Adelaide Hills Council, Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Annual Business Plan 2026-27. While I appreciate the services Council provide and all the hard work everyone is doing for our communities I just like to say a big Thankyou very much to all those involved I have concerns regarding the proposed 7.6% rates increase. Many residents including myself are already facing significant cost-of-living pressures,

	including rising food, energy, insurance, housing, and other essential expenses and costs At a time when many households are under financial strain, I believe Council should carefully review spending and seek efficiencies wherever possible before imposing further increases on ratepayers. I would encourage Council to keep any rate increases to the minimum necessary and ensure that value for money is being delivered to residents. More broadly, I would like to see the Adelaide Hills protected from excessive development and urban sprawl. Future growth should be carefully managed and supported by appropriate infrastructure, while preserving productive farmland, natural landscapes, wildlife habitat, and the unique character that makes the Hills such a special place to live. The Adelaide Hills are valued for their natural environment, open spaces, rural identity, and sense of community. These qualities should remain a priority when planning for the future. Growth and development should not come at the expense of the environment, productive agricultural land, or the character of existing communities. I also believe ongoing investment in maintaining local roads, footpaths, public spaces, and roadside areas (Rubbish weeds ect) is important to ensuring the Hills remain safe, attractive, and enjoyable for residents and visitors alike. Thank you for considering my feedback. Kind regards, [redacted] Lobethal
14	Hello. The Verdun Memorial Hall committee has asked me to give feedback on the 2026/2027 draft budget. Thank you for the opportunity. The committee would like to support the draft statement that provides funds to investigate the traffic and parking safety improvements at the Hills Christian Community School. (Page 28 under '2026-27 Initiative Project') We are grateful that the AHC has seen that this is a major issue in the area. For years the Hall committee has been very concerned about the pedestrians, safety of the students, carparking and general traffic safety in the vicinty of the Hall and the school. As you are probably aware, the school uses the Hall carpark for parking for staff and parents, having an ongoing lease with the Hall, which was a condition of their development application in 2019. Since 2024, the committee has had several meetings with AHC personnel at the site to express our concerns and to help provide solutions. We were also very grateful to have received an AHC grant to renovate the front of the Hall, providing improved streetscape view, a garden area and also going some way to organise the parking etc. We have also surveyed our boundaries. Therefore, the committee would like to be involved in any ongoing planning, onsite meetings or reviews as this investigation proceeds. As our property borders land owned by both the AHC and DIT, we feel our suggestions and experience might help with planning. Thank you again.

	Kind regards, [redacted] Verdun Memorial Hall committee
15	Dear Mr Lewis and the Annual Business Plan Project Team Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Annual Business Plan 2026–27. The Mylor Netball Club strongly supports Council's commitment to maintaining community infrastructure, supporting wellbeing, and ensuring long term financial sustainability. In particular, we recognise the importance placed on maintaining community assets and supporting sport and recreation facilities across the Hills. This submission provides feedback on the Draft Annual Business Plan and seeks Council support for additional funding for a critical community infrastructure project: resurfacing of the Mylor multi-use courts. Project Overview and Need With guidance from Stacey Dutton and Renee O'Connor of Council's Sport and Recreation team, we understand that Council commissioned an audit of community recreation facilities which identified the Mylor court complex as a high-priority resurfacing project. Since the completion of that audit, the condition of the courts has rapidly deteriorated due to significant tree root intrusion and instability in the subsurface, resulting in: • Uneven playing surfaces • Increased safety risks for players and the broader community • Reduced usability across all sports This deterioration has accelerated beyond normal asset life expectations and is outside the control of regular users of the facility (Mylor Netball Club, Mylor Tennis Club and Adelaide Hills Pickleball). Current netball usage is already restricted to 3 out of the 4 courts, and without intervention the courts will soon become completely unsafe and unusable, resulting in the loss of a key community facility. Community Value and Alignment with Council Priorities The Mylor courts are a shared, multi-use community asset regularly used by hundreds of participants in netball, tennis, and pickleball competitions and informal recreation and use by the nearby Mylor Primary School. This aligns strongly with Council's objectives to: • Support community wellbeing, physical activity and social connection • Maintain and renew sport and recreation infrastructure • Improve accessibility and connectivity of community facilities Importantly, in smaller Hills communities, facilities like the Mylor courts create opportunities for people to come together, attract visitors to the area, and help sustain local businesses. Funding Context The Mylor Netball Club has demonstrated strong commitment to this project, securing: • $80,000 in Club funds

- Approximately $70,000 in ORSR grant funding

However, due to the increased scope required to address subsurface issues and escalating construction costs, there remains a funding gap of up to $100,000.This shortfall is not due to a lack of planning, but rather reflects unforeseen asset conditions and broader market cost increases.

Request for Council Support

The Draft Annual Business Plan Capital Works Program includes a $46,000 allocation for "Sport and Recreation – Court Resurfacing," applied on a region-wide basis. There is currently no dedicated or site-specific funding for the Mylor courts, nor for the level of reconstruction required to address underlying structural issues.

The Mylor Netball Club therefore seeks Council's support to:

- Allocate $100,000 in funding toward the Mylor court resurfacing project; or
- Identify an appropriate mechanism within the capital works or community infrastructure program to support delivery in 2026–27

This support would enable the project to proceed in full, ensuring a safe, durable, and high-quality outcome.

Value for Investment

Council investment in this project would:

- Protect and extend the life of an important community asset
- Leverage significant co-contribution funding (~$150,000) already secured
- Deliver a multi-sport facility benefiting a broad cross-section of the community
- Reduce future maintenance costs through proper reconstruction, including subsurface remediation
- Support active lifestyles and preventative health outcomes

Given the relatively modest funding request compared to broader infrastructure programs, this represents strong value for community impact.

Conclusion

The Mylor Netball Club strongly supports the strategic direction outlined in the Draft Annual Business Plan. However, we see great importance of ensuring that local, community-scale infrastructure projects are not overlooked or under-resourced.

This project represents a critical upgrade to a well-used community facility, with clear benefits in:

- Safety
- Community wellbeing
- Participation in sport
- Long-term asset sustainability

With Council support, this project can proceed and deliver long-lasting benefits to the Mylor community and surrounding areas.

Thank you for considering this feedback. We would welcome the opportunity to provide further information, either in person or via a Teams meeting if required.

	Kind regards [redacted] President - Mylor Netball Club P: [redacted] E: presidentmylornetball@gmail.com
16	To whom it may concern, As a family with six school aged children (and battling serious health issues and subsequent financial stress), the proposed council rate rise is of utmost concern to us. The current economic climate is already a struggle for so many families who are often going without necessities, that the high increase may well be the straw that breaks the camel's back. We live on a street with no street lighting, no bus stop, no main sewerage, a road that is crumbling on all sides yet our local council will burden struggling families even more without giving anything back? Any increased rates are certainly not benefiting us in any way. We feel abandoned and not heard. Kind regards, [redacted]
17	Dear Mr Lewis and the Annual Business Plan Project Team, Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Annual Business Plan 2026–27. The Adelaide Hills Pickleball Club supports Council's commitment to maintaining community infrastructure, promoting community wellbeing and ensuring the long-term sustainability of public assets. We appreciate the continued investment in sport and recreation facilities across the Adelaide Hills. We are writing to seek Council's support for additional funding towards the resurfacing of the Mylor multi-use courts. Project Need With guidance from Stacey Dutton and Renee O'Connor from Council's Sport and Recreation team, we understand that Council's recent recreation facilities audit identified the Mylor courts as a high-priority resurfacing project. Since that assessment, the condition of the courts has deteriorated significantly due to tree root intrusion and subsurface instability, resulting in: • Uneven playing surfaces • Increased safety risks • Reduced usability across all sports Without intervention, the facility risks becoming unsafe for community use. Community Benefit The Mylor courts are a shared community asset used by the Mylor Netball Club, Mylor Tennis Club, Adelaide Hills Pickleball and Mylor Primary School, supporting hundreds of participants each year. Upgrading the facility aligns closely with Council's objectives by:

- Supporting participation in sport and active recreation
- Maintaining important community infrastructure
- Encouraging social connection and community wellbeing
- Providing a quality recreational facility for a growing Hills community

Funding Position

The project has already secured substantial external investment, including:

- $80,000 from the Mylor Netball Club
- Approximately $70,000 through Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing grant funding

However, increased construction costs and the discovery of significant subsurface issues have created a remaining funding shortfall of approximately $100,000.

Request

While the Draft Annual Business Plan includes a region-wide allocation for court resurfacing, there is currently no dedicated funding for the Mylor project.

We respectfully request that Council:

- Allocate $100,000 towards the Mylor court resurfacing project; or
- Identify an alternative funding mechanism within the 2026–27 Capital Works or Community Infrastructure Program.

This contribution would leverage approximately $150,000 already secured and enable the project to proceed in full.

Conclusion

This project will protect an important community asset, improve safety, reduce future maintenance costs and deliver lasting benefits for local sporting clubs, the school and the wider community.

We believe this represents excellent value for Council investment and strongly encourage its inclusion within the 2026–27 Annual Business Plan.

Thank you for considering our submission. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the project further or provide any additional information if required.

Yours sincerely,

Adelaide Hills Pickleball club

[redacted]

President - Adelaide Hills Pickleball Club

18

Submission re: Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2026-27 — Capital Project: "Stirling Coventry Library Cladding" ($800,000)

I am writing in response to the Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2026-27, specifically the capital project listed as "Stirling Coventry Library

cladding," budgeted at $800,000 and described as supporting "Council's program of safety and compliance upgrades to community facilities."

Given the scale of this allocation — the largest single item in the Buildings renewal category — I would appreciate further information on the basis for the decision, specifically:

1. **Existing cladding specification**: What is the specification of the cladding currently installed on the building (manufacturer/product/system), and has it been tested or assessed against AS 5113 or AS 1530.1? Is it an Aluminium Composite Panel with a polyethylene core, or another product type? Is the specification of the replacement product also available, for comparison?
2. **Risk assessment basis**: Has this building been through the state Aluminium Composite Panel Cladding Audit (administered via PlanSA in collaboration with councils, MFS and CFS)? If so, what risk rating was assigned, and can that assessment be made available?
3. **Building-specific risk factors**: The Stirling Coventry Library is a two-storey building that is not occupied overnight. Fire spread risk via combustible cladding is principally a function of building height (vertical fire travel distance) and occupancy pattern (evacuation time, particularly overnight). Was this building's specific height and occupancy profile considered in determining the scope and cost of works, relative to the risk criteria applied to higher-rise or overnight-occupied buildings?
4. **Driver for the works**: Is this project required by a regulatory order, an insurer condition, or is it a discretionary risk-treatment decision by Council? If discretionary, what alternative risk treatments (e.g. partial remediation, monitoring, deferral pending further assessment) were considered against the $800,000 full-replacement option?

I raise this not to question the importance of fire safety, but because the budget papers as drafted do not provide enough detail for ratepayers to assess whether the proposed expenditure is proportionate to the actual risk presented by this specific building. Given the size of the allocation, I would welcome the relevant risk assessment or a summary of the basis for the decision being made available, either in the final Annual Business Plan or on request.

Yours faithfully,

[redacted]

PO Box [redacted]

MOUNT TORRENS SA 5244

19

Hi AHC,

This is a protest email against the AHC proposal to increase rates by the proposed 7.6%.

Why:-

As a resident of Basket Range we do not see the value of our yearly contribution to the rates we pay.

As Senior residents we find it very difficult to accept any Government service or/and AHC rates increase above CPI.

The proposed additional 1.5% to manage community assets and deliver key initiatives.

What does this really mean and how will the council provide meaningful feedback?

What will the end result be?

Key initiative's is a very broad statement allowing AHC a reason to squander.

The proposed 1.5% for long term financial sustainability.

Again a very broad statement that residents will wonder how the AHC will track and the value to residents.

What I want AHC to do:-

Question every service provided to reduce costs.

Do not reduce on the ground staff that face the rate payers (customers) but do question the efficiencies of administration to reduce cost to the rates payers.

Question all costs associated with contractors that provide services and only deal with those that provide quality.

e.g. The road service resealing on Knots Hill Road Basket Range was extremely poor so much so it had to be repaired and they only did the corners.

The straight section will one day fail. Note:- The Classic Adelaide Rally had a crash on same road before resealing of corners, this had great potential to be serious harm to drivers.

We the Customer of AHC put immense trust in the AHC to provide value for money, so it's about time the Council question themselves in every corner on ways to provide efficient quality services we deserve.

Kind Regards,

[redacted].

20

Submission on the Draft 2026-27 Annual Business Plan and Budget

Proposed 7.6% Rate Increase

[redacted] *Aldgate Valley Road Mylor 5153 2nd July 2026*

Summary

A core responsibility of local government is the sound stewardship of public funds — which includes managing debt responsibly and ensuring that rate revenue is used to strengthen Council's financial position over time, not weaken it. This submission contends that the proposed 7.6% rate increase for 2026-27 fails that test completely.
The proposed increase is 7.6% — between 3.0 and 3.5 percentage points above current Adelaide CPI, and roughly double the above-CPI component Council's own Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) projected would be required for this specific year. Despite proposing to collect more in rates than planned and spending less on capital works than planned, the operating deficit is projected to worsen, not improve. New borrowings in 2026-27 are proposed to more than double compared to 2025-26, with total debt rising from $32.6 million to $37.3 million. A rate increase described as being for "long-term financial sustainability" that results in higher debt and a larger operating deficit is not delivering the outcome that description implies.

The figures in the draft budget, read alongside Council's own Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) 2026-2035, raise serious concerns about whether this increase is justified, whether Council's internal cost management has been adequately transparent and as described is clearly not intended to strengthen Council's financial position.

The sections below set out the evidence for this position, drawn entirely from Council's own published documents.

1. The increase departs materially from Council's own financial plan

The LTFP 2026-2035, prepared in the same planning cycle as this draft budget, projects an above-CPI component of 1% to 1.5% for 2026-27. The draft budget instead proposes an above-CPI component of 3% — roughly double what Council's own ten-year plan indicated would be required for this year. No explanation has been provided in the consultation documents for this departure.
The financial impact is significant. The additional rate increase, combined with proposed capital expenditure some $1.9 million below the LTFP's own projection for 2026-27 ($14.39 million versus $16.30 million), should have improved the operating result relative to the LTFP's forecast. Instead, the draft budget's proposed operating deficit of -$3.41 million is nearly double the -$1.76 million the LTFP projected for the same year. More rate revenue, less capital spending, and a substantially worse bottom line: this discrepancy has not been explained.

