

CITY OF ONKAPARINGA – GEOFF EATON - THALASSA WARD COUNCILLOR UPDATE MAY 2021

Annual Business Plan

Council continues to record low residential rate increases in 2021–22 following a zero percent rate rise last year, the City of Onkaparinga has adopted one of South Australia’s lowest council rate increases for 2021–22, to ease the strain on residents, deliver essential services and infrastructure, and over time, reduce our debt. We adopted a CPI rate revenue increase (1.2 per cent), plus revenue from new properties (growth), as part of its Annual Business Plan and Budget 2021–22 at Special Council meeting in July, and it’s a plan for our residents and the city’s future. As you would be aware the Valuer-General has recently undertaken a revaluation of properties across South Australia, which has lead to a further increase to rates in some cases. Unfortunately some properties that are classed as primary producers have ended up with a greater increase. I am aware of one case, which resulted in a 19.8% increase. A 10% safety net increase was applied to residential rates, but not for primary producers or commercial premises.

Our 2021–22 Annual Business Plan and Budget is the first step in implementing our Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP), which guides decision-making to achieve our long term financial sustainability. More than 900 residents shared their views with us about our city’s financial future, and we worked hard to adopt a LTFP that reflects what we heard. This will see the City of Onkaparinga eliminate its operating deficit over four years, set future rate increases to align with CPI, focus on upgrades and extensions to existing infrastructure rather than new major projects, and importantly, keep delivering the community services important to our residents. Council has also endorsed a new Debt Management Strategy (DMS), which guides the transition to a balanced budget by 2024–25 through additional savings of \$1.4 million each year.

During 2020 and 2021 I was one of three elected members (along with administration staff) who participated on Council’s Finance Working Group, which resulted in the LTFP and DMS being accepted by Council.

Some of the major projects to be delivered within the City of Onkaparinga’s \$205 million budget include:

- opening the soon to be completed Southern Material Recovery Facility at the SRWRA site in Seaford Heights, to ensure southern councils can process their own recyclables
- redeveloping the Port Noarlunga Wearing Street Precinct, delivering new facilities for existing aquatic user groups, improved and safer river access, upgraded vehicle and trailer parking, and new public toilets and public art. Construction subject to external funding, land transfer and necessary approvals
- constructing a new multi-use sports building at the Port Noarlunga Sports Complex, to support the current and future recreation needs of the community
- investing in the Aldinga Sports Park and new Aldinga Payinithi College indoor recreation and sporting facilities to ensure new, high quality facilities for community use outside of school hours
- upgrading our parks and sports grounds including disability access compliant toilet facilities at the Happy Valley Sports Complex main building, and upgrading Hastings Avenue Reserve, Sellicks Beach, and Godfrey Street Reserve, Darlington
- improving the maintenance program for 1953 hectares of open space, including parks, sports grounds, trees, natural assets, biodiversity, playgrounds and urban furniture
- improving First Nations engagement through the recently established First Nations People Advisory Group
- continuing the successful Go South Go Local campaign and focusing on activation projects for McLaren Vale Main Street and Beach Road, Christies Beach to support local businesses and the grow the local economy
- developing a climate change action plan to set the direction of our future climate change response
- introducing a web chat service to increase the options available to residents to seek information about council services
- continuing to deliver essential services to support vulnerable people in our communities
- bringing back the Christmas Pageant, Tour Down Under and Beachside Food and Wine Festival after they were cancelled or altered last year, to bring the community together and celebrate our great region and its people.

You can view the Annual Business Plan and Budget 2021–22 at onkaparingacity.com/abp

Aldinga Washpool to become a protected area

Aldinga Washpool, one of Adelaide’s last remaining coastal freshwater and estuarine lagoon systems, will form part of a new conservation park at Aldinga following a state government announcement. The Washpool land—which is of considerable spiritual and cultural significance to the Kurna people and is home to a wide range of native species of conservation significance—will be combined with the adjacent Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park to create one new 74-hectare conservation park. This decision is a huge win for the Onkaparinga region and anyone who loves the Washpool area. Council has been advocating strongly on behalf of the community for many years to secure the future of the Washpool and surrounding land.

Thankyou to Minister Speirs for this decision, which represents a strong commitment to conservation, culture and the environment.

The Aldinga Washpool area can now continue providing environmental, cultural, social and economic benefits for generations to come. However, there are still areas of land adjacent the washpool zone that are marked as “subject to further consideration for inclusion in the conservation park” on the state government’s proposed park map. Both Council and our community agree that all land in the area should be included in the park, including these zones. Given the cultural significance of the Washpool, the City of Onkaparinga also recognises the important opportunity the proclamation of the park presents for co-management with Kurna representatives.

