

I am a little late this month in distributing my newsletter as I have been waiting for the public release of the City of Onkaparinga draft budget for 2024/25 and draft Annual Business Plan. During the past couple of months elected members have been involved in a number of sessions relating to the development of the draft budget and Annual Business Plan.

City of Onkaparinga Draft Budget and Business Plan

Draft Budget

Both the draft budget and Annual Business Plan were approved for public consultation at a Special Council meeting on Tuesday 16 April. It is being proposed that there will be:

- A general rate increase of 6.8% plus rates from new properties (growth estimated at 0.0%.
- Renewal, New & Significant Upgrades and other Capital projects.
- A Community Wastewater Management System (CWMS) service charge of \$1273.56 which represents full cost recovery on this service (no rebate applied).
- It also includes increases in charges for certain services such as additional waste bins, green waste drop-off at one nominated site and suspension of community grants, along with other services.

The key focus of the 2024-25 budget has been on budget repair and returning to an operating surplus so that we can continue to deliver for our community. The City of Onkaparinga has run budget deficits for the past seven consecutive years. A range of factors has contributed to this, including rate revenue increases at lower levels than required and not rating for growth (the rates receivable from new properties each year). As a consequence, expenditure has grown at a pace higher than revenue. It is not financially sustainable to continue in this manner.

Following the adoption of the 2023-24 budget, elected members were briefed on the financial challenges facing the council, the assumptions within the previous Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) that had not occurred as originally set out, and the importance of making different decisions that would improve council's financial position both now and for the longer-term. Through a number of workshops with elected members, it had been discussed that repairing our financial position will require some hard decisions. However, making these decisions early sets the conditions for being able to build some financial resilience, meet the longer-term needs of our community and deliver on our Community Plan in an efficient manner.

In December 2023, as part of the review of the LTFP, an updated set of principles were adopted which were simplified from those in the previous plan and focussed on the key areas of strong financial management:

1. Through the Long Term Financial Plan and annual budgeting process, Council addresses the structural deficit position, transitions to a balanced budget in this Council term and maintains this surplus position going forward.
2. Council adopts a dollar value debt ceiling when the LTFP is finalised in June 2024, however additional debt can be accessed for capital investment purposes where there is a financial return to fully cover interest costs and provides a reasonable payback period.

3. Revenue is increased at least in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus revenue from new properties to ensure financial sustainability.
4. Council actively seek out collaborative opportunities which maximise value for our communities.
5. Council decreases its reliance on rates by increasing revenue from alternative sources.

These updated principles have underpinned the development of the 2024-25 budget.

Essential Services Commission of South Australia Advice

The City of Onkaparinga was in the second tranche of councils to be reviewed by the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA) in 2023-24, as part of the Local Government Strategic Management Plan Advice Scheme. This scheme came into effect in 2022 following amendments to the Local Government Act 1999 (the Act), with the focus of scheme being the review of council's Long Term Financial Plan and Infrastructure Asset Management Plan which are required under section 122 of the Act.

As part of the second tranche of councils to be reviewed, the City of Onkaparinga provided these plans and other necessary information to ESCOSA in September 2023, with the full advice provided by ESCOSA at the end of February 2024. The advice can be found on the ESCOSA website.

ESCOSA's advice identified challenges to council's financial sustainability, noting that the current financial performance is potentially unsustainable – but is taking steps towards a position of becoming more sustainable. The issues raised were known, and Council has been actively addressing them in the development of the 2024-25 budget as well as in the re-development of the Long Term Financial Plan, Strategic Asset Management Plan and Community Plan. Whilst recognising that the challenges will not be resolved overnight, this budget has called for some hard decisions to be made that will set the conditions for improved financial sustainability into the future.

I encourage residents to participate in the consultation process on the budget that will become available from Friday 19 April to Tuesday 13 May on council's site www.onkaparingacity.com/yoursay.