2. Employee cost growth and internal cost pressures

The draft budget proposes employee costs of $28.082 million for 2026-27, up from $21.915 million in 2022-23 — a 28.1% increase over four years against cumulative CPI of approximately 19.2%. Two years stand out: a 12.9% jump in 2025-26 when CPI was 2.2%, and a further 9.8% increase proposed for 2026-27 against CPI of 4.6%. Both represent
employee cost growth at more than double the rate of inflation. Council's own Annual Reports shed light on what has been driving this. Staff turnover
The 2023-24 Annual Report discloses a staff turnover rate of 21.7% — almost double the top of Council's own target range of 7–15%, representing a high proportion of the workforce departing in a single year. High turnover carries significant costs: recruitment, contract labour to cover vacancies, induction and training, and lost institutional knowledge. These costs are absorbed into the employee cost figure rather than disclosed separately. Consistent with this, contract labour spending in 2023-24 was more than three times higher

than two years earlier, almost certainly reflecting the cost of covering vacancies with temporary staff.
The 2024-25 Annual Report discloses turnover of 14.48% — at the upper end of the target range — accompanied by a note that data collection methodology is under review. This caveat raises questions about the reliability of the reported figure.

Executive remuneration

The 2024-25 Annual Report discloses the CEO's salary at $310,071 — an increase of 18.2% in a single year, in a year when CPI was 4.3%. The Executive Leadership Team expanded from three Directors and a Governance and Risk Coordinator to four ELT members, with the top of the salary range increasing by 13.5%. An 18.2% CEO salary increase and an expanded executive team in the same year Council reported a $4.353 million operating deficit is a matter ratepayers must absolutely question.

Legal fees

Legal fees increased from $500,000 in 2023-24 to $831,951 in 2024-25 — a 66% increase in a single year. Both Annual Reports describe these costs as arising from "unexpected events, often of a confidential and complex nature" with many matters "arising in the governance portfolio." No further breakdown is provided. Near-million-dollar legal costs attributed in a single sentence to unspecified governance matters do not represent an adequate level of transparency for expenditure of this scale.

Taken together

These three items — high staff turnover, executive salary growth well above CPI, and rapidly escalating legal fees — represent identifiable, Council-controlled cost pressures that are not acknowledged in the draft budget consultation documents. They are directly relevant to ratepayers' assessment of the proposed 7.6% increase.

3. Current year performance does not justify the increase

Council's Quarter Three Performance Report for 2025-26 shows year-to-date expenditure tracking within 0.2% of budget, with the operating deficit only marginally worse than forecast. This suggests reasonable expenditure discipline in the current year — which makes the scale of the proposed 2026-27 increase harder to justify, not easier.
It is also noted that the Q3 budget comparison is against figures revised through Budget Review Two, not the original adopted budget. Several capital works categories show very low spend at the three-quarter mark — Bridges at 4%, CWMS at 4%, Sport and Recreation at 9% — indicating deferred expenditure rather than genuine savings.

4. The rate increase is not being used to pay down debt — borrowings are increasing

A rate increase described in part as being for "long-term financial sustainability" might reasonably be expected to reduce Council's debt position. The draft budget shows the opposite. New borrowings proposed for 2026-27 total $13.129 million — more than double the $6.395 million borrowed in 2025-26. The total debt balance is projected to rise from $32.648 million to $37.277 million over the course of the year.
At the same time, the operating deficit is projected to worsen — from -$3.136 million in 2025-26 to -$3.406 million in 2026-27 — moving further away from Council's own target, not closer to it. Ratepayers are being asked to fund a 7.6% rate increase in a year when Council's debt is rising, its operating deficit is widening, and no explanation has been provided for why the increase departs so substantially from what the LTFP projected.

5. Capital deferral and future cost implications

The draft 2026-27 budget proposes capital expenditure $1.9 million below the LTFP's own projection for this year. Deferred capital maintenance does not disappear — it accumulates as a backlog that becomes progressively more

	expensive to address. Council's own Asset Sustainability Ratio target of 116% acknowledges that asset renewal investment needs to exceed depreciation. Consistent underspending against capital budgets, combined with a deteriorating operating result and rising debt, raises legitimate concern about whether ratepayers face even larger increases in future years. **6. The Landscape Levy should not be conflated with Council's rate decision** The budget notes that the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Levy will decrease by 1.26% in 2026-27. This is a State Government charge over which Council has no discretion. While it partially offsets the total bill impact, it does not reduce Council's own rate increase of 7.6% and should not be presented in a way that obscures the size of Council's own decision. **7. Consultation process** Meaningful consultation on a rate increase of this magnitude requires that ratepayers have access to underlying financial data in sufficient detail to assess the justification. The documents made available for this process do not include a variance breakdown between the LTFP's 2026-27 projections and the draft budget by expenditure category, nor a comparison against the original adopted 2025-26 budget before Budget Review Two revisions. Without this, ratepayers cannot meaningfully assess whether the proposed increase is justified within Council's own financial planning framework. **Conclusion** I recognise that Council faces real financial pressures, and that 2023-24 was a year of material and largely unanticipated deficit. I also recognise that asset revaluation and construction cost inflation affect councils across South Australia. My concern is that the proposed 7.6% increase departs materially from Council's own recently-stated financial plan without adequate explanation; that the additional revenue it generates does not appear to be improving the operating result; and that identifiable internal cost pressures — staff turnover, executive remuneration, and legal fees — have not been acknowledged or explained in the context of this rate increase. I ask that this submission be formally recorded as part of the consultation feedback on the Draft 2026-27 Annual Business Plan and Budget.
21	Dear Mr Lewis and the Annual Business Plan Project Team, Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Annual Business Plan 2026–27. As a resident of the Adelaide Hills I appreciate Council's continued investment in community infrastructure and its commitment to supporting health, wellbeing and active recreation across the region. I would like to highlight one project I believe deserves priority consideration: the resurfacing of the Mylor multi-use courts. The courts are a valued community asset, shared by the Mylor Netball Club, Mylor Tennis Club, Adelaide Hills Pickleball and the nearby Mylor Primary School. They provide an important space for organised sport, recreation and community connection. Unfortunately, the condition of the courts has deteriorated significantly due to extensive tree root intrusion and instability beneath the surface. The result is uneven courts, increasing safety risks and reduced usability. Our netball club is already limited to using only three of the four courts, and without intervention the facility risks becoming unsafe for all users. I understand Council's Sport and Recreation team previously identified the Mylor courts as a high-priority resurfacing project following an audit of

community recreation facilities. Since then, the condition has only worsened, increasing both the urgency and the cost of the required works.

The club has worked incredibly hard to secure funding, contributing approximately $80,000 of its own funds alongside around $70,000 in grant funding through the Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing. However, unforeseen subsurface issues and rising construction costs have created a funding shortfall of up to $100,000.

I respectfully ask Council to consider allocating additional funding within the 2026–27 Annual Business Plan to help bridge this gap and allow the project to proceed.

Supporting this project would:

- Protect an important community asset for future generations.
- Leverage around $150,000 already secured through club and grant funding.
- Provide a safe, high-quality facility for multiple sports and community groups.
- Reduce future maintenance costs by addressing the underlying structural issues rather than simply resurfacing over them.
- Encourage participation in sport, physical activity and community connection.

Facilities like these are especially important in smaller Hills communities. They are more than sporting venues they are places where families gather, volunteers contribute countless hours, children develop lifelong skills, and local businesses benefit from increased community activity.

I strongly support the strategic direction outlined in the Draft Annual Business Plan and hope Council will recognise the importance of investing in local infrastructure projects such as the Mylor courts. This is an opportunity to protect a well-used community facility before its condition reaches the point where it can no longer be safely used.

Thank you for considering my submission. I appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback and hope Council will give favourable consideration to this important project.

Kind regards

[redacted]

Biggs Flat

[redacted]

22	Dear Ms Lyons, On behalf of Activating Bridgewater, please find attached a submission to the Council's consultation on its draft Annual Business Plan 2026-27 and Budget; also enclosed is earlier correspondence, referred to in the submission (specifically, Rec. 1 - see below). Reproducing our key recommendations: **Recommendation 1:** ...Activating Bridgewater now kindly requests a formal written response to our letter from 28 March 2026. We would intend to share this correspondence with the Bridgewater and Mount George community. **Recommendation 2:** In the interest of sustainable rates relief, that the Council undertake a forward budget planning process that demonstrates how the Council budget will be brought back into balance – i.e. 'a budget-balancing plan' – and make that plan publicly available to the community. **Recommendation 3:** That the Council make a modest investment in initial community consultation and general scoping for a Town Centre Masterplan in FY2026-27. Subject to success in this first stage, Activating Bridgewater would seek a more substantial investment in the development of the actual Masterplan in FY2027-28. **Recommendation 4:** That the Council invest in 0.2 FTE to 0.4 FTE of dedicated environmental grant-writing capacity – for at least a 2-year pilot – to accompany the Council's soon-to-be renewed Biodiversity Strategy. **Recommendation 5:** That the Council prioritise the following local infrastructure in Bridgewater / Mount George in FY26-27: a. Recognising that it may be a multi-year project, safe paths and/or footpaths for Wembley Avenue from Aldgate Primary School to Mount Barker Road – this is a particular thoroughfare for Aldgate Primary School students who live in the western side of Bridgewater – student safety is a key concern. b. More defined paths / footpaths on Shannon Road near Bridgewater Primary School – student safety is a key concern. This would complement the recent Council upgrades of defined parking on – and planned resealing of – Morella Grove. c. A footpath to connect across the northern side of the Bridgewater Oval on oval grounds (i.e. behind the fence and not directly adjacent to the road), including a safety barrier or other obstacle between the parked cars in the oval carpark and pedestrians. d. The repair / refresh of the Bridgewater Netball Club toilets – the toilets – including the infrastructure within which they are housed, as well as the toilet themselves – are generally dilapidated and in need of repair, upgrade, or at least a significant refresh. **Recommendation 6:** That the Council carry out the following minor works: a. Fix (or unclog) the stormwater drain on Mount Barker Road, just to the east of that Road's intersection with Honeysuckle Grove b. Fix (or unclog) the stormwater drain on Onkaparinga Road between Third and Fourth Avenue c. Remove / flatten a major footpath fold at the corner of Wembley Avenue and Mount Barker Road – whilst seemingly minor from the photo below, this undulation is more than two-thirds of a metre high, and particularly difficult to traverse, especially with a pram

d. To make the path reasonably accessible for prams and bicycles, investigate reducing the steep gradient of this section of the main path between Bridgewater and Aldgate on the corner of Charlton Street and Mount Barker Road

All the best,

[redacted]

Treasurer, Activating Bridgewater

Letter submission: Draft ABP 2026-27 feedback

c/o Ms Beck Lyons

Corporate Planning and Performance Coordinator

Adelaide Hills Council

Via email: engage@ahc.sa.gov.au

Cc: ggeorgopoulos@ahc.sa.gov.au

3 July 2026

Dear Ms Lyons,

RE: Submission on Adelaide Hills Council's draft Annual Business Plan 2026-27 and Budget

Activating Bridgewater is an incorporated community progress association that aims to represent residents, community groups and businesses that are active in Bridgewater and Mount George. We are strictly non-partisan and not politically-aligned. Our committee thanks you in advance for your time and consideration in considering our submission to the Adelaide Hills Council on its draft Annual Business Plan 2026-27 and Budget.

Our organisation's purpose is to connect, facilitate and champion the shared aspirations for a thriving community in Bridgewater and Mount George within the Adelaide Hills, and our goal is to elevate and to realise the collective ambitions of our community whilst delivering on our core values of authenticity, collaboration, leadership, openness, and sustainability.

We have compiled our submission based on local community feedback and our 2025 community survey, and with a focus on local council-managed infrastructure.

State Government election commitments – earlier correspondence

We have also enclosed our letter to the CEO dated 28 March 2026 which specifically raises State Government election commitments and our interest in working together with the Council to advocate and progress those commitments.

We have included this because we received advice from the office of the CEO that "if any of the projects listed [in our correspondence] are included in the draft 2026-27 ABP it will form

part of the consultation in May (sic) *where you will have an opportunity to provide comment as to what you think should be prioritised.... When proposed projects are released, we would encourage you to resubmit your letter."* (17 April 2026).

Given one of the commitments in our correspondence relates to an intersection of State Government roads (specifically, Mount Barker Road and

Carey Gully Road), it was unclear to us why it would feature in the Council Budget – and indeed, it has not. The State Government's skate park commitment for Bridgewater has also not featured in this year's Council Budget.

> Recommendation 1: Given the above, Activating Bridgewater now kindly requests a formal written response to our letter from 28 March 2026. We would intend to share this correspondence with the Bridgewater and Mount George community.

Rates increase

Activating Bridgewater notes the significant community concern regarding the proposed rates increase. We strongly and urgently recommend that the Council undertakes forward budget planning process that demonstrates how the annual Council budget will be brought back into balance and reduces the pressure upon ratepayers, and to bring confidence to the community that the Council has sustainable budgeting in hand.

> Recommendation 2: In the interest of sustainable rates relief, that the Council undertake a forward budget planning process that demonstrates how the Council budget will be brought back into balance – i.e. 'a budget-balancing plan' – and make that plan publicly available to the community.

Bridgewater township masterplan

Bridgewater's town centre lacks vision, coherence, and investment. Building upon the model so successfully undertaken by other townships (for example, the Gumeracha Main Street Project), the Bridgewater and Mount George communities seek the Council's support in developing a Town Centre Masterplan to develop Bridgewater's future, making it a more attractive place to live, work, shop, and tourist destination.

Activating Bridgewater welcomes our initial meetings with Council staff, and now requests a modest investment in initial community consultation and Plan scoping this financial year, with the intention of seeking a larger investment in the development of a full Town Centre Masterplan in Financial Year 2027-28.

> Recommendation 3: That the Council make a modest investment in initial community consultation and general scoping for a Town Centre Masterplan in FY2026-27. Subject to success in this first stage, Activating Bridgewater would seek a more substantial investment in the development of the actual Masterplan in FY2027-28.

Environment and biodiversity

Activating Bridgewater recognises the significant community and environmental value being delivered by the Council through its project management of the Cox Creek Restoration Project1, funded via a successful Federal Government Urban Rivers and Catchments Program grant. This $1.97m project is a demonstration of the grant success that the Council's biodiversity team can achieve. With dedicated grant-writing resources, there is the opportunity to attract and secure significant additional environmental grants for the Bridgewater and Mount George communities, as well as communities across the wider Adelaide Hills Council area. This would provide additional, much-needed revenue to the Council and its biodiversity team, which operates with scarce resources across a very large area.

> Recommendation 4: That the Council invest in 0.2 FTE to 0.4 FTE of dedicated environmental grant-writing capacity – for at least a 2-year pilot – to accompany the Council's soon-to-be renewed Biodiversity Strategy.

