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## Council adopts 2021/22 Budget and Rates

The Town of Gawler has recently adopted its 2021/22 Budget and Rates.

‘The COVID-19 pandemic culminated in numerous challenges for us over the last 12 months, and I am proud of how Council and the local community has responded through the difficult and challenging times’ Mayor Karen Redman said. ‘Our Council provided a sector-leading General Rates relief program last year, which incorporated a ‘one-off’ 25% targeted General Rate rebate to ratepayers directly financially impacted by the pandemic and a ‘one-off’ \$40 rebate to all other ratepayers – a consequence of this is that the average residential ratepayer did not incur any increase in their General Rates last year’, Mayor Redman also noted.

For the 2021/22 financial year, Council has adopted a modest 2.5% increase in General Rates from existing ratepayers to extensively fund the \$15.8m Capital Works and \$33.4m Operations budgets.

‘Council continues to ensure that any annual increase in General Rates are kept to a minimum, whilst at the same time giving appropriate consideration to our longer term financial forecasts and the unique financial challenges and opportunities presented by way of being a major growth Council’, Mayor Redman said.

‘The 2.5% increase in General Rates means the average residential ratepayer will incur an increase of \$41 (or \$0.80 per week). Given that over 90% of residential ratepayers have not had any change in their property valuation, Council has applied a 2.5% increase in the Rate applied so as to achieve our budgeted revenue requirement’, Mayor Redman further said. ‘With regard to Commercial and Industrial properties there has been far greater volatility in valuation movements – which has resulted in 38% incurring a General Rate increase of less than 2.5% (12% will actually get a Rates reduction), whereas 52% will incur an increase of 5% or above’.

The 2021/22 Budget provides for a nominal increase of \$3 (1.3%) in the Waste Management Charge (from \$229 to \$232).

The 2021/22 Budget provides for a major capital works program of \$15.8m, which incorporates the delivery of a number of major key projects and initiatives. Key projects include:

- \$1.8m - Stage 1 of the redevelopment of Karbeethan Reserve (incorporating upgrade of baseball diamond, upgrade of existing soccer and shared turf areas, and installation of LED sports lighting). Council has secured State Government grant funding of \$900,000 towards this project;
- \$1.3m – for the conversion of street lights in the Council area to LED, resulting in \$200,000 annual savings in electricity costs, improved quality of lighting, and reduced greenhouse emissions;
- \$968,000 – for the resealing of 5.6kms of sealed roads;
- \$911,000 – for Stage 7 upgrade of Murray Street (from the Mill Inn Bridge to Tenth Street);
- \$839,000 – for the connection of the Stuart O’Grady bikepath to the Barossa Trail;
- \$770,000 – for the construction of new (\$210,000) and renewal of existing (\$560,000) footpaths;
- \$570,000 – for the installation of a lift at the Visitor Information Centre, to accommodate the inclusion of an exhibition space for Community Arts (project is fully funded from Federal Government grant funding);
- \$544,000 – for the construction of new toilets within Apex Park and Martin’s Place Reserve;
- \$364,000 – Stage 1 implementation of Essex Park and Gawler Showgrounds Regional Sporting Precinct Master Plan (incorporating a community recreation hub at Princes Park, including basketball courts and passive recreation facilities (e.g. BBQ, seating and shade structures) (50% funded from State Government grant);



- \$297,000 – for the upgrade of playspaces at Hemaforde Grove Reserve, Gawler East (including the replacement of the existing playground);
- \$230,000 – for the reconstruction of road pavement at Jane Street (Willaston);
- \$150,000 – for the implementation of prioritised strategies contained within the Town of Gawler Beautification Plan;
- \$127,000 – for the resheeting of 1.9kms unsealed roads;
- \$55,000 – for improvements to playspaces in the Aspire Estate (Evanston South);
- \$30,000 – for the construction of a half basketball/netball court at Humphrey George Reserve (Evanston Park).

‘Our capital works program for 2021/22 will kick-start a number of key initiatives to be implemented over coming years, such as the keenly anticipated major redevelopment of Karbeethan Reserve and the implementation of the Essex Park Master Plan, which will commence with an upgrade of facilities at Princes Park – both of which we have been able to secure major Government grants towards’, Mayor Redman said.

‘The Council Administration continually strives to secure Federal and State Government grant funding for our key projects and initiatives – our ongoing efforts in this regard have been rewarded by the Council securing grant funding of \$3.6m towards our \$15.8m capital works program, thereby ensuring loan borrowings to fund major capital works are kept to an absolute minimum’, Council CEO Henry Inat said. ‘In fact, approximately only one-third of our capital works program will need to be funded by new loan borrowings, noting that borrowing rates for Council continue to be at historic lows, with some of our borrowings incurring an interest rate as low as 1.3%’, Mr Inat further said.

The Council is particularly looking forward to the transition of all street lights in the Council to LED. ‘The Council is prudently investing \$1.3m in this initiative, as this project will not only achieve future ongoing electricity savings of over \$200,000 per annum, but will also significantly increase the quality of street lighting and reduce greenhouse emissions’, Mayor Redman said.

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