

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK REPORT

Annual Business Plan and Budget 2026-27

May 2026

Introduction

Each year we compile an Annual Business Plan (ABP) and Budget to outline the work we plan to do in the coming financial year. The ABP and Budget are guided by key documents that set our strategic direction, in particular our Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP), the Community Plan (Community Vision 2034), and the Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP). We are legislatively required to consult with the community on our draft ABP and Budget.

Community engagement purpose

The purpose of engagement was to ensure:

- the community was aware of the opportunity to review the draft Annual Business Plan and Budget and to provide feedback.
- we met our legislative requirements under Section 123 and Section 50 of the Local Government Act 1999.
- we drove click-through traffic to the Your Say website.
- we educated the community about our budget process, explaining how the budget works and dispelling misconceptions.
- the outcomes of engagement, how feedback was used and whether changes have been made to the Annual Business Plan and Budget are shared with community (stage 2).
- the community is informed about Council's decision to endorse the Annual Business Plan and Budget (stage 3).

The following promotional/engagement techniques were undertaken:

Technique	Reach
Direct email to all Your Say Onkaparinga registered members (16/4/26)	7,675 email addresses 2,161 opens 160 link clicks
Reminder email (6/5/26)	7,675 email addresses 2,508 opens 154 link clicks
Public notice in The Advertiser (legislated requirement)	Local reach unknown (293,000 state-wide)
Roadside banners (5 locations)	Unknown
Social media campaign • Facebook post – including paid promotion (16/4/2025)	117,360 views 468 link clicks 80 comments

Facebook post (22/4/26)	7,677 views 21 link clicks 32 comments
Facebook post – shared post (28/04/26)	Limited data
Facebook post (6/5/26)	8,067 views 16 link clicks 39 comments
Media - Fleurieu Sun - Fleurieu App - Tribe FM Mayor interview	Unknown
On hold call centre message	Unknown (12,000 calls per month on average)
Hard copy information and posters at customer service centres and libraries	Unknown
Ward specific elected member information packs	Unknown
Onkaparinga Now article - Hardcopy sent with rates notices - Digital	52,000 155 views
Dedicated Your Say Onkaparinga webpage with a range of information resources and engagement tools to collect submissions and feedback	2,541 visits to the project page

Summary of community engagement outcomes

Community engagement was undertaken for 25 days from Thursday 16 April to Sunday 10 May 2026.

Across the engagement period we saw:

- 2,541 visits to the Your Say Onkaparinga page by 1,949 unique visitors
- 2,078 documents downloaded from the Your Say page:
 - 694 downloads of the full draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2026-27
 - 476 downloads of the snapshot draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2026-27
 - 137 downloads of How your rates are calculated and spent factsheet
 - 99 downloads of Myth busting council rates factsheet
 - 78 downloads of Council rates explained factsheet
 - 503 downloads of the various ward fact sheets

- 52 downloads of FAQs
- 39 downloads of the CPI update information
- 211 Your Say feedback contributions
- 40 submissions received via other sources (email/letter, EM enquiries, drop-in session) including 3 late submissions
- 282 Facebook interactions across the three social media campaign activities
 - 100 reactions
 - 151 comments
 - 31 shares

Analysis/Summary of key findings

Engagement opened on 16 April and concluded at midnight 10 May 2026.

During the engagement 211 feedback surveys were submitted via Your Say Onkaparinga. Of these surveys, 167 included a submission (written feedback provided in addition to answering the questions).

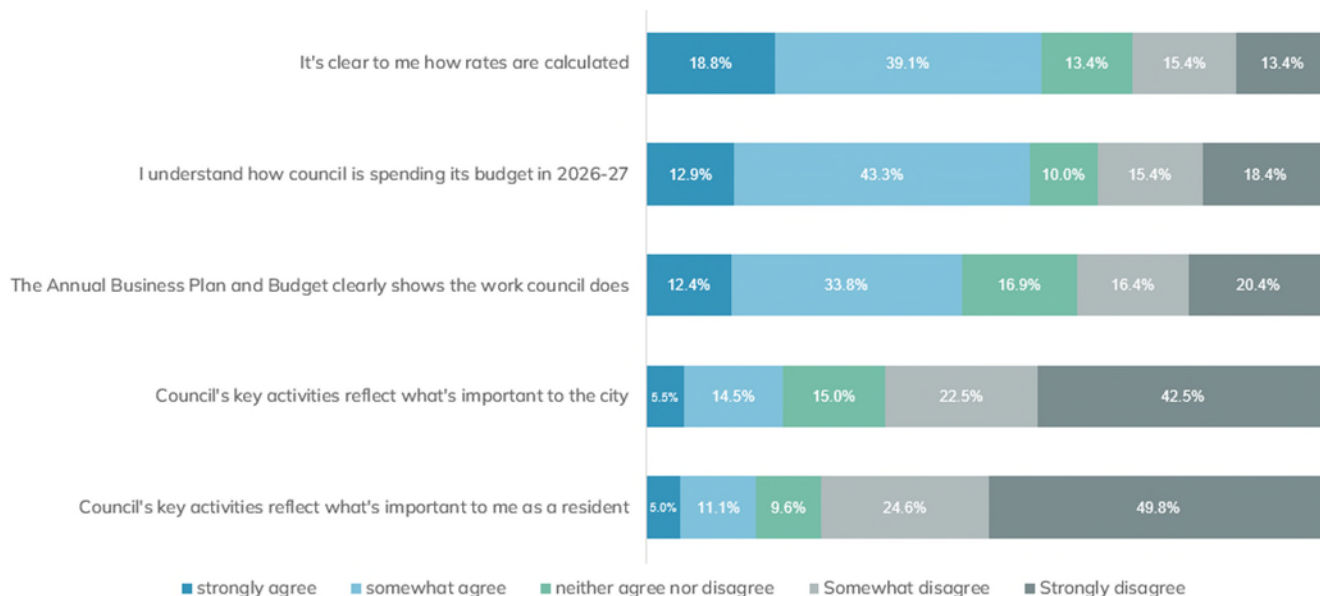
Your say survey response

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with five statements regarding the draft ABP and Budget. Between 199 and 202 people answered each of these questions. This year respondents were offered the response option of 'Neither agree nor disagree' instead of the 'Unsure' option previously provided. The extent to which the respondents agreed (strongly agree/ somewhat agree) with each of the statements were:

- 57.9% agreed it was clear to them how rates are calculated
- 56.2% agreed they understood how council is spending its budget in 2026-27
- 46.3% agreed the Annual Business Plan and Budget clearly shows the work council does
- 20.0% agreed Council's key activities reflect what's important to our city
- 16.1% agreed Council's key activities reflect what's important to them as a rate payer.

The full range of responses to these questions has been shown in Figure 1 below. A lower proportion of survey respondents agreed with the statements this year compared to people who provided feedback on the 2025-26 draft Annual Business Plan and Budget.

Figure 1: Your say survey responses



Your say submissions

Of the 211 submissions received via Your Say, 164 were written within the survey and 3 were documents uploaded to the platform. All written submissions have been included verbatim in Table 2 on page 9 of this report.

Sentiment was used to categorise whether the tone of each submission was positive, negative or neutral. More than half of the submissions were negative (61%), 28.5% were neutral and 10.5% were positive.

Additional submissions and feedback provided via other methods

A further 37 submissions were provided by alternative methods during the engagement period:

- Mayor/elected member email (16 submissions)
- City of Onkaparinga email (13 submissions)
- Your Say Onkaparinga email (3 submission)
- Strategy team email (1 submission)
- Attendance at other Your Say drop-in sessions (2 submissions)
- Attendance at the ABP and Budget community drop-in session (6 attendees, 2 submissions)

The 37 submissions and comments received through other platforms have been included verbatim in Table 3 on page 62 of this report.

A total of 3 late submissions were received and are included in Table 4 on page 102 of this report.

The 163 submissions and comments received through Facebook have also been included verbatim in Table 5 on page 103 of this report.

Feedback themes

Across all forms of submissions received, feedback shows a strong and consistent focus on affordability, financial restraint, and core service delivery. The most prominent theme is a clear expectation that Council limit or reduce rates, driven largely by ongoing cost-of-living pressures affecting households. Closely linked is a widespread call to reduce overall Council spending, with many residents seeking greater evidence that budgets are being carefully managed and aligned with community priorities.

Many participants emphasised the need to focus on essential or core services, prioritising fundamental infrastructure and operational activities over discretionary spending. This includes stronger attention to roads, footpaths, and facility maintenance or upgrades, which are seen as critical to daily community use. Additionally, contributors raised the importance of financial transparency, particularly around debt management and reporting, alongside suggestions to reduce costs in areas such as staffing or non-core services.

Figure 2: Most often mentioned themes¹ across all submissions



¹ Please note themes 5% or lower have not been shown

Definitions:

Specific content feedback:

Category encompassing feedback focused on the clarity, detail, and communication of council information, including:

- Requests for greater transparency or additional information across various topics
- Questions about the budget, rates, and financial decisions
- Comments on how plans are presented, including clarity, structure, or level of detail
- Requests for updates or follow-up on previously raised issues

Rating suggestion / query:

Capturing feedback about rates suggestions including:

- Objections to rate increases, especially above CPI or during cost-of-living pressures
- Concerns about affordability and fairness for residents
- Questions or criticism about how rates are set, adjusted, or justified
- Perceptions that rates rise unfairly or do not work in residents' favour
- Links between rates and spending priorities, including concerns about waste, non-essential projects, or growth funding

Facility upgrade:

Generalised service requests for improvements to facilities and services including community centres, halls, footpaths and sewerage.

How results are considered

All submissions and high-level analysis of key feedback themes were shared with Elected Members (EMs) at an EM workshop on 2 June 2026. These, along with budget updates, were provided for consideration and discussion of implications for the draft ABP and Budget 2026-27. This engagement feedback report will form an attachment to a Council report for the Special Council Meeting of 25 June 2026, for further consideration.

How results will be shared with the community

Results will be shared on the dedicated ABP and Budget 2026-27 page on Your Say Onkaparinga, including this report, the submissions made and Council's response. Those who provided their email addresses during the engagement process will be notified via email once the ABP and Budget has been endorsed.

As the survey and submissions were anonymous, council is unable to respond directly to customer service requests or requests for return contact made within the comments. Where people have provided personal details, these have been redacted in the table below to protect privacy, and we also request that these responders contact our customer care centre if they would like further follow up on their comment.

All reports to Council are publicly available via our website.

Evaluation

The engagement met its objectives and purpose by:

- Promoting the engagement through various channels to with a high level of reach to ensure as many community members as possible were aware of the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the draft Annual Business Plan and Budget.
- Achieving a notably higher level of visitation and participation on the Your Say platform than last year.
- Sharing information about our budget process, explaining how the budget works and dispelling misconceptions. Survey responses indicate that just under half of people did not agree it was clear to them how rates are calculated or that they understood how council is spending its budget so further work may be needed in the future to provide clearer explanations.
- Providing inclusive ways in which to contact us and provide information other than online, including a community drop-in session.

Sign-off

All feedback reports are to be reviewed by the Engagement Unit
(engagement@onkaparinga.sa.gov.au)

Officer who prepared the document

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Date:

Approved by

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Position title: Manager Strategy, Sustainability and Economic Growth

Date:

Submission and responses

Table 2: Your say written submissions

Participant comments (verbatim)	Council response
I would love to see some upgrades to the Morphett Vale Basketball Stadium! They are well overdue with a lot of local families and children using it almost every day of the week.	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
I believe an upgrade of the Morphett Vale Stadium should be a priority for local council. This stadium provides community connection and participation for hundreds of families each year. The toilet spaces are in bad shape and the front area is dull and dingey. This is also a space we welcome people from outside the region and should be a space that is warm and inviting and somewhere we are proud to call ours. Please invest in this invaluable sports and community space.	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
I just want to share feedback about the various arts programmes that run locally. Both Base 10 and Studio 20 have been amazing places for our children to have new experiences and make new connections in the community. Though there is no specific reference to community arts in this budget, I want to reflect how important it is to families in the community. Thanks	Noted, thank you.
As I enter my 74th year on this planet & 7th year as a resident of this council area I am dismayed that this council has embarked on such an overspending spree & debt. I, like the most of us in the community have to mind our dollars & cents. How are you doing this? Why can you not cut services that are not core business of Local Government? For Example, why not focus on cutting verges all year round rather than only selected roads when the TDU is on! Why not make some services user paid? I am not happy contributing to services that are welfare type servicers for the non contributors in our community.  McLaren Vale	Noted, thank you. The focus for this budget is to limit financial impact on our ratepayers and continue to build financial resilience.

Noone can afford an increase! Update pay rates and bring them into line with the CPI	Noted. The focus for this budget is to limit financial impact on our ratepayers and continue to build financial resilience.
Publish a list of needs and wants. No wants get expenditure until EVERY need is fully funded. Art of ANY kind is not a need and for most isn't been a want. NO FUNDING for art and certainly no overseas travel for ANY council member, until council has a \$0 debt! - And not even then!	Council acknowledges the feedback regarding prioritisation of essential services and expenditure, including concerns about discretionary spending and debt levels.
I'd like to see some upgrades at the Morphett Vale Basketball Stadium. The bathrooms are so old and run down, with the vanity falling off the wall and toilets leaking and cracked. Need decent hand dryers. We need a proper high flow water dispenser station that caters to 4 courts of basketball as the line up to fill drink bottles can become a wait. Court 1 has sunken floor boards. The scoreboards sometimes don't work. The backboards have seen better days. Our southern basketball community deserves a quality stadium to play in and show off when interstate tournaments are played here.	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
I would much prefer Council reduce services and building/park upgrades rather than increase rates. I believe that recreation and tourism would be a good area to reduce funding, as we already have many perfectly good parks, playgrounds, community halls and recreational areas within that Onkaparinga Council; we can hold off on upgrades until funding becomes more readily available from sources other than rates. I am also quite surprised by the high percentage of budget spent on waste and recycling, when the services offered by this Council are sub-standard to services offered by many other Councils. For example, I am aware that City of West Torrens, Holdfast and Tea Tree Gully allow a larger variety of items to be disposed of in hard waste collections AND many of these items are recycled through third party organisations. However, City of Onkaparinga sends all hard waste items straight to landfill. I would like to see the Council place higher priority on recycling, sustainability and community education.	Council acknowledges this focus and its intent to minimise financial impact on ratepayers while strengthening long-term financial resilience.
Management of dogs and especially cats should be prioritised. There are far too many irresponsible cat owners who let their cats roam. I am sick and tired of the up to 6 cats that use my yard as a toilet.	Council recognises the importance of responsible pet ownership.

The Morphett Vale stadium is of huge importance to the community. It is in desperate need of a significant upgrade especially for the safety of children in the toilets. The stadium needs a multitude of upgrades, including the adding of air conditioning, toilet and change room refurbishment and lining for the walls as currently it is a tin shed. I request the council add to what the state government has promised for a refurbishment? Our community needs a functional stadium, which it currently does not have. Thanks [REDACTED]	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
Council-owned Morphett Vale Basketball Stadium is in urgent need of upgrades to ensure it remains a safe, comfortable and functional facility for our community. Thousands of people use this venue every year, including local sporting clubs, school groups and district-level competitions, yet the building no longer meets the basic standards expected of a modern community sports facility. The toilets and changerooms require immediate refurbishment. The playing courts also have multiple dead spots two of our own players have recently suffered ankle injuries in the same area due to the unsafe surface. In addition, the stadium has no effective cooling system. During warmer months the indoor temperature becomes extremely uncomfortable for players, officials and spectators, and this significantly impacts participation and wellbeing. This venue regularly hosts district basketball and NBL1 games, welcoming teams and visitors from across Adelaide. Unfortunately, its current run down condition and excessive heat leave a poor impression of our council area, with many visitors commenting on how outdated and uncomfortable the stadium has become. Upgrading Morphett Vale Basketball Stadium is essential to support community sport, protect player safety and present our region with pride.	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
Please make sure to put up rates by CPI as a minimum. For too long this council has relied on growth to accommodate low rate increases. This is going to require tough decisions in the future when assets age and require extra maintenance and growth had significantly reduced. Better to allow moderate rate increases over time to make sure council is financially strong when this time comes. Other than that, keep up the good work!	Council acknowledges the importance of long-term financial sustainability. The budget applies key principles from the Long Term Financial Plan, which is updated to guide decisions and ensure Council can meet future asset and service needs.
I am writing to express my firm opposition to the proposed 3.3% general rate increase. I believe this rise is unjustifiable given the council's current financial standing and the visible decline in basic community maintenance. I urge the council to consider the following six points: 1. Unsustainable Financial Pressure on Households: Aligning rates with CPI fails to account for the compounding nature of current cost-of-living pressures. Between high interest rates and	Council acknowledges the concerns raised regarding the proposed rate increase, cost-of-living pressures, service standards, financial management, and transparency. These views are noted and will be considered alongside the need

rising essential costs, many in our community are at their financial limit. The council should be finding ways to reduce this burden, not adding to it.

2. Decline in Fundamental Maintenance Standards: The council is failing to meet its basic obligations while simultaneously asking for more money. We see dead weeds on verges left as fire hazards and parks where grass is mown but edges are left completely overgrown. Core services roads, coastlines, and open spaces must be the priority, yet they appear neglected in favour of more expensive initiatives.

3. Ignoring Expert Financial Warnings: The concerns raised by ESCOSA and the Audit and Risk Committee regarding the council's long-term sustainability cannot be ignored. A rate hike is a "band-aid" solution that does not address the underlying fiscal mismanagement identified by these independent bodies.

4. Failure to Address Significant Debt: With a debt projected at over \$112 million, the council must implement a moratorium on non-essential projects. Residents should not be forced to fund new "nice-to-have" projects while the city's debt remains at such high levels. All efforts must be redirected toward lowering this debt to a responsible figure.

5. Inappropriate Executive Spending and Leadership Risk: It is difficult to justify a \$405,000 salary for a new CEO in a city with such high debt. Furthermore, the reports of Ms. Mason's prior tenure at Selwyn District Council which allegedly saw debt more than double creates a lack of confidence. Appointing an executive with this history during a financial crisis is a risk that ratepayers should not have to subsidise.

6. Lack of Genuine Fiscal Transparency: The community lacks trust in the figures being presented. We need a clear, "warts-and-all" breakdown of the actual deficit and a transparent explanation of how growth revenue is being spent. Until the council provides a line-by-line justification for its current spending, there is no mandate for a rate increase.

Conclusion: I request that the council adopt a 0% rate increase and refocus its current \$262 million budget on essential maintenance and urgent debt reduction.


Suburb: Aberfoyle Park

to balance community expectations with long-term financial sustainability and service delivery.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2026-27.

Like many of the residents across the Onkaparinga region, I am increasingly concerned about the long-term financial direction of our council and the growing disconnect between rising rates and declining community confidence in actual service delivery.

Residents understand that inflationary pressures are extremely real. Electricity, fuel, insurance, labour, materials and interest costs have all risen sharply in recent years. However, many households are themselves under severe financial pressure and cannot continue absorbing repeated rate increases without meaningful evidence that council spending is becoming more disciplined, efficient and focused on core responsibilities and service delivery.

The central issue here is not simply the level of our rates. It is whether ratepayers believe they are receiving genuine value for their money. Many residents increasingly feel that council has expanded beyond its essential functions while core expectations:

- roads
- footpaths
- drainage
- waste
- community safety
- asset maintenance and local infrastructure, have all deteriorated or seemingly become secondary priorities.

At the same time, debt levels and ongoing financial obligations are continuing to rise. Has council sufficiently restrained its own spending growth and organisational expansion before turning again to ratepayers for additional revenue? There is also a growing concern regarding the interaction between inflation, property valuations and our rates. As asset prices rise due to broader monetary inflation and currency debasement, many residents are effectively pushed into higher rate burdens despite not experiencing any corresponding increase in real household prosperity! Long-term residents, retirees and working families are increasingly asset-rich on paper but cash-flow constrained in reality. This creates a perception that councils benefit automatically from inflated land values while it's the residents who absorb the financial

Thank you for your detailed submission. Council acknowledges the concerns raised regarding rate increases, affordability, service delivery, financial management, and value for money, and notes the suggestions around prioritisation, transparency, and long-term sustainability. These views will be considered as part of the budget and planning process.

consequences. I believe our council should now undertake a serious reassessment of its role, priorities and size.

Specifically:

- greater prioritisation of core infrastructure and maintenance,
- reduction in non-essential programs and discretionary spending
- tighter debt management
- stronger transparency around administrative growth and internal services
- clearer measurement of service outcomes
- a renewed focus on delivering tangible value to ratepayers.

Local government plays an important role in community life, but its legitimacy depends on maintaining public trust that rates are being spent prudently and responsibly. At a time when households, businesses, state governments and the broader national economy are all under mounting financial strain, councils must demonstrate restraint, discipline and focus. Residents are not asking for perfection. They are asking for accountability, prioritisation and value for money. That shouldn't be too much to ask for.

Thank you for considering this submission.