Local infrastructure

In addition to the need to secure a lasting solution to traffic and safety concerns at the intersection of Mount Barker Road and Carey Gully Road (see enclosed correspondence, and Recommendation 1 above), and in addition to those local infrastructure priorities already identified by Council in its draft, the following local infrastructure issues have been identified as particular priorities by our community:

Recommendation 5: That the Council prioritise the following local infrastructure in Bridgewater / Mount George in FY26-27:

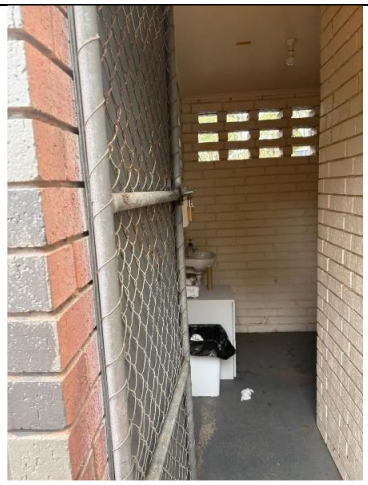
a. Recognising that it may be a multi-year project, **safe paths and/or footpaths for Wembley Avenue from Aldgate Primary School to Mount Barker Road** – this is a particular thoroughfare for Aldgate Primary School students who live in the western side of Bridgewater – student safety is a key concern.

b. **More defined paths / footpaths on Shannon Road near Bridgewater Primary School** – student safety is a key concern. This would complement the recent Council upgrades of defined parking on – and planned resealing of – Morella Grove.

1 See: https://www.ahc.sa.gov.au/environment/cox-creek-bridgewater-restoration-project

c. A footpath to connect across the northern side of the Bridgewater Oval on oval grounds (i.e. behind the fence and not directly adjacent to the road), including a safety barrier or other obstacle between the parked cars in the oval carpark and pedestrians. [blue = existing footpaths; red = missing connection]

d. The repair / refresh of the Bridgewater Netball Club toilets – the toilets – including the infrastructure within which they are housed, as well as the toilet themselves – are generally dilapidated and in need of repair, upgrade, or at least a significant refresh.



Minor works:

Recommendation 6: That the Council carry out the following minor works:

a.**Fix (or unclog) the stormwater drain on Mount Barker Road, just to the east of that Road's intersection with Honeysuckle Grove** (southern side, GPS: 35°00′35.1″S, 138°45′56.9″E)2.

b. **Fix (or unclog) the stormwater drain on Onkaparinga Road between Third and Fourth Avenue** (northern side, GPS: 35°00′34.7″S, 138°46′33.0″E)3.

2 See: https://www.google.com.au/maps/place/35%C2%B000'35.1%22S+138%C2%B045'56.9%22E/@-35.0097473,138.7658291,194m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m4!3m3!8m2!3d-35.009762!4d138.765791?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI2MDYyMS4wIKXMDSoASAFQAw%3D%3D

3 See: https://www.google.com.au/maps/place/35%C2%B000'34.7%22S+138%C2%B046'33.0%22E/@-35.009649,138.7751963,194m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m4!3m3!8m2!3d-35.009649!4d138.77584

c. **Remove / flatten a major footpath fold at the corner of Wembley Avenue and Mount Barker Road** – whilst seemingly minor from the photo below, this undulation is more than two-thirds of a metre high, and particularly difficult to traverse, especially with a pram (GPS: 35°00′33.8″S 138°45′23.8″E)4.

d. To make the path reasonably accessible for prams and bicycles, **investigate reducing the steep gradient of this section of the main path between Bridgewater and Aldgate on the corner of Charlton Street and Mount Barker Road** (GPS: 35°00′37.5″S 138°45′06.1″E)5.

4 See: https://www.google.com.au/maps/place/35%C2%B000'33.8%22S+138%C2%B045'23.8%22E/@-35.009386,138.7559563,194m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m4!3m3!8m2!3d-35.009386!4d138.7566

5 See: https://www.google.com.au/maps/place/35%C2%B000'37.5%22S+138%C2%B045'06.1%22E/@-35.010407,138.7510543,194m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m4!3m3!8m2!3d-35.010407!4d138.751698

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit on the to the Adelaide Hills Council on its draft Annual Business Plan 2026-27 and Budget; we look forward to continuing to engage on these issues with the Council. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Activating Bridgewater's Treasurer, Michael Cornish (c/o: activatingbridgewater@gmail.com).

Yours sincerely,

Mr [redacted]

Treasurer, Activating Bridgewater

Letter: Election Promises for Bridgewater

E: activatingbridgewater@gmail.com

Web: https://bridgewater.au/

Mr Greg Georgopoulos

Chief Executive Officer

Adelaide Hills Council

63 Mount Barker Road

Stirling SA, 5155

Via email: ggeorgopoulos@ahc.sa.gov.au

Cc: heysen@parliament.sa.gov.au

28 March 2026

Dear Mr Georgopoulos,

RE: State election commitments to the communities of Bridgewater and Mount George

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our correspondence; you will have seen our separate, recent correspondence to Premier the Hon Peter Malinauskas MP, to which you were cc'ed. Activating Bridgewater has valued our ongoing partnership with different teams within the Council.

Activating Bridgewater is an incorporated community progress association that endeavours to represent residents, community groups and businesses that are active in Bridgewater and Mount George. We are strictly non-partisan and not politically-aligned.

Our organisation's purpose is to connect, facilitate and champion the shared aspirations for a thriving community in Bridgewater and Mount George within the Adelaide Hills, and our goal is to elevate and to realise the collective ambitions of our community whilst delivering on our core values of authenticity, collaboration, leadership, openness, and sustainability.

We write to request Council's support and leadership in seeking a strategic approach to partnering with the newly-elected State Government to secure their commitments to the Bridgewater and Mount George communities, specifically:

Pedestrian crossing / intersection upgrade

Is the Council willing to support an integrated approach to the upgrade of the Mount Barker – Carey Gully Road intersection and pedestrian crossing, ideally advocating for the upgrade of the entire intersection to accompany the Government's commitment to a pedestrian crossing (or at the very least, for an integrated, future-proofed design for the intersection and crossing)?

Is the Council willing to use the intersection and pedestrian crossing opportunity as a springboard to progress a town centre planning process for Bridgewater, broadly akin to the process undertaken for Gumeracha several years ago?

Skate park

Is the Council willing to contribute (up to) $250,000 for a skate park to avail the community of the State Government's commitment?

Is the Council willing to undertake public consultation on any proposed skatepark?

Noting that in our community consultation, a pump (i.e. bike) track was raised as something sought after by young residents in Bridgewater and Mount George, is the Council is willing including this as an option in its consultation?

Again, as per our correspondence to the Premier, please note that if a total funding envelope of $500,000 is not sufficient to deliver a skate (and/or bike) park that meets the aspirations of the young people in our area, then Activating Bridgewater could seek to engage in community fundraising to provide additional funding, although we would not wish to overstate our capacity to raise substantial funds.

Lastly, we would kindly request the opportunity to send a representative from Activating Bridgewater to key meetings with the State Government where these commitments are discussed; we would, of course, like to extend the same opportunity to the Council where we seek meetings directly ourselves with the State Government on these commitments.

	Thank you again for your kind consideration of our correspondence and the opportunity to partner in our advocacy for outcomes for the Bridgewater and Mount George community. We look forward to your response which we would seek to share with our community. Yours sincerely, [redacted] Treasurer Activating Bridgewater
23	I am making this submission as a ratepayer NOT a council member 1. I support a lower rate increase, lower than the proposed 7.6%. Should be adjusted down to the June (or latest CPI) for Adelaide. 2. Page 19/21 - Strongly support at least $12.1 m for capital renewal ; Page 26 indicates $14.4m for depreciation. I would prefer that the numbers be the same. Where do the Asset Management Plan 2021 and Bridge Asset Management Plan fit into the picture?; Somewhere I would appreciate seeing some tables such as ratio % for salaries/rates, materials/rates 3. Page 17 - Bold the last sentence re updating the LTFPlan . 4. Page 22 - Do we have a "Plan B" re CCC annexure of part of AHC ? 5. Page 25 - I note expenditure, say on Positive aging is $1.4m. This is supported by a grant circa $1.0m. Can grants income be included so that readers can see the net cost to them.?; RL Levy what was the % increase this year? (I now read on p36 it has decreased!!!) How come? 6. Is the cost of CWMS $1.3m covered by the levy? Are we building up a reserve for a large capital expenditure in the future (Birdwood scheme is over 50 years old.) Is it included in depreciation? Page 28- Verdun school crossing Is this AHC cost or total cost? HM is DIT/school contributing. Simple solution - put no parking signs on Onkaparinga Road and make the school provide drop off/pick up spaces and teacher parking (Was parking a requirement of the Development approval?) Page 30 - Coventry Library - Spread capital cost over two years; Amy Gillett - Spread over two years - Is there grant money available ($200k?) ? Should expenditure be subject to receiving a grant? General Comment: I'm sure there is mention somewhere: Rehabilitation of Waste site - [redacted] Rehabilitation of Stormwater Drain AHBTC Amy Gillett Birdwood to Mt Pleasant Disposal of Assets Gumeracha Tennis Club Building replacement

	Gumeracha Oval - undergrounding water/irrigation Implementation of Housing Strategy Lobethal Multi use storage shed. Costs associated with the OWMM collection Future of Highercombe Golf Club Expenditure of projects announced by the State Government as election promises -at least Bridgewater and Heathfield = maybe others I think there should be a comment that these projects are before council and will be addressed in future budgets. Then there is the bigger question which needs to be addressed. When community sports clubs approach council for funds for large projects - Onkaparinga Women's Football Club rooms, Houghton Community Hub and Woodside Cricket Club spring to mind. AHC does not have the capacity to assist in a meaningful manner. The recreation and sports grants fund does not even meet the needs for small projects - always over subscribed e.g. Heathfield scoreboard. How do the Barossa and Mt Barker councils manage such significant projects? Also, there has been no debate on rates differentials I would like a review in upping the rates on vacant residential land in town boundaries to encourage development. Can you also ascertain what is the State Government level of support to cost of living . It replaced the pensioner concession scheme years ago. Maybe around $250. (This can counter the argument re pensioners are doing it tough.) Late comment - will council be exposed to meet any costs for damage to Bridgewater change rooms
24	Dear Mayor and Elected Members, I am writing as a resident of the Adelaide Hills Council area to express my strong support for the completion of the Adelaide100 walking trail https://adelaide100.com.au/ through the agreed Adelaide Hills corridor. The Adelaide100 is an important regional asset that will provide new walking opportunities for local residents, support healthy and active lifestyles and strengthen the Adelaide Hills' reputation as a leading nature-based tourism destination. Completing the Hills section will also help connect townships, improve visitor access and support local businesses that benefit from increased walking and outdoor recreation. I respectfully request that Council include funding in the 2026–27 Annual Business Plan and Budget to finalise implementation of the Adelaide100 using the existing corridor and previously completed Risk and Cost Analysis. This is a practical, achievable project that will deliver long-term community benefit. Thank you for considering this request. I appreciate Council's ongoing commitment to recreation, wellbeing and the natural environment in our region. Kind regards [redacted]

	[redacted] Crafers West SA 5152
25	Dear Beck Lyons, Ranges Ward Councillors and Mayor, I hope this sees you well? Please find attached a submission to Council's budget consultation from the Hills Community Toy Library Committee. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss any of the matters we have raised in our submission, further. Warmest, [redacted] Secretary Hills Community Toy Library Inc. c/o Ms Beck Lyons Corporate Planning and Performance Coordinator Adelaide Hills Council Via email: engage@ahc.sa.gov.au CC: ndaniell@ahc.sa.gov.au, acheater@ahc.sa.gov.au, gmcdonnell@ahc.sa.gov.au, kboyd@ahc.sa.gov.au, kparkin@ahc.sa.gov.au, lmudge@ahc.sa.gov.au, lclarewoolcock@ahc.sa.gov.au, mosterstock@ahc.sa.gov.au 5 July 2026 Dear Ms Lyons, **RE: Submission to Adelaide Hills Council's draft Annual Business Plan 2026-27 and Budget** The Hills Community Toy Library, located in Council property on 24 Fenchurch Rd Aldgate, has been serving our part of the Adelaide Hills community since 1979. Our purpose is to sustainably enrich family's play with a variety of toys and games that meet the needs of child development within the Hills community. Our 100% volunteer-run service supports approximately 700 children and caregivers in our community, providing enriching toys, games and experiences that support child development, community wellbeing and connection. We run on an extremely lean financial model where our membership income covers our operating expenses (~$3,000). We of course supplement this with grants, donations and fundraising where we can. As a committee, we work hard to foster strong working relationships with Council (in particular the library service), the Hut Community Centre and its associated programs, Child and Family Health Services, Clayton Church Homes, local family-focussed small businesses, and community groups such as Uraidla Sustainability Fair, Parents for Climate Adelaide Hills, Mt Lofty Kindergym and Stirling Market. We make this submission in support of the community programs, community centres and libraries and generational cultural institutions such as Fabrik. We are wary that in challenging financial times, often these services come under

increased scrutiny – Fabrik in particular. We know all too well that the 'business model' for these services looks poor on paper. But it is important to note, that a lack of financial return is an outcome of us all performing our functions well – investing and reinvesting into the community. Further, our children deserve the breadth of community, cultural and learning institutions that we all benefitted from growing up.

We are aware that Council is currently undertaking a property asset review and determining underperforming properties for potential disposal, reuse or otherwise. We in principle support this approach to build greater financial sustainability in Council. In considering community halls, centres, clubrooms and the like, in our experience we do not see an underutilisation and indeed it is a struggle to find space to host family- friendly events or start up new programs. Likewise, we caution against an approach which measures performance only in metrics such as hours used, member numbers, and other such quantitative data. Our community infrastructure is often utilised by those most vulnerable or in need – and often with an 'arms reach' level of support from Council.

In 2029 we turn 50, and our 21-year peppercorn lease with Council is also due for renew in coming years. We are a 100% volunteer-powered registered charity and a proud Toy Library Australia member. We are not in receipt of any block funding from Council, State Government or otherwise. Our neighbouring toy libraries in all directions are all Council-run and staffed (Blackwood, Mount Barker, Gumeracha and Burnside), and indeed toy libraries across Australia are now commonplace and an expected community service. Regardless, our independence is our strength - we buck volunteer trends having volunteers across all generations, including those most time poor (parents of small children), despite the nature of paid and unpaid working changing considerably since 1979. Our little cottage in Aldgate is a bright, wonderful, eclectic third place for families, and reflective of the personalities of some of our longest serving volunteers.

Please consider this submission in part as early notice of our desire to remain a community asset for a further fifty years. We have several key asks that will become more pertinent as we approach our birthday in 2029:

Renew our peppercorn lease at 24 Fenchurch Rd, Aldgate.

A funding agreement with Council which provides us with ~$30,000 per annum to engage our community more effectively. This funding would be used primarily to:

- Establish our first paid worker in fifty years, securing a worker for one day a week or equivalent.
- Open the Toy Library on a Monday, meaning our service could be open five days a week.
- Open the Toy Library for scheduled 'low sensory' appointments for people with disabilities, learning difficulties and/or sensory challenges.
- Undertake more strategic collection management including sustainable, evidence-based procurement and disposal.
- Enhance our disability friendly collection, networks and outreach.
- Promotion, community engagement and participation on professional networks and community fora.