Pimpala Ward Supplementary Election

Nominations for the vacant Pimpala ward councillor resulting from the resignation of former councillor Kevin Rillet, closed at midday on Thursday 18 April. There is one position available, with Councillor Michael Fisher retaining the other one. Eleven people have registered as candidates for the supplementary election and ballot papers will be posted out the Electoral Commission between Tuesday 7 and Monday 13 May and are required to be returned by 12 noon on Monday 3 June

Becoming a member of Council is an important decision and is a great way to make a difference to your local community.

Candidates do not have to live in a suburb of the Pimpala ward to nominate. The [Electoral Commission SA](#) website details the eligibility criteria for potential candidates. More information can be found on the council's website and the [Electoral Commission SA website](#).

Youth Recognition Award

Last month council held our annual Youth Recognition Awards ceremony, which collectively recognises, celebrates and honours young people for their outstanding actions in improving themselves and their communities, and for securing their futures. Four inspiring young people and a

hard-working youth worker were named winners following 93 nominations across five award categories, and the evening was presented and hosted by the Onkaparinga Youth Committee to coincide with SA Youth Week.

A huge congratulations to the five winners, who were:

- **Sienna Kate Jones** – who took out the Business, Employment and Social Enterprise award. Sienna is a 14-year-old self-driven, young entrepreneur who has taken her hair braiding passion and turned it into a thriving small business, 'Hair by Sienna Kate'.
- **Jack Dobson** – who won the Contributions to Community award. Eight-year-old Jack was committed and trained hard for a 10km run in the Victor Harbor Marathon in December to raise \$4000 for two children with cancer.
- **Charli Haining Kennedy** – who won the Personal Achievement award. Charli was told she'd unlikely be able to participate in her favourite sport of cheerleading again due to severe scoliosis and a spinal fusion. Not to be deterred, Charli worked hard to overcome her physical challenges and won the right to represent her club at the Cheerleading Worlds.
- **Harmony Bailey** – who won the Learning Success award. Fifteen-year-old Harmony has exceeded academic excellence, receiving the Dux award at her school for the past three years on top of a range of other awards and a leadership position at the school.
- **Deb Coad** – who won the Youth Worker of the Year award. Deb works with senior students who are either unsure of their future direction and/or disengaging from school. She helps them set goals, transport and support students at job interviews and with mental health concerns, supports them with strategies, visits to outside agencies to support wellbeing, and directs and assists with enrolling students in training programs, including TAFE courses, university study, short courses and employment.

Renewed Fight Against Climate Change

Some great news for the environment is on Thursday 28 March when the City of Onkaparinga and three other southern councils renewed our partnership to tackle climate change alongside the state government over the next five years. Resilient South is a partnership between the Cities of Holdfast Bay, Marion, Mitcham, and Onkaparinga and the state government, aimed at strengthening resilience against climate change in Southern Adelaide. operating since 2011, a new agreement was signed between the mayors and environment minister, extending the partnership until 2029.

Local government acknowledges that human-induced climate change is occurring, and that urgent, ambitious, and immediate action is required at all levels of government to address the climate crisis.

The goal of Resilient South is to work together to implement emissions reduction and climate change response planning, programs and actions. This is reflected in the Regional Climate Action Plan (ReCAP), which was recently developed after extensive consultation with the community and adopted by all Resilient South partners. Promoting climate-resilient and low-emissions development, enhancing green spaces and reducing council and community greenhouse gas emissions were among the top priorities residents flagged during public consultation.

The ReCAP contains 49 actions across four focal areas:

- Growing cooler, greener, biodiverse environments
- Creating climate resilient neighbourhoods
- Transitioning towards a low-carbon region
- Reducing climate risk

These actions are designed to be pragmatic and outcome-focused, highlighting areas where it makes sense to work together.

