

**MEDIA RELEASE**



## **SOUTHERN MALLEE OPENS CONSULTATION ON 2020-21 BUSINESS PLAN AND LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLAN, WITH PROPOSED 0% RATE INCREASE**

The Southern Mallee District Council has adopted its Draft 2020-21 Annual Business Plan (ABP) and Budget and Draft Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP), with a focus on balancing vital support for a sustainable community, strong investment in infrastructure and responsible long term financial management.

The draft plans will be open for public consultation from Wednesday, 24 June, and Council is encouraging community members to have their say.

Highlights of the 2020-21 Annual Business Plan, include:

- \$1.975m urban design (including the Pinnaroo and Lameroo town centre projects)
- \$1.82m transport infrastructure program (including \$502,000 on the Kulkami and Billiatt Road upgrade)
- \$1.7m to upgrade the ageing Pinnaroo CWMS network
- \$473,000 building program (including upgrades to swimming pools)

In helping aid the community recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic, the Council has also proposed a 0% rate increase. This has been made possible due to various contributing factors, including Council attracting more than \$2.76m in Federal Government grant funding for the year and various other operational efficiencies.

Mayor Andrew Grieger said the business plan was a direct reflection of the Council's focus on delivering against its goal for a prosperous region where people can recreate, do business and live well.

"The Draft 2020-21 Annual Business Plan shows a positive investment into the wellbeing and vibrancy of our communities, while also reflecting responsible financial management," Mayor Grieger says.

"In developing the plan, we have taken into account various influences, including the significant hardship our community faces as it comes back from several years of drought, increasing State Government fees and levies and now the Coronavirus pandemic. For this reason, we have found efficiencies and prioritised work plans in order to achieve a 0% rate rise.

"We've also been incredibly fortunate to have attracted significant grant funding from the Australian Government, which allows us to continue with vital urban development projects and key road upgrades.

"The Pinnaroo Village Green and Lameroo Town Centre projects are now ready to begin and will help breathe life back in to our communities and economies for years to come. While significant investment into our roads and footpaths ensures vital infrastructure maintenance and development.

"There will also be upgrades to our local swimming pools, halls and cemeteries – all vital services for our rural and remote residents."

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The Council's 2020-21 plan builds on the success of the current financial year, following the completion of the two new childcare centres, resheeting works of nearly \$1m on the district's unsealed roads and delivery of works to revitalise our two commercial centres.

"The plan demonstrates Council's commitment to a broad range of areas which contribute to a vibrant and resilient community, and now we're looking forward to hearing the community's feedback on it."

Ensuring Council remains financially sustainable over the long term, the draft LTFP (now adopted by the Audit Committee and the Council) reflects up to date changes from the 2020-21 draft budget with a 0% rate rise, and shows an average operating surplus of \$147,303 over the plan period.

"Council has been working on a review of the Long Term Financial Plan since December 2019 and has now considered the most recent budget updates and economic influences to ensure we have a document which guides us in responsible expenditure over the next decade," Mayor Grieger says.

People can have their say on both the *Southern Mallee District Council Draft Annual Business Plan 2020-21* and the *Draft Long Term Financial Plan* by viewing and responding to the documents on the Council website ([www.southernmallee.sa.gov.au](http://www.southernmallee.sa.gov.au)) or viewing copies at one of the Council offices from Wednesday, 24 June through to Thursday 16 July (4pm).

People can also choose to make deputations to the Council on the ABP, with time set aside at 5pm on 15 July, prior to the next formal Council meeting. Those who wish to do so, must submit a written deputation request before this time. Details on how to do this, are also available on Council's website, or by contacting one of the two offices.

Council will consider all written and deputation submissions before looking to adopt the plan on 29 July 2020.

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