

## **GEOFF EATON – THALASSA WARD COUNCILLOR – MAY 2024 NEWSLETTER**

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I was again busy during April attending the City of Onkaparinga Town Hall meeting at the Hopgood Theatre, three elected member sessions considering the Hopgood Theatre Operations, Community Facilities Framework, 2024/25 Budget Session, Open Space Strategic Management Plan, Representation Review and Community Plan Review, a Special Council meeting for the Annual Business Plan and Budget public consultation approval and our normal monthly Council meeting, CEO Performance Committee and as an observer for a special Audit Risk Committee meeting in respect to the budget and business plan and a Citizenship Ceremony where 72 residents (from 27 different countries) became citizens of this great country of ours.

My community related meetings/gatherings included:

- South Districts Baseball Club's Senior Members presentations.
- National Trust Coromandel Valley and Districts Saturday morning tea.
- Holding a listening post at the Hub Library (where a range of issues were raised regarding the risks of particular eucalypts trees).
- Story Book Walk Frogs Find a Place Thalassa Park launch.
- Board meetings for our local ovals and Coromandel Valley Community Centre.
- Clarendon Historic Hall.
- Clarendon Agriculture Bureau.
- Aberfoyle Men's Breakfast.
- South Coast United Soccer Club opening of new canteen and shed.
- Two Member for Hurtle Vale community catch-ups at Happy Valley and Woodcroft.
- Official opening of the Minkarra Trail at Glenhuntly Reserve Flagstaff Hill.
- Member for Davenport playground meeting at Ridgeway Drive Flagstaff Hill.
- Northern Community Forum – Meet the Candidate session.
- Two Neighbourhood Watch Zones.
- Healthy Cities Onkaparinga & Onkaparinga Food Security Collaborative (on-line).
- Native Vegetation Act Changes facilitated by the Local Government Association (on-line).

In respect to Anzac Day, I attended the Morphett Vale Youth Vigil (with fellow elected members and local state and federal members of parliament), represented the City of Onkaparinga at the Flagstaff Hill Dawn Service, Cherry Gardens Memorial Service, (slipped into the Coromandel Valley Memorial Service where Cr Themeliotis represented the City of Onkaparinga) and then onto the Clarendon service/morning tea with local state and federal members of parliament, the mayor and fellow Cr Bell.

Should you ever consider running for Council it is important that you understand the time commitments that it entails, as it is not just one monthly meeting as there is a range of many other commitments, as well as many emails and phone calls from community members needing assistance, the reading of pages of documents and undertaking your own research. I am generally committed most Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, along with day-time engagements.

### **Have Your Say on our Annual Business Plan and Budget**

The City of Onkaparinga's draft Annual Business Plan (ABP) and Budget 2024–25 is now open for community engagement until 9am on Monday 13 May. The focus of this year's plan is budget repair. We have operated at a deficit for seven consecutive years, and we need to act now to return to a balanced budget as soon as possible. Elected members, management are all working towards this goal, while ensuring we can continue to provide the services our communities need.

We will still deliver \$158.29 million in services, programs and asset maintenance, and \$73.57 million in new projects and initiatives for the community. But to develop the budget this year we have also had to make some hard decisions. We know some of these measures will impact people in the community, but they are vital to improve our overall financial position and ensure we can continue to deliver important and valued services to the community well into the future. This budget will also meet all key financial indicators set for the local government sector. This means delivering a surplus in our budget, committing to adequate investment in asset renewal, and ensuring debt remains within an acceptable range.

The key measures implemented as part of the budget include:

- A rate increase of 6.8 % (noting Adelaide CPI in December 2023 was 4.8 per cent), plus rates from new properties.
- Managing employee costs to achieve an additional \$2.48 million in savings.
- Managing costs within the council's control such as contracts, materials and other expenses, which are budgeted to rise by less than SA's current CPI of four per cent.
- Recovering the full-service cost of the community wastewater management scheme.
- Pausing the grants program for 12 months to review the way the program delivers the best value.

The ABP and Budget was developed with reference to the February 2024 Essential Services Commission (ESCOSA) report, which identified challenges to council's financial sustainability. We were already aware of the issues identified by ESCOSA and we have continued to actively address them in this budget.

After seven consecutive years of budgets being in deficit, the measures outlined in the ABP and Budget will return the council's financial position to surplus. To achieve this, we had to thoroughly analyse the causes of historic budget challenges and be bold in exploring the budgetary options available.

