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Town of Gawler adopts 2023 / 24 Annual Business Plan and Budget

Town of Gawler has officially adopted its 2023 / 24 Annual Business Plan and Budget by Council Members at Council's Ordinary General Meeting, held on Tuesday 27 June 2023.

Key Points:

- The 2023 / 24 Annual Business Plan and Budget sets out an operating deficit of \$1.032 million, which is based on a 5% increase in rate revenue collected from existing property owners.
- For the residential property, valued at \$419,000, this translates to an additional \$53 per annum (or 3%). This increase is well below the forecast inflation of around 6.5%.

The Annual Business Plan focusses on the delivery of the core services, with the Council's continued commitment to the renewal of the Towns Transport Assets, with \$2.9 million allocated to the renewal of our roads footpaths and kerb and gutter, plus an additional \$560,000 to renew our open space assets, stormwater drainage and buildings. This commitment is supplemented with a further \$349,000 investment in the construction of new footpaths across the Town.

Key Projects for 2023 / 2024 included in the Annual Business Plan are;

Development of the **Growth Framework 2046**. This will shape how the Town and region's future growth occurs, the infrastructure needed, where the facilities and services are located, and ensuring Council is in a position to respond appropriately to meet the growth. An associated **Integrated Transport Strategy** aimed at establishing a suitable road hierarchy which meets the current and future growth within the region, promote active travel infrastructure (walking and cycling) and public transport considerations to reduce vehicle reliance.

As part of the Essex Park and Gawler Showgrounds Master Plan, with funding from the State Government, Council will commence a \$4.8million redevelopment of the new, compliant high quality netball courts for the Gawler and District Netball Association. The playing area will include new netball courts, improved lighting, a new shelter, improved disability access, and improvements to the carpark.

Also funded by the grant funding received from the State Government, local residents and the wider community will benefit from the development of a new playground at Reid Reserve. Construction will also commence on Stage 1 of the Karbeethan Reserve Redevelopment, which includes new playing diamonds for Baseball and Softball.

Quotes attributable to Gawler Mayor Karen Redman:

"Given the record high inflation and rising interest rates, developing the 2023 / 2024 Annual Business Plan & Budget has not been an easy task for the Council to ensure it continues to provide its current level of service to the community, along with the ongoing asset renewal and maintenance programs. As Council is not immune to the rising interest rates and the record high inflation, coupled with the many financial challenges and opportunities we face with Gawler being a major growth council, as operating costs increase, we have needed to demonstrate restraint with expenditure, while collecting sufficient revenue to maintain service levels and programs and position ourselves for long-term financial sustainability" Mayor Redman said.

"The council, in setting the budget, has strived to provide value for money when providing its services and programs and I commend Council staff and Council Members for the extensive work and effort that has gone into formalising the 2023 / 2024 Annual Business Plan & Budget."



Quotes attributable to Town of Gawler CEO Henry Inat:

“Managing the financial consequences of being a major growth Council continues to be a challenge for the Town of Gawler, a challenge more difficult to balance given the current economic conditions, with record high inflation and rising interest rates.”

“In developing the budget, Council has applied prudent and sound financial strategies to be well-placed to position its operations on a path to financial sustainability.” Mr Inat said.

“We will continue to explore opportunities to deliver efficiencies and value outcomes in the delivery of the myriad of services that the Council provides, with the view to return the Council to an operating surplus position in the coming years. Councils Management looks forward to meeting the challenges of another busy year.”

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