I am writing to express my firm opposition to the proposed 3.3% general rate increase. I believe this rise is unjustifiable given the council's current financial standing and the visible decline in basic community maintenance.

I urge the council to consider the following six points:

1. **Unsustainable Financial Pressure on Households:** Aligning rates with CPI fails to account for the compounding nature of current cost-of-living pressures. Between high interest rates and rising essential costs, many in our community are at their financial limit. The council should be finding ways to reduce this burden, not adding to it.
2. **Decline in Fundamental Maintenance Standards:** The council is failing to meet its basic obligations while simultaneously asking for more money. We see dead weeds on verges left as fire hazards and parks where grass is mown but edges are left completely overgrown. Core services roads, coastlines, and open spaces must be the priority, yet they appear neglected in favour of more expensive initiatives.

Council acknowledges the concerns raised regarding the proposed rate increase, cost-of-living pressures, service standards, financial management, and transparency. These views are noted and will be considered alongside the need to balance community expectations with long-term financial sustainability and service delivery.

3. Ignoring Expert Financial Warnings:The concerns raised by ESCOSA and the Audit and Risk Committee regarding the council's long-term sustainability cannot be ignored. A rate hike is a "band-aid" solution that does not address the underlying fiscal mismanagement identified by these independent bodies. 4. Failure to Address Significant Debt: With a debt projected at over \$112 million, the council must implement a moratorium on non-essential projects. Residents should not be forced to fund new "nice-to-have" projects while the city's debt remains at such high levels. All efforts must be redirected toward lowering this debt to a responsible figure. 5. Inappropriate Executive Spending and Leadership Risk: It is difficult to justify a \$405,000 salary for a new CEO in a city with such high debt. Furthermore, the reports of Ms. Mason's prior tenure at Selwyn District Council which allegedly saw debt more than double creates a lack of confidence. Appointing an executive with this history during a financial crisis is a risk that ratepayers should not have to subsidise. 6. Lack of Genuine Fiscal Transparency:The community lacks trust in the figures being presented. We need a clear, "warts-and-all" breakdown of the actual deficit and a transparent explanation of how growth revenue is being spent. Until the council provides a line-by-line justification for its current spending, there is no mandate for a rate increase. Conclusion: I request that the council adopt a 0% rate increase and refocus its current \$262 million budget on essential maintenance and urgent debt reduction. ██████████ Suburb: Aberfoyle Park	
I am writing to formally reject the proposed 3.3% general rate increase. This proposal is an unacceptable burden on a community already pushed to its limit, and it signals a council that is prioritising executive interests over its core obligations to residents. My opposition is based on the following six critical points: 1. The Breaking Point of Cost-of-Living Pressures:The council's reliance on "CPI alignment" ignores the lived reality of its residents. When combined with skyrocketing mortgages, grocery prices, and utility costs, another rate hike is not just an "adjustment" it is a financial breaking point for many households. The community cannot continue to act as an open-ended credit card for the council's inability to live within its means. 2. Gross Failure in Basic Service Delivery:It is insulting to be asked for more money when current maintenance is visibly failing. Our verges are left with dead weeds throughout the fire season, creating unnecessary risk, and parks are left looking neglected with long grass around trees despite "mowing" occurring. If the council cannot even manage basic upkeep and fire safety, it	Thank you for your submission. Council acknowledges the concerns raised regarding rate increases, cost-of-living pressures, service delivery, financial management, governance, and transparency, and notes the strong views expressed on prioritisation and debt reduction. These matters will be considered as part of the budget deliberations.

has no business asking for a budget increase for "new" projects. 3. Total Disregard for Regulatory Warnings (ESCOSA/Audit Committee):The council is currently under a cloud of financial instability, with both ESCOSA and the Audit and Risk Committee raising serious red flags. Ignoring these warnings and proceeding with a rate hike is fiscally irresponsible. The priority must be internal reform and structural efficiency, not extracting more wealth from a struggling public. 4. Failure to Prioritise Debt Reduction over "Nice-to-Haves":With debt projected to exceed \$112 million, the council must immediately pivot to a "Back to Basics" mandate. All discretionary spending and "vanity projects" must be frozen until the debt is lowered to a sustainable level. We demand that infrastructure, roads, and coastal maintenance be the only spending priorities until the council's balance sheet is restored. 5. Out-of-Touch Executive Remuneration and Leadership Risk:The appointment of a new CEO on a \$405,000 package "plus relocation perks" is a slap in the face to every ratepayer currently struggling to pay their bills. Furthermore, Ms. Mason's track record at Selwyn District Council, where debt reportedly doubled and rates saw massive hikes, is deeply concerning. The council has appointed an expensive leader with a history of increasing debt precisely when we need the opposite. She either needs to go and we need to appoint someone with proven skills in this area and also with a salary that is affordable given the councils financial circumstances. 6. Lack of True Fiscal Transparency:The current budget document looks polished on paper but feels disconnected from reality. There is a profound lack of transparency regarding the actual deficit and how "growth" revenue is being utilised. We don't need creative accounting; we need a raw, honest look at the books. Without a line-by-line justification for every dollar, this budget fails the community's trust. Conclusion: urge the council to scrap the 3.3% increase and adopt a 0% rate rise for the 2026-27 year. Focus on the weeds, the roads, and the debt. Stop the overspending and start managing the city for the people who actually pay for it. ██████████, Suburb: Aberfoyle Park	
Would like to see Money spent on the maintenance and up keep of Morphettsvale Basketball Stadium. Such important upgrades to a very run down facility.	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
I am writing to formally lodge my opposition to the proposed 3.3% general rate increase. Ratepayers should not be expected to continuously bail out the council for historical overspending and financial mismanagement.	Thank you for your submission. Council notes the concerns raised regarding rate increases, service delivery, financial management, debt levels, governance, and transparency, and the views

My opposition is based on the following critical points:

1. Failure to Provide Basic Services and Maintenance:

While the council asks for more money, the visible quality of our suburbs is declining. Other councils manage to provide premium services and pristine public spaces for their residents; however, Onkaparinga is failing at the basics. For example:

Fire Safety: Dead weeds are left on council verges throughout the fire season, creating a clear hazard. Substandard Landscaping: While lawns are mown, long grass is left around trees and obstacles because whipper-snipping is ignored. Council must prioritise core services specifically roads, coastal maintenance, parks, and natural resources before asking for additional funds.

2. Financial Sustainability and Oversight Concerns:

I am deeply concerned by the warnings issued by the Audit and Risk Committee and ESCOSA regarding the council's financial sustainability. When independent bodies flag the council's fiscal health as a concern, the response should be a freeze on non-essential spending, not a rate hike. I call for total transparency and a detailed, line-by-line breakdown of spending to foster trust with a community that currently feels ignored.

3. Debt Reduction and Project Deferral:

With debt projected to sit at \$112.4 million, the council must adopt a "debt-first" strategy. All "nice-to-have" or non-essential projects must be put on hold until the debt is lowered to an acceptable level. It is irresponsible to continue capital expansion while the current infrastructure and verges are poorly maintained.

4. Extreme Cost of Living Leverage:

The community is at a breaking point. The 3.3% proposal, combined with the "growth" revenue from new properties, shows a lack of empathy for the current economic climate. If the council cannot find 3.3% in efficiencies within its \$262.42 million budget, it indicates a systemic failure in management rather than a lack of revenue.

5. Irresponsible Executive Expenditure and Leadership Risk:

The community is deeply concerned by the appointment of the new CEO, Sharon Mason, under a remuneration package that is fundamentally at odds with the council's "distressed" financial position.

expressed on prioritising essential services and strengthening financial sustainability. These will be considered as part of the budget considerations.

Unsustainable Salary: Ms. Mason's remuneration of \$405,000 per annum, plus up to \$20,000 in relocation costs, is an unjustifiable expense while residents are being asked to subsidize a 3.3% rate rise. We cannot afford executive salaries that rival the Premier's while basic maintenance like verge clearing is failing. Historical Financial Performance: Evidence from Ms. Mason's previous tenure at Selwyn District Council (2023-2025) suggests a pattern of financial management that is incompatible with Onkaparinga's needs. During her time there, gross borrowings reportedly more than doubled from \$115.2M to approximately \$231.8M, accompanied by consecutive, double-digit rate increases (14.8% and 14.2%). Loss of Confidence: Appointing a leader with a track record of "exploding" debt and massive rate hikes at a time when Onkaparinga is already being warned about its sustainability by ESCOSA is a high-risk decision. Ratepayers should not be the insurance policy for this appointment. Until the council can prove it can manage its own executive costs and debt, it has no mandate to demand more from its residents. Conclusion, urge the council to move to a 0% general rate increase and refocus its existing budget on essential maintenance and debt reduction. We want to see our rates working for the basics cleaner verges, safer roads, and a sustainable financial future.  Suburb: Reynella East	
Include much needed upgrades to the Morphett Vale Basketball Stadium as "promised" pre election. Which is used far more than any of the playgrounds.	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
For 2027 priority I would like the council to consider maintenance and upgrades to the Morphett Vale Basketball Stadium. Whilst this is predominantly used but the Southern Tigers Basketball Association it is also used by many schools in the southern suburbs for school basketball competition. The building is tired, the restrooms and change facilities are not large enough to compete with activity demands and air conditioning to the stadium should strongly be considered to increase players, coaches, volunteers and spectators comfort as well as better	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.

seating and space to manage the high flow traffic of players and spectators.Thank you for consideration.	
Would be great to help our kids with upgraded facilities at Morphetvale basketball stadium. Very tired and toilets unsafe	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
Please consider Morphett Vale Basketball Stadium in your budget for upgrades and maintenance. Basketball is a fast growing sport and the facilities in the south are an embarrassment compared to the rest of Adelaide. Mould on walls, broken seats and stands, rundown bathrooms, unsafe conditions for users in summer with no air conditioning or fans. Every other sport seems to be benefiting from upgrades lately but Basketball keeps missing out.	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
Please consider putting some of the budget towards upgrades for the Morphett vale basketball stadium	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
The Morphett vale basketball stadium services over 1000 visitors from Onkaparinga council area and other community members. It is clear BSA have not done any maintenance or faculty upgrades and this is in desperate need of funding. The sport of basketball and other indoor court sports is growing rapidly and while other councils have shown value in young people being involved in clubs, sport and having a sense of connection, Onkaparinga has overlooked this. The growth of the southern suburbs is evident and yet there is no funding announcement from local Council to support this growth which suggests council have a short sightedness of what community needs	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
As a council rates payer, I had to cut back due to rising cost of everything. The council should do the same. I believe all the councilors should have a pay cut as we are doing it tough. Stop spending our rates that is not necessary. I want to know what are you doing about the traffic on Murray Rd and to the port Noarlunga bridge.	Noted. The focus for this budget is to limit financial impact on our ratepayers and continue to build financial resilience.
Council rates are not proportionately spent in line with what the ratepayers are wanting, there is too much money being spent on CEO's and council processes instead of the grass roots that impact the community. More upkeep of playgrounds, public facilities and community centres would benefit a wider community base, not the inflated income of those at the top.	Council notes the concerns raised regarding rate increases, service delivery and the views expressed on prioritising essential services. These will be considered as part of the budget considerations.

Projects and overall budget looks to be very high-level. It would be good to have better understanding of what is happening in each suburb or within each area of council so I have a better understanding where rates are going.	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
May I strongly suggest council adopt a Green Waste pick up service for the properties on Lacey Drive Aldinga Beach. As a rate payer and property owner on this street I collect green waste from council areas such as the verge and currently have to dispose of this waste at my own expense. I believe that this is not acceptable. My property is well vegetated and I also do not put general waste or recycle waste bins out weekly so I think there should be some consideration made in light of the under-utilisation of the services covered by my rates.	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
"Local councils must acknowledge their role in the current cost-of-living crisis. By raising rates and fees to generate revenue, they contribute to a cycle of inflation that leads to higher interest rates, hurting the community. We need to shift toward productivity-led economic solutions rather than constant price hikes. Additionally, the council's assertion that they don't benefit from rising property values needs to be backed by evidence, particularly when new builds are already providing a growing stream of revenue that should cover service expansions." Thank you, 	Noted. The focus for this budget is to limit financial impact on our ratepayers and continue to build financial resilience. Following previous year's feedback fact sheets have been introduced 'Council Rates Explained' and 'Myth busting council rates.' They can be found on the City of Onkaparinga Your Say page.
Not all plans will be popular, but they are necessary. I see the value in this plan and that it is dealing with as much of the urgent business as possible as well as future planning and foundation building.	Noted, thank you.
It is sad to see that the area of Sellicks Beach is again neglected in the Councils budget spending. And we only get a bike track. Which in itself is of importance in a community that is growing with families. But as a long term resident of the area, I have seen little to no improvements in our area. But we pay some of the HIGHEST rates in the whole of the Onkaparinga Council. Yes we get waste pick up. But we don't even have footpaths or gutters in some of our streets. We do not have suitable sewerage, a pain point since we became residents back over 20 years ago. The ever going battle with a large Quarry who is polluting our air and destroying our hills face zone. We are the gate way to the Southern Fleurieu with the most spectacular beaches in South Australia. With the most limited resources. Where is our hall upgrade? Where is our sewerage -	Noted. The focus for this budget is to limit financial impact on our ratepayers and continue to build financial resilience. Following previous year's feedback fact sheets have been introduced 'Council Rates Explained' and 'Myth busting council rates.' They can be found on the City of Onkaparinga Your Say page.

a privilege only reserved for the newer rate payers to our area. It would just be nice to see a fairer balance in what we pay to what we get as a ratepayer	
There needs to be more transparency on where the money is being spent. Rate payers used to be able to see the actual budget breakdown which hasn't appeared in years. I think council are not listening to what the users are actually asking for. When cost of living is so high expenditure on things like street art, having council vehicles with Christmas wraps etc seem frivolous and is frustrating when I live across the road from a park that has been left to die since being taken over from the estate into council hands, mattress being dumped and weeds as high as street signs. The medium age of residents in onkaparinga in accordance to your own documentation does not reflect the planning put forth. People want to see how you are cutting costs on the unnecessary things not services that you are employed to actually look after. How much is the contract for greeninc for example? You talk about green spaces yet they have placed 7 trees in a big open space near me and then want to plant 3 trees on my southern fence line. Good to have trees but when they are being planted in a way that will now increase the costs of my heating and cooling negates the reason for the planting right. When they could have been placed in the big open spaces the council own?? Makes no sense and I can imagine the amount of trees wasted because of this poor planning. The insistence on being net zero is contributing to the crippling costs. I am very much in line of reducing our climate impact but the costs really need to be evaluated right at this moment. We need less debt, same services and more transparency. And lastly why are rate payers such as myself not receiving a quarterly bill? I am told it's because I'm ahead on our bill but am email every 3 months costs very little and should be sent. Lastly I just want to mention how disgusting it was to not see representatives of council across all dawn services this year. Utilising the morphett vale one to chummy up to sitting members of parliament for their photo opportunity rather than actually representing the council area. How sad that such an important day of commemoration used that way. Appreciated at least seeing a representatives at Port noarlunga at least. Council have lost track of how that represent the people paying their wage. People that have grown up and continue to live on the midcoast deserve to be represented by those that understand the area and advocate for our area to be placed in it's best light. Sad to see the disrepair it is slowly going into whilst money is clearly thrown around to artist rendering of street scapes and consultation fees.	Council acknowledges the importance of long-term financial sustainability. The budget applies key principles from the Long Term Financial Plan, which is updated to guide decisions and ensure Council can meet future asset and service needs.
There should be a clear budget tab on the Onka website that show each and every charge. This should be transparent to the ratepayer.	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.

I would like the fund spent on the Algae bloom to devote more funds to actually understanding and remediation the bloom and less on artworks or events or promotions please	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
Interested in McLaren Vale investment - as the magnet in Onkaparinga you can see the hollowing out of Main Road which is greatly concerning for locals and tourism attraction alike. I don't believe that upgrading the Visitors Centre more is going to address that. In many ways the Visitor Centre can cannibalise the Main Road business by ensuring that visitors go to the centre and then go to wineries without actually visiting Main Road. There seems also uncertainty whether the Visitors Centre will stay at the same site so why invest there. And why invest in the playground near there? More collaboration is required with McLaren Vale businesses and residents to ensure investment is in the right places.	Noted. Comments have been forwarded to the Economic Growth and Tourism team.
Annual business plan makes no reference to income generated by the bus shelters /pad advertising. Operational costs total \$30K, but there is no revenue booked against these items. Where is this revenue reported in the ABP given it was the touted as a major benefit to ratepayers? Where are prior expenditure offsets by this advertising deal?	Consistent with councils financial reporting framework, the Annual Business Plan provides budget transparency at a whole-of-council level, rather than detailed financial disclosure on individual contracts. Revenue from individual commercial agreements is not reported as separate line items. Instead, this revenue is included in aggregate within the User Charges category, which encompasses a broad range of unrelated fees, licences and charges across council operations. Council is therefore unable to provide a publicly reportable breakdown of income for this commercially confidential agreement. This includes any additional detail that could allow the value of the agreement to be estimated or determined.
Cost of living is becoming unsustainable for so many now. During these desperate times residents don't want to hear that thousands of dollars are wasted. Our hard earned money should not be used to fund councillors taking a fully paid trip to Rio! What benefit have Onkaparinga residents gained from that trip? How many employees are there in Onkaparinga council? What is the wage bill for all these employees? Why is the CEO paid so highly? What percentage of our rates is paid in wages? From a very unhappy resident. PLEASE do not	Noted. The focus for this budget is to limit financial impact on our ratepayers and continue to build financial resilience. Following previous year's feedback fact sheets have been introduced 'Council Rates Explained'

squander and waste the money we pay to our council. You are there to serve our community and its residents.	and 'Myth busting council rates.' They can be found on the City of Onkaparinga Your Say page.
Spend more on making our beaches more accessible to the public ramps and gardens look unsightly and dangerous not good for tourists and locals	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
The major and all the councilours are wasting rate payers money on crap. What a waste of money in a stupid wave pool. Water of money on a a vro from NZ, really you are not better than Albo, you do not listen and bend the rules to suit your pocket, You are so far in debt you not far from bankruptcy. Pay back the money you wasted on a trip overseas, never heard of zoom [REDACTED]. get your [REDACTED] act together	Thank you for your feedback. Council notes the concerns raised regarding spending priorities, major projects, financial position, and representation, and the strength of views expressed. The Aldinga Wave Pool is a privately funded commercial development. The Local Government Association Board approved funding for the LGA President and the Mayor to attend the C40 World Mayors Summit, with any additional costs met personally and no reimbursement sought from the City of Onkaparinga.
I don't know why Flahstaff Hill is in the Onkaparinga council area. Community activities are too far away and your beaches although beautiful are not local for us. It feels strange that our rates go toward a community so far removed from us. I do appreciate all the services we do receive.	Important projects, specific to the Thalassa ward can be found on the Your Say page – Thalassa Ward fact sheet.
It would be helpful to detail what aspects are funded by operational budgets and what are being sought to be covered by grants, bids, state funding etc. A few pieces of feedback: 1. Chapman Park Stump Hill Road, McLaren Vale - uncertain why this area is being noted for an upgrade with Gemmel Tassie Reserve allotted in the coming years. This park is out of town with very little foot traffic. I would put this money into Gemmel Tassie instead 2. There is already a large Christmas Pageant in McLaren Vale. Seeing as the Beachside Food & Wine festival is at Christies. Could Council better partner with McLaren Vale to make that Pageant the larger success for the region?	Noted. Comments have been forwarded to the Economic Growth and Tourism team.

