

MEDIA RELEASE



SOUTHERN MALLEE DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN AND BUDGET RELEASED FOR CONSULTATION

The Southern Mallee District Council has released its *Draft 2021-22 Annual Business Plan and Budget* this week, with a focus on continued development for a vibrant future and maintaining vital district-wide infrastructure, while also ensuring responsible financial management.

Some of the proposed major investments for 2021-22 include:

- continued development of the two town centre projects in Pinnaroo and Lamerloo (\$3m),
- investing in road resheeting projects (\$1.07m),
- Kulkami Road construction (\$1.5m),
- Lamerloo swimming pool upgrades (\$1.7m), and
- the Pinnaroo Community Wastewater Management System (CWMS)(\$2.36m).

Importantly, the Council's success in securing external grants means significant portions of these major projects are funded through both State and Federal Government contributions (totalling \$2.359m in 2021-22), and ensuring development can continue without creating undue financial pressure on the Southern Mallee community.

Council has proposed in the 2021-22 financial year to increase rates by a modest 2.25% plus growth, following a zero rate rise last year during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The minimum rate is proposed to increase by \$57, up to \$627, while there will also be minimal increases for those ratepayers on CWMS.

The annual charges for waste management will increase by \$35 (14%) and is a direct result of the charges imposed on Council for disposal of waste.

Increases in rates and charges have been influenced by a range of factors, including the cost and compliance with State Government reporting and accountability, a CPI increase, COVID-19 impacts, critical infrastructure maintenance requirements, the Council's level of grant funding, continued increases in utility costs and more.

Southern Mallee District Council Mayor Jeffrey Nickolls said the plan demonstrates a balance of creating a sustainable future for the district, liveable towns for its community and opportunities for ongoing economic development.

"This plan builds on the success of our Council in 2020-21, as we continue to develop a range of community projects, keep our transport infrastructure well maintained and ensure core Council services can be provided without major rate increases," Mayor Nickolls says.

"I'm incredibly proud of the Council's efforts to continually attract external government funding for local projects, because this allows these major community investments to go ahead, without passing on the high cost to our ratepayers.

"Further, all rural and remote Councils face ongoing pressure to ensure our vast road networks are maintained and upgraded, providing our industries and communities with safe transport routes. This is why, once again, our largest allocation of the proposed budget for 2021-22 is for road resheeting and construction.



“We are also investing in our community’s wellbeing and economic development, through the upgrades to our swimming pools and town centres. These are exciting projects that will grow the attractiveness of our towns for local families and visitors.

“This plan should provide confidence for the whole Southern Mallee community that our district has a strong future of opportunity, while also knowing that continual improvements and efficiencies are being applied to traditional Council services.”

A snapshot of other key projects outlined in the *Draft 2021-22 Annual Business Plan and Budget* are:

- Pinnaroo Institute wall upgrade (\$150,000)
- Pinnaroo Swimming Pool renewal (\$180,000)
- Lamerook Memorial Hall Renewal (\$40,000)
- Executive staff housing project (\$600,000)
- 7km resheet of Carcuma Road (\$270,000)
- 4km resheet Karte West Road (\$160,000)
- 4km resheet Maynard Road (\$160,000)
- 4.4km resheet Beehive Road (\$140,000)
- Kerb and Gutter replacement on Pethick Street, Pinnaroo (\$200,000)
- Adelaide Road footpath project (\$45,000)

Council CEO Jason Taylor said this plan would also support the recently updated *Southern Mallee District Council Strategic Management Plan 2021-2025*.

“Last year our Council faced significant and unprecedented challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent border closures,” Mr Taylor says.

“I’m incredibly proud of what our team was able to deliver in the face of this, and now our Council and residents have come out on the other side, still in a strong position to continue to provide exceptional services and outcomes.

“As a Council, we want to engage more with our community in 2021-22, and this first step is asking for community feedback on the plan before it is finalised in June.

We’re investing in a range of areas, including our swimming pools, roads, community halls, open space, footpaths, wastewater and more. While we firmly believe this is the right fit for our community, it is important that our community understand what’s proposed and continues to have a say in our collective future prosperity.”

Community members can review the annual business plan and budget and have their say by visiting the Council website (www.southernmallee.sa.gov.au) or viewing a hard-copy from one of the Council offices. Further information on the plan will be provided via the media, and Council’s website.

Written submissions are encouraged, and Council will consider them all, along with any presentations made at Council’s May 2021 public meeting on the annual business plan and budget. Council is scheduled to consider adoption of the budget at its June meeting.

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Media contacts:

Southern Mallee District Council Chief Executive Officer Jason Taylor
P: (08) 8577 8002 | E: jason.taylor@southernmallee.sa.gov.au