We are a strong, capable and enthusiastic committee. But it is tough work running a service; maintaining a building; ensuring child safety; managing and recognising volunteers; undertaking community engagement; running events; managing a collection; updating policy and procedures annually, ensuring committee engagement and recruitment; undertaking professional development; and continuous improvement – all on volunteer-labour alone.

We will be the first to admit that our biggest weakness is that our opening hours are limited. We think our community deserves better.

We have attached a short 'potted history' of Hills Community Toy Library overleaf, which provides a brief snapshot of some of our successes and challenges.

We look forward to continuing to engage on these issues with the Council and would welcome the opportunity to talk about our dreams for the future of this service, including in a deputation if that is a suitable forum. We have made this submission for our community's children – our future leaders. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us on mail@hillstoylibrary.org.au

Play forever,

The Hills Community Toy Library Committee

[redacted] (Chair), [redacted] (Treasurer), [redacted] (Secretary), [redacted] (Memberships Officer), [redacted] (Party Pack Coordinator), [redacted], [redacted] and our kids, niblings and grandkids.

Hills Community Toy Library – Short History

The building at 24 Fenchurch street was originally a library and was built in the 1920s.

In 1956 a lean-to was built at the back for the local 'Mothers and Babies'.

The present toy library started in 1979. The then Toy Library committee tried to have the toy library incorporated into the then book library but there was no room. So, the Avenue Road Kindergarten (now Stirling Districts Kindergarten) housed the then named 'Hills Community Toy Library Resource Centre'. State Government and Council helped with establishment costs. At the time it was run by the four local kindergartens (Bridgewater, Aldgate, Snows Road (now Stirling East) and Avenue Road) and mother helpers.

An important ongoing funding source was the annual Petticoat Lane Market, with the toy library running the sausage sizzle.

Avenue Road Kindergarten needed the room the toy library was housed in, and the toy library was moved to the current location at 24 Fenchurch Road, in the front room, in 1987.

MT BARKER COURIER. 25 March 1998.

Dollar deal saves Aldgate Toy Library

Heysen MP David Wotton holds the dollar that has saved the Aldgate Toy Library. Adelaide Hills Council Mayor A Aspinall (right) has her eyes on the cash along with toy library treasurer Phyllis Coulter.

For the sum of one dollar, the future of Aldgate Toy Library has been assured.

The former CAFHS premises adjoining the old Aldgate Institute is to be transferred to the Adelaide Hills Council for just one dollar, enabling the toy library to be upgraded and extended.

The council will now be spending about $8000 on maintenance and creating indoor access between the two parts of the building.

Established nearly 20 years ago, the toy library is an independent and self-funded organisation providing a wide range of toys to Hills families.

Discussions began during the final phase of Stirling council to have the building transferred from Child and Youth Health to the council, free of charge.

Originally Child and Youth Health wanted more than $40,000 for the property.

Hills Council Mayor Anita Aspinall said the building was originally community-funded and built on donated land.

"Council was of the opinion that residents should not have to pay for the change of ownership," she said.

"We are very grateful to Heysen MP David Wotton for his efforts to ensure a successful outcome.

"At his instigation, the Minister of Health, Dean Brown, intervened in the negotiations and decided that the council should have the building transferred to it for $1.

"The transfer will give the toy library much-needed toilet facilities and provide more space for other groups that use the building."

Mr Wotton said he had been inv in the negotiations since 1996, a had been a very frustrating proce

"I am very pleased that Min Brown has recognised the import of the history of this building t community," he said.

"The library will now be abl continue its excellent work i improved environment and security of tenure assured."

Toy library treasurer Phyllis Co particularly welcomed the succe negotiations, after researching building's history in Stirling li archives.

Going back to old minute books found that the building had been for by the community and erecte donated land.

"If the council had to buy building, the community would been paying for it twice," she said

+ The Courier Wednesday July 6, 2005 PAGE 9

No room to move

THE JOYS OF TOYS ... Henry Tooze (left) and his friends Ethan Reeves, Sarah and Jemima van der Linden enjoy the delights of the Hills Community Toy Library with their mothers (from left) Suzie Reeves, Debbie Greenwell, Annabel Tooze and Melissa van der Linden.

By Joan Clayton

Space allocated in the new $5.4m Stirling library for a toy library is "totally inadequate", according to the toy library committee.

And if more suitable space cannot be provided, the Hills Community Toy Library will refuse to shift and stay at its Aldgate premises.

Although the internal design is "conceptual" at this stage, committee members doubt there is much leeway for change.

Spokeswoman Annabel Tooze said the group felt building the new library would be a great opportunity to relocate.

"But the plans show only 20m of shelf space in a shared, multi-purpose room at the rear of the building, some distance from the washing facilities," she said.

"The Adelaide Hills Council promised 'equal or better' amenities if we were co-located in the new library.

"The proposed arrangements are totally inadequate and we don't think there is much room for change."

At Aldgate the toy library has 72sqm of space, including display and storage areas, an office, kitchen and toy washing and toilet facilities.

120 families

It has nearly 1000 items ranging from small games and educational toys to large outdoor play equipment.

About 120 families are members, with more than 200 children aged from babies to 10-year-olds.

Toy library representatives met with council officers last week to stress their needs including a dedicated area closer to the children's section and washing facilities. Committee member Phil Coulter described the library as the "engine of Stirling".

"We support the building of a new library, but if we can't get larger or better amenities than we have here, then we won't move into it," she said.

Council engineer Robert Harris said the plans on public display were concepts.

"Details of the layout will be finalised when we know if the library is going ahead," he said.

"First we have to find out if we have a project."

Mr Harris said there had not been sufficient time to consult further before preparing the plans.

But if the council votes to proceed with the library, he said there would be consultation with groups such as the toy library and Mt Lofty Districts Historical Society.

26

Hi there,

Please find attached Walking SA's submission to the AHC draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2026/27

Please get in touch for further information if needed.

Keep Walking!

[redacted]

[redacted]
Executive Director
xxxx xxx xxx | [redacted]@walkingsa.org.au

NEW OFFICE | 55 Exchange Place, Adelaide SA 5000

walkingsa.org.au

Free monthly newsletter

Letter: Draft ABP 2026-27 Feedback

Submission: Adelaide Hills Council Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2026–27

To: Mayor and Elected Members, Adelaide Hills Council

Email: engage@ahc.sa.gov.au **Date:** 6 July 2026

Budget allocation to finalise the Adelaide100 through the agreed Adelaide Hills corridor

Dear Council,

Walking SA welcomes the opportunity to comment on Adelaide Hills Council's Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2026–27.

Walking SA requests that Council include a dedicated **$65,000 capital allocation in 2026–27** to complete implementation of the Adelaide100 through the agreed Adelaide Hills corridor.

This request is deliberately modest and delivery-focused. It does not seek to reopen route selection, repeat previous investigation work, purchase new trail-marker posts, or undertake new wayfinding design.

The agreed corridor has been identified, and Council has previously commissioned an Adelaide100 Risk and Cost Analysis. Walking SA understands that the analysis was completed to identify route-specific risks, infrastructure implications and implementation costs. The next step is to apply that work to final on-ground delivery.

The request

Walking SA requests that Adelaide Hills Council:

1. Allocate **$65,000 in the 2026–27 Annual Business Plan and Budget** to complete the Adelaide100 route through the agreed Adelaide Hills corridor.
2. Confirm that delivery will proceed through the agreed corridor, subject only to final micro-siting, land-manager approvals, cultural heritage considerations, environmental requirements and implementation of the risk controls identified in Council's existing Risk and Cost Analysis.
3. Use the completed Adelaide100 Risk and Cost Analysis as the baseline document for prioritising safety works, route treatments and implementation actions.
4. Recognise that Walking SA holds trail-marker posts and wayfinding materials in stock and can provide these as an in-kind contribution to the project.
5. Direct the requested funding primarily to installation, targeted safety treatments, approvals, contractor or Council labour, and project completion rather than further route investigation or purchase of trail-marker materials.

Previous Council investment and completed analysis

Adelaide Hills Council has already demonstrated leadership by supporting the Adelaide100 Walking Route as a Council project and commissioning a Risk and Cost Analysis.

That work should now be used to complete the project.
The purpose of the requested 2026–27 allocation is to move from assessment to implementation. It would allow Council to address the practical issues identified through the existing analysis, install the available trail markers and wayfinding materials, and make the route safe, legible and ready for public use.

Walking SA is not seeking a duplicate feasibility study, a new route-selection process or unnecessary design expenditure.

Revised 2026–27 budget request

Component	Indicative allocation
Project coordination, land-manager liaison, approvals and implementation planning	$8,000
Final route micro-siting and close-out of priority risk controls identified in the existing Risk and Cost Analysis	$7,000
Installation labour, plant, transport and contractor support for existing trail-marker posts and wayfinding materials supplied by Walking SA	$25,000
Targeted safety and access works, including minor drainage, gates, barriers, crossing treatments, surface repairs or route adjustments where identified as necessary	$18,000
Contingency for unforeseen site, environmental or approval requirements	$7,000
Total requested allocation	**$65,000**

In-kind contribution from Walking SA

Walking SA will contribute available trail-marker posts and wayfinding materials already held in stock.

This contribution reduces the financial burden on Council and ensures that the budget can focus on the work that must be undertaken by or through Council: installation, site preparation, safety controls, approvals, asset integration and ongoing maintenance arrangements.

Walking SA will also contribute route knowledge, mapping support, walking-user expertise, volunteer coordination advice, promotional support and launch activity.

Why delivery is needed now

The Adelaide100 is a distinctive long-distance walking route linking Adelaide's coast, river corridors, parks, foothills and hills. The Adelaide Hills section is central to the quality and integrity of the overall route.

The agreed corridor provides an opportunity to create a safe, coherent and marketable walking experience using existing public reserves, roads, trails and connecting corridors.

Completion of the Adelaide Hills section will:

- provide local residents with new walking and recreation opportunities;
- create connected short walks, day walks and longer-distance walking options;
- improve visitor access to Adelaide Hills landscapes, townships and businesses;
- support local cafés, accommodation providers, wineries, shops and tourism operators;
- strengthen the Adelaide Hills' identity as a leading walking and nature-based tourism destination;

- improve safety and reduce informal use of unsuitable routes through clear route identification and targeted risk treatments;
- support physical activity, wellbeing, social connection and healthy ageing;
- create an enduring public asset from work already undertaken by Council and its partners.

Proposed delivery approach

Council should lead delivery within its responsibilities, including final approvals, procurement, contractor engagement, installation of Council assets and incorporation of completed infrastructure into relevant maintenance programs.

Walking SA will work collaboratively with Council officers and relevant land managers to:

- apply the findings of the existing Risk and Cost Analysis;
- support detailed route confirmation and micro-siting;
- provide existing marker posts and wayfinding materials;
- advise on walker experience, route legibility and mapping;
- support community, volunteer and stakeholder liaison;
- assist with public information, mapping, promotion and launch activity.

Where necessary, Council should engage with Traditional Owners, heritage advisers, environmental specialists and relevant land managers to ensure that implementation respects cultural, environmental and land-management requirements.

Requested Council resolution

Walking SA respectfully requests that Adelaide Hills Council resolve:

That Council include a $65,000 capital allocation in the 2026–27 Annual Business Plan and Budget to finalise implementation of the Adelaide100 through the agreed Adelaide Hills corridor.

That Council use the completed Adelaide100 Risk and Cost Analysis as the basis for prioritising and delivering outstanding route safety, access and implementation works.

That the allocation exclude the purchase of trail-marker posts and wayfinding materials, which Walking SA will provide as an in-kind contribution, and instead be directed to installation, approvals, targeted risk controls, site works and contingency.

That Council officers work collaboratively with Walking SA and relevant land managers to prepare and deliver an implementation program during 2026–27.

Conclusion

The Adelaide100 has progressed beyond concept stage. The corridor has been agreed, Council has invested in risk and cost analysis, and Walking SA has the required marker posts and wayfinding materials available.

A targeted $65,000 allocation will allow Council to convert previous planning and analysis into a completed public walking asset.

Walking SA urges Council to make this practical investment in 2026–27 and complete the Adelaide100 through the agreed Adelaide Hills corridor.

[redacted]

	Executive Director Walking SA
27	Council Members, Thanks for the opportunity to provide feedback in relation to the 2026/2027 Draft Annual Business Plan and budget. A proposed 7.6% increase is far too much in the current economic climate. I understand this is the largest rate increase in the Metropolitan area. It's actually more than that as our properties have once again increased in value so we will get slugged with that increase via our rates as well. The community is doing it tough with increasingly high interest rates alongside electricity, fuel, food costs etc also going through the roof. I feel for the young home owners with children in the Council area and as a pensioner I'm also struggling. You say that the increase is only an additional $223 a year, well for many, that's quite a large increase. I'm already paying $90 to the Council each fortnight out of my pension which still has me in arrears and now you're adding another $9 plus to that. Again, I pity young families having to cover additional council rate costs each payday. I would have thought Council members would also be struggling with day to day living expenses like the rest of us and would have had empathy and foresight to keep the rate rise equivalent to the 2025/2026 increase of 6.2% at the most. Please don't argue that the Council wouldn't be able to cover the cost of running the area without the increase. Can I suggest that you delay a few of what I see as nice things to do to save some money this financial year. I ran a business and know that many things in your budget are non-negotiable which is fine but perhaps consider delaying/deferring the following: • FABRIK Arts +Heritage- $861,012 why and what do the rate payers get for this expenditure? Tourists coming to the Hills to visit it I guess? • Amy Gillett bikeway "key linkages" $675,000 a nice thing to do but defer. As an aside and of particular concern from my perspective anyway, is that you're actually spending $275,000 more on the AG bikeway than on footpaths which continue to be practically non-existent. Not good if we are encouraging small children to ride to school and they are forced onto the road due to a lack of a safe bikeway. So, there's another approx.$1.5 million reduction to your budget in addition to the $3.44 million you have apparently "cut from spending initiatives." *(1)* If you do another deep dive into your budget you may even be able to find some more spending cuts. I do hope that you take into consideration any feedback received and are able to reduce the proposed rate increase accordingly. This is the first time I have ever felt the need to provide feedback to the Council in relation to a proposed budget and I've lived here for 50 years but I am seriously concerned. Thank you. [redacted] [redacted] Bridgewater
28	In the context of the national cost of living crisis any increase to AHC rates should be limited to a maximum of the Adelaide CPI. Anything beyond

	that would in fact contribute to further inflation. Where necessary Council expenditure should be reduced to fit within that budget. [redacted] Resident and ratepayer Carey Gully
29	Six points I'd like to make: 1. Rates should only be increased by the CPI, as is to be the case in Alexandrina Council. The Council should live within its means, expenditure should be no more than the CPI allows. Lower priority infrastructure improvements and maintenance should be postponed, as should new project aspirations, until they can be afforded. Inflation puts quite enough pressure on ratepayers. 2. Australia Day should revert to how it has always been, fully observed and supported by Council, including the citizenship awards. It should never have been changed, especially with so little, if any, community consultation. If a minority want to observe a sorry day, let them do so on preferably another day, provided they in no way disrupt Australia Day. 3. The scenic attraction of the hills is very much due to its trees and small towns and villages. New building developments should retain the village character, permitting a maximum height of three stories, and absolutely minimising the loss of trees. People are attracted to the hill's food and wine, enjoyed in beautiful locations. 4.Pedestrian access and safety could be much improved, at no great expense. For example, simply paint for zebra crossings in Stirling. 5. Numerous road speed limits are too high. For example Ridge Rd from River Rd near Mylor to Longwood, increasingly used as a short cut from Blackwood to avoid Stirling/Aldgate. A smaller road example: Wilson Rd Mylor where no limit is signed, it should be 50kph at most. 6. The proposed OTR at Heathfield is inappropriate and unnecessary; Council should everything still possible to prevent it going ahead. Thankyou and good luck! [redacted], Mylor
30	Dear Ms Lyons (cc CEO and Councillors), Please find attached a submission from a range of leaders of local environmental groups who are residents in the Adelaide Hills Council area - thank you for your consideration of our submission. **Our key recommendation is that the Council invest in an additional 0.2 FTE to 0.4 FTE for dedicated environmental grant-writing capacity – for at least a 2-year pilot – to bring in additional Council revenue to support the operations of the Biodiversity Team.** If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me in the first instance, although I have no doubt that everyone on the submission would be happy to answer questions about the invaluable work that the AHC Biodiversity Team does to support their own group's dedicated efforts to help manage and improve the Adelaide Hills environment for our community –