Council rates are going up this year, like most years. Rates in Onkaparinga are already high, and council has no problem with raising them again. What are the council members wages? \$200k/year for a chairperson? Plus benefits? We are only paying partially for services we need - my issue is that we are paying for bureaucracy, non-essential services (that council shouldn't be involved in) and wastage of our money. Focus on road, parks and rubbish - the rest doesn't have to be done by council. Council seems to be more interested in increasing its staff and wages, and care less about the best interests of its residents. In short, my rates are going up significantly - while wages are the same - and council couldn't care less.	Thank you for your submission. Council notes the concerns raised regarding rate increases, service delivery, financial management, debt levels, governance, and transparency, and the views expressed on prioritising essential services and strengthening financial sustainability. These will be considered as part of the budget considerations.
So much wastage, the rates are way to high , its disgraceful You overspend on art project's that aren't needed , latest trucks when the old ones could run for years . Employees sitting around with engine's running during a fuel crisis. And trips overseas for useless reasons for management. Its a disgrace.	Council notes the concerns raised regarding rate increases, service delivery and the views expressed on prioritising essential services. These will be considered as part of the budget considerations.
The proposed Plan and Budget have a number of failings and Councillors need to take responsibility when they vote for higher and higher debt. The fact that the budget appears balanced but is infact balanced by approximately \$6m in additional debt does not provide Councillors or residents with a clear picture that debt is increasing. Nor is the current level of Council debt and the costs of servicing that debt clearly shown. * automatically increasing rates by the Adelaide CPI is not appropriate when the 3 largest increases in the CPI figure are housing costs, transport and food and beverages. While these components do make up some of Council costs, they are hardly a significant proportion of the total budget. I do not support the 4.9% increase and do not believe it is a representative figure of Council costs increases. * using a 4.9% cpi figure is also hardly in touch with being mindful of the cost of living pressures ratepayers are enduring. * rather than simply increasing Council revenues, surely Councillors should be given options for cost savings or cost deferrals to assist ratepayers. You could start by deferring or cancelling the Carbon Emissions review, and defer infrastructure projects while constructions costs are so inflamed. * savings could also be made by Council staying focussed on the services they should be delivering and not trying to deliver or add to services that are a Commonwealth or State responsibility. * related to a lack of clear information about the budget debt position is no, or hard to find,	Council acknowledges the importance of long-term financial sustainability. The budget applies key principles from the Long Term Financial Plan, which is updated to guide decisions and ensure Council can meet future asset and service needs. Council spending is carefully planned. Every year, the council develops an Annual Business Plan and Budget, outlining spending priorities and services for the year. Many costs are set by legislation or required for service delivery. The budget is guided by last year's community feedback for the Annual Business Plan and community survey.

information comparing this years proposed Budget to last years. Nor is there any clear information about savings Council have made or plan to make. One wonders if this is because there are none. If cost management and the constant search for savings is not occurring, then perhaps it should and Councillors and ratepayers should be advised as such.thank you	
I write to express serious concern regarding the proposed 2026-27 budget, particularly the continued increase in council debt and the proposal to increase rates above CPI at a time when many households are already under significant financial pressure. The budget appears to reflect an ongoing pattern of expenditure growth that is not sufficiently grounded in prudent financial management or core local government responsibilities. Instead, the direction of spending increasingly appears driven by ideological ambitions, expansionary projects, and discretionary initiatives that exceed the reasonable expectations of ratepayers. Rising Debt and Financial Sustainability A responsible council should prioritise long-term financial sustainability, debt restraint, and the protection of essential services. Increasing debt during a period of elevated cost of living pressures raises serious questions about financial discipline and strategic priorities. Debt itself is not inherently inappropriate; however, borrowing should be reserved for clearly justified infrastructure investments with demonstrable long-term community benefit and sound economic rationale. Instead, the current trajectory suggests an institutional reliance on borrowing to sustain a growing expenditure base. This approach risks: - transferring financial burdens onto future ratepayers; - reducing council's financial flexibility during economic downturns; - increasing future interest and servicing costs; - normalising structurally high expenditure levels; and - creating pressure for continual rate increases in future years. The community deserves greater transparency regarding: - which projects are essential versus discretionary; - the long-term debt servicing implications; - the projected debt-to-revenue ratio over coming years; and	Council notes the concerns raised regarding rate increases, service delivery and the views expressed on prioritising essential services. These will be considered as part of the budget considerations.

- what expenditure reductions were genuinely considered before proposing higher rates.

Rates Increases Above CPI

The proposal to increase rates above CPI is difficult to justify given the economic circumstances facing residents, retirees, farmers, and small businesses across the region.

Many households are already experiencing:

- increased mortgage and rent costs;
- rising electricity and insurance expenses;
- higher food and transport costs; and
- broader economic uncertainty.

Council should not assume that ratepayers possess unlimited capacity to absorb ongoing increases beyond inflation. If residents and businesses must tighten their budgets during difficult economic conditions, council should demonstrate the same restraint. A rates increase above CPI sends the message that council expenditure growth has become prioritised over affordability and financial responsibility.

Focus on Core Functions

Local government performs an important role in maintaining roads, waste collection, community safety, parks, libraries, and essential infrastructure. However, many ratepayers are increasingly concerned that councils are expanding into areas that are political, ideological, or outside traditional core responsibilities.

Council should refocus on:

- essential infrastructure maintenance;
- asset renewal;
- service efficiency;
- financial sustainability; and
- measurable value for ratepayers.

Before increasing debt and imposing above-inflation rate rises, council should undertake a comprehensive review of discretionary spending, administrative growth, consultancy expenditure, and non-essential programs. Conclusion The current budget direction risks undermining community confidence in council's financial stewardship. I respectfully submit that council should: 1. reconsider any rates increase above CPI; 2. reduce reliance on debt-funded expenditure; 3. prioritise essential services and infrastructure; 4. conduct a thorough review of discretionary spending; and 5. adopt a more disciplined and sustainable long-term financial strategy. Ratepayers expect council to exercise the same financial prudence that households and businesses are being forced to adopt in the current economic climate. Yours faithfully, [REDACTED]	
Please put a footpath in along port road. It's so dangerous to walk along in the dark and would be great for improving access for people walking to the school. All the roads like Bowering Hill Road need major improvements rather than just covering up the massive potholes for them to appear again weeks later! Trimming back the trees on the tiny footpath at the top end (port road) of Bowering Hill road would also be appreciated	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
Whilst I understand the API has changed it doesn't reflect the increased house prices. The rate is a higher percentage on an higher property assessments thus not truly reflecting the already burdensom price increase. Onkaparing already has one of the largest councils with the highest council rates. That made sense when the houses were cheaper but they're not now - prices are now on par with the wealthier suburbs. As a resident of Murray Road Port Noarlunga I can definitely confirm councils financial waste as I witnessed it for more than 6 months whilst working on the road. Still no lighting on the crest!	Noted. The focus for this budget is to limit financial impact on our ratepayers and continue to build financial resilience. Following previous year's feedback fact sheets have been introduced 'Council Rates Explained' and 'Myth busting council rates.' They can be found on the City of Onkaparinga Your Say page.

From what I hear, the upgrade to the aquatic centre has been a big waste of money. Locals want a centre with slides for older kids, fun activities for the little kids - splash area with water buckets dumping water, fountains etc. Apparently, the pools have been upgraded and most of the money spent on redoing the roof. Very disappointed. Playgrounds in the area are not appealing. They should all be fenced completely so that parents of young children (especially ADHD, ASD) can relax and not have to chase wandering kids. We need more playgrounds with hands on equipment for ASD kids. A lot of the playgrounds on Yorke Peninsula were wheelchair friendly but I have seen any in our area. What a fantastic draw card that would be to bring people into our vicinity and support local businesses for lunch etc. I wish that we had an ice arena here again. We need fun activities for our teenagers to keep them off the streets. Imagine if the old Bunnings site could have been used as a recreation site - bmx track, ice skating, adventure playground etc. The new wave park at Aldinga will disappointingly be out of everyone's budget. Very expensive. I hear that there is trouble with a conflict of interest issue with the Mayor at the moment. Doesn't sound good. It's not fair when our rates have to go up because of expensive trips/travel by Council, overspending on projects, blowouts to the budget, indulgent food & wine expenses by Council etc. People are elected to Council to represent us, not have a good time at our expense. Our council area keeps getting so many more houses built, but infrastructure like schools, hospitals, roads, parks, upkeep to roads & footpaths, bridges don't get planned to cope with the extra people. We are starting to live in an unsafe council area for daily living or if emergencies were to happen. What can you do to reduce the number of shopping trolleys on the footpaths? People should be fined or made to take them back, or the trolleys have a locking mechanism to stay in the car park area. The streets are being spoiled by all these trolleys and we look like idiots for letting this happen. Some people have no respect and shouldn't get away with this. It has been happening out North for some time and now we are no better. Its degrading and embarrassing. Thanks for listening.	Thank you for your feedback, your concerns regarding spending priorities, inclusive and youth-focused recreation, infrastructure planning, and community amenity issues such as shopping trolleys are noted. Your input will help inform Council's planning, advocacy, and future investment decisions. Updates on the Noarlunga Aquatic Centre and other important projects can be found on the Your Say page.
I can see the council has put in a lot of work in developing the business plan. What i fail to see the planned improvement in the Thalassa Ward, specifically Aberfoyle Park. Other than the redevelopment of the BMX track at Minkarra Park, what other improvement have been planned? It would be good to do a review of the footpaths or lack off in the Aberfoyle Park areas, especially on Manning Road and adjoining streets. The planned events are often not within this ward and I find that we miss out a lot in terms of developments (whether it is parks or playgrounds), events and community projects.	Important projects, specific to the Thalassa ward can be found on the Your Say page – Thalassa Ward fact sheet.

Show us how you are removing unnecessary bureaucracy, reducing your expenditure by removing unnecessary bureaucracy, rather than just hike up our rates. CPI can say one thing, but you can trim the fat and help us during a 'cost of government crisis'.	Council spending is carefully planned. Every year, the council develops an Annual Business Plan and Budget, outlining spending priorities and services for the year. Many costs are set by legislation or required for service delivery.
All non essential spending should be held off for 12 months. Things like redeveloping the moana surf club change rooms is not essential. Its far more important that families can keep a roof over their heads and actually feed themselves. Hold off all non essential spending for 12 months and get the budget and debt under control. I want to do things to my house, but I have to wait until I actually have the funds to do it, I cant just turn around and tell my work they need to pay me more so I can pay for it.	Council spending is carefully planned. Every year, the council develops an Annual Business Plan and Budget, outlining spending priorities and services for the year. Many costs are set by legislation or required for service delivery.
Well done Council on working out CPI is more now than it was in Dec & then upping rates accordingly - I wonder if that will ever work in OUR favour. Yep, unlikely	Noted, thank you.
I think in this time of belt tightening every cent of spending needs to be scrutinised. I think far too much money is spent on sporting facilities to the detriment of the bread and butter essentials. I am 77 years of age and struggle to keep my nature strip tidy because it needs to be done although so many people don't bother.	Thank you for your feedback, your concerns regarding spending priorities are noted. Your input will help inform Council's planning, advocacy, and future investment decisions.
How about you cut spending on unnecessary overpriced art installations and things of that nature. Stick to core duties required to run the area and stop treating ratepayers like a bottomless funds supply. If you haven't noticed, we are in a cost of living crisis and we already pay high enough rates as it is so we are sick of seeing those funds being wasted. If council is so determined to cram 1000's of extra houses in the area then their rates should cover the services required, don't make the rest of us prop them up.	Thank you for your feedback, your concerns regarding spending priorities are noted. Your input will help inform Council's planning, advocacy, and future investment decisions.
The councils spending absolutely does not reflect the current economic environment for residents and fails to listen to concerns, or alternate ideas for the budget and services. Services being cut, whilst luxury spending on art works etc, especially at a time residents are having to make difficult budgeting choices is a very poor look for council. Cutting discretionary spending, reducing staffing to all but necessary staffing, reducing the overpriced wage package for the CEO (She needs to lead by example), cut luxury spending are all better options than putting the	Thank you for your feedback, your concerns regarding spending priorities are noted. Your input will help inform Council's planning, advocacy, and future investment decisions.

onus on residents. A full audit of the councils budgeting and finances need to be done by an independent advisor. The current council appears to be completely out of touch with the residents and continues to seek feedback with deaf ears and no concern for real opinions. The concern over the integrity of the CEO, Mayor and councillors needs to be addressed with honesty.	
Do not support any carbon initiatives or climate expenditure. The council must be committed to spending our rate money on community tangibles, not climate or climate legislative issues.	Noted, thank you.
I am writing as a retired ratepayer regarding the Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2026-27. I am on a fixed income and cannot continue absorbing ongoing rate increases. Living costs have risen across groceries, insurance, utilities, fuel and medical expenses, while retirement income has not kept pace. Rates have increased by approximately 7.9% in 2023-24, 6.8% in 2024-25, 2.2% in 2025-26, and now a proposed 3.3% in 2026-27. This is a cumulative increase of approximately 21.7% over four budget cycles. Property values have also increased, which means council receives more through the rating system. However, higher house values do not give retirees more income. Many retirees are asset rich but income poor. Council should not keep passing financial pressure onto ratepayers. Before increasing rates again, council should review internal costs, staffing structures, salaries, perks, credit card use, discretionary spending and non-essential projects. Spending should focus on core services: roads, waste, parks, open spaces, coastal management and essential community services. Public art, promotional projects and other non-essential spending should be paused until council's financial position improves. I urge council to reduce costs, reduce debt, focus on essential services and limit further rate increases. Regards Kim Scoble	Thank you for your feedback, your concerns regarding spending priorities are noted. Your input will help inform Council's planning, advocacy, and future investment decisions.
Council don't care about us residents they spend spend spend but what do we see from not much at all the cut services but up our rates. Put a report for anything and the Council brush it off or do nothing about it	Council spending is carefully planned. Every year, the council develops an Annual Business Plan and Budget, outlining spending priorities and services for the year. Many costs are set by legislation or required for service delivery.
Half of these councilors and of course the mayor are wasting taxpayers money on schemes that are not inline with the residents wishes but their own personal interests and agendas and the mayor herself should be ashamed and resign after the waste of taxpayers money for her own	Council spending is carefully planned. Every year, the council develops an Annual Business Plan and Budget, outlining spending priorities and services

little reason instead of the community service and needs embezzlement is a crime and breaching local government laws should be instant dismissal	for the year. Many costs are set by legislation or required for service delivery.
I am writing to provide feedback on the Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2026-27. I acknowledge the importance of maintaining essential council services such as roads, waste collection, libraries, parks, open spaces, coastal management and community facilities. However, I am deeply concerned that council continues to rely on rate increases while many residents are already under significant financial pressure. Like many families across our community, households are being forced to review their budgets, cut unnecessary expenses and prioritise only what is essential. I believe council should be expected to apply the same level of discipline before asking ratepayers to contribute more. The council's own community feedback shows that residents key priorities are environment and coastal management, open spaces, parks and natural resources, roads, waste and recycling, and community services, programs and grants. These are the practical, everyday services residents expect council to focus on. The same feedback also shows that only 45% of residents believe their income is enough to meet their needs. This should be treated as a serious warning. Many households cannot continue absorbing rate increases without first seeing clear evidence that council has reviewed its own internal costs, reduced unnecessary spending and made genuine operational changes. Over recent years, residents have experienced repeated rate increases, including approximately 7.9% in 2023-24, 6.8% in 2024-25, 2.2% in 2025-26, and now a proposed 3.3% increase for 2026-27. Over the past four budget cycles, this represents a cumulative increase of approximately 21.7%. At a time when many households are already struggling with mortgage pressure, rent increases, insurance, groceries and utilities, this ongoing rise is becoming increasingly difficult for the community to absorb. I am also concerned that council continues to carry significant debt and long-term financial pressure. The budget shows forecast borrowings of approximately \$129.9 million by June 2027, against a debt ceiling of \$143 million. The Long Term Financial Plan also acknowledges that council has experienced operating deficits for seven consecutive years and that ESCOSA has identified concerns about financial sustainability. This demonstrates that the current financial model requires stronger reform. Council cannot continue to treat rate increases as the default solution while residents are already tightening their own household budgets.	Spending is carefully planned. Every year, the council develops an Annual Business Plan and Budget, outlining spending priorities and services for the year. Many costs are set by legislation or required for service delivery. Council acknowledges the importance of long-term financial sustainability. The budget applies key principles from the Long Term Financial Plan, which is updated to guide decisions and ensure Council can meet future asset and service needs.

I believe change is needed in the following areas.

First, council should conduct a full review of internal operations, staffing structures and job descriptions. This should include whether roles are still necessary, whether there is duplication across departments, whether services can be delivered more efficiently, and whether redundancies are required in non-essential areas.

Second, council should review executive and management salaries, salary increases, allowances, perks, credit card use and discretionary internal spending. Before residents are asked to pay more, council should be able to clearly demonstrate that internal costs have been properly examined and reduced where possible.

Third, council should publish clear cost-saving targets and report publicly on progress. Residents deserve to know what savings have already been achieved, what departments have been reviewed, what operational spending has been reduced, and how these savings are being used to reduce debt or limit future rate increases.

Fourth, discretionary and non-essential projects should be paused until council's financial position improves. I do not believe public art, promotional projects, activation programs, branding initiatives or nice to have beautification works should continue while council remains under significant financial pressure. Families do not continue luxury spending when they are carrying major debt, and council should apply the same principle.

Fifth, council spending should be tightly aligned with the community's stated priorities. Residents are asking for practical basics: better roads, maintained parks and open spaces, waste and recycling services, coastal and environmental protection, and responsible spending. These should come before projects that do not directly address core service delivery or financial sustainability.

I urge council to focus on:

- * reducing debt
- * strengthening financial sustainability
- * prioritising essential infrastructure and maintenance
- * reviewing staffing structures and internal operational costs
- * pausing non-essential spending
- * publishing cost-saving targets

* showing residents where savings have been made before increasing rates further The community has stood united in saying that enough is enough. Residents are doing everything they can to manage rising costs, and council must demonstrate the same discipline, accountability and restraint. Thank you for considering this feedback. ██████████ ██████████ Woodcroft	
Thanks for devising the plan. I will only comment on what I feel could improve. I believe the plan needs to look at equity. For example, I noted the improvement for young people with BMX tracks; however, illegal and unmonitored tracks are frequently being made. Many people now are increasingly navigating their walks around ditches and jumps despite the councils attempts to support young people. This is the same as cycle paths now being dominated by e bikes. As much as I want young people to participate in outdoor activities that are in controlled environments- due to the rising trend of the BMX sport - the environment is dominated and not monitored when illegal tracks are made. The basketball facilities off states road are shocking. It would be good to upgrade these facilities so that recreation can be undertaken in a controlled environment which will also decrease destructive behaviours. This facility is appalling. I noted the wages and expenses the council can claim. I call for more transparency here. I noted older people have some improvements in recreation in terms of bowling etc. Maintaining the current environment and monitoring it would support older people's recreation. Please address the speeding in residential areas as there is great disparity especially when councils border. Onkaparinga seem to have higher speed limits, disparity and less caution than for example Mitcham even though some roads cross over and border. I noted you ask for an email address to share updates : Please add customer relations to the plan as in 10 years of living in this area not once has anyone contacted me re significant issues or reported vandalism despite having identified the source of the problem and left phone numbers and emails	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.

The council waste on unnecessary projects, not listening to residents and their concerns, the cost of running the council is way to high like any government agency. Maybe cutting the size and waste would be a start without putting the rates up.	Council spending is carefully planned. Every year, the council develops an Annual Business Plan and Budget, outlining spending priorities and services for the year. Many costs are set by legislation or required for service delivery.
Your draft increase is unacceptable and you need to go back and reassess where your spending rather than continuing to increase rates while increasing debt.	Council spending is carefully planned. Every year, the council develops an Annual Business Plan and Budget, outlining spending priorities and services for the year. Many costs are set by legislation or required for service delivery.
Throw this out and start again. DEBT REDUCTION should be first and foremost. Pare it back to roads, improving waste services for residents, and maintenance of libraries, verges etc only. No new spending on community groups, artwork, beach road festivals, sculptures or playgrounds until the debt is paid down.	Council acknowledges the importance of long-term financial sustainability. The budget applies key principles from the Long Term Financial Plan, which is updated to guide decisions and ensure Council can meet future asset and service needs.
Cancel this waste of money: Deliver the How to Adult program series.Undertake a council facilities/projects carbon emissions review covering carbon emissions measurement, reduction goals, and an approach to using renewable electricity and offsetting carbon emissions.\$741,000Arts Centre upgrade - Gawler St, Port NoarlungaCancel all tennis court upgrades this year and the Stryker driving range. Get your bloody finances under control, enough is enough.	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
Biggest bunch of liars who are just money hungry who want people to sell so the spaces get sub divided which means more money for the onkaparinga grubs	Thank you for sharing your feedback. We understand there are strong concerns in the community about development and financial priorities, and we take these views seriously. Your input will be considered as part of our ongoing planning and community engagement processes.
Stop increasing the rates by so much. You are already raking it in due to houseprices increasing by A LOT.	Noted. The focus for this budget is to limit financial impact on our ratepayers and continue to build financial resilience.