By working together, the councils can more effectively manage their networked infrastructure such as roads and active transport routes, catchments and stormwater, and their network of parks and reserves. Resilient South is widely regarded as being on the leading edge of climate adaptation work nationally, with a number of flagship projects including:

- the Resilient Asset Management Program – leading the integration of climate risk into the management of approximately \$5 billion in community assets in the region.
- the Future Trees Project, assessing the vulnerability of public trees to climate and biosecurity threats, and making recommendations on how the urban forest can be made more resilient.

Our residents consistently tell us one of the most important things about living in Onkaparinga is the natural environment, describing a vision for a sustainable, connected, inclusive and green city.

Our new action plan and renewed sector agreement represents a unique opportunity for councils to work closely with ministers to ensure planning reform prioritises sustainable and climate-resilient housing and protects biodiversity and natural environments.

Multi Use Sporting Facilities Governance and Operational Review

The City of Onkaparinga has 15 multi use sporting facilities (MUSFs). Twelve of these are council owned facilities whilst three (Ironbank Cherry Gardens, McLaren Vale and Willunga) are community owned. Fourteen of these facilities attended a workshop at Noarlunga Centre on 15 February. The draft Governance and Operational review document was made available to each of the committees of these facilities from Monday 15 April with responses required by 3 May 2023.

The draft Action Plan identifies the city-wide governance and operations priority needs and consolidates these is a draft three-year Action Plan for implementation we are only seeking MUSF feedback on the draft Action Plan, rather than the full Project Report.

Our staff have developed a survey to assist with measurable and structured feedback to assist. We are encouraging MUSFs to discuss the draft Action Plan with their Executive Committee members and provide one consolidated and agreed response on behalf of their organisation.

Following analysis of the engagement feedback it is proposed that the Action Plan will be workshopped with elected members on 30 May 2024 and presented to Council for approval at its meeting on 18 June 2024. The City of Onkaparinga strongly value our MUSFs and the contribution they make to healthy, active lifestyles in our community. Thank you again for your interest and involvement in this important project.

Hub Library Lift Update

Unfortunately, there have been significant delays with the installation of the lift facility at the Hub Library, which is frustrating some residents who use this space. In last November, we advised of delays due to an error in the blockwork construction which resulted in the anticipated project completion being pushed out. Unfortunately, since this time there have been several further delays due to a shortage of specialist sub-contractors and a supply delay with the specified lift. The lift delay led to the decision to substitute the lift for an alternative, equivalent lift model and in turn, the need for minor lift re-design. Council staff are managing this closely, with the parameters of our contract to minimise further delay and inconvenience. We appreciate the public's frustration and apologise for the inconvenience experienced. Whilst timely completion is important, we are trying to balance this with ensuring a quality build to expected construction standards.

Thalassa Park Storybook Walk Sculpture Launch

On Saturday 6 April at Thalassa Park, council unveil the latest public art sculpture in the Storybook Walk in Aberfoyle Park. The book being brought to life on this occasion is *Frog Finds a Place* – a charming and beautifully **Storybook Walk's new sculpture**.

Storybook Walk was created by the City of Onkaparinga in 2007 and funded in partnership with the Thalassa Parks and Gardens Trust. The walk aims to celebrate and raise the profile of Australian writers and poets and their works, by bringing characters from some of the best-loved children's books to life.

Every two years, three books are selected, and the community is asked to vote for their favourite, with council then putting out an expression of interest to artists, inviting them to create an artwork based on the winning storybook's central character.

This year's illustrated tale is about respecting a friendship.

Frog Finds a Place was written by Sally Morgan and Ezekial Kwaymullina, illustrated by Dub Leffler, and published by Omnibus Books, and it follows the dream of an ambitious frog, who wants to fly to the moon and stars to make friends. The book was chosen by students, families, and community members across 20 schools and centres across the City of Onkaparinga, after a council-run poll, which saw *Frog Finds a Place* secure more than half the 1000 votes!

This sculpture joins the likes of *Grug*, *Snugglepote and Cuddlepie*, *Storm Boy* and *The Dirty Dinosaur*.

Trees Update Dates

Elected members have been encouraged by our administration to share the following dates with our community.

