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MEDIA RELEASE



TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE THE PRIORITIES IN SOUTHERN MALLEE ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN

Important transport and community infrastructure projects will be delivered over the coming year after the Southern Mallee District Council adopted its 2022/23 Annual Business Plan and Budget last week.

The plan sets out Council's priorities for the next 12 months, with a strong focus on new and enhanced infrastructure and future planning.

The \$4.12m capital works program includes the following major projects:

- \$1m to continue the Kulkami Road upgrade
- Further \$1.66m transport infrastructure program including road and footpath upgrades across the district
- \$290,000 for the Lamerook Community Meeting Space project
- \$290,000 to deliver the Pinnaroo Eastern Entrance Project
- \$65,000 for refurbishments at the Pinnaroo and Lamerook pools, including pool blankets and toddler pool heating
- \$20,000 for a Parilla Community Plan (development and implementation).

Work will continue on delivering Stages 2 and 3 of Council's Commercial Centres Revitalisation Project, and progressing the Pinnaroo Village Green Masterplan and the Lamerook Town Centre. This is underpinned by an estimated \$2m investment, a significant portion of which comes from Federal Government grant funding.

Rates will rise an average of 5.2%, incorporating 4.7% CPI and 0.5% in line with Council's Long-Term Financial Plan. This comes after a 0% rate rise in the previous financial year, and a 2.25% rise in 2020/21.

Southern Mallee Mayor Jeff Nickolls said the Annual Business Plan and Budget will continue Council's work to deliver significant infrastructure investment to create economic opportunities and improved community facilities for the district.

"The last few years have provided challenges for our district through drought and COVID-19 border restrictions impacting on our local economy and our community's wellbeing," Mayor Nickolls says.

"While there are new national financial pressures, we believe it is important to continue to invest in the future of our district with targeted projects that build economic opportunity, enhance liveability and create opportunities for our community.

"We've also carefully considered operating costs to maximise efficiency wherever we can to combat rising cost pressures.

"Although there are challenges, we are looking forward to another year of delivering significant wins for our community in improved roads and footpaths, better community pools, newly developed and enhanced public spaces in Pinnaroo and Lamerook and a future plan for Parilla – all of which will benefit the community into the future."

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