	Following previous year's feedback fact sheets have been introduced 'Council Rates Explained' and 'Myth busting council rates.' They can be found on the City of Onkaparinga Your Say page.
I do not support a rate rise and I seek a rate reduction. Council has grown its services beyond what the community can afford and urgently needs to review and reduce its services and overall budget expenditure. It is time for Council to undertake significant structural reform to reduce the financial burden on the community. Council needs to return to core service delivery. Council needs to classify its services as either legislatively required or discretionary and then review the level of service / cost of each service and genuinely engage with the community on what it is willing to pay for. It appears the administration particularly, is out of sync with community expectations. We are at an inflection point where the community can no longer afford the cost of local government in its current form and a significant intervention is required to bring it back to a series of affordable services.	Thank you for sharing your feedback. We understand there are strong concerns in the community about development and financial priorities, and we take these views seriously. Your input will be considered as part of our ongoing planning and community engagement processes.
Council needs to review its spending on vanity projects and excessive employee benefits. Everyone is tightening their spending habits and scrutinising their budgets. It looks like you are just increasing rates to cover costs and not looking for ways to reduce spending and operate efficiently	Thank you for your feedback, your concerns regarding spending priorities are noted. Your input will help inform Council's planning, advocacy, and future investment decisions.
Raising rates is unreasonable on residents. Revenue wastage on unnecessary sculptures and CEO business trips, and dodgy council member tax claims must stop before considering continuing to bleed residents dry during the prolonged cost of living crisis, fuel crisis, interest rate rises, leading to an inevitable recession. Do better.	Thank you for your feedback, your concerns regarding spending priorities are noted. Your input will help inform Council's planning, advocacy, and future investment decisions.
An absolute absurd amount of financial spending on art and dog parks and wages. Cut back the wages for a start. Businesses are crisis managing and wages keep going up in Onkaparinga. Our parks and weeds on our sidewalks are overgrown that would be a start. No art installations please and hire staff within the country let alone the state.	Council acknowledges the feedback regarding prioritisation of essential services and expenditure.
Mostly I just want to know that rates are being used with efficiency and council is making the best use of funds possible. I don't like to think of money being wasted on things it shouldn't, such as overseas trips which could be avoided with the use of zoom. Scrap net zero and leftie	Thank you for your feedback. We recognise the importance of using funds efficiently and delivering essential services while minimising unnecessary costs. Your views on spending

nonsense and focus on individual autonomy, not over governance and excessive red tape, and providing the best service on the tightest possible budget. It's not rocket science.	priorities and governance will be considered as part of the ongoing budget planning process.
Council are wasting rate payers money on stupid things and salaries that shouldn't be as high as they are, CEOs for starters..... Rates are extremely expensive and are over the top for what residents get. Reduce the rates or please give us more services that we can actually use!	Council acknowledges the feedback regarding prioritisation of essential services and expenditure.
The rate increase has just been identified as potentially 4.9%. Does this mean the total rates figure (ie: fixed charge, and variable charge) will increase 4.9%, or is it only applicable to the variable charge, meaning the fixed charge may increase by a different percentage? Also it's impossible to give feedback on rates unless the council explains exactly what the new rates will be BEFORE the Your Say cut off date of May 10th. Please advise if I am to get a response to this or if I need to raise it with my councillors as a question on notice to get a response.	Noted. The focus for this budget is to limit financial impact on our ratepayers and continue to build financial resilience. Following previous year's feedback fact sheets have been introduced 'Council Rates Explained' and 'Myth busting council rates.' They can be found on the City of Onkaparinga Your Say page.
Noting the significant difference between the actual CPI figures and the estimation in the Draft Budget, propose that rate increases do not use the actual CPI figure but instead a middle figure between CPI (4.9%) and the estimated CPI (3.3%) - e.g. around 4%. This better reflects draft budget outcomes while still giving a slight increase overall and moderating the cost of living impact of rate rises on residents.	Noted. The focus for this budget is to limit financial impact on our ratepayers and continue to build financial resilience.
Balance the budget, no increases. Cut everything you have to (including staff and mayors wage). Every taxpayer has to live to what they earn, nobody gets to ask for more wages because they spend more. Enough is enough, no rate rises for the next 5 years to balance out the above CPI increases you have had us endure for decades.	Council acknowledges the importance of long-term financial sustainability. The budget applies key principles from the Long Term Financial Plan, which is updated to guide decisions and ensure Council can meet future asset and service needs.
I am writing to strongly object to the City of Onkaparinga's continued decision to spend ratepayer funds on unnecessary artwork, public art installations, and extensive capital projects for sports clubs and recreation facilities that are already operating acceptably, while council rates remain among the highest in the region and visible frontline services are minimal. With many households already under severe pressure from the housing and cost of living crisis, it is unacceptable that we are being asked to pay more in council rates while being priced out of basic essentials. Council has chosen to invest tens of millions of dollars over recent years into sports club buildings, clubrooms, lighting upgrades, resurfacing courts, and other enhancement projects, despite the fact that many of these clubs are already functional and well used. If those	Thank you for your detailed submission. We acknowledge your concerns regarding spending priorities, rate affordability, transparency, and the balance between discretionary projects and core services. Your feedback will be carefully considered as part of Council's Annual Business Plan and Budget deliberations.

facilities are good enough for regular community use, then shiny new clubrooms and cosmetic upgrades should not be funded at the expense of ordinary ratepayers. The claim that a medium sized household pays around \$520-\$600 per quarter for bin collection and servicing is not only difficult to reconcile with the level of service we receive, but it also lacks transparency. Residents deserve a clear, line by line breakdown of where this money actually goes: fuel, trucks, labour, landfill or processing fees, and administration. Without this, it is impossible to trust that our money is being spent responsibly. Instead of increasing spend on non essential art installations, flashy foreshore features, and capital upgrades for sports clubs and recreation facilities that are already functioning, council should immediately freeze all discretionary and nice to have projects. Funding should be redirected towards core services such as waste collection, road maintenance, drainage, and essential infrastructure that directly affects every household, not just the handful of clubs or locations that benefit from photo op projects. Council must also cap rate increases more tightly to genuine CPI, and stop using CPI plus growth as an excuse to fund prestige projects that do not address the urgent financial strain experienced by residents. In short, council should stop spending ratepayer money on artwork, vanity projects, and unnecessary sports club upgrades, and instead prioritize affordability, transparency, and real world services that residents can actually see and benefit from every day. Hopefully with the reduction of spending on unnecessary projects you can pass the savings on to the Onkaparinga home owners struggling at this time.	
I do not feel the council put any thought into the people they are supposed to support in regards to this budget. There is ongoing unrest within this council region and feel that it is not listening to what the people say.	Council spending is carefully planned. Every year, the council develops an Annual Business Plan and Budget, outlining spending priorities and services for the year. Many costs are set by legislation or required for service delivery.
Council is so out of touch for us a residents. They keep saying what they are doing to the money put all i see happening is services being cut and my rate been put up or the mayor doing trips away while us the residents are coving that. This cou cil is so far out of touch its not funny	Council acknowledges the feedback regarding prioritisation of essential services and expenditure, including concerns about discretionary spending.
Customer phone service has been poor + ineffectual in regard to:- 1. Number of pets a a single storey suburban household can have , only to be told 15 cays was acceptable unless a nuisance by a paid council operator/ staff worker. 2. Any problems of broken asbestos fences not removed by investment owner landlord despite	Noted, your feedback has been forwarded to the relevant teams.

repeated ineffectual conversations, difficult since council regulations of wood, brick or asbestos fencing only 1980's. 3. Conduct of previous staff responsible for outstanding meetings/party/ celebration/ vehicle use debts, which have been passed on to the home owners. 4. Certain council staff member responsible for providing meagre disability and aged care services to Onkaparinga home owners (not that council staff's family members of course), asking if they could manage that NDIS client's NDIS plans! It is little wonder that many home-owners seek advice from other councils to sort out their problems with Onkaparinga council and certain staff members. These comments are not a reflection all other staff members who are polite, professional and helpful. Such a pity!	
The council needs to stop increasing its enormous debt. We as citizens are constantly told we need to live within our means, council does not. Keep essential services, cut pointless jobs, significantly reduce spending and aim to be debt free sometime in our lifetime. The reputation Onkaparinga City Council has for being incredibly hard to deal with when it comes to approvals for new developments and businesses is something that needs to change. You work for us, we don't work for you. Start acting like it. You're not a business, you're an unnecessary level of government and your attitude needs to change, quit the political posturing and get back to basics	Thank you for your feedback. Council acknowledges your concerns regarding debt, spending priorities, and the need to focus on essential services and efficient processes, including development approvals. Your input will be considered as part of ongoing planning and efforts to improve service delivery and financial management.
Plan lacks details - too much double talk. Come out and say what the rate increase will be, that's what people want to know. The latest CPI figures are out but still no rate increase amount given. Either Council is incompetent or untrustworthy.	Thank you for your feedback. We understand community expectations for clear and transparent information on proposed rate increases and acknowledge your concerns around the level of detail provided. Your comments will be considered as we continue to refine how we communicate budget information to the community.
Having an email left unresponded to for weeks highlights the fact to me that \$1.94 of \$100 spent on communications isn't the right balance. What exactly is 'maintenance and upgrades' expensive I would say.	Thank you for your feedback. We acknowledge your concerns regarding communication responsiveness and clarity around spending categories such as maintenance and upgrades. Your comments will be considered as we review

	service levels and how we communicate with the community.
I am writing to provide feedback on the draft 2026-2027 annual budget, particularly the proposed 3.3% rates increase. I strongly oppose this increase given the current cost-of-living pressures facing residents. Many households in our community are already struggling with rising costs for essentials such as housing, groceries, utilities, and insurance. An increase in council rates, even at what may seem like a modest level, adds further strain at a time when people can least afford it. I urge the council to reconsider this approach and instead focus on reducing or deferring non-essential spending for the coming financial year. Prioritising core services and essential infrastructure while postponing discretionary projects would demonstrate an understanding of the financial challenges residents are facing. This is a time for restraint and careful financial management. The community expects the same level of prudence from council that households are being forced to adopt in their own budgets. I ask that the council take these concerns seriously and revise the proposed budget to minimise the burden on ratepayers. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.	Thank you for sharing your feedback. We understand there are strong concerns in the community about development and financial priorities, and we take these views seriously. Your input will be considered as part of our ongoing planning and community engagement processes.
New housing developments and the additional rate payers should drive rate costs down. City of Onkaparinga: A major southern growth area with massive projects including Onkaparinga Heights (2,000 homes), Sellicks Beach (1,700 homes), and Aldinga developments yet rates go up. Greed. This council has ruined my town of Kangarilla with a development and no decrease in my rates. The additional traffic on our country roads due to the Kangarilla and Meadows developments have made driving a nightmare and the road noise at our property has changed our way of living permanently. No more sitting in the backyard, relaxing, it's not possible with the racing traffic and ten of barking bloody dogs from the development. Nothing gained as a loyal ratepayer from this development just another 3.3% increase.	Council acknowledges your concerns about the impact of growth, including increased traffic, changes to local amenity, and expectations around rates and development benefits. Your input will be considered as part of Council's ongoing planning, growth management, and budget decision-making processes.
Affordable housing and living is the highest priority for me personally as a resident living in the City of Onkaparinga.	Noted, thank you.
Council needs to significantly and directly invest in services and programs that support business being created, developed and grown in the Onkaparinga region. This includes a proactive role to help entrepreneurial and business minded residents transform ideas into self-employment and ventures. Don't defer this to state and commonwealth governments, because it has real benefits locally. 42% of all local employment is created in and by small business. Sustainable and	Thank you for your thoughtful feedback. We acknowledge your strong interest in greater investment in local business development, entrepreneurship, and economic development across the region. Your suggestions will be

profitable local business contributes to community and council prosperity. Local business owners are not just residents and ratepayers, but Jobmakers and return commercial level rate revenue to increase council budget for investing in community needs. The \$6 Million or so, I see provided in the budget is not enough to provide a significant and increased ROI in place-based economic development. Onkaparinga is not doing enough in our region to overtly encourage real complexity and diversity in the local economy beyond traditional tourism, horticulture and agriculture. We need a Centre for entrepreneurship and business excellence and take charge of and own our economic future. It is far more cost effective and impactful to nurture and grow businesses locally, (they already have a vested interest) than 'investment attraction' in competition with other regions. This includes nurturing young minds to entrepreneurship and business pathways, not just workforce pathways to increase economic diversity in our region. This will encourage young to stay and settle in our region instead of looking for opportunities elsewhere and potentially move out. Just my thoughts and observation. Our families have been in the region, since the 1970s and 1990s. Multiple home ownerships and encouraging our kids to build or buy locally.	considered as part of Council's ongoing planning and budget considerations to support a more resilient and locally driven economy.
Rates MUST to be frozen for at least 12 months given the current and expected upheaval in world events which is likely to severely impact households. Expenditure MUST to be very seriously curtailed URGENTLY. The proposed budget needs to be revised/ redrafted.	Noted. The focus for this budget is to limit financial impact on our ratepayers and continue to build financial resilience.
1. Valuer General to re-asses how they value rural land - look at what income comes off the land not just size of land. 2. Look at rezoning of rural land east of South Road so some sub dividing is allowed. We are asset rich but cashflow poor, pulling out grapes as no buyers anymore. We cannot sub divide our land which is unfair. 3. Seal Rogers Road, a big waste of money maintaining it every year. We've lived on this road for 36 years and nothing has changed in that time, dusty and dirty, no footpaths or lighting. Disappointing when we are paying over \$4,000 a year in rates - this is a big percentage of our income.	Thank you for your feedback. We recognise the importance of using funds efficiently and delivering essential services while minimising unnecessary costs. Your views on spending priorities and governance will be considered as part of the ongoing budget planning process.
Like many residents in the Onkaparinga area, I am currently experiencing significant cost-of-living pressures. Households are being forced to make difficult decisions every day to manage rising expenses, including fuel, groceries, insurance and housing costs. In this environment, it is both concerning and frustrating to see Council propose increased rates while attributing this largely to rising fuel costs. Fuel price increases are not unique to Council they are being absorbed by every household and business. The difference is that residents do not have the ability to simply pass these costs on. Instead, we are required to adjust, reduce spending, and prioritise essential needs.	Noted. The focus for this budget is to limit financial impact on our ratepayers and continue to build financial resilience. Council acknowledges the importance of long-term financial sustainability. The budget applies key principles from the Long Term Financial Plan, which is updated to guide decisions and ensure Council can meet future asset and service needs.

It is therefore reasonable to expect that the Council would demonstrate the same level of financial discipline before seeking additional contributions from residents. I ask that Council clearly outline: What non-essential projects, upgrades, or discretionary spending have been reduced or deferred in response to current economic conditions; What internal efficiencies have been identified and implemented to minimise the impact on ratepayers; Why increasing rates has been prioritised over adjusting expenditure. Without this level of transparency, it is difficult to accept that this approach is balanced or reflects the financial reality faced by the community. I strongly urge Council to reconsider its position and ensure that any budget decisions reflect not only operational needs, but also the genuine capacity of residents to absorb further financial pressure.	
It is exciting to see improvements to our community, such as the Driving Range, community building renewals, Surf Lifesaving club renewals, fitness classes, swimming lessons, etc. These all add community connection and pride. However, under the current phase of significant financial pressure and increasing cost of living, I will be forced to tighten my own budget at home. Ironically, my sacrifices will include no longer paying to go to a Driving Range anywhere near as much, I won't be paying for much needed building repairs and renewals to my own aging house, etc. It is disappointing that a reduction (or even non-increase) to rates was not a large priority for this budget, when I am forced to reduce my own budget at home. Seeing these projects will not currently fill me with usual pride, but frustration. Please don't hesitate to return to quality improvements in the future when the cost of living allows it (the recent improvements to community spaces have been very impressive, thank you!) but for now please focus more on just budgeting for the necessities, not the niceties, like the rest of us.	Thank you for your feedback. We acknowledge your support for community improvements alongside your concerns about cost-of-living pressures and the need to prioritise essential services over discretionary projects at this time.
There needs to be more focus on greening Onkaparinga and looking after our nature reserves and parklands. Initiatives like Community Tree Giveaway are so disappointing, as 1000 free trees barely covers a fraction of the resident population. Many rate payers are missing out and thus less green space is created, less habitat for wildlife, more urban heat from roads and higher density housing, and the community miss out on all of the benefits from trees. We need to provide more funding for these initiatives within the budget, as well as continually tackling	Thank you for your feedback. We appreciate your suggestions regarding increased investment in greening initiatives, maintaining natural areas, and enhancing community programs.

weeds such as olives and broom and council tree planting programs. The community information sessions are fantastic, informative and help connection between ratepayers. Ratepayers love the libraries, accessible footpaths and beautiful places to gather in the community - these areas really improve quality of life. Please stop hiring contractors to do the landscaping for projects as they don't maintain them long term and look unloved and ugly very quickly - I'm sure the council gardeners can take pride in this work instead. To improve cash flow, please consider discounts for rates paid annually. To avoid people dumping rubbish in our bush, please consider tip passes annually -this will save money long term and encourage people to recycle. Thank you for taking the budget and business plan seriously - we love our area in the world.	
Very unhappy with the 3.3% rates increase. During the current financial crisis the Council should be reducing the rates to give the poorer residents some financial respite. We currently have no green waste drop-off service as this essential service was removed to pay for ridiculous, unwanted and embarrassing art works that were installed in McLaren Vale and probably other areas. Our Council should be there to provide essential services to people who need assistance and coordinated common systems like roads, waste and essential infrastructure. Our planning services in McLaren Vale are terrible. We have a town that is dying in the hands of the Business Groups that dominate decision-making. We have zero consultation in our town on planning. It's no wonder we have ended up with a Main Road full of hairdressers. We have only one pub, our restaurants are closing and we are now getting a second petrol station that we don't need. Does no-one in Planning have any idea about planning controls? The only consultation that occurs is conducted through the greedy traders in our town and there are no decisions made that benefit residents. Meanwhile our rates go higher and higher to pay the Council salaries of nearly \$100 million. This is obscene and the Councillors need to make some important decisions to cut costs, reduce the salary bill, end unnecessary non-essential services like appalling sculptures.	Thank you for your feedback. Council acknowledges your concerns regarding rate increases, service levels, planning processes, and the prioritisation of spending, including essential services and community consultation.
Why are council not doing anything about the traffic congestion through Port Noarlunga and Christie's beach every morning and afternoon. There is not even a mention of this in the proposed budget, If there was a car accident or health emergency in Port Noarlunga South how are ambulance drivers expected to get there. Do people have to die before this problem is addressed More and more housing is being approved over the bridge without the infrastructure	Noted. City of Onkaparinga continues to advocate to improve the gateway to the south with upgrades to infrastructure on state government managed roads.

to support why don't you listen to the people that pay your rates I think we would all prefer a solution to the road congestion from the Noarlunga expressway exit to Seaford than a ridiculously expensive driving range or stupid yellow lines painted down all our streets air can't park in our streets	
I can't see the need for the 3,3% rate increase. My rates have increased a lot (more than 3,3%) due to increased house valuations. I don't get any additional services and can't see why it is needed. The increase adds to inflation.	Noted. The focus for this budget is to limit financial impact on our ratepayers and continue to build financial resilience. Following previous year's feedback fact sheets have been introduced 'Council Rates Explained' and 'Myth busting council rates.' They can be found on the City of Onkaparinga Your Say page.
I have found the submission a pack of lies! Might I remind council charged an extra amount last year of the probability of excessive increase that did not come to pass!And so to this year, and I now challenge council to explain the definition of affordable housing???????? Then of course lets get to the so called sea levels rising, NOAA, addresses this issues through numerous monitoring stations around the world, name one place in the council area that has succumbed to an increase in the sea levels????? Then lets get to the Climate Change bullshit, in the middle east, one oil fire pumps more carbon into the air than Australia can counteract in a thousand years! So again another lie, because its not carbon that affects the earth so much, its water. The Tahitian volcanic eruption proves this, its history. Yeah, the Australian plate moves to the north east 750mm per year, the magnetic poles are in the process of shifting, and upper council still believes in the tooth fairy. Expenditure to resurface roads is ridiculous, why not just fix the many potholes on the roads. And who inspects contractors that excavate over roads????? There is such a thing as compaction tests! So lets get onto footpaths, how many are trip hazards because there are no expansion joints, which is great because an individual who injures themselves has to prove the contractor negligent, what a cope out, let alone the amount of paths damaged by trucks, even those under the employ of council. It appears also that council members have their own agendas and do not participate in apolitical way! Is this corruption to favour their agenda's! Then of course ther is the boom of housing construction in the area, no mention of being proactive, but wait till later and be reactive! I can go on and on. But especially that a vacancy existed in the council and no action was taken to resolve it????? Sounds like a sell off! And how many green spaces are green with weeds in winter and a dust bowl in winter, why not just put houses in the area. Plus	Council appreciates you taking the time to share your views and understand you have a number of concerns regarding spending, and service delivery. Your feedback on transparency, infrastructure, environmental management, and governance has been noted. These comments will inform ongoing improvements and be considered in future planning and decision-making processes.

there is the debt, what a joke, no real attempt to lower debt has eventuated. And the calculation of rates is the worst in the state! No confidence in the managerial of the council itself!	
Don't spend so much money on council buildings. Stop approving putting 6 townhouses on a block that used to have one house. Give us back free green waste and mattress disposal. Don't increase rates which are already extortionate in a cost of living crisis especially when other far nicer council areas pay far less despite their houses being valued far higher. Don't let the mayor bully our only good councillors into resigning.	Thank you for your feedback, your concerns regarding spending priorities are noted. Your input will help inform Council's planning, advocacy, and future investment decisions.
Bill stress is a real issue in the local area and money should be cut and library & community services should be cut by at least 20%.In this day and age the community services budget is just way to big and more increase to council rates is an un fair burdon on the local community.	Noted. Council understand concerns about cost-of-living pressures and the impact of rates on households, as well as views on funding priorities for community services. Your comments will be considered as part of Council's ongoing budget review process.
The Council workers / safety officers need to be monitored better. Almost everytime i see them, they are standing around doing nothing or sitting on their phones. Need to be supervised better	Noted, thank you.
Whilst I appreciate that running a business (ie council) comes at a cost, there has been years of wasted revenue. Perhaps there needs to be a tightening of the purse from the top down. Whilst during the current economic and global difficulties, most businesses are reducing their overheads, the same should be done by the council. There also needs to be more transparency on everything coming from the council and I applauded Cr Marion for her constant updates and POV on her Facebook page.	Noted, thank you. The focus for this budget is to limit financial impact on our ratepayers and continue to build financial resilience. Council acknowledges the importance of long-term financial sustainability. The budget applies key principles from the Long Term Financial Plan, which is updated to guide decisions and ensure Council can meet future asset and service needs.
Free green waste drop off (15 times a year) was discontinued a couple of years ago. Council's reasoning for this was that the service was not utilised by enough ratepayers and was to be treated as a "user pays" service. Libraries and Community Services, in my opinion, are also not utilised by enough ratepayers, so should be made a "user pays" service similar to free green	Thank you for your feedback. We understand concerns about cost-of-living pressures and the impact of rates on households, as well as views on funding priorities for community services.