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Friends of Sunnyspring Glen Reserve

Letter: Draft ABP 2026-27 Feedback

c/o Ms Beck Lyons
Corporate Planning and Performance Coordinator
Adelaide Hills Council
Via email: engage@ahc.sa.gov.au
Cc: ggeorgopoulos@ahc.sa.gov.au
6 July 2026

Dear Ms Lyons,

RE: Submission on Adelaide Hills Council's draft Annual Business Plan 2026-27 and Budget

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to the Adelaide Hills Council's draft Annual Business Plan and Budget for FY2026-27. We, the undersigned, are writing to you collectively as members of local environmental groups operating within the Adelaide Hills Council area. Thank you in advance for your consideration of our submission.

Our key recommendation is that the Council invest in an additional 0.2 FTE to 0.4 FTE for dedicated environmental grant-writing capacity – for at least a 2-year pilot – to bring in additional revenue for the operations of the Biodiversity Team.

The Adelaide Hills is within a Commonwealth-recognised Biodiversity Hotspot – one of only 15 such Hotspots across the country1. However, vegetation clearance in our region has also been extensive, with approximately only 10% of the original native vegetation of the Mount Lofty Ranges region remaining2, a fact which immediately becomes apparent when looking at satellite maps of the Hills.

Hills' residents also have a great love of the environment – often why they have settled in the Hills – and it is, of course, a major drawcard for tourists and local visitation which supports our local businesses.

The Biodiversity Team at the Council delivers impressive value to the community and our environment with very limited resources. The local environmental community groups have been very grateful for their support, their open communication and trust, and their concerted efforts to protect, steward, and manage the remaining biodiversity we have within the Council area.

Further, the Biodiversity Team have demonstrated their ability to attract serious grant-funding for the Council and our community, including through Heritage Agreement Incentive and other grants, but most impressively by successfully securing a $1.97m Federal Government Urban Rivers and Catchments Program grant for the Cox Creek Restoration Project3.

With a dedicated grant-writing resource, the Biodiversity Team has the opportunity to build on these successes and attract significant additional environmental grants for the Adelaide Hills Council and its community. At a time where the Council is facing significant budgetary pressure, this is a rare and valuable opportunity to attract additional, and much-needed revenue to the Council and its small but highly effective Biodiversity Team.

On this basis, we return to our recommendation for the Council's consideration as it finalises this year's Budget, namely, **that the Council invest in an additional 0.2 FTE to 0.4 FTE for dedicated environmental grant-writing capacity – for at least a 2-year pilot – to bring in additional revenue for the operations of the Biodiversity Team**.

If you would like to respond to this correspondence, please do not hesitate to contact [redacted] in the first instance ([redacted]@gmail.com).
Thank you again for your time (and in no particular order),

[redacted] **National Trust SA**

[redacted] **Bridgewater Friends of Cox Creek**

[redacted] **Bridgewater Friends of Cox Creek**

[redacted] **Mylor Parklands Bushcare Group**

[redacted] **Hills Biodiversity**

[redacted] **Mylor Parklands Bushcare Group**

[redacted] **Friends of Mt George Conservation Park**

[redacted] **Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park, Trees For Life**

[redacted] **Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves, Friends of Mark Oliphant Conservation Park**

[redacted] **Aldgate Valley Landcare Group**

[redacted] **Aldgate Valley Landcare Group**

[redacted] **The Bradbury Conservancy**

[redacted] **Friends of Sunnyspring Glen Reserve, Activating Bridgewater**

1 Government of Australia; https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/20130409033514/http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/hotspots/national-hotspots.html

2 https://www.ahc.sa.gov.au/environment/biodiversity-in-the-hills

3 https://www.ahc.sa.gov.au/environment/cox-creek-bridgewater-restoration-project

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Adelaide Hills Council – Annual Business Plan consultation response – 6/7/2026

From: [redacted], *Gumeracha*

I thank you for this opportunity to provide comment on the AHC ABP document and the broader process surrounding this consultation. I detail my various comments and concerns in dot point form below. I also want to reiterate that I have been contributing to the AHC ABP consultation for the last decade, and never have I raised concern re the proposed rate rise, and often I have lobbied for increase service and capital projects. I also am not one to politically seek small government either – I think Councils and Governments more broadly have an important role to provide many services to citizens, albeit economically responsible and efficiently.

However this year is different, I feel that all AHC residents are under acute financial strain, and whilst many will be able to afford the $200-$300 extra per

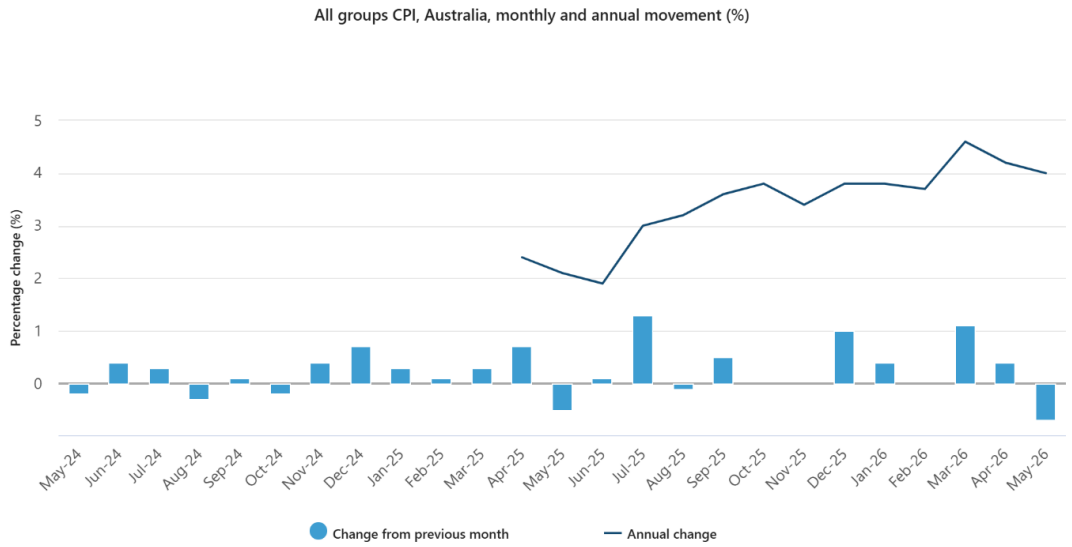
year no doubt, it will be money not spent at local business who are under the most duress from what I can tell.

Therefore, any rate relief provided by AHC this year (through not increasing rates by such a high percentage), will not only provide some small relief to ratepayers, but also provides the opportunity for locals to spend what may have been a rate rise at local businesses. This ensures ongoing activation of our many townships, and ongoing employment for many.

However, I first turn my commentary to macro-economic issues, that Council appears not to have considered when developing this ABP, nor their financial and rating strategy. It is these issues putting pressure on AHC ratepayers, and particularly so in the northern Adelaide Hills, where the tyranny of distance, recent bushfire/storm events and rapidly increasing rents/house prices have had more impact than on the southern half of the Council area.

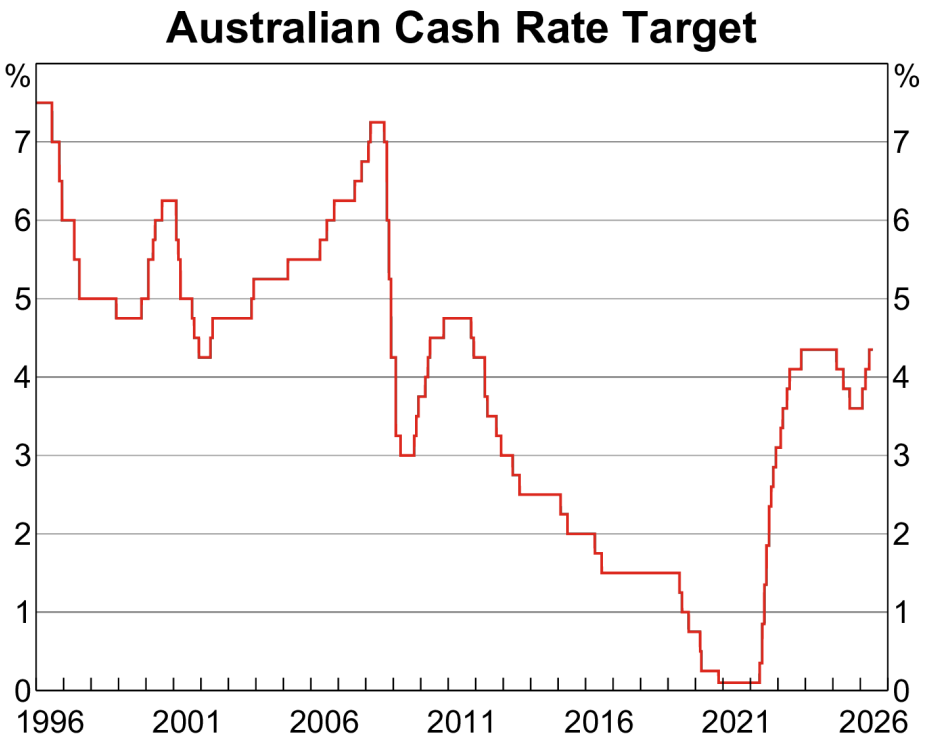
The tables and data below show some interesting economic realities facing many AHC residents –

- CPI – 4.6% April 2026 figure the highest since the period immediately post-COVID (source ABS)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Consumer Price Index, Australia May 2026

- Interest rates have risen markedly, to highs we haven't seen in 15 years, and in all likelihood another rate rise will occur in coming months, putting further pressure on households



Source: RBA.

- Home Insurance – whilst hard to get accurate comparisons, this article here - https://www.realestate.com.au/news/home-insurance-surges-across-australia/ - mentions SA Home and Contents Insurance premiums went up on average 17% in one year (2024 to 2025) – as an average, it can be assumed that properties more likely to be impacted by storm and bushfire (i.e. most of the AHC) will have higher average price increases. Our standard family home in the middle of Gumeracha township has gone from around $480 premium per year in 2011 to $3400 in 2026. I can only imagine what larger homes and those on acreage are paying!

In terms of concerns with the AHC ABP that's currently on consultation, I have an overall concern with any raise above CPI given cost of living pressures on residents, especially in the northern Adelaide Hills (we have higher cost pressures given we have to travel further to get to many places, we have less retail/supermarkets (= less competition), no bulk billing doctors, high insurance premiums due to two major fires in a decade, no Metrocard buses etc).

In more detail, my comments and concerns are -

- Over $2 million allocated to "Governance and Performance", yet of the 83 Council policies detailed on the AHC website, 43 are out of date, despite this funding being consistent over a number of years – how do we get better value from this money?

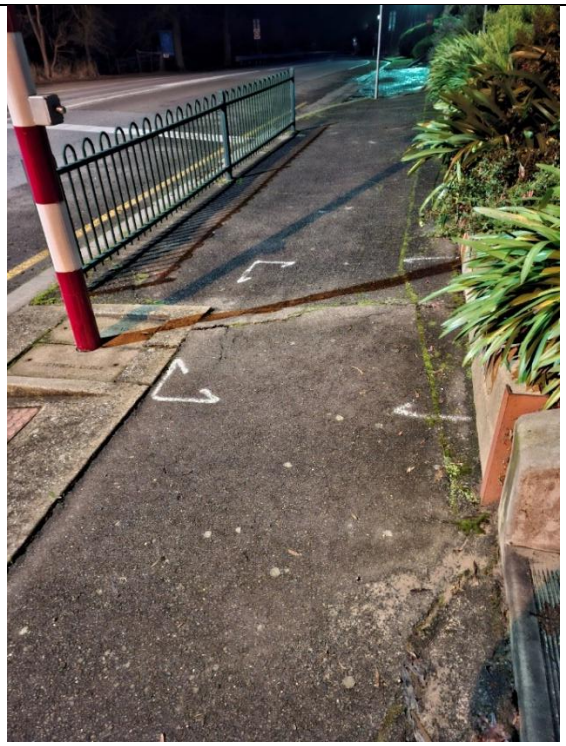
- Listed CAPEX projects, besides some road reseals and patching, the only projects in the Houghton to Birdwood Norther Adelaide Hills corridor are CWMS and Council depot works – nothing of benefit for the community really (and CWMS is in theory regulated expenditure monitored by ESCOSA as a user-pays syste, so it's not really a initiative borne from the 'general' Council rates)

- Concern re Footpath budget $414k - projects are all centred around only 3 sites (Lobethal south, Aldgate Primary School and Heathfield High) – why? Why not spread the budget across the whole area? The

Lobethal footpath upgrade is a footpath on both sides of the same road – having a footpath on both sides of the road is above the service standard most Councils have, and AHC doesn't even have a standard for footpaths. There appears no real need for all the footpath works around Heathfield High and sports precinct – the footpaths don't look in that bad condition there.

Refer photos below of the Lobethal footpaths that are apparently in need of upgrade, and then some sites around Gumeracha that are apparently not in need of upgrade (noting the bitumen footpath in Gumeracha below with white markings was marked out by AHC in January 2026 for repair, I raised a CRM in April 2026 to query progress and it's since been closed (accidently closed based on information from Council administration), yet is still 6-12 months away from repair occurring according to Council administration – despite it being on a busy DIT road, near a retirement village, outside a Primary School and across from the Hospital!!