There are economic factors that are outside of our control such as CPI and interest rates. These factors affect our ratepayers, and they also affect council's day-to-day work, so we must factor them in. The rising cost of living, post-pandemic recovery, inflation, existing commitments, workforce, and energy prices all needed to be considered.

The ESCOSA report affirms we are focused on the right direction and has independently confirmed our assessment of the situation.

I encourage our residents to participate in the budget and ABP engagement process. To do so please go to [YourSay platform](#)

### **Plant A Tree in 2024**

Making a difference is as easy as one, two, tree! That is the message behind our new campaign encouraging people of all ages to plant trees and shrubs on their properties, with 1400 free plants available to Onkaparinga residents and schools. One Tree Per Child Onkaparinga aims to increase the region's tree canopy while also creating habitat for the vulnerable yellow-tailed black cockatoo.

The new campaign is a collaboration between the City of Onkaparinga and One Tree Per Child – a not-for-profit established by Olivia Newton-John and Jon Dee that has seen hundreds-of-thousands of trees planted in 10 countries – plus Green Adelaide, Arborgreen, Trees For Life and Yates Australia.

It is the first time One Tree Per Child, which encourages every child to plant at least one tree before leaving school, has partnered with an SA council. You do not need to have children to take part in the

campaign. Simply by planting a tree – or gifting them to loved ones – you will be leaving a legacy for the children of tomorrow.

Metropolitan Adelaide’s tree canopy is under threat, particularly on private land, and that is why we are offering the community the resources, inspiration – and trees – to help cool their properties and provide habitat for wildlife.

One-thousand trees will be available for the community to plant at home. A tree giveaway event will be held at Seaford Community Centre on Sunday 2 June (ahead of World Environment Day) and will include a range of fun family activities, information stalls and talks.

One Tree Per Child Onkaparinga will also provide 400 trees to several local schools for students to plant on campus and at home as part of a Green Adelaide education program.

Promoted plants for the inaugural campaign include the Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*) and Drooping Sheoak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*) – both habitat for the yellow-tailed black cockatoo – but you do not need to plant these trees exclusively. Planting local native trees and shrubs is ideal to help provide food and shelter to local wildlife.

I encourage everyone to access the fantastic resources available at our webpage to find out how you can plant a tree or shrub on your property, where you can source your tree, and what species are suitable this planting season, which runs from April to October. Once you have planted, drop a pin on our interactive map so the community can see our collective canopy grow. Let us bring the birds back to our yards!

One Tree Per Child Onkaparinga complements the 5000+ trees the council plants annually in council reserves, streets and parks; and our community tree initiatives, which include ongoing sustainability workshops, an Adopt a Tree program, a seed library at Woodcroft Library, tree tags and trails and a Tree of the Month campaign.

Please plant them in locations that will not in future years create a risk to your’s or other people’s properties though, so that limbs will not later fall and cause damage. Some of us in the 70s planted many eucalypt trees a bit too close to our houses so it is essential to pick the right location and improve our coverage across the whole of the area. Fortunately, I live in an area that has many trees and each morning we have up to 5 kookaburras and around 20 magpies that come in for their daily feed, with some of the kookaburras taking the food from my wife’s hand. The magpies have been known to knock on the front door or the kitchen window to let Sue know they have arrived. There are still three ducks that also visit us occasionally, although we use to have around 15 land on our lawn to be fed. We even have a rescue koala in the area that you can pat, however he can keep you awake at night due to his grunting. Ah a life amongst the gum trees.

Head to [onkaparingacity.com/onetree](http://onkaparingacity.com/onetree) for all the details.

### **South Australia’s History Festival in Onkaparinga**

There is a record-breaking race car driver, a well-known woman preacher, a decorated war hero, and a winemaker who dreamt of building a medieval catapult to hurl watermelons at neighbouring wineries. Those are just some of the characters you can learn about at a free historical tour in Onkaparinga during South Australia’s History Festival (1–31 May).

“A faithful flock: the Strout and Bethany Methodists” is a free tour taking place in McLaren Vale between 10am and 12pm on Tuesday and Wednesday 14 and 15 May, taking participants to the Strout Place Cemetery and the former Bethany Chapel and its graveyard, now home to Samson Tall Wines.

The Strout Place and Bethany chapels grew among the early Methodist communities of the McLaren Vale area, with worshippers gathering there for more than a century. Though small, the remnants of their settlements are rich and history, and you'll hear their stories from Onkaparinga Libraries' local history team.

The tour, which has some tickets left, is just one of several events happening in the City of Onkaparinga during South Australia's annual state-wide festival exploring the state's history, though many of them have already sold out, so be quick!