waste. Why should ratepayers that do not use libraries and community services, have to subsidise those that do? Council should focus on Rates, Roads, Reserves and Rubbish!	
Most residents in our community are doing it tough - struggling to pay rent/mortgages and put food on the table for their families. This is where we need to tighten our belt and make our money stretch further - where the nice to haves go on the backburner so essentials can be a priority. This is what council needs to do for the next few years - focus on the essentials, and put the non essential projects on hold. Things like playground/sporting club upgrades, driving range at Pt Noarlunga, public art. Yes, these things all have a place in our community and are important - but when families are losing their homes and going to bed hungry, then these things don't seem so important.	Noted. Council understand concerns about cost-of-living pressures and the impact of rates on households, as well as views on funding priorities for community services. Your comments will be considered as part of Council's ongoing budget review process.
Council ratepayers are being pushed to the limit, and it's becoming increasingly difficult to see where the value is. Rates continue to rise year after year, yet many residents feel there is little meaningful return in terms of improved services, infrastructure, or tangible community benefit. A major concern is the disproportionate amount of money being directed toward consultation processes. While community engagement is important, it cannot come at the expense of actually delivering the projects and services that residents need. Too often, consultation appears to replace action rather than inform it, leaving communities frustrated and no better off. For residents in the Fleurieu region, this issue is even more acute. On top of rising general rates, they are required to pay an additional CWMS fee of nearly \$700. The removal of the rebate has only intensified the burden, with households now left questioning what exactly they are receiving in return for this significant cost. Essential services should be transparent, fair, and demonstrably beneficial not an added strain with unclear outcomes. At its core, this is about accountability and priorities. Residents are not asking for luxuries; they are asking for responsible financial management, essential infrastructure, and visible reinvestment into their communities. It is time for council to genuinely listen to its residents, reassess its spending priorities, and focus on delivering real, measurable outcomes rather than process-heavy administration. The message from the community is clear: stop over-investing in consultation and start delivering the services and infrastructure that ratepayers are funding.	Council understand concerns about cost-of-living pressures and the impact of rates on households, as well as views on funding priorities for community services. Your comments will be considered as part of Council's ongoing budget review process. Council acknowledges the importance of long-term financial sustainability. The budget applies key principles from the Long Term Financial Plan, which is updated to guide decisions and ensure Council can meet future asset and service needs.
May be you should reduce mayor Moira Were salary	Noted.
Our rates increase every year and are spent on non important things, like wooden poles that are supposed to be art. The trees which you have planted all the way along the estate I live on are	Noted. Council recognises community concerns about cost-of-living pressures, the impact of rates

not looked after and just grow out of control. The commercial road between tiller drive and the Saltfleet bridge is a disgrace and needs resurfacing. There should be no need to increase the rates with all the extra income you get from allowing all the houses to built on every spare piece of land, but hey it does not matter what the tax payers say Onkaparing council will just do what they want.	on households, and differing views on funding priorities for community services. This feedback will be taken into account as part of the ongoing budget review process.
There's no clear setting of funding priorities in the plan. I don't see a consistent policy of council debt reduction, especially, taking into account the statement of the Auditing Commission saying the council financial position is in a "precarious" state as fuel price increases and generally rising costs will adversely affect the council future budgeting.	Council acknowledges the importance of long-term financial sustainability. The budget applies key principles from the Long Term Financial Plan, which is updated to guide decisions and ensure Council can meet future asset and service needs.
All of the following should be scrapped: * How to Adult program series.. * Renew and replace 5 playgroundsat Aldinga Beach, McLaren Vale, Christie Downsand Morphett Vale (2 playgrounds). * 3 major hardcourt renewal projectsat O'Halloran Hill, Clarendon and Old Noarlunga. * major events Trucks on Tour,Christmas Pageant, Beachside Food andWine Festival, Australia Day Family Fairand hosted stages of the Tour Down Under. * Redevelop 4 BMX tracks at John Nicole Reserveat Aldinga Beach, Hastings Avenue Reserveat Sellicks Beach, Minkarra Park at Flagstaff Hilland Valentine Street Reserve at Morphett Vale. * refurbishment of the NoarlungaAquatic Centre to maintain a safe, reliableand welcoming facility for the community. * Upgrade the Moana Surf Life Saving Club Expansion of existing facilities, includingincreased garage space for emergencyservice vehicles, upgraded change rooms,and a new accessible unisex change room.	Noted, thank you. The focus for this budget is to limit financial impact on our ratepayers and continue to build financial resilience.
Council needs to refocus. When I say that I mean the elected members. All this nonsense council involves itself with needs to stop. The staff must do what the elected members decide. It's not the staff bringing these ideas to the table. It's the elected members. If they really want to curb spending they need to stop bringing ridiculous ideas to the table. Stay in your lane and focus spending on the things the community touches every day. The roads, the parks, the playgrounds, the open spaces, the buildings and facilities, the community services, the coastal foreshore. Make	Thank you for your feedback. Your views on Council priorities, the role of elected members, and the importance of focusing on core services such as roads, parks, waste, and essential infrastructure are noted. Your comments will be

sure waste services are up to scratch. Cut back everything else. If people in the community start to SEE the change, the way they feel will change. Cut spending on arts, rationalise the number of libraries to three (north, central and south), and stop meddling in things outside your remit, like statements on nuclear power, or affordable housing plans. Every such idea takes focus and resources away from the stuff the community needs. Grow a spine and learn to say no the the community when they bring a stupid idea forward. Focus their attention instead on the fundamentals. If they want rates kept under control they need to understand the bigger picture. Focus also on lobbying the state and feds for funding for infrastructure. The bridge across the river at Port Noarlunga is a traffic disaster and will only get worse. You should be hounding the government on this. Overall, imagine yourself in the shoes of a resident. What are they driving and walking on, where are their kids playing, what facilities to they really need (not nice to have), and what core services are essential to their lives, such as waste collection. Approach everything with that mindset. Every single day.	considered as part of ongoing planning, service delivery, and budget processes.
Honestly, you don't listen to onkaparinga residents. You've had years to fix roads, cut dry grass and do basic maintenance. Using the fuel shortage as a reason for increasing rates is weak and pathetic. Putting further pressure on families already struggling is disgusting. Maybe instead you need to look at cutting the fat from the council. Maybe you actually need to support the community. Maybe you need to run lean until the council is out of debt. This council has one of the worst and most corrupt reputations.... you think you'd want to change that instead of carrying the torch.	Noted. Your feedback will be considered as part of Council's ongoing efforts to improve services, accountability, and budget planning.
Scrap unnecessary art works at ridiculous costs to the rate payer. Keep council workers to rosters and in check, ie not playing games with local residents and costing hours of time and fuel. R3duce wages of the ceo and mayor spending. Maybe employ an actual builder to go over council plans, getting things right the first time will save millions.maybe Onkaparinga is too large abd should look at splitting into x2 councils, willunga and noarlunga. Our beach concerns are not crucial to happy valley residents etc.	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
After debt being clearly identified by ESCOSA as an issue for the Council, it is disappointing to see the draft ABP incorporates \$6m of new loans. While there is a demonstrated long-term plan to address the issue, there is no time like the present to address the problem. The ABP does not indicate what Projects are requiring the Loan Funding - it can only be assumed that is part of the \$19m for New Capital works. If this can't be addressed now to respond to the overuse of borrowings from the past, how can the ratepayers truly trust this future debt repayment	Thank you for your feedback. We recognise the importance of using funds efficiently and delivering essential services while minimising unnecessary costs. Your views on spending priorities and governance will be considered as part of the ongoing budget planning process.

strategy? The time to demonstrate trust in accepting the problem and dealing with issue starts right now. Perhaps the \$19m of New Capital, should be trimmed to \$13m to demonstrate the sincerity and seriousness of the undertaking. "Nice to have" items would no doubt have to be cut to achieve this, but this is why the Council is in the borrowing predicament that it is in now. The hard calls have to be made now. There will be plenty of other unforeseen issues arise in future years that may require emergency funding from borrowings, start building the capacity now to be able to meet this contingency as well.	
Whilst we have such a huge deficit, why are the council spending millions on projects like arts centers and sporting facilities? They may have importance to a select few on the Onkaparinga community but not the majority. Until the debts are sorted out, we shouldn't be frivolous. We as residents shouldn't have to pay extra on what is already extremely high council rates. As a single mother, I struggle to pay my quarterly bill and with everything else that's gone up, I honestly don't know how much longer I can sustain living in my own home. The council needs to focus on keeping our bills as low as possible whilst clearing debt and doing what's essential to a high standard. The council itself needs to reassess how much and what perks are given to CIs and the Mayor especially. Why do we even have a mayor and a ceo? Both high payed positions with lots of perks that we are paying for. We should have more say in this. My biggest gripe is, there are 100's if not thousands of new homes within Onkaparinga, all of which pay rates. How is it that with all this extra revenue, you are still in massive debt? Our rates should be decreasing if anything!! The money is being mismanaged and I feel there should be an independent audit. Also, why have you recruited a ceo of NZ? Why not a local? We know she is infamous for mismanaging funding and ramping up rates, she seems completely unacceptable as a candidate, especially with the \$40k relocation fees and yet, she was still chosen. All of these things should be investigated, your residents are very unhappy!	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process. Council understands that ratepayers may have difficulty paying their rates. There are various supports in place that may provide assistance through the Financial Hardship Policy.
40k for relocating the council mayor from NZ to Aust, 40k for garbage artwork. 27k for the mayor's supposed work spending. And 400k annually for a mayor who is only interested in lining her own pockets. This council cares nothing about it's constituents, residents, home owners.	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
Hello, I am concerned about the councils debit and how it is going to pay it off.. \$183m would go toward mandatory council services or to discretionary spending This is not covered in detail in the budget papers. Why another rate increase, after last year the biggest rate increase in the state. Also facts are not clear, is it s 2.2% rate increase or a 3.3% rate increase. I am also frustrated still about the green voucher system that was taken away last financial year,	Following feedback fact sheets have been introduced 'Council Rates Explained' and 'Myth busting council rates' along with frequently asked questions. They can be found on the City of Onkaparinga Your Say page

and still not brought back, because people didn't complain enough, and it costs the council too much money. But you can spend 183m on council services... Why do councillors leave and no explanation. I am very concerned as a rate payer.	
Rates are already too high compared to other council areas and must be restricted to CPI increase without any additional growth. I will not vote for any councillor who promotes or agrees to any above CPI rate increase.	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
Perhaps don't spend on any "nice to haves" for the immediate future to save money. When times are good again, these can be reinstated. In bad times, stick to the basics.	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
Core services needs to be better understood, there needs to be a larger audit and risk team, why is there two members? What are the financial ratio guard rails? Why does onkaparinga council seem to go from bad to worse year on year? What is the executive leadership team doing to streamline and be more responsible? Trust is low you need to rebuild trust with your community. Please be transparent with improvements that you are undertaking to be more financially responsible.	Following feedback fact sheets have been introduced 'Council Rates Explained' and 'Myth busting council rates' along with frequently asked questions. They can be found on the City of Onkaparinga Your Say page.
Due to financial pressures that everone including council are under in the present climat, instead of adding to these pressures by raising rates the council needs to make the difficult decisions now to help with their future finacial position and benefit eveyone that is affected. Some examples are listed below. -A pause on ALL non essential spending, including community grants, and projects which only benefit a small percentage of the councils electorate(eg tennis court surface upgrades) - No personal use of council vehicles. - A pause on any wage increases above cpi, as most other businesses are currently doing. - A review of the exorbitant CEO salary to bring it inline with community expectations. These are just a few of the ways council can reduce spending onlong with helping to reduce debt without the need to increase rates which will cause more hardship within the community. Im sure there are many more cost saving oportunities that could be found within the councils operations.	Thank you for sharing your feedback. Council understands there are strong concerns in the community about financial priorities, and we take these views seriously. Your input will be considered as part of our ongoing planning and community engagement processes.
Royal commission auction on your spendings	Noted, thank you.
I agree and support both Councillors Yeomans and Themeliodis who have questioned the fact that many of the elements of the budget and spending of the Onkaparinga council are not	Thank you for sharing your feedback. Council understands there are strong concerns in the

explained or justified. With the amount of money that the Onkaparinga council is in debt, projects like the upgrades of multiple BMX tracks, playgrounds and hard courts can't be justified to put the council into further debt. These projects should be pushed off or prioritise only ONE from each category, rather than multiple. There continues to be spending on the Aquatic centre and yet no upgrades to the pool offerings at the centre, and the project extending beyond the JULY 2026 deadline we were told when the project closed. Why are their programs being run for teenagers through council on how to ADULT when this is something their parents should be teaching them or other providers can be offering. Why do we as residents need to fund this, especially with little benefit to me as a resident. With the cost of living increases and the extreme spending in this report, PLEASE DO NOT increase the rates. We are barely scraping by. There needs to be a review and prioritisation of the services council offer, the importance of projects, and an intense review of the council management and administration for their to be such overspends and little justification for councillors as to why. There needs to be transparency from our local government organisations.	community about financial priorities, and we take these views seriously. Your input will be considered as part of our ongoing planning and community engagement processes.
Why don't you show financial planning over a budget cycle, like a 5 year period? Without that info how can I trust the figures given.	Council acknowledges the importance of long-term financial sustainability. The budget applies key principles from the Long Term Financial Plan, which is updated to guide decisions and ensure Council can meet future asset and service needs.
I feel this council expenditure is out of control and not on what is important. Stop worrying about dogs and cats!! Focus on families and children. Woodcroft Playgrounds are old and crap and broken. This council needs to divided its suburbs /area into 2 seperate councils and look at budgets that way, why are inner suburbs paying for roads and parks/ tress for the more rural-ish open areas. You guys are the most expensive council and we pay the highest rates yet the support and services are minimal. you guys hicked rates massively after covid and added extra surcharges ontop yet your services and bins ect reduced. Now you are doing in again. its unfair to the residents and just like the labor government waste money on crap!!! you need to revisit families and priorities! follow Marion council they have done so much more for their community and playgrounds and roads with less money.	Thank you for your feedback. Council acknowledges your concerns regarding spending priorities, service levels an core community infrastructure. Your comments will be considered as part of Council's ongoing planning and budget review process.

The Council has 1394kms of sealed roads(ref: Draft ABP& Budget 2026-27, pg 36) The 2026-27 budget allows for only 24kms (ref: Draft ABP & Budget, Key Activities pg 28) of road to be resealed. This equates to only 1.72% of the councils sealed road network. At this rate it would take over 58 years to reseal all the roads in Onkaparinga. Given the average lifespan of sealed roads is around 15 years, the council needs to target resealing about 92kms per years to keep the roads in reasonable shape. It's pretty clear to see why so many roads are in poor shape, given this level of maintenance.	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
Perhaps its time council puts a few new projects on hold for a few years, so rates revenue can remain stable. No point having new parks,amenities etc when your rate payers are struggling to maintain a reasonable lifestyle. Onkaparinga council has a vast array of excellent parks and community venues, so it makes sense to maintain what we already have and hold back on new ventures for a while, whilst at least keeping rates revenue in check.Take a "use what you've got" approach instead of increasing costs. There are parks and community venues everywhere that rarely get used, yet still require maintenance. Hold back on expanding the choices, and encourage the community to use and appreciate what they already have. Put the costs saved on new developments back into the communities pocket through rate reductions, so we can actually afford to use these great community venues.	Noted. Council acknowledges your suggestion to prioritise maintaining existing assets and consider deferring new projects in light of cost-of-living pressures on ratepayers. The focus for this budget is to limit financial impact on our ratepayers and continue to build financial resilience.
House values go up each year. In turn rates go up each year. New houses are added each year. In turn this increase rates revenue each year. So why exactly do we need to add a 3.3% CPI increase as well? If the budget isn't balancing cut back councillor wages and non-essential spending.	Noted, thank you. The focus for this budget is to limit financial impact on our ratepayers and continue to build financial resilience. Following feedback fact sheets have been included 'Council rates explained' and 'Myth busting council rates' and frequently asked questions. They can be found on the City of Onkaparinga Your Say page.
Stop spending money on public artworks and delay or stop projects like the Noarlunga Aquatic Centre and the Silver Sands Surf Club. Stick to the basics like roads, council buildings, rubbish collection etc	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
We don't need more dog parks. Stop upgrading playgrounds unless they are going to include shade, otherwise it makes them under utilised. The reserve behind my house was upgraded with fancy equipment but nobody uses it because it's too hot. Also, the exercise equipment is never	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.

used - it's a waste of money. With the budget in deficit we should be maintaining services that actually educate and improve the community (i.e libraries which cater for residents from birth to 80). Upgrading sports facilities is not a priority right now.	
I know you'll hear many people saying Please don't put up rates which is understandable with the cost of living, but most won't suggest how to achieve that through cutting services. Just uninformed comments like Pay the CEO less or Cut the waste or Restructure. The simple fact is that all councils have costs that increase each year, well above CPI, and keeping rates at or below CPI like Onkaparinga did last year and during COVID, then creates a deficit budget, which is not good financial management. I know councillors are mindful of all of this and are reluctant to pass on the cost increases to us ratepayers, which is admirable, but then you are left with two options - cut services or borrow more money. Borrowing money to go about your daily business is dumb. It just increases the debt and interest payments, and these burdens will be borne by future generations. Just like drawing down on your mortgage to pay for your groceries - you just wouldn't do it, so please rule out that option. To me the only viable answer is to pass on the ACTUAL cost increases to ratepayers to ensure a balanced budget, AND look for services that could be cut or reduced to minimise that impact. I am mindful some services just need to continue, like waste collection, road upgrades and libraries. But I am sure there are others that could be reduced or paused. Things like major events that provide free or low cost entertainment are great, but when times are tight, maybe need to be cancelled for a year or two. Trucks on Tour would use a lot of fuel, and your Australia Day event flies in the face of your Reconciliation Action Plan, so those two might be events to pause (Trucks on Tour) or cancel (Australia Day). And finally look for ways to generate ongoing income to reduce reliance on rates. Maybe sell surplus land and buildings and invest that money into commercial properties that pay an income greater than the interest on council's debt. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your draft budget, and for taking the time to read my feedback. Wishing you luck balancing the books! P.S. Love the myth busting fact sheet! Great info.	Thank you for your thoughtful and constructive feedback. Council acknowledges your perspective on balancing rate increases, service levels, and financial sustainability, including minimising debt and considering both cost recovery and potential service adjustments. Your suggestions will be taken into account as Council continues to review priorities and refine the budget.
I feel as though there needs to be more thought put into who and where money is being spent. It is all well and good saying you are spending X amount to do this but why has that particular vendor been chosen to do the work, are there more cost effective options? Why do these jobs/upgrades cost such much, why does it cost so much to upgrade a road crossing? And why do you seem to say road resealing when it's barely patching at best 99% of the time. In all honesty 90% of the upgrades in the planned budget mean nothing to me and it would be interesting to see how many people these particular upgrades actually benefit.	Thank you for your feedback. Your concerns regarding value for money, procurement decisions, and how projects are prioritised and communicated, including road works and upgrades are noted. Your comments will be considered as part of ongoing reviews to improve transparency, cost efficiency, and service delivery.