City of Onkaparinga - SA Landscape Architecture Awards

In July council’s tree planting program, efforts to combat climate change and biodiversity loss, planning at Aldinga, and our marquee nature playground were all recognised with 2021 SA Landscape Architecture Awards. Our tree planting program Greening Onkaparinga—part of our Suburb Improvement Program—won the Award of Excellence for Landscape Planning, demonstrating council’s efforts to support the more disadvantaged people in the community through targeted tree planting efforts.

Greening Onkaparinga involves a detailed assessment of tree canopy cover, urban heat island mapping and social vulnerability in a highly graphic and digestible document, with the data being used to direct tree planting to the suburbs that need it most. Approximately 10,000 new trees have been planted over the past decade through the program, and aim to deliver 1000 new street trees and streetscape improvements each year.

The City of Onkaparinga’s environmental efforts were also recognised by picking up the AILA SA President’s Award, which acknowledges, celebrates and recognises our level of commitment to “get on” with climate change and biodiversity loss actions, and for “placing social outcomes above other measures”.

City of Onkaparinga’s marquee nature playground at Wilfred Taylor Reserve, Morphett Vale, was another award winner, winning both the Landscape Architecture Award for Play Spaces, and a Commendation Award for the Healthy Parks Healthy People SA Award. Jointly won by Peter Semple Landscape Architects, the awards recognised the design approach to integrate the 2020-built playspace into the stunning natural environment, and the collaborative approach taken with the community. The judges particularly singled out the collaboration with Kurna Elders and Aboriginal artist, Allan Sumner, whose work at the playspace provides an opportunity for all users to gain a greater understanding of and respect for Aboriginal heritage and culture.

Also the City of Onkaparinga’s work to help council and community to provide input into significant state government initiatives taking place in Aldinga was recognised with the Landscape Architecture Award for Landscape Planning. Council’s Aldinga Framework Plan is a persuasive planning tool that ensures advanced key stakeholder awareness of potential development outcomes, along with providing council the ability to influence these to benefit their community. The Plan achieves this by bringing together known information about the Aldinga region and identifies key issues and opportunities to ensure that large scaled greenfield developments provide high-quality design outcomes, including plentiful open spaces and functional streetscapes.

The wins for the Suburb Improvement Program, Aldinga Framework Plan and Wifred Taylor mean City of Onkaparinga will represent SA in those categories at the AILA National Awards Presentation in October.

Community Grants

City of Onkaparinga has launched a revamped grants program, to make applying for a grant much easier for our community. Following a review of the program, we received feedback that the number of grants categories and the language used in the previous grants program was confusing and could be simpler. Council listened to the community feedback, and have introduced a range of improvements, starting with six easy-to-understand grant categories:

- Community Grants –for local not-for-profit organisations and individuals
- Arts Grants –for local artists and creatives
- Environment Grants –for local not-for-profits, schools and businesses
- Heritage Grants –for owners and lessees of local heritage places
- Major Festivals and Events Grants –for any organisation keen to host a local event
- Business Grants –for local businesses.

Grant application forms have been simplified and grant guidelines updated to ensure applicants apply for the correct grant category. Council staff are also available to help people through the application process. The main aim of these changes is to ensure the community wasn't negatively impacted, and that the types of activities previously funded remain eligible for funding.

Applications for the new grants are now open, so head to onkaparingacity.com/grants now if you have a great idea you'd like to bring to life. Applications will close on 23 August 2021.

Regional Development Australia, Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu & Kangaroo Island Information

[Nominate now for the 2021 South Australian](#)

[Agricultural Town of the Year](#)

The search is on for South Australia's next Agricultural Town of the Year!

The South Australian Agricultural Town of the Year award recognises our state's towns that are excelling in agriculture and the flow-on effect this has on a township and community.

An initiative of the Government of South Australia, nominations are now open. A public vote will determine the five finalists, with the winning town to be announced at this year's South Australian Regional Showcase celebration in November.

Nominations close Friday, 6th of August 2021

[Community Consultation Now Open:](#)

[South Australia's Road Safety Strategy to 2031](#)

The Department for Infrastructure and Transport, on behalf of the South Australian Government has developed a draft *South Australia's Road Safety Strategy to 2031*.

The Strategy has been developed with input from communities, stakeholders and road users across the state. By working together we can save lives, reduce serious injuries and create safer communities.

The draft Strategy contains principles that underpin road safety decision making and

nine strategic priorities that are the focus areas for the Strategy.

Every person in South Australia is a road user. Whether you drive, ride, are a pedestrian or a passenger, this is your opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Strategy to guide South Australia's focus for the next decade.

Your input is important and will contribute to the final Strategy. We encourage you to get involved. Have your say by completing the online survey at .

Consultation closes 5pm Wednesday 1 September 2021.

For general enquiries, please email: DIT.RoadSafety@sa.gov.au

Thank you for your participation as we work together to continue improving road safety for all South Australians.

[Complete survey →](#)

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this article are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of Council.

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