- **Adopt a Tree:** Applications for the 2025 planting season opens on 1 April – this includes around 300 street trees and 75 fruit trees (as part of the second year of our fruit tree trial). Please refer residents to [the webpage](#) to check their eligibility and read through the FAQs before they apply.
- **Tree survey:** Residents still have the opportunity to complete [the tree survey](#) and provide their views to help shape our tree policies and planning and the current review of our tree canopy and greening targets (closing on 7 April). We've already had over 500 responses!
- **Tree of the Month:** Please encourage the community [to nominate](#) a tree that's special to them – the February tree was a stunner and so uniquely placed (see the photo above)! Have you seen [the article?](#)

Clarendon Classic Car Run

The Clarendon Classic Car Run is to be held on Sunday 28 April and is open to all locals who have a classic car or motorbike, and you are invited for a car run through the hills ending with a picket lunch at the Old Apple Orchard sheds on Apple Tree Lane, Clarendon between 11.00 am and 1.00 pm. For more details on this event and to register please contact:

- Glen Schulz - 0428899314
- Dave Fuss – 0410516683
- Email – ecosscholz@gmail.com

Anzac Remembrance Events in Thalassa Ward

Clarendon

- Anzac Light Memorial where the streets light up between 7.00 pm – 9.00 pm Monday 22 and Thursday 25 April.
- Last Post 6.00 am Anzac Day Clarendon Museum Car Park.
- Anzac Day Memorial Service 10.30 am at the Clarendon War Memorial followed by a morning tea at the Clarendon Uniting Church.

Cherry Gardens

- Cherry Gardens War Memorial Cherry Gardens Road 8.30 – 9.30 am

Coromandel Valley

- Coromandel Valley War Memorial adjacent to the community centre (in partnership with the Blackwood RSL and the community centre) commencing 9.00 am

Flagstaff Hill Dawn Service

The Flagstaff Hill Scout conduct a dawn service at the Flagstaff Monument, Regano Road, Flagstaff Hill commencing at 6.30 am.

National Trust Coromandel Valley and Districts

Just a reminder if you would like to pop-into the Coromandel Valley and Districts morning tea which is held the first Saturday morning of each month at the Watchman House Main Road, Coromandel Valley. Their May gathering is to be held on Saturday 4 May from 9.30 am. It is a great opportunity to meet with the locals and talk about those issues that are of interest to our community. I endeavour to get along to them but unfortunately do not get along to them all due to other commitments.

Northern Community Forum Meeting

The Northern Community Forum will be holding its next meeting on Monday 22 April at the Aberfoyle Park Community Centre commencing at 7.30 pm. The Forum provides an opportunity for residents in the northern suburbs of the City of Onkaparinga to be updated on a range of local issues that not only relate to council activities. State and federal Members of Parliament (or their staff) also attend it and provide updates along with the ward councillors for Thalassa and Pimpala Wards.

At this month's meeting candidates for the Pimpala Ward supplementary election will be given the opportunity to speak, so please come along and meet these people to help you decide.

Neighbourhood Watch Meetings Schedule

Flagstaff Hill Neighbourhood Watch Area 453

Meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

- Wednesday 12 June
- Wednesday 14 August
- Wednesday 9 October
- Wednesday 11 December.

Meetings commence at 6.30 pm at the Flagstaff Hill Golf Club (temporary restaurant) where a light supper is provided.

Aberfoyle Park Happy Valley Neighbourhood Watch Area 491

- Monday May 20.

Meetings commence at 7.30pm at Aberfoyle Park Community Centre where a light supper is provided.

Happy Valley O'Halloran Hill Neighbourhood Watch Area 461

Meetings are scheduled for to be held on the following dates:

- Monday 12 August
- Monday 4 November

Meetings commence at 7.30 pm at the Scout Hall Candy Road O'Halloran Hill

Reynella Neighbourhood Watch Area 048/146

Meetings are scheduled to be held on the following dates:

- Wednesday 19 June
- Wednesday 18 September
- Wednesday 18 December.