The proposed approach to rate setting (linking increases to CPI plus growth) appears to be fiscally prudent on its face, but in the current economic context it raises serious concerns about community composition, affordability and equity. While CPI is intended to reflect general price movements, it does not capture the lived experience of low- and moderate-income households, particularly renters, who are facing sustained housing cost pressures well above headline inflation (rental inflation) nor mortgagees (RBA cash rate + X). The addition of growth further compounds this significant increase - embedding structural increases in the rate base that are disconnected from household income growth. As the business plan notes, only 45% of residents believe their income is sufficient to meet their needs. And council - particularly a council that values the current community and talks a good game on public service, should take this as a critical signal that even CPI-aligned increases are not neutral in their impact. In practice, the proposed model risks accelerating changes in the household composition of the community - locking people out and leaving people behind. As housing and associated costs rise, lower-income households, which includes those on income payments and minimum wage payments, are increasingly excluded. This is compounded by shifts in program delivery, where many of my neighbours discuss that they no longer see value of council besides new signage in the area. While the plan highlights a broad suite of services, there are clear indications that some targeted supports, particularly for young people, have changed in nature in the past few years, with a move toward lighter-touch or short-term programming. What reads well, is actually felt deeply in the community. At the same time, there is limited evidence of new structural supports for middle-income households who are also experiencing cost-of-living pressures; in fact as a state government worker our agreements are well behind what Council is asking us to pay for projects like a "new tennis court" surface. The cumulative effect of endorsing this approach over a multi year period is that council is proposing a hollowing out of socio-economic diversity in the year prior to a council election. A CPI plus growth framework, when applied in an accelerating and high-cost housing environment, risks reinforcing a system where: - those on the lowest incomes are structurally excluded, - those in the middle receive diminishing relative benefit, and - the ability of families (and our children) to live in Onkaparinga increasingly reflects capacity to pay rather than need.	Noted. Council spending is carefully planned. Every year, the council develops an Annual Business Plan and Budget, outlining spending priorities and services for the year. Many costs are set by legislation or required for service delivery. The budget is guided by last year's community feedback for the Annual Business Plan and community survey.
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Council's proposal has implications not just for council services, but the changing approach does not account for the impact on housing accessibility and the long-term social fabric and economic resilience of the region. Further, the current approach to capital works and project delivery appears to prioritise continuity over the same prioritisation that we must all do in our budgets. Council has already benefited (and we can see, has spent) from the significant increase in growth. In a constrained affordability environment, Council is the purported representative of the electorate and should take a more explicit role in answering the tough questions and assessing which projects should proceed, be deferred, or not proceed at all. Continuing to advance a broad pipeline of projects such as tennis courts, that particularly do not directly address core service needs or housing outcomes, places upward pressure on costs and ultimately on our rates. The Commonwealth Treasurer has indicated that he does not expect the economy to continue with the same level of growth and it will affect households. Council should be planning for these challenges, and take a more disciplined approach: - prioritising projects with clear and direct community benefit, particularly for vulnerable and low income households that are doing it tough right now, so we don't have to change our social fabric, - deferring or reconsidering projects with marginal or primarily amenity-based returns, and - explicitly linking capital decisions to affordability and essential outcomes. This proposal was unexpected, borders on the tone-deaf, and deserves a real re-calibration. There is a real risk that the combination of CPI-linked increases, growth assumptions, and continued expenditure expansion will further entrench exclusion for those already agitating for reforms and on the edge of having to move. Council has an opportunity, which I hope it takes, to reconsider, reprioritise and embed inclusion in its core decision-making principles.	
Personally I'd rather see a more localised rate structure. As a resident in the Seaford Heights area, I don't see why I should pay the same rates as residents of suburbs that are actually getting investments like Aldinga, Port Noarlunga, McLaren Vale, etc. Lowering rates in newer suburbs could help reduce cost of living for first home buyers and incentivise more building investments. Residents paying higher rates to fund the projects in their neighbourhood just makes a bit more sense to me than a flat rate charged to everyone.	Council's current rating approach is designed to ensure fairness and support services that benefit the whole community. Rates contribute to essential services such as waste collection, road maintenance, community facilities, and environmental management, page 44 of the Annual Business Plan provides a summary of these services.

No more rates hike. Also how many BMX tracks do we really need? there's a lot of unnecessary projects ahead!	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
We do not need 4 skate parks! Stop wasting money unnecessarily. Put it towards fixing the pot holes in the roads.	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
NO to any increase in rates! I'm a single disability pensioner who is already under incredible financial stress and at constant worry of facing homelessness. I can't absorb another council rate increase. Council needs to work within its budget without increasing rates. Stop unnecessary projects and programs such as; art installations, How To Adult Program, Trucks on Tour, and new playgrounds - just to name a few. Focus on essential, core, business only and get this Council's finances back on track. I want to see good fiscal management by council NOT increased rates! Back to basic council services until this council is out of debt and financially back on track. Until then restraint needs to be shown. No borrowing, no more rate increases, no unnecessary new projects or programs. Work within your means!	Your submission was considered as part of the decision-making process. Council understands that ratepayers may have difficulty paying their rates. There are various supports in place that may provide assistance through the Financial Hardship Policy.
Projects like redeveloping BMX tracks, driving range development and upgrades to community centres to name a few, are not important/priority projects for the next financial year. Considering the poor financial position of the council and the already high council rates that we pay, funds should only be spent on necessities and issues that have a health and safety impact (eg. fixing damaged roads).	Noted. Council understand concerns about cost-of-living pressures and the impact of rates on households, as well as views on funding priorities for community services. Your comments will be considered as part of Council's ongoing budget review process.
Paying hundreds of thousands of dollars for private schools to have their crossings updated, what an insult! I am a rate payer with school aged kids but because of the insanely high council rates, i cannot afford private school fees. My children go to wirreanda. Where is Wirreanda's new crossing, new anything? Mayor has made very clear she thinks higher of private schools in conversations I have had with her. I am honestly so ashamed to live in this council region right now	Noted. City of Onkaparinga continues to advocate to improve the gateway to the south with upgrades to infrastructure on state government managed roads.
Rates are the biggest expense to homeowners, how has the council let spending get so out of control. REDUCE SPENDING Renew and replace 5 playgrounds - This number could be cut down, do 2 Redevelop 4 BMX tracks - Maybe redevelop 2 BMX Tracks	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.

Moana Caravan Park Toilets are fine they don't need upgrading rite at this point 3 major hardcourt renewal projects - Maybe renew 1 Hardcourt	
The Council is out of touch with the priorities of its community. In a time of high cost of living, the council needs to review its spending and curtail the 'wants' from the 'needs'. This is not a time to start new projects that only benefit such a small group of the community, such as the Strykr Driving Range. I also question the need to invest in the upgrade of the Moana Surf Life Saving Club where data shows the club only represents a very small portion of the community and membership is shrinking. Is this a multi-function building? How is it used, by whom and how often? I see a cafe open daily across 3 week days - who gets this profit? I also think the Council needs to relook at its carbon emissions review. This is a costly exercise that has little benefit for the future. Until other countries (such as China) fall in line, a little country like Australia will not make any significant dent. The latest fuel crisis has demonstrated how ill-prepared Australia is. Your positive aging project may assist the over 75's but does little for the middle group - 60 to 75s, who, in the main, are fit and healthy retirees looking for subsidised exercise.. it's no wonder I attend classes run by the Marion Council as their program is by far superior to City of Onkaparinga. And lastly, the council needs to have a good look at the infrastructure expenses, specifically, the cost of staffing. It is massively over-staffed, and paying it's CEO, Mayor and Councillors too much. This should be the first place to look at tightening your belt and reducing costs. You should NOT automatically look at the rate payer to deliver your budget shortfall!	Thank you for your feedback. Council acknowledges your concerns regarding spending priorities, cost of living pressures, project justification, and staffing costs, as well as the importance of focusing on services that benefit the broader community.
The Draft ABP and Budget for 2026/27 appear to be well considered documents and there are numerous projects that will benefit my local area. I would urge the Council to continue to work towards the advice and recommendations of the Essential Services Commission to ensure the Council moves toward a more sustainable financial position.	Noted. The focus for this budget is to limit financial impact on our ratepayers and continue to build financial resilience.
The only good part of the draft budget is the attempt to contribute to the tree canopy. However, the use of budget money for tennis courts, the noarlunga aquatuc centre, and other projects should be put on hold until the budget is in a better position	
This budget Council should be keeping only essential activities that help the area look clean and tidy eg rubbish collection, gardening, graffiti removal etc. These are essential services and help the area look tidy and inviting. At the moment a lot of areas look unkept and devalue the suburbs. Get rid of all social projects and the community development section of Council. These	Noted. Council understand concerns about cost-of-living pressures and the impact of rates on households, as well as views on funding priorities for community services. Your comments will be

are a double up of SA Govt projects - How to Adult Series (similar offered by SA Govt), Carbon Emissions Review is also a waste of funds and not needed. Scrap the quarterly newsletter as there's never anything of value in it that will educate residents. Also, only repair footpaths, roads and buildings that are dangerous. If they are good to keep for another year, fix them later when the Council has more funds. People are struggling and can't afford rate rises, so Council needs to keep rates as they are and only provide the essential services and only absolutely necessary road/building upgrades. Could also cut Council staff. Too many Managers and not enough admin staff. We had to wait 9 months for a response from a Compliance Officer which is ridiculous. If you cut higher paid Managers and employ lower paid employees more necessary work might get done. Also could cut the Australia Day Fair as it's not supported very well.	considered as part of Council's ongoing budget review process.
Council must acknowledge that a freeze on non-critical upgrades is imperative. Bike trail upgrades, when a bike trail is already functional and safe, is wasted rate payer money. It is truly absurd that this is even being considered! Delaying maintenance or upgrades can cause more costs, this is understood by most, but this budget doesn't consider, anymore than tokenistically, that ratepayers are struggling with the burden of every survival-critical cost going up. Onkaparinga needs more revenue generating assets, like other Council's, to take the burden off ratepayers. We should not be the Council's primary income stream. This is poor financial management.	Noted. Council understand concerns about cost-of-living pressures and the impact of rates on households, as well as views on funding priorities for community services. Your comments will be considered as part of Council's ongoing budget review process.
With all the economic stresses being put on residents, this is not the time to raise rates. Some projects should be paused for a better time.	Noted. Council understands that ratepayers may have difficulty paying their rates. There are various supports in place that may provide assistance through the Financial Hardship Policy.
This budget shows that the council is out of touch with reality and has poor accounting skills. Residents of this council area are fed up with council as it stands. Our money is being wasted (on a CEO that ruined her last council) while our roads are crumbling and our parklands are over grown and you feel it necessary to raise our rates. We saw this coming as soon as the dirt on the CEO came to light. Renowned for raising rates and wasting money she is. We are being squeezed by the supermarkets, the fuel companies, the energy companies, the ATO and the RBA! Now you want more! I have 2 words for you all! Two of our councillors knew what the community wanted and the rest had no idea. You can take this budget and shove it. Go back to the table with a qualified accountant and come up with a budget that doesn't squeeze the rate payer.	Noted. Council understand concerns about cost-of-living pressures and the impact of rates on households, as well as views on funding priorities for community services. Your comments will be considered as part of Council's ongoing budget review process. Council understands that ratepayers may have difficulty paying their rates. There are various

	supports in place that may provide assistance through the Financial Hardship Policy.
I have read the budget and it just doesn't look like the council is working within its financial constraints. Why are you spending an extra \$3m this year on capital projects when you don't have the surpluses to support this? Why isn't debt reducing? It is increasing this year again! Council needs to look at ways of reducing operating expenses and reigning in spending. Are you using you human and capital resources in the most efficient and effective manner? Do we really need multiple liberators, over 50 centres, youth centres and community centres? Couldn't we look at consolidating some of these to save costs and still provide services? Please start looking at different ways of delivering the services you are providing and ask are they still what the communion want? Are they meeting the needs of the majority of the community or a small minority? How do we ensure we are looking after all of our community? I am very concerned about this budget there are structural changes that need to be made to the services that are delivered and the way they are delivered. Until this is done nothing will change and the council will continue to be unsustainable. A small surplus of \$39k is not enough and doesn't give any buffer for further changes in economic conditions. Council you need to do better and start making hard decisions and asking more of the staff you employ to help you do this. The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different outcome – and that is exactly what this budget is insanity! Go back and sharpen your pencils and make some hard decisions which will put the community in a more sustainable position for the future. They may not be popular but sometimes the unpopular decisions need to be made to make the future better.	The focus for this budget is to limit financial impact on our ratepayers and continue to build financial resilience. Council acknowledges the importance of long-term financial sustainability. The budget applies key principles from the Long Term Financial Plan, which is updated to guide decisions and ensure Council can meet future asset and service needs.
This business plan does nothing to address the structural issues with councils financial instability. Debt increases, borrowing increases, and council refuses to address the underlying cause. Overspending on projects and items which are simply not required or affordable when there is massive debt. Scrap most of the projects, reign in spending and attempt to move to a firm financial footing. Above CPI rate rises are not a fix to an obsession with spending ask the real question would th rate payers forego things which only benefit a small section of people for a smaller rate increase and reduction in overall debt	Council acknowledges the importance of long-term financial sustainability. The budget applies key principles from the Long Term Financial Plan, which is updated to guide decisions and ensure Council can meet future asset and service needs. Council understands that ratepayers may have difficulty paying their rates. There are various supports in place that may provide assistance through the Financial Hardship Policy.

I am a long time resident of the southern area and have seen this area go from a vibrant area complete with medium and large business to more of a long commute to work style area. So with this in mind would it be a good idea to put effort into attracting large and medium size industry to our area. This has been the proven way to retain our younger generations by providing purpose and confidence that flow from stable employment within their area. As i am now retired this does not affect me but i would like to think we can leave opportunity for our kids.	Thank you for your feedback. Council notes your suggestion to strengthen efforts in attracting larger industries and employment opportunities to support local jobs and retain younger residents. Your input will be considered as part of Council's economic development and long-term planning.
Disappointed to see that there is no development of the Reserve behind the Moana SLSC included. The playground that is currently there is pathetic, there is a huge amount of space where a new larger playground for all ages could be built or even a splash park, or similar like Splashtown in Moonta.	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
This council should concentrate on paying down the debt. Only do the vital works necessary and stop having large rate increases every year. This council is becoming to large to manage, with all the new houses being built every year. With all the new rates we still have increases with very little to show.	Noted. Council spending is carefully planned. Every year, the council develops an Annual Business Plan and Budget, outlining spending priorities and services for the year. Many costs are set by legislation or required for service delivery. The budget is guided by last year's community feedback for the Annual Business Plan and community survey.
The City of Onkaparinga delivers the infrastructure, programs and services that enables me to live my best life. Thank you.	Noted, thank you.
The salary paid to the CEO should be cut before exorbitant rate increases are even considered to be placed on residents	Noted, thank you.
You mention "Dogs & Cats" but no detail as to your action plan - can we see some enforcement of animal control i.e. leads at all times & keeping cats at home at all times?? When are you going to attack the disgraceful roads within Aldinga Beach - lived here for 14 years & no sign of anything other than pothole remedies??	Thank you for your feedback. Council acknowledges your concerns about animal management enforcement and the condition of local roads, particularly in Aldinga Beach. Your comments will be considered as part of ongoing service improvements and future planning.

The council needs to invest more in improving pedestrian and cycling accessibility. Given the current cost of living and fuel crisis, walking and cycling improvements need to be prioritised. Port Noarlunga Beach, for example, doesn't have a single zebra crossing. This is a serious deficiency for the council's premier beach, and reduces the attractiveness for tourists and residents alike. Similarly, there is much work to do to improve cycling infrastructure in the council to improve accessibility. This will help reduce traffic and increase tourism.	Thank you for your feedback. Council acknowledges your concerns about pedestrian safety and the need for improved walking and cycling infrastructure, particularly in high-use areas like Port Noarlunga Beach.
The rate increase is too high given the increased costs of living. Further savings need be made immediately by reviewing current levels of service against community need. Cancelling the repetitious community events such as the Australia Day bush fair which are only attended by a fraction of the population would divert spending to more equitable assets and services that provide greater community benefit.	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
River Road still does not have a multi use path. This has been raised before at council nothing has been done.	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
This business plan shows complete disregard to those 70% of rate payers who actually fund this council. For starters the Australian government supports the NDIS not the Onkaparinga council. The NDIS is crippling the federal budget, we do t need to completely destroy an already crippled council with NDIS that is already over supported. This council needs to go back to the basics of what it should be supporting, such as roads, parks and local infrastructure and not getting involved in social services which is currently supported by state and federal governments. The Onkaparinga council has shown in the business plan that they do not have a diverse revenue stream, heavily reliant on rate payers followed by grants from government. This is appalling, this council has many opportunities for growth and prosperity it the incompetence of the council and it's representative who are more focused on social services than running the council are its downfall. I do not support this business plan and highly recommend you reach out to other interstate prosperous councils to get an idea on how to run a council.	Thank you for your feedback, your concerns regarding spending priorities are noted. Your input will help inform Council's planning, advocacy, and future investment decisions.
Generally, I think the ABP&B are good, and for the most part it appears as though the plans and activities will benefit the community. I do have concerns about the road congestion and frequent car accidents at the end of the Southern Expressway and subsequent intersection of Main South Road/Seaford/Patapinda Roads. Both North and South directions are frequently backed up and accidents are a weekly occurrence. Having the merging lanes from Seaford Road when travelling North on Main South is ridiculous,	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.

and the congestion at the end of the Expressway is dangerous. Given the influx of residents to the area, and continuing plans to expand/develop, it would be great to see the Council address this before it becomes even more of a problem.	
Rates are going up. I would not like to fund The City of Onkaparinga ENCORE Activation Program,; - It's funded through grant-style pools (e.g. \$1,500-\$10,000 per activation) - It supports seasonal activations, night economy, pop-ups Can we please remove these events to save money there are so many of them now 3 pop up bars this year I believe. It's overwhelming and the spending can be used better elsewhere. Thank you [REDACTED]	Noted. Comment was considered as part of the Annual Business Plan drafting process.
Improve Malpas road	Noted, thank you.
Rates are too high for me it's getting ridiculous lower them please	Noted, thank you.
Sporting Club rates have already increased from last financial year are they included in this rate increase again? If so such a huge increase becomes a burden on small clubs to be able to keep their facilities which then has to get passed onto the member. Also who are getting hit with rate increases on their personal properties.	Noted, thank you.
There is a lot of fluff and little valuable info in your budget breakdown. And there is plenty that could be scrapped like community grants until such time as you are out of debt. Yes playgrounds are important but building new ones should also be a back burner until you are in the hole as far as you are. Your own audit shows the financial position of council is perilous but your view is plow on and spend spend spend any way. This isn't the first audit that has told council either. Any non essential service or upgrade should be on hold until such time as council is either out of debt or paid it down significantly that the financial position is manageable. Grants aren't essential, park upgrades aren't essential. 90% of your draft budget isn't essential. We don't need to waste money on the trucks on parade especially when the fuel is as high as it is. The trucks are more valuable doing the job they were bought for. We don't need the exorbitant waste of money that is thrown down under. Rubbish collection Road maintenance Footpaths Park maintenance (cutting grass, watering trees, cutting weeds) not building new ones or dog parks. Cwms maintenance (let's be real it's not serviced until something breaks) Libraries These are the	Thank you for your feedback. Council acknowledges your concerns regarding Council's financial position, spending priorities, and the balance between essential services and discretionary projects.

only things council should be focused on these are essential services. Everything else is wants and dreams and they don't pay the bills.	
City of onkaparinga is out of control. An independent body has already warned about your budget and you ignored it just like you ignore your residence and the people that pay your salaries. particularly concerning is Moira because she is an unhinged lunatic!	Noted, thank you.
I would like to know why Council is not seriously taking into consideration the findings of the Audit & Risk Committee? The committee found the Long Term Financial Plan pointed to a deterioration in Council's overall finances. What is Council doing to reduce operating expenditure & rate revenue? ESCOSA assessed Council's financials are potentially unsustainable for 2023-2024 & the financials are getting worse. Why is Administration pushing their own agenda & not caring for the financial state of the Council? Precarious is not a good financial position for our Council & Council does not appear to be doing anything to rein in spending & stop wasting rate payer funds on insignificant ideologies that will not benefit the wider community.	Council acknowledges the importance of long-term financial sustainability. The budget applies key principles from the Long Term Financial Plan, which is updated to guide decisions and ensure Council can meet future asset and service needs.
See appendix A, B and C for uploaded submissions	

Table 3: Submissions provided via other platforms

Participant comments (verbatim)

I have seen a post this morning on social media about council rates rising once again? When I once voted on the formation of Onkaparinga council forming many years ago we were told that our rates etc would be cheaper under an Onkaparinga council, I have not seen this yet. Now the council is approving the subdivision of multiple blocks of land (my street is one of them) and you cannot tell me the council isn't profiting from the sell off of these blocks and making money and the increased number of rates from charged to these properties. With the massive cost of living pressures how does the council justify this? I would like the council to tighten their belts on charging rate payers extra when I don't see much of a difference in the services I am getting, instead we are being charged for rubbish and recycling that we previously weren't. I hope the council listens to rate payers and does a better review of council and councillors spending, and maybe more open discussion to rate payers to explain these increases?

Kind regards

Morphett Vale, SA, 5162

Due to the current situation being experienced by people notwithstanding the further spiralling cost recently in fuelling our vehicles and the expected higher costs still to come to bear, I am imploring you to not vote in favour of an increase to our rates. Please look to fund necessary expenditure within the current income received.

Households are under increased burden to meet their expenses within their budgets and the Onkaparinga council should look to implement better financial management also. Please represent us fairly and conscientiously with a vote against any rate rise.

Yours sincerely

Happy Valley

I have lived in Reynella for over 40 years and it my understanding council is sitting tonight to discuss increasing rates. I am in disbelief to think for the current cost of living the council is even considering this - I personally believe the council can save cost by looking deeper in to how the council is being run and services and grants that could and should be cut back. I am totally against rates being increased - this council is one of the most expensive councils in Adelaide for council rates. I am sure if rates increase the media will be on to this and then the council will have accountability on its hands.