Footpaths on both sides of Woodside Road in Lobethal planned for Capital Works Upgrade – a 2025 image shows that they're not in that poor condition



Albert St outside Gumeracha Primary School – marked out by AHC for repair in January 2026 – I lodged a CRM to seek follow up in April 2026 – CRM was accidently closed by AHC staff in May 2026 (and still is closed) – staff advise works planned to occur in 6-12 months! Despite being on a DIT road, opposite the only public hospital in the Council area and near one the largest retirement complex north of Woodside.

Slippery unsealed footpath outside Gumeracha Child Care Centre (second largest child care centre north of the Freeway) and Kindergarten – it only needs a 10-15m extension yet has not been funded

Slippery and unsealed footpath on John Fisher Ave, Gumeracha – 2 photos above – no footpath on other side of this road either – it's a DIT arterial road – it leads to many houses in the south of Gumeracha. Despite numerous emails/CRM's from me to Council including the Mayor, CEO and administration, this footpath remains a safety risk.

- As per my recent Courier article, AHC needs a footpath strategy to show transparently where and when upgrades will occur – as well as something like this for playgrounds. Many other Council's have footpath and playground strategies to guide development and provide clear

transparent decision making for the public – even the very small Coorong District Council beats AHC at this! https://www.coorong.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0028/1156447/Coorong-Footpath-Network-Expansion-Strategy-2022-2027,-Final.pdf

- There is minimal in the AHC ABP for local business. To assist them, AHC could develop low-cost solutions to assist tourism and business, such as online maps to guide tourists to local towns/business/scenic routes (whilst Council is a part of Adelaide Hills Tourism, AHT are perceived to more target the 'upper' end of the tourism market). I suggested this via email to the AHC CEO, Mayor and Valleys Ward Councillors in October 2025 but I've heard no further on discussions between AHC and AHT, nor on the new Economic Development staff member Council was in the process of appointing at that time.

- With some minor capital works, Council could create relatively safe walking trails on the AHC unsealed road network, especially in the north where we have limited trails. I note Council's website promoting trails is quite limited with lots of room for improvement – again a low cost, but big value-add Council could do to support locals find recreation opportunities and also to attract visitors - Our Trails • Adelaide Hills Council

- I am concerned over funding of the AHC Community centres vs Fabrik – the 2 x AHC community centres are only allocated $360k total in this budget, the Hut is appearing to only get cash funding of $140k – these provide important social and community services, which are very important during this cost of living crisis. Fabrik was allocated $1.06m in 25/26 and has $860k earmarked in 26/27, yet the easiest to access figures I could find shows Fabrik only brought in $81k of income July 1 2025 until 31 March 2026 – this seems an excessive subsidy from Council! I would guess that local businesses like Enrico, Lobethal Bierhaus and the many local wineries bring in many more tourists and they receive no subsidy (and actually pay reasonably large rates!)

- I also have a concern re the Woodforde/Rostrevor potential annexation being unbudgeted – the response to my "FAQ" online on the AHC Engage website should be in the ABP – I shouldn't have had to go asking for it!

Woodforde - boundary reform 3 views

Gumeracha is great! asked 2 days ago | Question asked to **AHC Project Team**

The AHC ABP contains this statement below, however AHC reported in 2024 that total rates received from the area was $1.932 million (3.76% of the AHC rate base) - is this figure still correct? - "The Boundary Commission's Inquiry into Campbelltown City Council's Woodforde/Rostrevor boundary reform proposal is ongoing. Should the reform proposal be successful, it may materially impact Council's financial sustainability. No financial or resource implications have been built into the 2026-27 budget"

AHC Project Team Answer

Replied 5 hours ago

Hi Gumeracha is great,

The figure referenced is correct and has been consistently used in Council's formal submissions and advocacy material to illustrate the financial significance of the area to the broader Council community.

In relation to the Annual Business Plan, it is important to note that the Inquiry process remains ongoing and no final determination has been made. As a result, no financial impacts (including potential loss of rate revenue) have been incorporated into the 2026–27 budget at this stage.

Council has outlined in its submissions that, should the proposal proceed, transitional and compensation arrangements would need to be considered as part of any implementation, noting the material and ongoing impact on Council's revenue base.

You can find more information about the **Boundary Change Proposal here**.

AHC also needs to determine how it can generate more income too. At a very superficial level, things like permitting advertising on bus shelters, inside or around buildings, inside toilets etc, advertising flyers in Council rates notices etc, and allowing local sports clubs to enter into sponsorship arrangements on Council ovals (an AHC policy change which prohibited this a couple of years ago) with a percentage being returned to Council etc. There are many innovative ways to raise income and reduce the burden on residential ratepayers.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide in put and I wish you well in all your deliberations.

Kind Regards

[redacted]

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To Whom it May Concern

I write to your Council to advise you of my support of the Mylor Netball club in their Application for a Grant to fund the resurface of Mylor courts.

I am a Life Member of the Mylor Tennis Club and have played for the club for 55 years. I currently hold the position of Secretary and Treasurer.

I was also a long-term player for the Mylor Netball club, many years ago.

My involvement with this facility, as a player and Committee member will continue for as long as I can be actively involved.

I am very proud of the magnificent facility we have at Mylor, with many clubs that play there, saying it is one of most picturesque, serene places to play tennis.

I would love to see the clubs grow in membership and truly believe this is possible with new upgraded courts. For those that can no longer participate in tennis, I believe that pickleball can be played as an alternative.

Over many years and involvement with the Hills Tennis Association where I am currently on the Management Committee, I have seen many clubs fold and the courts deteriorate. I my lifetime, I hope I do not witness this happen to the Mylor facility.

I wish to convey my full support for the Mylor Netball Clubs application for a grant to fund the resurface project.

If you have any queries regarding this letter, please feel free to contact me.

Kind regards

[redacted]

Letter of support: Mylor Netball Courts

Mylor Tennis club wish to thank Adelaide Hills Council for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Annual Business Plan 2026–27, in support of the Mylor Netball clubs application for a grant to resurface the courts at Stock Road Mylor.

The Mylor Tennis club would also like to express our gratitude to the Adelaide Hills Council's for their commitment to maintaining and support for this community sport and recreational facility.

Due to very low tennis membership, our club does not have the funds to contribute to the 'Resurfacing', at this stage. However, our club do have the commitment of Adelaide Hills Pickleball in the hiring of the facility.

Project Overview and Need

With guidance from Stacey Dutton and Renee O'Connor of Council's Sport and Recreation team, we understand that Council commissioned an audit of community recreation facilities which identified the Mylor court complex as a high-priority resurfacing project. Since the completion of that audit, the condition of the courts has rapidly deteriorated due to significant tree root intrusion and instability in the subsurface, resulting in:

- Uneven playing surfaces
- Increased safety risks for players and the broader community
- Reduced usability across all sports

This deterioration has accelerated beyond normal asset life expectations and is outside the control of regular users of the facility (Mylor Netball Club, Mylor Tennis Club and Adelaide Hills Pickleball). Current netball usage is already restricted to 3 out of the 4 courts, and without intervention the courts will soon become completely unsafe and unusable, resulting in the loss of a key community facility.

Mylor Tennis club support this statement

Community Value and Alignment with Council Priorities

The Mylor courts are a shared, multi-use community asset regularly used by hundreds of participants in netball, tennis, and pickleball competitions and informal recreation and use by the nearby Mylor Primary School. This aligns strongly with Council's objectives to:

- Support community wellbeing, physical activity and social connection
- Maintain and renew sport and recreation infrastructure

- Improve accessibility and connectivity of community facilities

With an upgrade of the courts, the Tennis club hope to attract more players to join, increasing our membership and once again filling teams from juniors to seniors. (Our club has not filled junior teams for many years). The use from Mylor Primary students and support from Tennis SA, should assist in achieving this.

Pickleball with their commitment to hiring the facility from the Tennis club continues to increase in popularity, whereby the spring/summer competition, may see a second night of competition each week (currently one night).

Pickleball at Mylor has become a major hub for the sport (outdoor option) across the Hills. Pickleball SA has indicated that Mylor is an ideal venue (once upgraded and with permanent pickleball lines) to use for Regional and State tournaments, strengthening its value and status for the Hills (and Council).

The Tennis club believe that the Mylor facility is an ideal venue, as a centre for major recreational activities, for the following reasons:

- 4 courts on one level and side by side,
- modern clubrooms with great facilities,
- a beautiful tranquil location, which is a good distance from any housing,
- large carparking area

Value for Investment

Council investment in this project would:

- Protect and extend the life of an important community asset
- Leverage significant co-contribution funding (~$150,000) already secured
- Deliver a multi-sport facility benefiting a broad cross-section of the community
- Reduce future maintenance costs through proper reconstruction, including subsurface remediation
- Support active lifestyles and preventative health outcomes

Given the relatively modest funding request compared to broader infrastructure programs, this represents strong value for community impact.

Mylor tennis club support this statement

Conclusion

The Mylor Netball Club strongly support the strategic direction outlined in the Draft Annual Business Plan. However, we see great importance of ensuring that local, community-scale infrastructure projects are not overlooked or under-resourced.

This project represents a critical upgrade to a well-used community facility, with clear benefits in:

- Safety
- Community wellbeing
- Participation in sport
- Long-term asset sustainability

With Council support, this project can proceed and deliver long-lasting benefits to the Mylor community and surrounding areas.

Mylor Tennis Club support this statement

The Mylor Tennis Committee and our members fully support the Mylor Netball club in their application for funding for the Resurfacing of Mylor courts.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Mylor Tennis Club Secretary/Treasurer

Appendix C – Public Forum Presentations

Presenter	Notes
Presenter 1	No additional information provided.
Presenter 2	No additional information provided.
Presenter 3	No additional information provided.
Presenter 4	**Adelaide Hills Council** **2026–27 Draft Annual Business Plan** A Critical Ratepayer Analysis **1. Budget Overview — Ratepayer Perspective** 7.6% — Proposed rate increase +$223 — Average residential bill increase $3.4M — Operating deficit $37.3M — Forecast total borrowings June 2027 **The rate increase is significant** The proposed 7.6% combined rate increase — framed as CPI (4.6%) plus 1.5% for asset management plus an additional 1.5% for 'long-term financial sustainability' — translates to roughly $223 more per year for an average residential property. Property valuations are also rising by around 9.5% for residential properties, meaning actual bills could increase meaningfully beyond the headline figure. **The Council is running a deficit** The budget projects a $3.4M operating deficit on income of $68.3M, following a $3.1M deficit in 2025-26. The Operating Surplus/(Deficit) Ratio of -5.0% sits outside the target range of 0–10%. Ratepayers are being asked to fund a structurally loss-making organisation while absorbing a rate increase. **Borrowings are growing** Total borrowings rise from $32.6M to $37.3M by June 2027. New borrowings of $13.1M are planned against principal repayments of only $8.5M — a net increase of $4.6M. Future ratepayers will inherit higher debt service costs. **Capital program is 85% renewal** Of the $14.3M capital budget, $12.1M goes toward renewing existing assets. Only $2.2M funds new or upgraded assets. This reflects a council playing catch-up on maintenance rather than expanding services. **Operating costs rising faster than income** Operating expenditure is up 7.36% ($4.9M), driven largely by inflation and depreciation. Employee costs alone are budgeted at $28.1M — the single largest expense. No structural efficiency gains are evident. **2. Interest Rate Risk — Variable Debt Exposure** 91% — $33.8M — +$338K — $92.9M

Debt at variable rate	Variable borrowings	Cost per 1% rate rise	Annual borrowing churn

The current position

Of the forecast $37.277M total borrowings at June 2027, $33.807M (91%) is variable rate debt and only $3.470M is fixed. This is a heavily exposed position for a council already running operating deficits with limited capacity to absorb cost shocks.

What the numbers mean in practice

Finance costs are budgeted at $1.517M for 2026-27. With $33.8M of variable debt, a 1% rise in interest rates adds approximately $338,000 to annual finance costs. A 2% rise adds $676,000. The entire new operating projects budget is $1.0M — meaning a 3% rate movement could wipe out all discretionary initiative spending without any decision being made.

The compounding problem

Construction and materials costs also rise when rates rise — inflation and interest rates tend to move together. Property valuations that underpin rate revenue could soften in a higher rate environment. Ratepayer hardship increases, leading to more requests for rate relief and higher bad debt provisions.

The cash flow statement reveals a concern

The budget shows $92.859M in borrowing proceeds and $88.158M in repayments in a single year — suggesting the Council is constantly rolling short-term facilities rather than holding long-term fixed debt. This means Council is perpetually exposed to whatever the prevailing rate environment is at rollover, with no ability to lock in favourable terms retroactively.

LGFA access — not a complete shield

While councils access the Local Government Finance Authority at rates below commercial lenders, the sensitivity to rate movements is essentially identical. A 1% movement costs the same $338,000 regardless of the lender. The 91% variable position is an active choice — LGFA offers fixed rate products — and that choice is difficult to justify in the current environment.

Ratepayers are the ultimate guarantor

Rate obligations attach to property and must be paid. Ratepayers cannot exit their exposure. When variable rates rise, the cost flows through to future rate increases. The transmission is slower than a mortgage but the economic effect is identical — ratepayers fund the interest bill one way or another.

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3. Boundary Reform — The Unquantified Revenue Risk

The Campbelltown City Council Woodforde/Rostrevor boundary reform inquiry is mentioned in a single paragraph with no financial modelling. This is arguably the single largest unquantified risk in the entire document.

Why this matters disproportionately

Woodforde and Rostrevor are among the more densely populated and higher-value residential areas within the Adelaide Hills boundary. Dense suburban properties typically generate strong rate revenue while requiring

relatively standard suburban services — they are net contributors to the financial position. Losing them would remove a disproportionately high-value slice of the rate base.

The numbers nobody is publishing

The document does not state what proportion of current rate revenue comes from these suburbs. Rate revenue is budgeted at $59.988M. Even a 5% reduction from boundary changes would remove approximately $3M — almost exactly equal to the entire projected operating deficit. A 10% reduction would be severe and potentially unrecoverable without dramatic service cuts or further rate increases.

The collision with variable rate debt

If the rate base shrinks materially through boundary reform, the debt does not shrink with it. Remaining ratepayers inherit the full debt burden serviced by a smaller revenue pool. With $37.3M in mostly variable rate borrowings, a revenue reduction does not just affect the operating deficit — it threatens the Council's ability to service and refinance debt at all.

The LTFP timing problem

Council will update and adopt a new Long Term Financial Plan in Quarter One 2026-27. If the boundary inquiry is unresolved by then, ratepayers will be asked to approve a ten-year financial framework built on a potentially incorrect assumption about the revenue base.

What due diligence requires

A responsible financial planning process would include a published sensitivity analysis showing the financial impact across several scenarios: full transfer of both suburbs, partial transfer, and no change. The Boundary Commission inquiry is not new — the absence of this modelling is a material accountability gap.