Meetings commence at 7.00 pm at the Reynella Football Club 1 Oval Road, Old Reynella

Woodcroft Neighbourhood Watch Area 406

Meetings are scheduled to be held on the following dates:

- Tuesday 21 May
- Tuesday 13 August (AGM)
- Tuesday 12 November

Meetings commence at 7.30 pm at the Woodcroft Heights Children Centre, 25 Investigator Drive Woodcroft.

YOURSAY*Open Engagements*

- Road reconstruction Maslin Beach – Old Coach Road closure (inform only)
- New Aldinga Skatepark (closes 15 Apr)
- Witton Bluff Base Trail (inform only)
- Bains Road reconstruction Woodcroft (closes 21 April)
- Our Tree Canopy (closes 7 Apr)
- New public toilet for Byards Road Wetlands (inform only)
- New public toilet Christies Beach (inform only)
- State-wide Bushfire Hazards Overlay Code Amendment – SA gov project (closes 5 Apr)
- McLaren Vale Regional Water Security Strategy – SA gov project
- Sustainable onsite wastewater system management – private councils survey (closes 14 April)

Closed Engagements

- Coastal Adaptation Plan – consultation on draft
- Dog on-leash and prohibited areas review
- Beach and You – Flinders University study

Go to www.onkaparingacity.com/yoursay for more information.

Grant Opportunities

Please find below a list of external funding opportunities that we have been asked to share with our community networks.

- Dog and Bone – Impact Grants Program (Community; cyber resilience/security; cyber risk management) – close 19/4/24 [Impact Program| Dog & Bone \(dogandbone.com.au\)](#)
- Housing Support Program – Stream 1 (Government; planning pathways/systems/tools; master planning; planning/regulatory reform) – close 29/4/24 ***council eligible*** [Housing Support Program - Program Guidelines for Stream 1 | Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts](#)
- Business; community; women/girls; sport/active recreation; facilities; equipment; participation) – close 29/4/24 ***council** [Grant Opportunity Documents - GO6763: GrantConnect \(grants.gov.au\)](#)
- Mable Community Grants (Community; disabilities; mental health; programs; outings; access; all ages) – close 30/4/24 [Mable Community Grants: Funding Accessible and Inclusive Projects](#)
- Impact100 SA – High Impact Grant (Community; DGR; disability; homelessness; vulnerable people) – close 3/5/24 [Our Grants - Impact100 SA](#)
- Natalie Miller Fellowship (Business; community; arts; film/TV; training; employment; media/entertainment) – close 6/5/24 [Apply Now | Natalie Miller Fellowship | How Do I Apply?](#)
- Live Music Events Fund (Business; community; marketing; equipment/venue hire; musician fees) – close 30/6/24 ***council eligible*** <https://mdo.sa.gov.au/funding-programs/live-music-events-fund>
- SilverChef Community Grants Program (Community; charity; ATSI; disadvantaged; cooking equipment/cash) – close 30/6/24 [Community Grants Program | SilverChef](#)
- Tourism Local Navigator Pilot Project (Business; training; employment; food/beverage; tourism; mentoring) – close 30/6/24 [Tourism Local Navigator Pilot Project :: Purple Orange](#)
- Housing Australia – Affordable Housing Bond Aggregator Loans (Community; new construction; manage existing housing; refinancing; land acquisition; construction; fees) – open ongoing [Affordable Housing Bond Aggregator \(AHBA\) loans | Housing Australia.](#)
- South Australian Venture Capital Fund (Business; investment; innovation; R&D; startup/establishment) – open ongoing [SAVCF - South Australian Venture Capital Fund - Australia \(savcfund.com\).](#)

[Please refer to our website.](#)

Disclaimer

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

Geoff Eaton
Councillor
Thalassa Ward
City of Onkaparinga
Email: geoff.eaton@onkaparinga.sa.gov.au
Mobile: 0416 637 351