Another event with tickets remaining is a free talk at Seaford Library from enthusiast Neil Gale on Thursday 23 May about the history of the Willunga Railway Line, including notable accidents, unusual activities and how the line supported the commerce and livelihoods of local communities.

At Woodcroft Community Centre, a free photography exhibition will be on display for the month of May, with the historical photos exploring the power of people and the local community. Bookings are not required for this celebration of resilience, unity and the unique identity of the neighbourhood.

For details and booking links for these events and more, visit [onkaparinganow.com](http://onkaparinganow.com)

### **National Road Safety Week**

National Road Safety Week begins on Sunday 5 May, so I am urging our community to drive so others survive and emphasising the need to protect our most vulnerable road users – children.

Road trauma is the leading cause of death for children aged one to 14 in Australia, so everyone has a responsibility to keep our future generations safe on our roads. While there has been significant recent investment in road safety projects in Onkaparinga – including upgrades to a number of school crossings – infrastructure improvements alone will not eliminate child pedestrian fatalities. That is why education and addressing the behaviour of road users is also vital in protecting the children who live, play and go to school across the whole of Australia.

The council has partnered with the Little Blue Dinosaur Foundation (LBDF) for the first time in 2024 to help inform parents, caregivers and drivers on how to keep children safe around roads. This not-for-profit organisation has a vision of zero child pedestrian fatalities, and it was established by Michelle McLaughlin in memory of her son, Tom, who was tragically killed in a pedestrian motor vehicle accident during a family holiday in 2014 when he was just four years old. LBDF informs and champions road safety research, and their studies suggest child pedestrian fatalities can be avoided if direct supervision – especially involving physical contact – is maintained.

With children having just returned to school and kindergarten for Term 2, it's a timely reminder to hold children's hands around roadways and driveways, and to encourage older children to reduce distractions, pay attention to their surroundings and, where possible, cross at pedestrian crossings or traffic lights.

The partnership between the council and LBDF will see the not-for-profit's distinctive and colourful "Hold my Hand" signage (pictured) installed in key locations in Onkaparinga later this year. We will also share information and LBDF awareness campaign messaging to parents and the wider community, including via social media and to schools for possible inclusion in their newsletters.

You can also help to protect children and all road users by making National Road Safety Week's pledge to drive so others survive.

By making the pledge at [roadsafetyweek.com.au](http://roadsafetyweek.com.au) you'll be committing to:

- Drive as if your loved ones are on the road ahead.

- Removing all distractions and never using your mobile phone while driving.
- Not putting other people at risk by speeding, driving while tired or under the influence of alcohol/drugs.
- Protecting all vulnerable road users, especially those whose job places them in harm's way, by slowing down and giving them the space they need to be safe.

If every one of us in Onkaparinga made this pledge, we will be going a long way towards reducing road trauma and making sure everybody gets home safely.

From a personal perspective (during my early policing career) I have had to deliver that horrible message “that a loved-one had died from a vehicle collision” to too many families. I remember as a 22 year old police officer having to admit two children to the old city mortuary at the West Terrace Cemetery one evening (who had been killed in a vehicle collision) and on another occasion trying to resuscitate a man who had been hit by a car while crossing Grand Junction Road in front of the unmarked police car I was the rear passenger in and having that person die in my arms with his blood all over my hands and mouth. My colleagues had to leave me with him and chase the offender. Even as recently as this week (whilst accompanying my 9-year-old grandson to school on his bicycle) I witnessed a female driver fail to give way as we crossed a side-road (from the footpath) and she was doing a right turn from a major road into that side road and ignored pedestrians crossing the side road who were already on the roadsurface. So please take care on all our roads.

### **National Reconciliation Week**

National Reconciliation Week is coming up from 27 May to 3 June and you're invited to the City of Onkaparinga's annual Reconciliation in the South event. National Reconciliation Week is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.

Taking place on Tuesday 28 May, Onkaparinga's event begins at 10am with Nunga Screen – a free annual touring event across regional SA that celebrates First Nations culture, stories and language through film.

Nunga Screen will be held at the Hopgood Theatre and feature a premiere short documentary from an emerging First Nations filmmaker commissioned by Country Arts SA. Book your free spot at [countryarts.org.au/Hopgood](http://countryarts.org.au/Hopgood).

Following Nunga Screen at 11am, our free community event with Neporendi Aboriginal Forum Inc. will take place opposite the Hopgood Theatre in Ramsay Place, where you can enjoy music and dance, art and craft, guest speakers, cultural activities, free food, First Nations businesses and more.