Regards

I am writing to you as a resident of 50 years having lived at the same address for half a century to express my deep frustration with the proposed rate increase. My position is simple:

the rates currently being paid are not reflective of the services or standards we are receiving. The numbers simply do not add up.

I have firsthand evidence of a complete lack of oversight regarding council maintenance. Since 5 January 2026, I have been requesting essential weed control and tree trimming at the neighbouring reserve. This job has been raised and subsequently closed off as "actioned" three separate times, yet to this day, nothing has been done.

This highlights a systemic failure in how the council manages its contractors. It appears that contractors are being paid for work they have not completed because there is no quality control process in place to verify the jobs. If the council employed a quality controller to oversee these contracts, you would not be wasting ratepayer funds on unfinished work.

Furthermore, I am demanding transparency regarding the council's debt. It is unacceptable that the debt has been allowed to reach its current levels. Ratepayers deserve a clear and honest explanation of how the budget was allowed to get this far out of hand.

Before asking residents to reach deeper into their pockets during a cost-of-living crisis, the council must first: Prove it can manage its existing budget by ensuring contractors actually perform the work they are paid for. Implement a rigorous quality control system for all maintenance requests. Provide full transparency on debt management and why previous financial oversight failed. As a 50-year resident who has seen this council evolve, I am disappointed in the current lack of accountability. I urge you all to vote "No" on the proposed rate increase at tonight's meeting and instead focus on fixing the internal inefficiencies that are draining our funds.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

I am emailing to request that the costs of living and economic conditions be taken into consideration when voting on an increase in council rates. I have three young adult children that are trying to pay new mortgages as well as cope with the cost of living. An increase in council rates would make an already difficult time in their lives unmanageable. I trust that you have your wards interests in the fore front of your mind, as was stated in your position statement at council elections. I have faith that you will vote to hold council rates and not make any further increases.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

It is with perplexity and concern that the discussion of increasing rates during a cost of living crisis has even been discussed, let alone considered to be passed this evening. The discussions on social media have unanimously voiced concerns and an overwhelming rejection of any further financial stress on ratepayers, to ignore these concerns would exhibit such tone deafness on your behalf that community outrage will be justified. May I suggest that if the Onkaparinga Council evidently lacks fiscal discipline and management skills, then perhaps this position is not one you should consider. I'd be happy to provide sound professional advice- believe me I'm more than qualified.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

I am writing to you as a long-term resident and ratepayer to formally voice my opposition to the proposed increase in council rates. I am a single mother of three children under the age of 12, and I am writing to share the reality of how this decision will directly impact my family's survival.

I bought my home in this community when I was 25 years old. Now 39, I have poured my blood, sweat, and tears into this house. It is the only stability my children and I have in an increasingly uncertain world. However, that stability is now under threat. Following the breakdown of my marriage three years ago, I attempted to re-enter the workforce after an extended break to raise my children. Despite my experience, the job market is incredibly competitive, I regularly see over 250 applicants for a single role and it is tiring. While I secured three months of work last year, finding stable employment that accommodates the needs of a single parent is an ongoing struggle.

Currently, we are living less than week-to-week. To keep a roof over our heads and food on the table, I have already cut every possible "luxury" from our lives:

- We do not have broadband internet or any paid streaming services (Netflix, Disney+, etc.).
- I do not smoke, drink alcohol, take drugs or gamble.
- Our meals are made in bulk and repeated to save every cent.
- Family dinners out or holidays are things we simply cannot afford.

The rising cost of living has left me with nothing left to trim. Every dollar added to my rates notice is a dollar taken directly from my children's basic needs.

I am not asking for sympathy, but for an understanding of the impossible choices families like mine are facing. This is not just a line item in a budget, it is our livelihood. I urge you to consider the most vulnerable members of your community and vote "No" on the proposal to raise council rates at tonight's meeting and I request accountability for the Council's current expenditures and to explore other ways to help manage the Council's current Debt.

Yours sincerely,

We do NOT agree with the rate rises for our council, I agree that the Mayor and other parties should have a wage reduction to support the struggling families that pay your wages. We DO NOT need any more homeless families we need to reduce costs like rates so that Families can feed and maintain warmth and power for their children and themselves. The costs of living are currently unmanageable and the mayor is not listening to the people who pay her bills for her.

Enough is enough she needs to go. Thanks A VERY concerned mother who is working her arse off to maintain her living situation for her children.

I have just submitted my formal feedback on the Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget, but I'm posting it here because we know that individual submissions often get "rolled up" into high-level summaries before they even reach your desk.

I am writing to provide my formal feedback on the Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2026-27. While I acknowledge the council's effort to align rate increases with the Consumer Price Index (CPI), I believe the current draft fails to address the underlying cost base and misses an opportunity for genuine financial reform.

1. Failure to Address the Cost Base and Lack of Efficiency Targets The council's primary strategy appears to be limiting the rise in costs by indexing them to inflation. However, this approach assumes the current spending baseline is already optimized. Simply tracking inflation does not equate to operational efficiency.

I note that the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA) has previously advised the council to adopt explicit cost-saving targets and report both projected and actual savings within the budget. The current draft lacks these measurable targets. I request that the council incorporate a formal Efficiency and Savings Target into the final 2026-27 Business Plan to provide upfront accountability.

2. The "User-Pays" Double Standard and Disparity in Value The decision to remove free green waste drop-off was justified by the council on the basis that "the people using the service should be the ones paying for it." However, this "user-pays" logic is applied inconsistently. Across the budget, the council continues to fund and upgrade niche use assets with no cost-recovery model from the specific users.

Some examples in this year's draft include:

- The Clarendon Recreation Ground Hardcourt Renewal: A \$925,000 project serving approximately 180 club members. In this case alone, the broader ratepayer base is expected to absorb a cost of \$5,138 per member.
- The Moana Surf Life Saving Club Upgrade: A major capital spend for a specific membership-based organization.
- Specialized Recreation Facilities: Ongoing maintenance for 14 skate facilities and 22 BMX tracks, as well as specialized dog park enclosures. These lay bare the inconsistency; council is choosing to approve the building of a facility for 180 people while claiming it cannot afford a basic waste service for 8,400 people. When compared on a per-person basis, the inequity is stark:
- Clarendon Court Upgrade: ~\$5,138 council cost per person served.
- Free Green Waste Service: ~\$45.85 council cost per person served (based on 4% of households with 2.5 people per household, 8,432 residents).

3. "Gold-Plating" and Capital Inefficiency This also highlights the low value ratepayers are getting in capital works.

The ground removal and relaying of bitumen and re-surfacing of the single netball and tennis court at the Clarendon Primary School cost \$53,000 in total using government preferred suppliers. This didn't include fencing, lighting or walkways, but even extrapolating these out with the additional courts does not come anywhere near \$1 million in cost and clearly shows the gold plating and inefficiency that is happening within particular council capital projects.

4. Capital vs. Operational: The Budgetary Blind Spot. The budget reveals a philosophy where "Capital" spending is treated as "free" money that does not require justification by user numbers, while "Operational" services are treated as a burden to be transitioned to user-pay services. The council often justifies capital expenditures for these clubs and facilities as "one-off" investments, arguing the cost is amortized over the life of the asset. However, while any single project is spread over a decade, the practice of approving multiple low-utilization niche projects repeats every single budget cycle. When the council approves these "amortized" niche projects year after year, they effectively create a cumulative yearly spend on low beneficiary groups. It is illogical and inconsistent to reject a high-utility service like green waste on the grounds of annual operating cost (\$386,685) while simultaneously committing nearly \$1 million to a single project serving significantly fewer residents.

5. Requirement for Transparency in Future Budgets To ensure the community can properly evaluate "value for money," I request that all future Annual Business Plans include a "Primary User Base" column for every capital project and new budgetary initiative over \$100,000. Ratepayers should be able to see exactly how many residents are expected to benefit from a spend before it is approved. Transparency regarding the size of the beneficiary group is essential for a fair debate on whether a project should be funded by the general ratepayer or a user-pays model

Formal Requests for Action

In light of the concerns raised above, I formally request that the council incorporate the following three actions into the Annual Business Plan and Budget 2026-27:

1. Adoption of ESCOSA Efficiency Targets: Implement explicit, measurable cost-saving targets as recommended by the Essential Services

Commission of South Australia. These targets should be clearly reported in the budget to ensure the council is optimizing its existing cost base before cutting essential community services.

2. Establishment of a Consistent Funding Framework: Develop a unified policy for project approvals that applies the "User-Pays" logic consistently. If a broad-reach service like green waste is subjected to a cost-per-user analysis, the same scrutiny must be applied to high-cost capital projects.

3. Moratorium on Niche Capital Projects: I call for a temporary pause on funding for all new and non-safety-critical capital projects that serve a primary user base of fewer than 2,000 residents. This pause should remain in effect until the transparency framework and unified policy for project approvals mentioned above are established and the funding of broad-reach services is reviewed.

4. Audit of Capital Project Delivery Costs: I request an independent review of the council's capital works procurement framework. The significant disparity between the cost of delivering functional sporting surfaces via state-preferred suppliers (as seen in the \$53,000 Clarendon Primary School project) and the \$925,000 budgeted for council-delivered renewals suggests a major inefficiency in project scaling and "gold-plating." Council must demonstrate that it is delivering infrastructure at market-competitive rates rather than inflated internal or "consultancy-heavy" estimates.

I look forward to seeing these concerns addressed in the final version of the 2026-27 Annual Business Plan and Budget.

I am just reading the draft budget for 26-27 and have a few questions/points. Please excuse the fact that they are in no particular order; just the order in which they occur to me-

1. I note that it is proposed to increase borrowing over the short term. with new borrowing of almost \$6m. Yet the budget already shows Finance charges of over \$7m and with inflation increasing (we have yet to see the Iran effect in inflation figures) we are probably heading towards higher interest rates. Each .25% increase in rates adds about \$325k to the finance costs (based upon \$130m of borrowing). Currently the market is pricing in at least 2 rate increases over the coming year so where is the modelling of how the budget is affected by rate rises?

2. Further to point 1 what options have been discussed to avoid increasing borrowing and to reduce debt over the short term? My recollection was that the large rate rise a year or two ago was supposed to be a one off increase to get the borrowing under control but it looks like this has now been "thrown out the window" and council is back to trying to borrow its way out of trouble. A lot of the Financial Assumptions (per the Assumptions table) look overly optimistic. CPI, Interest on loans, Rate increases, etc. all look like being adversely affected in the current economic environment and we have no indication on council's modelling for these effects.

4. As you will both be aware there has been a significant fuel price surge and council uses a number of fossil fuel sources for vehicles, heating etc. They also use a number of chemicals where pricing has also increased due to the "Iran War" effect. What modelling has council done on the effect of these and how that affects the budget? and what mitigating strategies are being implemented?

5. What decisions have been taken by council over which projects continue to be funded and which do not and are projects rated so that if operating costs increase certain projects no longer become financially feasible?

6. Is any weight given to the value of projects by the number of people affected? It has been put to me (and on some online forums) that some of the projects that are still going forward only benefit a small number of people so in hard times should they still proceed?

7. It is my understanding that council has approved the draft budget without having full disclosure of all figures available (e.g. tree canopy financial impact information). Can you confirm that at time of voting for the draft budget you had ALL relevant financial information to be able to

make a fully informed decision to approve it?

8. What risk modelling is used when reviewing budgeting at council? Even before Iran we had seen that the US was willing to carry out actions that affect oil prices (Venezuela) so there were always geopolitical risks that could adversely affect the costing basis for budgeting and it would be good to know that council takes risk planning seriously when putting these budgets together and has strategies in place for when things fall apart.

9. At a time that everyone is feeling pain and the numbers of people experiencing real financial hardship are on the increase it would be good to get a sense that council are empathetic to this and adjust their budgets to reflect this so that "nice to have" items, or items that only benefit a small group of people, are cut back to try to ease the rates burden for the residents.

From having worked for large multinationals for a large portion of my life, and putting together budgets for large departments, I would not accept this budget as put forward to me without a lot more of the detail being expressed, certainly without knowing how rate rises etc. would impact the borrowing costs, and understanding supply risks.

Sorry if it sounds like a bit of a moan but these are key points I see from looking at the budget and from what people are telling me.

PS. I think council should consider have more public forums whereby residents can feed in thoughts and feelings about budgets ahead of the short timeframe given for commenting on draft budgets. By the time we get to this stage there is almost no chance of changing anything being put forward

Is there any evidence that any feedback received from rate-payers (and I am one in the Knox Ward) has ever resulted in changes made to a 'DRAFT' budget put out for consultation by the City of Onkaparinga? Rightly or wrongly, my perception is that there hasn't been...but if I am wrong I would like to see some examples if that is possible please. Thanks in advance,

Thanks for raising Marion i submitted a reponse but i am not sure how many responses you can submit before they start ignoring them, maybe 1 . As the CPI has come in a full 1% above what was expected for the quarterly update, the council should be limiting the impact to its ratepayers, who are already affected by the rising CPI, and consider the following points:

The main driver affecting the council with these results is temporary fuel cost rises; rather than just applying the increased CPI across all council services, the council should instead take steps to manage fuel costs and present an increase proposal based on these costings in isolation.

- o The current quarter's CPI figures do not take into account the government's halving of the fuel excise, which is a lagging indicator and will not show up until next quarters figures.

- o We are approving an annual budget, but the increase in fuel prices is a temporary impact; we do not know if they will come down next week or next year. There should be a control in place so that if an increase to the council budget is approved based on fuel prices, an expected surplus results if fuel prices return to normal. This amount should not be absorbed by other activities and should be returned to residents as part of the next budget cycle.

Housing costs are another main driver for the figure, even though the rise is lower than last year. Housing cost measures have been driven by consumer electricity prices (not council or business electricity prices) due to the cessation of government energy grants. Costs of construction remain flat with linear increases. Again, this is something that affects the ratepayer, not the council, and should not be used to justify an increase

in rates. The CPI figures hurt the residents far more than they impact council costs, and to take the full CPI amount into the council budget would be doubling the residents' financial burden for no reason. There is a lot of fat in the council's budgets which can be trimmed (see my other responses to the budget), and this is a time to show restraint and help residents rather than harvest the opportunity for increased rates without justification.

I acknowledge that the City of Onkaparinga, like many organisations, is facing increased operational costs due to inflationary pressures. However, I do not believe that a full CPI-linked rate increase of 3.3% should be adopted without clearer evidence that all reasonable efficiency measures and cost-saving opportunities have first been thoroughly explored.

Many households within the community continue to experience significant cost-of-living pressures, including rising mortgage repayments, rental costs, insurance premiums, electricity prices and grocery expenses. Any rate increase adds further pressure to household budgets and should therefore be carefully balanced against the community's capacity to absorb additional costs.

Before approving a CPI-aligned increase, I respectfully request that Council:

- * provide clearer justification as to why the full CPI increase is necessary.
- * identify what operational efficiencies, savings measures, and expenditure reductions have been considered.
- * review discretionary or non-essential projects and spending priorities.
- * outline strategies to reduce long-term debt levels and strengthen financial sustainability.
- * consider whether a smaller increase, potentially phased in over time, may be more appropriate under current economic conditions.

I would be more supportive of a moderate increase where Council can clearly demonstrate strong financial discipline, prioritisation of core services and infrastructure maintenance, and a commitment to minimising non-essential expenditure. I also encourage Council to continue improving transparency around how ratepayer funds are allocated, including clearer reporting on efficiency improvements, project outcomes, and long-term financial planning. Having lived along Cherry Gardens Road since 1986, I am concerned that the Council has not fully addressed the ongoing accumulation of leaves, branches, and soil debris along the roadside drainage system. During periods of high wind and rain, this material travels more than 100+ metres downhill and regularly blocks the underground pipes beneath our driveway. On one occasion due to these pipes being blocked Storm Water travelled over the swale and travelled down the driveway edging to our residence and took leaf matter, small branches and driveway gravel across the driveway through the fencing and into the first dam. As the surrounding trees continue to mature, along the main road the volume of fallen leaves both small and large branches has increased significantly over this time. I have also observed that roadside debris is generally only cleared in areas accessible to machinery, primarily near the main road itself. While the sections extending to residents fence lines are often left unattended. This accumulation of dry vegetation and debris presents a serious fire risk, particularly in bushfire-prone conditions. The Cherry Gardens Bushfires in January 2021, burnt approximately 2,700 to 3,877 hectares and resulted in the destruction of two homes, highlights the importance of comprehensive and ongoing maintenance of roadside vegetation and drainage areas is necessary to reduce these risks and better protect residents and properties in the area. Should you require any further information please advise me.

PS I noticed that your email address onkaparingacity.com/yourSay or <https://yourSay.onkaparinga.sa.gov.au/> could not be sent from the pamphlet Your Say Council Budget and A better way Part 2 Help us improve Council Communications ????

Kind Regards.

[REDACTED]

Please supply me with the answers to my following requests.

What is the current council debt?

What is the current interest rate on this debt?

What is the amount paid currently on this debt?

Which items of the budget expenditure list are compulsory core expenditures.

The budget expenditure totals \$m 252.06 and the budget income totals \$m 262.42

Please account for this discrepancy of \$m 10.36

Part of our vision at Fit and Well is to see more communication boards across playgrounds in Onkaparinga, it's not clear in the ABP and budget what is happening in this space. We could lead the way in Onkaparinga with inclusivity - including at events.

Brisbane Council does a free hard rubbish collection each month. This is a good idea.

Council used to do free mattress collection but now charges \$40 per mattress. This leads to dumping. The free collection should be reinstated.

PRECARIOUS BUT PASSED ANYWAY

Only two councillors voted against sending out the bigger draft budget. Council unanimously accepted the finances were precarious and sent the CEO off for more advice. Then, it pushed the bigger draft budget out for consultation anyway. That is the contradiction at the centre of this budget. Council says the draft budget is responsible because the 3.3% rate rise is tied to CPI plus growth. But the bigger story is a \$262.42 million draft budget - up \$17.37 million from last year without any clear explanation of what is essential, what is optional, and what choices sit behind the increase.

A bigger budget, with no proper public accounting.

The report sets:

- operating expenditure at \$242.61 million
- capital expenditure at \$57.30 million

Capital gets structure, project detail and explanation. Operations do not. While the report provides substantial detail for \$57.30 million in capital expenditure, once that is separated out, \$185.31 million of spending still does not receive the same level of public breakdown. That is where the real problem starts. The report flags serious financial pressure, but still does not show one clear costed breakdown of the increase or the trade-offs behind it. Fuel is where this gets real. The report says fuel volatility is the most significant external risk. It says council has little resilience if those pressures continue. It says difficult trade-offs may be required. It says some future pressures remain unquantified. It even says accounting treatment can mask the underlying financial position. That is strong language. But it is not a fully costed public case. Councillors were told informally in early March that a 20 cent increase in fuel could equate to about \$400,000 in additional cost. Since then, diesel has risen by about \$1.33 a litre - roughly 73%. Using council's own rule of thumb, that points to about \$2.64 million in added pressure. If that were recovered entirely through rates, it is roughly another 1.4% rate increase.

And the report itself warns that if the fuel crisis continues, council may need to:

- increase rates above CPI
- increase borrowings
- reduce service levels and capital delivery

This is not just a fuel warning. It is a warning that council may respond with above-CPI rates, more debt, or cuts. That gives little comfort to ratepayers and little job security to employees. If fuel stays high, council is telling the public the options are simple: pay more, borrow more, or cut services. The debt story is already sitting there too

The report also forecasts borrowings of \$129.94 million at 30 June 2027, while the draft budget snapshot says \$27.51 million is going to loan repayments, interest costs and the regional landscape levy. So this is not just a story about one pressure point. It is a story about a larger budget, rising pressure, big debt-related costs, and a financial position council itself has already accepted is “precarious”.

Tourist parks shows how thin the explanation is. The snapshot shows a big increase in recreation services and tourist parks. That is not a minor shift. It is a clear example of the wider problem: large spending changes without the financial breakdown showing what service the money is for, what it costs, and why.

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Council accepted the Audit and Risk Committee’s advice that the position was precarious and directed the CEO to seek further advice. Yet it still endorsed the draft budget for consultation. Only two councillors voted against sending it out - Cr Paul Yeomans and b - after both sounded the alarm about the financial position, the missing information, and their unsuccessful attempts to get the detail needed to properly assess the budget.

The public is being asked to comment without the real trade-offs in front of it.

Council is effectively telling the public how it may balance the budget: increase debt, increase rates, or cut services. But the public is being asked to comment without those trade-offs being fully costed and clearly laid out in one place. And when consultation closes, the community still will not control whether council chooses higher rates, higher debt, reduced services, or some combination of all three. That is the democratic problem at the centre of this process. The issue is not just that the budget is bigger.

It is that the community is being asked to comment without the full financial picture in front of it.

