

MEDIA RELEASE



Subject: **Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2023-24 + Long Term Financial Plan Consultation**

Contact: **Acting Chief Executive Officer Heather Barclay**
0436 682 381 / h.barclay@murraybridge.sa.gov.au

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BALANCING the needs of a growing Rural City whilst navigating a tough economic climate facing the entire country is a primary focus of Council's Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2023-2024.

The Rural City of Murray Bridge Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2023-2024, along with Council's Draft Long Term Financial Plan are now open for public consultation.

Mayor Wayne Thorley said Council is working hard to balance a range of pressures to produce the best possible outcome in a proposed plan for the Council over the next 12 months.

"Following a year of resilience that saw the greatest natural disaster for our community in a generation, the Murray River Flood, we will continue to work together in the current financial climate to protect our Thriving Communities," he said.

"Elected Members and Council staff have worked hard to produce a budget that is sensitive to cost of living pressures facing ratepayers at the moment - one that is well balanced, financially responsible and sustainable.

"Faced with a rise in property valuations of almost 20%, an Adelaide March 2023 CPI (Consumer Price Index) of 7.9%, Murray River flood impacts and the general rising costs of doing business, our overriding concern for this budget has been to absorb the impact and buffer residents from further financial pain as much as possible.

"We've tightened our belts and identified around \$1.4m worth of proposed savings in services and projects, sourced grant funding where we can, and this has resulted in a proposed reduction in the rate in the dollar for calculating rates this year by 10.1%, and therefore managed to keep the rates increase lower than CPI.

"This will still mean a higher rates increase for our community than we've experienced for some time at an average of 6.9% but this will also ensure Council continues to deliver core services such as waste collection, road repairs and aged care to the same high standard our community expects."

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Headline projects to be delivered in the coming year include a wharf precinct upgrade in the next stage of the Sturt Reserve Masterplan, a Co-Working Business Hub and Economic Recovery Centre in the heart of Murray Bridge and a framework of strategic plans to support the future growth of our Rural City.

“I encourage everyone to read the Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget, along with the Long Term Financial Plan, get involved and provide your feedback through the consultation process,” Mayor Thorley said.

“What’s important to our community is important to Council and working together is how we continue to support our Thriving Communities.”

A Special Council Meeting to hear submissions will be held at 7pm on Monday 19 June at the [Local Government Centre](#).

The Draft ABP and Budget + Long Term Financial Plan documents and feedback form are available on Council’s consultation portal letstalk.sa.gov.au, and paper copies can be found at the [Local Government Centre](#) and the [Murray Bridge Library](#).

The consultation closes 5pm Tuesday 20 June 2023.

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