We are also calling for nominations for the Mayor's Reconciliation Week Recognition Awards. If your organisation or business can demonstrate outstanding work in the field of Reconciliation in the City of Onkaparinga, we would like to hear from you. To nominate and to check out the full program for Reconciliation in the South when it's revealed, visit [onkaparingacity.com/reconciliation](http://onkaparingacity.com/reconciliation).

The 2024 National Reconciliation Week theme is “Now More Than Ever”, which is a reminder to all of us that no matter what, the fight for justice and the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people will, and must continue.

### **Cast Your Vote in Pimpala Ward**

If you live or run a business in Happy Valley, Reynella East, Woodcroft, or the Onkaparinga parts of O'Halloran Hill or Darlington and you are enrolled to vote, you will receive voting papers in the mail for the Pimpala Ward supplementary election between 7 and 14 May.

The supplementary election is being held to fill a vacancy, following the resignation of a councillor (due to unplanned interstate work transfer). Nominations for the position closed on 18 April.

We encourage you to vote for a candidate who will represent your local community at Council – it is one of the most direct ways you can make a difference. To find out about the candidates, visit the Electoral Commission of South Australia website [ecsa.sa.gov.au](http://ecsa.sa.gov.au).

Voting papers can be returned via the reply-paid envelope or ballot box at council's Noarlunga office. Voting closes at 12pm on 3 June. So please don't leave them on the kitchen counter and forget about them. You vote counts.

## **Christies Beach/O'Sullivan Beach public art projects – Your Say Engagement 6 – 24 May 2024.**

### ***Background information/Project scope***

In 2022, Council received funding through state government election commitments to deliver artwork and murals for Christies Beach and O'Sullivan Beach. Council sought to pursue opportunities to deliver these outcomes in conjunction with other high profile public projects in the area, including the Witton Bluff Base Trail and Beach Road Streetscape.

#### *Christies Beach/O'Sullivan Beach public art projects*

There are four elements to the Christies Beach and O'Sullivan Beach public art projects that aims to use art and design elements to build on the local narrative of the area.

- **Location 1** - The Nodal Point adjacent to the O'Sullivan Beach Coast Park Trail and shipyard will be a viewing area overlooking the beach and southern coastline. A Kurna artist will be commissioned for this work due to its association with the Tjilbruke Track and will provide an opportunity for cultural storytelling.
- **Location 2** – Esplanade, Christies Beach will enhance the existing shared path along the coastal side of the Esplanade. The path along the Esplanade and O'Sullivan Beach Coast Park between Christies Beach and O'Sullivan Beach provides opportunity for a variety of small public art elements to tell a story as people journey along the coastline. This will be created with a series of footpath inlay designs to highlight native flora and fauna, local beach culture and to build on the local narrative of the area.
- **Location 3** – Y Steps wall – Stairway from the Esplanade to Christies Beach will similarly be an opportunity to showcase native flora and fauna and is a highly frequented entry and exit to the foreshore at Christies Beach.
- **Location 4** - Galloway Road court area. This project was identified as an opportunity to improve the existing urban fabric by creating increased visual interest and placemaking opportunities.

Galloway Road court area commonly known as the Gravel Pit has been a point of interest for a committed local group (Gravel Pit to Garden group) to beautify and enhance the community engagement with the park and the surrounding unused old courts. They have been working since 2022 and have identified three projects, one of which is to create a ground mural on the disused southern court. Their idea is to use a labyrinth as the core design for the ground mural.

The local schools have worked with this group through Green Adelaide, to imagine ways to beautify this area and court over the last 18 months and have already identified some themes they consider to be engaging and fun for community. The long-term plans for this area are being seeded by the group, with an aspiration to create a community garden and activity area for community members and local schools. This is still in its early stages, but it will affect the way in which the Expression of Interest for the ground mural is developed and advertised.

The current project which they are beginning works on, is Eli's Garden, a native sensory garden situated in the park adjacent to Christies Creek on Brodie Crescent. The group are working with council to begin planting and shaping the space. It will be a space specifically designed for all abilities and ages to enjoy.

These projects are diverse in their application of public art and are at different levels of planning and delivery. Linking the projects creates significant value as an investment in the local landscape of Christies Beach and O'Sullivan Beach and the potential to develop a consistent art narrative for the community. The scope of these projects has been approved by the funding body and has local and state support.