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4. Where Non-Urgent Savings Could Be Made

Operating Projects That Could Be Deferred

ERP System Transition — $600,000

The most obvious candidate. Enterprise software migrations are notoriously over budget and disruptive. Deferring one year while the financial position stabilises would save significantly. The system currently in use is presumably still functional.

Town and Precinct Planning Framework — $70,000

Strategic planning work that produces no immediate community outcome. Could be staged over two years rather than delivered in one.

Strategic Asset Management Plan Consultancy — $120,000

Could be staged over two years without material risk.

Sport and Recreation Strategic Planning — $80,000

A study that identifies future spending opportunities — arguably premature when running a deficit.

FOGO Investigation — $64,000

Worth doing eventually, but the investigation itself could wait twelve months without service degradation.

EV Charging Infrastructure — $75,000

The net zero goal is legitimate but in a deficit year, spending primarily benefiting a small number of EV-owning visitors or staff is difficult to prioritise. The policy goal survives a one-year deferral.

Operational Workplace Accommodation Review — $100,000

An internal overhead project that should be paused when asking ratepayers to absorb a 7.6% increase.

Capital Renewal Items Worth Scrutinising

Plant and Fleet Renewal — $3.088M

The second largest capital item. Fleet renewal programs often have flexibility — vehicles approaching end of life can frequently be extended 12-24 months with maintenance spending considerably less than replacement cost. Deferring a portion could free $500,000–$800,000.

Stirling Coventry Library Cladding — $800,000

Warrants scrutiny on urgency. If a fire safety engineer has deemed it genuinely urgent it should proceed, but if primarily an aesthetic or longer-horizon compliance issue, staging over two budget years would ease pressure considerably.

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5. Priority Questions Ratepayers Should Demand Answered

CRITICAL — Answers Required Before Final Plan Adoption

1. What is the specific dollar value of rate revenue currently generated by Woodforde and Rostrevor, and what would the operating deficit become if those suburbs transfer to Campbelltown? Adopting a budget without quantifying the single largest financial risk is not responsible governance.
2. Why is 91% of council debt in variable rate facilities when the council is running consecutive operating deficits, faces a potential revenue shock from boundary reform, and has access to fixed rate LGFA products? What would it cost to fix 50% of current variable debt today?
3. What is the specific year in which Council projects returning to operating surplus, with explicit milestones — not aspirational language? The LTFP update promised for Q1 2026-27 should make this concrete and public before the final plan is adopted, not after.
4. Can Council publish a stress test showing the combined impact of a 2% interest rate rise, a 10% boundary-related revenue loss, and a softening of property valuations simultaneously? These are not implausible scenarios and ratepayers deserve to see the downside.
5. What proportion of the $13.129M in new borrowings funds capital infrastructure with a genuine multi-generational life versus operating deficits or short-lived assets? The intergenerational equity justification only holds for the former.

HIGH PRIORITY — Should Be Answered During Consultation Period

6. What is the multi-year debt trajectory? Ratepayers cannot assess whether the financial position is improving or deteriorating without seeing borrowings, deficits, and ratios across at least five years historically and ten years projected.
7. What does the cash flow statement's extraordinary churn of $92.859M in borrowing proceeds and $88.158M in repayments represent? What is the average term of current borrowings and what happens if the LGFA tightens terms or markets make rollover more expensive?

8 Has a formal independent review of the service portfolio been conducted — not an internal efficiency review but a genuine zero-based examination of whether every service is either statutorily required or demonstrably valued at the price it costs to deliver?

9 What is the per-household cost of each major service category and how does this compare to neighbouring councils? Without benchmarking, ratepayers cannot assess value versus structural inefficiency.

10 What specific conditions or triggers would cause Council to implement service reductions rather than further rate increases? Ratepayers deserve a published framework defining when services would be cut, outsourced, or shared rather than funded by rate rises.

MEDIUM PRIORITY — Important for Long Term Accountability

11 Why has the fixed charge increased 7.6% from $880 to $947 when the CPI component is only 4.6%? The fixed charge is regressive — its increase above CPI disproportionately affects lower-value properties and should be specifically justified.

12 What is the current status and expected timeline of the Boundary Commission inquiry, and is Council actively making submissions to protect its financial position?

13 What is the actual age and condition of the 17 light vehicles proposed for renewal, and could a portion be extended 12-24 months without material risk or liability?

14 The ESCOSA advice scheme response is listed as a placeholder. What were the nine recommendations and what is Council's substantive response to each? These are directly relevant to every financial question above.

15 What asset life assumptions are used to justify each borrowing decision? ERP software, accommodation reviews, and planning studies have short useful lives and the intergenerational equity argument does not apply to them.

LOWER PRIORITY — Important But Less Time-Sensitive

16 What entities does Council have equity ownership interests in, contributing $105,000 in income, and do those interests represent good value?

17 What advocacy has Council undertaken to scrutinise or reduce the $1.693M Regional Landscape Levy, and what direct benefit do Adelaide Hills ratepayers receive relative to what they pay?

18 What does the $1.28M project management and contingency allocation represent and has contingency been historically drawn upon or returned unspent?

19 What is the economic value of the 30% population volunteering to Council's service delivery, and is demographic or economic change reducing volunteer availability modelled?

20 Does the Fabrik Arts and Heritage facility at $861,012 operating cost generate sufficient utilisation to justify that expenditure, and is there a pathway toward greater cost recovery?

6. The Overarching Question

	This council has described itself as having **the size of a regional council with the expenses and population of a city council.** That structural mismatch has existed for years and annual rate increases do not resolve it — they fund it temporarily while the underlying problem persists and potentially worsens. The questions in Section 5 are important but they address symptoms. The question nobody in the document appears to be asking seriously is whether the current configuration of Adelaide Hills Council — its boundaries, service portfolio, asset base, and governance structure — is financially sustainable in its present form over the next twenty years, or whether more fundamental structural change is required. A council running consecutive operating deficits, increasing borrowings, holding 91% variable rate debt, facing a potential boundary reform that could strip rate revenue, and relying on property valuation growth to support its rate base is carrying a degree of financial fragility that the document's measured language does not fully convey. The document as drafted asks ratepayers to accept significant financial burden while leaving the largest financial risks entirely unquantified. **That is not a sufficient basis for informed community consent to a 7.6% rate increase.** --- *This analysis is based solely on the Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2026-27 published by Adelaide Hills Council for community consultation. All figures cited are drawn directly from that document. This analysis does not constitute financial or legal advice.*
Presenter 5	Thank you Mayor and Councillors for opportunity to speak. 7.6% is too high in a cost of living crisis. Yes everything has gone up, CPI is meant to cover this. Not everyones wages have gone up as much as CPI. People living off the land wouldn't have experienced this increase. Yet in a climate emergency Council seeks to increase rates by 165% of CPI. The compound effect of rate rises above CPI every year has driven up what an increase of 7.6% means , on average $223 to $233 per homeowner, compared to in 2025/26 rate increase of 6.2% meant on average $161 per homeowner. It's the compound effect that contributes to making this significant. At this time it is too much. I support reducing new projects, deferring them another year, or alternatively altering the project as was suggested recently by some residents of lowering the speed limit on back streets were there is no footpath. Yes that can result in the cost going up, and not meeting everyones expectations , however if we go ahead with this budget increase in interest due to overall borrowings increases grows significantly, to point were future people are paying for what we do. And with existing projects look for savings, yes that's not easy but that's reality. Extra dollars for Fabrik may need to be deferred or at least lowered, a great project which you know I support but we need to work to bring this budget and future ones back into balance. Details I couldn't see in the budget included what significant renewal works which are not in asset management plan are included. efficiencies using AI, or other initiatives. limiting legal spend-yes its been reduced but its still too high No initiatives for retaining employees in a time that keeping skilled people is becoming harder. No planning for renewal of playgrounds at Gumeracha or Woodside, I acknowledge the work that goes into budget preparation. I am looking for balancing the budget, looking for the detail in initiatives proposed, and looking for reasonable increases in rates so we all can afford to live here.
Presenter 6	No additional information provided.

Appendix D – Information Provided and Feedback Form

Draft Annual Business Plan 2026-27 and Budget

Share your feedback on our Draft Annual Business Plan 2026-27 and Budget.

+ Follow

Home / Draft Annual Business Plan 2026-27 and Budget

Every year Council develops and adopts an Annual Business Plan (ABP), which sets out Council's key programs, priority actions and budgets for the financial year.

We want our community to help review our draft ABP 2026-27. Feedback from residents, businesses and community groups helps to shape the initiatives included in the final Plan, ensuring they reflect local priorities.

This input comes from consultation on the Draft ABP, as well as community participation in Council's strategic planning processes and engagement activities undertaken throughout the year.

The ABP is our way to ensure that we continue to develop and maintain essential infrastructure services such as roads, footpaths, bridges, public toilets and open spaces as well as providing important services including libraries, health, planning, support services and waste collection.

The draft ABP 2026-27, continues the process of underpinning our long-term financial sustainability while maintaining facilities and services our community deserves.

Lifecycle

Council Report

Draft ABP 2026-27 presented to Council at the Meeting on 9 June 2026, seeking approval to take out for community engagement.

Engagement Open

We will be seeking feedback on our draft ABP 2026-27 from Monday 15 June to 5pm Monday 6 July 2026.

Public Meeting

Opportunity for interested community members to present at the public Council Meeting being held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 23 June 2026 at The Summit

Community engagement is open until 5pm Monday 6 July 2026.

Draft Annual Business Plan 2026-27

Sharing feedback | Quick look | FAQs | 2025/26 achievements

Share your ideas and feedback

Your feedback on our draft ABP 2026-27 is appreciated, and all feedback received during the engagement period will be considered, prior to the plan being finalised.

Community engagement is open until 5pm Monday 6 July 2026.

How can I provide feedback?

Once you have reviewed the draft plan, you can provide your feedback in one of the following ways:

Online

Complete our online feedback form.

View online form >

Email

Email your feedback to us at engage@ahc.sa.gov.au.

Send us an email >

Post

Post your written feedback to us at 63 Mount Barker Road, Stirling SA 5152.

Present

Present at the public Council Meeting being held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 23 June 2026 at The Summit Community Centre.

Collect

Hardcopy feedback forms will be available from our Service Centres / libraries at Stirling, Woodside, Gumeracha and Norton Summit.

Download form >

Ask a question

Visit the FAQs tab and if your question isn't answered there, ask our project team using the Q&A tool.

Accessibility

If you need assistance to complete the feedback tools or need an alternative format, please email engage@ahc.sa.gov.au or call 8408 0400.Further information

You can ask us a question by email engage@ahc.sa.gov.au or by using the Questions tab below.

Face to face engagement opportunities

If you would prefer to provide your feedback in person, the Director Corporate Services (or another member of the project team) is happy to make an appropriate arrangement to meet with individuals or small groups.

You may alternatively like to present at the public Council Meeting on 23 June or to come along to the Mylor Community Forum which is being held on Tuesday 30 June 2026.

Community Centre.

See more

Document Library

Draft Annual Business Plan 2026-27
PDF (5.17 MB)

Hardcopy Feedback Form - Draft ABP 2026-27
PDF (222.52 KB)

Factsheet - Draft ABP 2026-27
PDF (469.62 KB)

See more

Links

Council Meeting Agenda - 9 June 2026

Council Meeting Minutes - 9 June 2026

Who's Listening

Beck Lyons

Corporate Planning and Performance Coordinator

Melissa Clarke

Community Engagement Coordinator

Phone: 8408 0400

Email: engage@ahc.sa.gov.au

Review some of the key elements of the draft ABP

Key considerations

The key focus in preparing the 2026–27 budget has been to balance financial sustainability with the delivery of essential services and community infrastructure.

Considerations include:

- Responding to ongoing cost pressures, including increased infrastructure, depreciation and finance costs in a challenging economic environment;
- Maintaining, rationalising and renewing a large portfolio of community assets;
- Taking a disciplined approach to expenditure, including reducing new initiatives compared to previous years;
- Supporting community priorities through targeted investments in safety, accessibility and connectivity;
- Returning to surplus in the coming years and achieving the goals of the Long-Term Financial Plan.

Focus areas

Council's focus for the 2026–27 financial year is on supporting and strengthening the community, environment and region through a responsible budget that recognises unique constraints and prioritises essential services, prudent resource management, and sustainability.

Some of the key areas of focus for 2026-27 include:

Natural environment:

- Continue reviewing waste management service models to find efficiencies and divert more waste from landfill.
- Adapt Cox Creek rehabilitation project learnings and techniques to prepare for expansion across water supply catchments and improve the health of Adelaide Hills creeks and rivers.
- Build capacity in electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Community wellbeing:

- Implement the new Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.
- Use a co-design approach to develop a new Youth Action Plan.
- Explore opportunities to expand visitor and tourism experiences at Fabrik Arts + Heritage.

Built Form and Economy

- Plan for the future of the Hills by defining what our communities need and value into the future.
- Advocate for development outcomes for the Woodside Barracks that deliver the best long-term outcomes for the community.
- Progress a review of Community Land Management Plans and prepare a Strategic Asset Management Plan.

Organisation:

- Continue to enhance the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to improve customer experience for enquiries, requests and response timeframes.

- Improve efficiency and service delivery through the implementation of a modern, integrated Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.
- Continue to progress towards long-term financial sustainability by undertaking long-term asset and financial planning.

Operating and Capital Projects

View a list of the **Operating and Capital Projects** featured in the Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget.

Capital renewal expenditure

$12.1 million expenditure on existing asset renewal, down from $14.29 in 2025-26.

The renewal program is informed by Council's Asset Management Plans. Sustained investment in renewal is critical to maintaining service levels, managing long-term costs, and delivering safe, reliable infrastructure that continues to benefit the community.

Below is a list of planned asset renewal spending for 2026-27 by asset type:

- Bridges - $405K
- Buildings $140K
- Cemetries $40K
- Community Wastewater Management Systems $302K
- Footpaths $414K
- Kerbing and road shoulder $565K
- Sport and recreation $166K
- Stormwater $150K
- Roads (sealed and unsealed) $4.874M
- Plant and fleet $3.088M
- ICT equipment $166K
- Project management and contingency $1.280M

The complete Draft Capital Works Program 2026-27, is available in Appendix F of the **Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2026-27**.

Rate adjustment - proposed rate increase

The draft plan reflects a rate increase in line with the March National Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1.5 per cent to manage the Council's $800m portfolio of infrastructure assets and deliver $2.2 million in key capital expenditure.

An additional 1.5 per cent is proposed as the Council continues the process of ensuring long term financial sustainability. This is reflective of the cost of maintaining legacy infrastructure, higher depreciation and increased finance costs against a background of challenging economic and geopolitical conditions.

The combined proposed rate increase of 7.6% equates to approximately $223 for an average value residential property.

Note: This draft plan is based on the national **March quarter CPI** figure (4.6%). Recognising inflation eased in the April quarter, Council will reassess in line with latest CPI data at the conclusion of the consultation period and this may influence the final rate that is adopted.

Operating Projects

Food Organics Garden Organics kerbside collection

To further investigate Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) kerbside collection waste management service models, including opportunities for cost savings and improved cost recovery within waste management services.

Operating project $64,000.

Sport and Recreation Strategic Planning

A strategic open space strategy that identifies opportunities for sport and recreation development.

Operating project $80,000.

School safety and activation project: Verdun

To investigate, in partnership with the Department for Infrastructure and Transport, safety improvements at Hills Christian Community School. This includes reviewing pedestrian access and further off-street parking at peak school hour drop off times, to ease congestion and improve safety.

Operating project $40,000.

Strategic asset planning and land management

To progress a Strategic Asset Management Plan from a review and renewal of asset management plans and community land management plans.

Operating project $120,000.

Town and precinct planning

To deliver three integrated land use planning tools – the Township & Precinct Planning Framework, a Housing Strategy incorporating a Local Area Plan, and a Placemaking Framework - to guide coordinated growth and investment. Together, these frameworks will prioritise precinct-level planning and infrastructure alignment, address housing issues, strengthen local centres, and attract targeted investment that reflects community needs and place-specific opportunities.

Operating budget $70,000.

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System

To fund two contract positions to manage the ERP transition, including process mapping, change management, training and project management.

This is a committed project within Council's Annual Business Plan that will proceed, investing in technology infrastructure to deliver contemporary services and improve decision-making, efficiency and productivity.

Operating budget $600,000.

Local Government Election costs

Provision for the costs associated with delivering the Adelaide Hills Council election, in line with the scheduled election cycle and statutory requirements.

Operating cost $350,000.

ESCOSA Advice Scheme

To meet the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA) requirements, ensuring Council's ongoing compliance with regulatory and reporting obligations.

Operating budget $45,000.

Operating Projects | **Capital Projects**

Electric vehicle charging infrastructure

To enhance and optimise Council's existing electric vehicle charging infrastructure and to develop policy that incorporates public access.

Capital project $75,000.

Operational workplace accommodation review

To optimise staff accommodation across Council sites to ensure facilities remain fit-for-purpose and support effective service delivery to the community. The project will include relocating staff into Council-owned facilities.

Capital project $100,000.

Stirling Coventry Library cladding

To progress the replacement of cladding at the Stirling Coventry Library. The project is part of Council's program of safety and compliance upgrades to community facilities.

Capital project $800,000.

School safety and activation projects: Lenswood

To undertake the Lenswood Main Street safety upgrade, including footpath access, a footbridge, kerb alignment and street scaping.

Capital project $150,000.

School safety & activation project: Stirling East

To undertake targeted infrastructure improvements in the vicinity of Stirling East Primary School to enhance pedestrian access, safety, and local traffic management.

Capital project $90,000.

Amy Gillett Bikeway connection: Station Road

To provide key linkages between Amy Gillett Bikeway at Station Rd, Woodside, from Tiers Rd to the existing Bikeway connection point. This will include a formalised path and access through the existing reserve and complete the sections from Gillman Rd Oakbank through to Birdwood.

Capital project $675,000.

New footpath program

The footpath program improves asset condition, accessibility and connectivity across the pedestrian network through the planning, construction and renewal of footpath infrastructure.

Capital project $400,000.

Draft Annual Business Plan 2026-27 and Budget

Feedback Form

This submission form is also available online at engage.ahc.sa.gov.au.
Please submit your feedback by 5pm Monday 6 July 2026 to an Adelaide Hills Council library or customer service centre or mail to 63 Mount Barker Rd, Stirling SA 5152.

About you

01. Your name Required

02. Your email or phone number

03. Your suburb, township or locality Required

04. What is your connection/s to the Adelaide Hills Council area? Required

Select all that apply
☐ Resident
☐ Business owner
☐ Visitor
☐ Employee/worker
☐ AHC staff member
☐ Student
☐ Other

Your Feedback - Overall Draft ABP 2026-27

05. Have you read the Draft ABP 2026-27? Required

Select one answer only
○ Yes, I have had a thorough read
○ Yes, I've had a quick glance
○ No, I have not read the draft Plan

06. To what extent do you support the Draft ABP 2026-27? Required

Select one answer only
○ I fully support the draft ABP
○ I support the draft ABP with some changes
○ I do not support the draft ABP

07. Please provide more information about your response above.

Your Feedback - Operational and Capital Projects

08. Please rate your level of support for the following operational and capital projects featured in the Draft ABP 2026-27 with 1 representing low or no support and 5 representing high support.

To assist you with answering the following questions, please view the operating and capital projects featured in the Draft Annual Business Plan (pgs 27-30) for details about each initiative or view the project descriptions on Adelaide Hills Engagement Hub.

Operating and Capital Projects	1 Low	2	3	4	5 High
FOGO kerbside collection further investigation into service models. To further investigate waste management service models, including opportunities for cost savings and improved cost recovery within waste management services.					
Development of a strategic open space strategy. A strategy that identifies opportunities for sport and recreation development.					
School safety activation project – Verdun. Investigate, with the Department for Infrastructure and Transport, safety improvements at Hills Christian Community School, including pedestrian access and off-street parking to ease peak-hour congestion.					
Review / renewal of asset management plans and community land management plans. Progress a Strategic Asset Management Plan from a review and renewal of asset management plans and community land management plans.					
Integrated Town and Precinct planning project. Deliver integrated planning tools: A Township & Precinct Planning Framework, Housing Strategy with Local Area Plan, and Placemaking Framework to guide coordinated growth, infrastructure alignment, housing outcomes, and place-based investment.					

Operating and Capital Projects	1 Low	2	3	4	5 High
Enhance and optimise electric vehicle infrastructure. Optimise Council's existing electric vehicle charging infrastructure and to develop policy that incorporates public access.					
Operational workplace accommodation review. Optimise staff accommodation across Council sites to support service delivery, including relocating staff into Council-owned facilities.					
School safety and activation project - Lenswood. Undertake the Lenswood Main Street safety upgrade, including footpath access, a footbridge, kerb alignment and street scaping.					
School safety and activation project - Stirling East. Deliver targeted infrastructure improvements in the vicinity of Stirling East Primary School to enhance pedestrian access, safety, and traffic management.					
Amy Gillett Bikeway Connection – Station Road Woodside. Deliver key links between the Amy Gillett Bikeway at Station Rd and Tiers Rd to the existing connection point, including a formalised path through the reserve and completing sections from Gillman Rd, Oakbank to Birdwood.					
New footpath program. Improve asset condition, accessibility and connectivity across the pedestrian network through the planning, construction and renewal of footpath infrastructure.					

09.Would you like to provide feedback about a specific project or initiative?

Please include the project or initiative name as part of your feedback.

Your Feedback - Rates

Proposed Rate Increase

The draft ABP reflects a rate increase in line with the March National CPI (4.6%) plus 1.5% to manage the Council's portfolio of infrastructure assets and deliver key capital expenditure.

An additional 1.5% is proposed as the Council continues the process of ensuring long term financial sustainability.

The combined proposed rate increase of 7.6% equates to approximately $223 for an average value residential property.

10. When setting the rate rise for the 2026-27 FY, what factors are most important for Council to consider?

Select your top three priorities.

Select between 1 and 3 answers
☐ Ensuring maintenance and renewal of existing assets e.g. renewal of playgrounds, sporting facilities, open space assets, buildings.
☐ Allowing for new capital projects e.g. new playgrounds, sporting facilities, public toilets, footpaths.
☐ Keeping rate increases as low as possible for residents.
☐ Maintaining current service and program levels.
☐ Ensuring the long-term sustainability of Council by reducing Council debt.
☐ Rationalising, repurposing, or divesting underperforming assets to reduce long-term maintenance costs and infrastructure backlogs.
☐ Meeting the objectives of Council's Your Place Your Space Strategic Plan.
☐ Other

11. Which of the following best reflects your view about the proposed rate rise?

Select one answer only
○ The increase is appropriate given current cost pressures and future needs
○ The increase is reasonable but could be lower
○ The increase is too high, even considering the reasons provided
○ Rates should not increase beyond CPI
○ Rates should not increase at this time
○ Other

12. If the rate increase were reduced, which areas should be prioritised for reduction or delay?

Select up to two options.

Select up to two options
☐ New capital projects and initiatives
☐ Maintenance and renewal of existing assets
☐ Service levels / community programs
☐ Debt reduction / long-term financial sustainability
☐ No reduction – maintain proposed plan
☐ Other

13. Would you like to provide any additional feedback about rate setting and the proposed rate increase?

Thank you for providing your feedback!

Your feedback will be considered by the project team. You can find out more about this project and register to become an engagement subscriber of our Adelaide Hills Engagement Hub at: engage.ahc.sa.gov.au.

Your Say, Your Way

Share your feedback on our draft Community Engagement Framework

Your ideas and feedback have helped us to develop our draft Community Engagement Framework and now we want to find out if we heard you correctly.

You can view the draft Framework and share your feedback, by visiting our online Engagement Hub below, or collecting a copy from one of our libraries or customer service centres.

Community engagement is open until Sunday 26 April 2026.

Scan to find out more

engage.ahc.sa.gov.au
mail@ahc.sa.gov.au
8408 0400

Adelaide Hills
COUNCIL

Draft Annual Business Plan 2026-27 and Budget

Adelaide Hills COUNCIL

We'd like to share with the community our Draft Annual Business Plan 2026-27.

This important document is currently open for community feedback. Does it cover what is important to you?

The Draft Annual Business Plan (ABP) 2026-27 continues the process of underpinning our long-term financial sustainability while maintaining and improving the facilities and services our community deserves.

The ABP is our way to ensure that we continue to develop and maintain essential infrastructure services such as roads, footpaths, bridges, public toilets and open spaces as well as providing important services including libraries, health, planning, support services and waste collection.

Key considerations

The key focus in preparing the 2026–27 budget has been to balance financial sustainability with the delivery of essential services and community infrastructure.

Considerations include:

- Responding to ongoing cost pressures, including increased infrastructure, depreciation and finance costs in a challenging economic environment;
- Maintaining, rationalising and renewing a large portfolio of community assets;
- Taking a disciplined approach to expenditure, including reducing new initiatives compared to previous years;
- Supporting community priorities through targeted investments in safety, accessibility and connectivity;
- Returning to surplus in the coming years and achieving the goals of the Long-Term Financial Plan.

Capital project highlights

- $675,000 on the Amy Gillett Bikeway connection at Station Road, Woodside.
- $400,000 on new footpath program.
- $240,000 on school safety and activation at Lenswood and Stirling East.
- $75,000 on enhancements to exisiting electrical vehicle charging infrastructure.

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Draft Annual Business Plan 2026-27 and Budget

Adelaide Hills COUNCIL

Our Rates

Rates revenue is Council's primary source of income, raised from property owners to fund the delivery of services, infrastructure, and community outcomes.

The draft plan reflects a rate increase in line with CPI plus 1.5 per cent to manage the Council's 800m portfolio of infrastructure assets and deliver $2.2 million in key capital expenditure.

An additional 1.5 per cent is proposed as the Council continues the process of ensuring long term financial sustainability. This is reflective of the cost of maintaining legacy infrastructure, higher depreciation and increased finance costs against a background of challenging economic and geopolitical conditions.

The combined proposed rate increase of 7.6% equates to approximately $223 for an average value residential property.

Note: This draft plan is based on the March quarter CPI figure (4.6%). Recognising inflation eased in the April quarter, Council will reassess in line with latest CPI data at the conclusion of the consultation period and this may influence the final rate that is adopted.

We want to hear from you

Your feedback on the draft ABP 2026-27 is appreciated, and all feedback received during the engagement period will be considered, prior to the plan being finalised.

You can view the draft ABP 2026-27 online at Adelaide Hills Engagement Hub or copies are available for viewing in our libraries and customer service centres at Stirling, Woodside, Gumeracha and Norton Summit.

Sharing your feedback

Once you have reviewed the draft plan, you can provide your feedback in one of the following ways:

- Complete the online feedback form at engage.ahc.sa.gov.au or via the QR code below.
- Email feedback to engage@ahc.sa.gov.au.
- Mail feedback to 63 Mount Barker Road, Stirling SA 5152.
- Phone 8408 0400.
- Present at the public Council Meeting being held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 23 June 2026.
- Collect a hardcopy feedback form from any AHC Library or Customer Service Centre and submit via any of the ways listed above or by handing into our Council Service Centres or Libraries

This engagement closes at 5pm on Monday 6 July 2026.

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Courier Ad – 27 May 2026

Adelaide Hills Council

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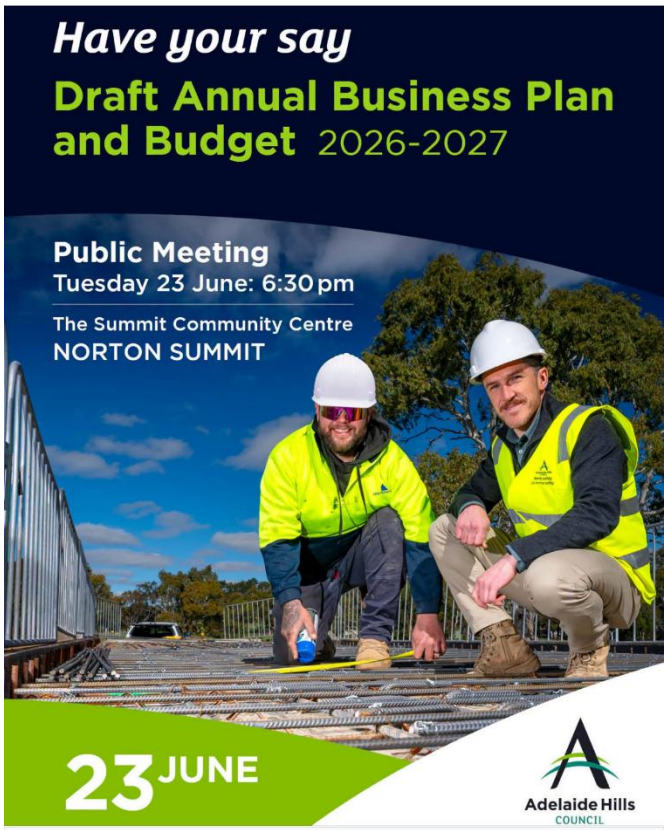
Adelaide Hills Council
19 Jun ·

You're invited to provide feedback on the Draft Annual Business Plan 2026–27 and Budget at the public Council meeting this Tuesday:

📅 Tuesday, 23 June
🕕 6:30pm (start of the meeting)
📍 The Summit Community Centre
📌 4 Crescent Dr, Norton Summit

💬 Share your thoughts in person or review the plan and submit feedback online 👉 https://ow.ly/7SX150Zeu0t

#ABP2026



TUE, 23 JUN
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Interested

4 4 2

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