### **Aberfoyle Repair Café – Aberfoyle Community Centre**

Aberfoyle Repair Cafe will be celebrating their 2nd birthday on **Saturday May 11th between 1-4pm** at the Aberfoyle Community Centre. They will be welcoming Amanda Rishworth MP Federal Member for Kingston to the repair cafe to help celebrate and meet their enthusiastic volunteers.

Bring along your broken/damaged household items and get help from skilled repair volunteers to fix them. No need to book - just turn up! There may be a wait for some repairs, depending on the demand on the day. This is not a drop and go service. You must stay with the repair volunteer while your item is being fixed. We encourage you to be as involved in the repair as possible. This is a free service, but we gratefully accept donations to help cover our costs. I am going to be there will my chainsaw that one of my son's managed to break the "pull cord" some months ago.

### **Foodbank Mobile Food Service – Aberfoyle Community Centre**

The Foodbank Mobile Food Hub visits the Aberfoyle Centre fortnightly on a Thursday from 12pm-1pm. During May they will be coming on **2nd, 16th & 30th**. To access this service you need a referral voucher which you can get from the community centre anytime during our opening hours Mondays to Fridays 9am - 4pm. You can find the Mobile Food Hub Schedule here <https://www.foodbank.org.au/SA/metromobilehubcalendar/?state=sa>

### **O'Sullivan Beach Boat Ramp Dredging by DIT**

For the information of our *boaties*, the Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) will undertake routine maintenance dredging at the O'Sullivan Beach Boat Ramp to remove built up sand from the inner basin and extending out through the entrance. Works are scheduled to commence in May 2024 for three weeks, subject to weather and operational delays. Works will be undertaken 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Please note works are weather dependent and scheduling may be subject to change.

Some discolouration of a section of the beach due to deposition of dredged sandy materials could be expected and should not persist beyond winter storms.

This activity will not require the closure of the boat ramp. Access to the beach and boat ramp car park will be maintained during the works as shown in the Dredge Layout Plan available on the link below. Dredge Safety Instruction signage will be in place for mariners and boat ramp users.

Additionally, Boat Ramp Safety Signage will be in place at the entrance to the boat ramp that includes:

- 4 Knot Limit applicable to all vessels (signage in place).
- Exclusion zone (signage in place).
- Restricted area (signage in place).
- No vessels (Signage in place).

Residents around the O’Sullivan Beach Boat Ramp have been notified via letter drop.

Visit [O’Sullivan Beach Boat Ramp Maintenance Dredging page](#) for more details, the dredge layout plan and safety information. Please direct any enquiries to DIT on 1300 794 880 or [Dit.Engagement@sa.gov.au](mailto:Dit.Engagement@sa.gov.au)

### **Neighbourhood Watch Meetings Schedule**

The Neighbourhood Watch program is run by the South Australia Police (SAPOL) and works towards achieving connected, safe and resilient communities by keeping residents informed of crime and other safety issues in their area and how they can reduce their potential from becoming victims. It relies strongly on volunteers to distribute newsletters and to manage their meetings. I encourage our residents to become involved in this program and attend your local Zone meetings detailed below. It is also a great opportunity to meet local residents.

I am a state councillor for this program as one of my volunteering roles with SAPOL. After 39 years in SAPOL and 5 with the Australian Federal Police (holding senior positions within both organisations), managing the Hazards Management Team in the Department of Environment and Water (doing flood risk assessments across the state and riverbank collapse on the lower sections of the River Murray) and facilitated community safety and disaster resilience programs for two local government areas (during a number of unsuccessful attempts at retiring), I still maintain a strong interest in community safety and wellbeing.

#### *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
- Monday July 15
- Monday September 16
- Monday November 18.

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*

- Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2024-25 (closes 13 May)
- Murray Road reconstruction Port Noarlunga (closes 19 May)
- Streetscape upgrade Main Road McLaren Vale (closes 6 May)
- Witton Bluff Base Trail (inform only)
- New public toilet for Byards Road Wetlands (inform only)
- New public toilet Christies Beach (inform only)
- McLaren Vale Regional Water Security Strategy – SA gov project
- Christies Beach and O'Sullivan Beach Public Art Projects (opening 6 May, closing 26 May)

Go to [www.onkaparingacity.com/yoursay](http://www.onkaparingacity.com/yoursay) for more information.

*Closed Engagements*

- SALHN Local Area Needs Analysis – SA gov project

Go to [www.onkaparingacity.com/yoursay](http://www.onkaparingacity.com/yoursay) for more information.

**Grant Opportunities**

Grant opportunities are currently available for sharing with your networks. Please click [here](#)(PDF, 155KB) for further information.

[Please also refer to our website.](#)

**Disclaimer**

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

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