The bottom line

So the public is not just being asked to absorb a larger budget. They are being asked to absorb:

rate increases above CPI

acknowledged financial pressure

\$27.51 million in debt-related and levy costs

and, a larger expenditure base without a proper breakdown of what is essential, what is discretionary, and what choices were actually considered
No full financial picture, no real transparency, and no real say in the consultation.

Pay more. Borrow more. Get less. That is the choice council is floating with a precarious financial position and the community is being asked to comment without ever being given the full costed trade-offs in one place.

I am writing to express my concern regarding the proposed 4.9% council rates increase. At a time when households and small businesses are already facing significant cost pressures, another above-inflation increase feels difficult to justify. Many in the community are struggling with rising insurance, utilities, wages and interest costs, and council rates only add further pressure.

As the owner of a busy local cellar door, I have regular touch points with a broad cross-section of local residents and visitors, and I know many people are increasingly concerned about affordability and rising council costs.

This proposal is particularly concerning given the new CEO's apparent history of significant rate increases in previous roles. I believe this deserves careful consideration, particularly in an election year where affordability and community confidence are front of mind for many residents.

I encourage Council to reconsider the scale of the increase and place greater focus on cost control and operational efficiencies before passing further costs onto ratepayers.

This is a proposal for a major upgrade for the St Nicholas playground BMX track and reserve. I have lived in Port Willunga since 1994. First living down on Martin street as a child to now as a 31-year-old adult with a young family, living near St Nicholas Street. Port Willunga is known for its beautiful beach which brings in an influx of tourism in the summer months, however growing up here I have felt Port Willunga community often seems overlooked, with majority of the focus on upgrades to the beach/car parks and signage. Whilst I respect and value this, there is minimal focus on other areas in the community such as parks and recreational activities.

From 1994-2026 St Nicholas playground has had 2 minor upgrades to playground equipment. Which compared to the playground upgrades in Christies beach- Rotary Park, Morphett vale- Wilfred Taylors reserve (\$100,000 State Government funding toward installation of accessible play equipment in (reference from Minutes 2025 <https://www.onkaparingacity.com/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/agendas-and-minutes/ceopmc/council-meetings/minutes-council-meeting-15-july-2025-public.pdf>) Port

Read the "Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2026-27" and saw both parks/ playgrounds in port willunga have not been addressed.

St Nicholas ave playground & BMX track is in need of urgent upgrades. BMX track and play group posing risks to young children. Unsafe play equipment for young children, limiting access for parents to support play (high platforms, parent/carer unable to access these platforms to support play, resulting in high risk of a fall)

With Port Willunga now being home to many young families unfortunately the area is lacking for community engagement and play equipment for young children. Skoda street playground being unfenced next to a main road is a high risk safety concern for young children- Risk being hit by traffic.

I have lived in port willunga since 1994, and have only noticed that St Nicholas playground has had 2 upgrades since then till now. Skoda street playground being made as a memorial park due to the death of a local girl back in early 2000's.

Please see attached proposal.

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St Nicholas Ave reserve: Playground, BMX track, and reserve.

Last upgraded in; unable to find.

Current state of park:

- BMX track bumps and banked curves are crumbling.
- Play equipment looks very dirty around the yellow slide/tower area.
- No grass area or shaded picnic benches for families and the community to enjoy/sit- One bench seat under large tree near playground, however often covered in bird poo.
- No paths to the playground, only a path directly through the reserve itself (St Nicholas to Caffrey crescent)
- Park is not friendly for young children, only area young children can use are the baby swing.
- Often overgrown with weed's, of course keeping in mind of the designated area for pollinators, which I understand is supposed to be unkept and I love this space.

Photos of BMX track in its current condition

1) Right hand side curved wall.
curved wall



2) back of curved wall.



3) left hand side of



I would like to propose for a major upgrade to St Nicholas playground to
detour the following:

- Nature play area to be added.
- Existing playground equipment upgraded to cater to all ages.
- BMX track to be fixed.
- Grassed area to be able lay a rug for families to sit and enjoy with small children able to crawl and explore.
- Picnic benches with shade for families and community to enjoy (yes there are tall trees however no picnic tables to enjoy food).

Skoda street playground is also unfriendly to young children and backs on to a main road, posing several high safety risks for young children. This playground and park is also heavily neglected and in need of an upgrade and fencing added for safety.

PRECARIOUS — BUT PASSED ANYWAY

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APR 16



READ IN APP ↗

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Dear Mayor and Elected Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Budget 2026/27.

As the local Member for Davenport, I work closely with our community every day. Through that engagement, I regularly receive feedback regarding infrastructure, open space, recreational facilities, accessibility, waste management and local amenity.

I take this opportunity to advocate on behalf of my community for the consideration and, where possible, advancement of the following projects and initiatives, which reflect consistent community feedback and demonstrated local need across the Davenport electorate.

I also wish to acknowledge and express my strong support for several important projects within Davenport that Council has included in the Draft Budget.

In particular, I welcome and thank Council for its commitment to:

- The Serpentine Creek Urban Creek Resilience and Recovery Project
- Hardcourt renewal at Serpentine Reserve
- Redevelopment of the BMX track at Minkarra Park

These projects represent important investments in community infrastructure, environmental resilience, youth recreation and the long-term liveability of our local area.

I also acknowledge and thank Council for progressing key local projects such as the Clearview Terrace footpath, now scheduled for 2026/27 following strong local advocacy. I know residents such as Mr and Mrs Atsalas, both in their eighties, will be particularly grateful to see this upgrade delivered.

In relation to the Serpentine hardcourt renewal, which I assume relates to the O'Halloran Hill Tennis Club courts, I seek clarification as to whether the Club's previously raised request for a disability-accessible toilet has been incorporated into the project scope.

If not currently included, I strongly encourage Council to deliver this upgrade concurrently with the planned works. Accessibility improvements should not be viewed as optional extras, but as essential community infrastructure that ensures all residents can participate equally in community life.

Green Waste Disposal

I also strongly advocate for the reinstatement of free green waste disposal passes in some capacity.

This issue is raised with me frequently by residents, particularly those living in hills and high vegetation areas where property sizes, tree coverage and bushfire risk create a greater need for affordable and accessible green waste disposal options.

Many residents feel the recent fee-for-service change acts as a barrier to responsible disposal and may unintentionally discourage timely vegetation management and fuel reduction activities.

There is a strong and consistent community view that reinstating a limited number of free green waste passes would provide a meaningful benefit to households while also delivering broader environmental and community safety outcomes.

Importantly, this is not simply a convenience issue. Accessible green waste disposal supports:

- Bushfire prevention and preparedness
- Reduced illegal dumping
- Cleaner local streets and reserves
- Improved environmental outcomes
- Increased community participation in vegetation management

Many residents believe the modest cost to Council would be outweighed by the broader public benefit and goodwill generated across the community.

I strongly encourage Council to reintroduce free green waste access in some capacity.

Mattress Collection

Many residents understand the financial pressures facing Council. However, they also question whether the downstream costs associated with illegal dumping, clean-up operations and compliance activities now outweigh the savings generated by the recently introduced fee for service system.

I respectfully request that Council review the current model and consider reinstating a free mattress collection service, or an alternative subsidised option, to better support residents and help reduce illegal dumping across the city.

Playground Upgrades and Improvements

I sincerely thank Council for listening to community feedback throughout the Open Space Strategy discussions. My community is very grateful that Council ultimately adopted a more balanced approach which retained many valued local playgrounds previously identified for possible removal.

I respectfully request that Council now consider bringing forward or reviewing the following playground projects to better meet existing and future community demand.

Roxanne Reserve

Following understandable community concern regarding the possibility of removal under the Open Space Strategy, residents were greatly relieved to see the playground retained. However, the subsequent decision to defer the upgrade to 2027/28 has caused disappointment within the community.

Residents feel they have waited patiently and advocated strongly for this project over a long period of time. Bringing this project forward would go a long way toward rebuilding community confidence and demonstrating that Council has listened to local feedback.

Happy Valley Sports Park Playground

Given the number of sporting clubs operating from the site, attracting hundreds of families each week, combined with the proximity to local schools and childcare centres, there is a strong community view that this project should be prioritised.

I was pleased to learn that community advocacy resulted in Council agreeing to bring forward works to 2028/29. However, I was disappointed to learn the upgrade would only proceed if 100 per cent external funding is secured.

On behalf of the community, I respectfully request Council reconsider its position and allocate funding toward this much-needed project. I would also appreciate further information regarding Council's efforts to secure external funding opportunities.

Flagstaff Park Playground (Regano Road)

This project is currently scheduled for 2029/30.

Residents continue to raise the need for an upgrade and many local families with young children are concerned that, under the current timeline, their children may age out of using the playground before improvements occur.

This project services a growing number of young families and I request Council consider bringing the timeline forward in recognition of demonstrated community need and advocacy.

Serpentine Reserve Playground

I am very pleased this project is scheduled for 2027/28 with a project value of \$828,000. It will build on the many recent upgrades delivered by Council with State Government funding I secured at the 2022 State Election.

Given the strong local interest and differing community views regarding whether the reserve should include one larger destination playground or two smaller play spaces, I request community consultation commence as early as possible to help inform future delivery and build community excitement around the project.

Ridgeway Drive Reserve

This reserve is uniquely positioned adjacent to a shopping centre, café precinct, local primary school and a recently established childcare centre.

Despite this high level of usage and strategic location, the reserve is currently not included within the upgrade schedule. Residents regularly raise concerns that the current offering no longer adequately reflects local demand.

I once again advocate for modest but meaningful improvements such as nature play elements, additional seating and shade, low-cost play additions, and improved landscaping.

Sporting Facilities

Local sporting clubs play an incredibly important role in community wellbeing, youth participation, social connection and preventative health outcomes.

Participation in local sport continues to grow across the southern suburbs. However, many clubs are increasingly struggling to keep pace with demand and infrastructure expectations.

I therefore request consideration of the following projects within this budget:

- Flagstaff Hill Football Club – improve lighting (following trial at Happy Valley Sports Park) and a water fountain
- Seacombe Tigers Softball Club – installation of a diamond, lighting and storage shed

- Happy Valley Football Club – installation of an electronic scoreboard

These upgrades would support growing participation, improve safety, extend training capacity and strengthen important community sporting hubs.

Trails and Footpaths

Accessible, connected and safe footpaths are essential community infrastructure.

Residents regularly raise concerns regarding walkability, connectivity, road safety and accessibility, particularly for older residents, school students, parents with prams and people with disability.

I respectfully request that Council prioritise and, where possible, bring forward the following projects:

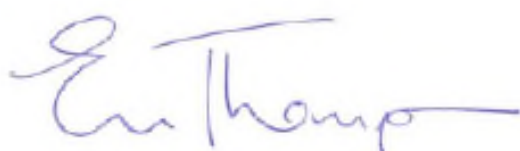
- Thalassa Park pedestrian trail (running from Hub Drive to Thalassa parallel to Outlook Drive) – currently scheduled for 2027/28. Please consider commencing consultation early to support delivery early in the financial year.
- Trinidad Way, Happy Valley (one side) – currently scheduled for 2027/28. Please consider commencing consultation early to support delivery early in the financial year.
- Western side of Tripoli Road, Happy Valley – currently scheduled for 2028/29. Please consider bringing these works forward.
- Bonneyview Road, Flagstaff Hill – currently scheduled for 2028/29. Please consider bringing these works forward.
- Stone Road, Happy Valley – currently medium priority and scheduled for 2032. Please consider bringing these works forward.

These requests reflect ongoing and consistent feedback from residents across the Davenport electorate.

As our southern suburbs continue to grow and evolve, it is critical that investment in community infrastructure keeps pace with increasing usage, changing demographics and community expectations.

I appreciate Council's continued investment in community infrastructure and look forward to continuing to work collaboratively to deliver positive outcomes for our growing community.

Warm regards,



Erin Thompson MP
Member for Davenport

8th May 2026

Shop 11, The Hub Shopping Centre Taylors Road Aberfoyle 5159
PO Box 1137 Flagstaff Hill SA 5159 | 8270 5122 | davenport@parliament.sa.gov.au

 [ErinThompsonMP](#)  [erin_thompson_mp](#)





Aquatic Centre Aldinga Bay Action Group

Submission to City of Onkaparinga 2026-2027 Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget Your Say

Our group notes the absence of a documented Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) for aquatic facilities in Noarlunga and Aldinga, and questions the proposed budget for additional work on Noarlunga Aquatic Centre (NAC), in particular the possible extension to the facility with a \$1.5M splash pad (Council minutes, 28 April 2026).

Background

- Our group has been advocating for aquatic facilities in Aldinga since at least 2021. In 2022, we were allocated a State government grant of \$150K for a planning study and subsequently participated in the study that was completed in July 2024. Council staff also participated in the study.
- The Aldinga Bay Aquatic Centre Feasibility and Business Case Report (The Report, June 2024) was submitted to the Mayor and CEO in December 2025. The Report makes a case for an aquatic centre at Aldinga, in recognition of the current and future population growth in the south of the Council area.
- Furthermore, Aldinga is named by the Royal Lifesaving Society (2025) as the one place in greater Adelaide where the most people have to travel 20 minutes or more to access public aquatic facilities*.
- Following a successful deputation to Council in December 2025, the Acting Mayor wrote to Renewal SA to advocate for land to be set aside for a potential aquatic centre at Aldinga.

Given this history, it is disappointing that the Council has not made a commitment to revising aquatic facilities planning in the 2026-2027 LTFP process.

Noarlunga Aquatic Centre (NAC)

- It is good to see that the repairs and upgrades to NAC proposed for 2025-2026 are to be completed this year, with additional grants and under budget (\$10.8M).
- The repairs and upgrades were proposed to elected members in May 2024, along with a proposal to seek future funding for a \$40-60M plan to extend NAC with new pools. The repairs and upgrades component was approved in December 2024.
- We note that the NAC budget for 2026-2027 has a budget item for 'continued refurbishment' (p. 26) of \$16M, part of a multi-year project to 'continue to construct and deliver the Noarlunga Aquatic Centre' (South Coast Fact Sheet).
- We also note that the Council is considering how to spend anticipated savings of \$1.5 million (Council Minutes of 28 April 2026).

Our understanding is that the Council is considering spending the savings of \$1.5 million on a new splash pad at NAC, with an ongoing commitment to \$100k per annum to managing the splash pad (expenses and depreciation). This appears unwise and inconsistent with 'refurbishment', as it would add an additional structure to the complex in the absence of a review of aquatic centre policy. It is mission creep, not 'continued refurbishment', 'repairs' or 'upgrades'.

Splash pads

While splash pads may be popular and modestly increase attendance, the evidence suggests splash pads are most successful when they are used to activate public spaces at no charge e.g Henley Square.

The Aldinga business case, reflecting current industry knowledge, considered a splash pad an expensive and lower priority than other features of a new aquatic facility.

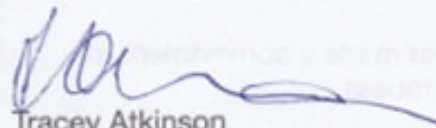
The cost of \$100k per annum to operate a splash pad at NAC would constitute approximately 20 percent of the estimated annual cost for a completely new aquatic centre comprising three indoor pools at Aldinga (see Report).

If the Council were to approve spending of the \$1.5 million on building any new aquatic facilities at NAC, a more urgent and much-needed addition to NAC would be a warm water/hydrotherapy pool, as there are no such facilities between Victor Harbor and Marion.

It is recommended that the Council defer any further spending on extensions to NAC until the Council's long-term financial planning for aquatic facilities is reviewed with reference to the Aldinga Bay Aquatic Centre and Business Case Report (2024).

If you would like to discuss further, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,



Tracey Atkinson
for

Aquatic Centre Aldinga Bay Action Group

7/5/26

Tracey Atkinson, Aldinga Beach; Karen Lever, Sellicks Beach; Anne Cross, Port Willunga.

Facebook: Aquatic Centre Aldinga Bay-Action Group

Instagram: AquaticCentre_AldingaBay

Email: aquaticcentrealdinga@gmail.com

Phone: 0408 611 574

*Source:

Royal Lifesaving Society, <www.royallifesaving.com.au> , Search for 'State of Aquatic Facilities 2025' and go to page 22 Table: 'Top 50 Australian Communities Where The Most People Have To Drive More Than 20 Minutes To Access A Public Pool'.

OCW Submission

Draft 2026–27 Annual Business Plan and Budget

Submitted by Onkaparinga Council Watch

1. Purpose of submission

This submission addresses the draft 2026–27 Annual Business Plan and Budget.

It also refers to issues raised in the 2025–26 budget submission, Council's response to that submission, Council's 2026–27 budget responses, OCW community engagement, public comments, and the Mayor's budget survey.

The submission focuses on:

- Long Term Financial Plan discipline
 - debt strategy and debt reporting
 - asset sales and debt reduction
 - budget transparency
 - service and program reporting
 - tourist parks
 - ICT and ongoing system capability
 - accounting treatment and financial reporting
 - community engagement and public understanding.
 - Essential and nonessential services
-

2. Relevance of 2025–26 submission and asset sales

The 2025–26 budget submission lodged by Yvonne Wenham raised concerns about asset sale proceeds, the \$3 million annual surplus asset sale target, debt reduction, debt strategy, and transparency in financial reporting.

Council's response confirmed the \$3 million annual target formed part of the Long Term Financial Plan and that less than \$632,000 had been raised to that point.

Council has now provided the following actual revenue from surplus asset sales:

Year	Actual revenue
2021–22	\$335,937
2022–23	\$105,000
2023–24	\$7,695
2024–25	\$1,608,147
2025–26	\$5,396,074

The figures show the \$3 million annual target was not met in 2021–22, 2022–23, 2023–24 or 2024–25, and was exceeded in 2025–26.

At a March 2026 elected member session, it was stated that current-year asset sale proceeds had exceeded the \$3 million target. It was also stated that treatment of the excess had not yet been determined.

Options raised included whether the excess would be carried forward, applied to debt reduction in the current financial year, offset against future years' asset sale targets, or paid down immediately to reduce interest costs.

OCW submits that this should be clearly determined and publicly reported. If surplus asset sale proceeds are not applied to debt reduction when received, Council may continue carrying debt and interest costs that could otherwise be reduced.

The budget should clearly show total asset sale proceeds, whether proceeds relate to plant, fleet, equipment or land, whether proceeds are operating or capital in nature, how much is applied to debt reduction, how much is applied elsewhere, and how shortfalls against the LTFP target are managed.

OCW further submits that, as part of standard quarterly reporting, Council should maintain a transparent public register disclosing surplus asset sales, proceeds received, where proceeds are allocated, when proceeds are applied to debt reduction, and the resulting impact on debt levels and interest costs.

OCW submits that Council's Asset Revitalisation Plan should also include a structured public engagement process identifying assets proposed for consideration through each annual budget cycle. This would provide the public with earlier visibility of proposed asset rationalisation, allow meaningful public feedback before decisions progress too far, improve transparency regarding future asset disposal considerations, reduce situations where proposals only become publicly visible once formal reports are presented to Council, and assist Council to identify assets that are unlikely to raise significant public concern so they can progress more efficiently through the process.

3. Long Term Financial Plan discipline

Council has LTFP documents, strategies, reviews and financial principles.

The issue is not only whether plans exist.

The issue is whether Council:

- sticks to adopted plans
- reports against them
- explains changes
- publicly acquits outcomes
- identifies drift
- shows the financial consequence of new or changed priorities.

OCW submits that each newly elected Council should adopt a four-year priorities and project framework during its first budget/LTFP cycle.

That framework should identify:

- major projects
- minor projects
- strategic priorities
- service review priorities
- borrowing assumptions
- asset sale assumptions
- planned operating savings
- expected community outcomes.

Projects should not materially drift during the Council term unless there is a stated reason, such as:

- legal requirement
- emergency circumstance
- critical asset failure
- confirmed external funding opportunity
- formally demonstrated public-interest need.

Changes should be reported publicly against the original four-year framework.

OCW further submits that State Government election commitments involving local government infrastructure or projects should be focused on projects already identified within Council's adopted four-year budget and strategic planning framework.

OCW submits that commitments for projects outside the adopted four-year framework create financial planning, prioritisation and governance risks for councils, particularly where projects create ongoing operational, renewal and lifecycle liabilities.

If the State Government seeks delivery of projects outside Council's adopted strategic and financial priorities, OCW submits the State Government should fully fund both establishment and associated long-term financial impacts.

OCW submits councils should not accept external funding for projects without fully assessing and publicly identifying:

- ongoing operating costs;
- renewal costs;
- lifecycle costs;
- future staffing impacts;
- future upgrade obligations;
- depreciation impacts;
- and long-term budget implications.

Those costs should be incorporated into Council's long-term financial planning and decision-making at the time projects are approved so elected members and the public can properly assess whether projects remain financially viable over their full lifecycle, not merely at installation or construction stage.

4. Tourist parks

The adopted 2025–26 budget identified the objective to:

“Finalise the master plan for the Moana Beach Tourist Park, guiding future investment to transform it into a premier tourist destination.”

However, the strategy has not yet been publicly delivered or presented to Council.

The 2026–27 draft budget proposes expenditure of:

Tourist park	Draft 2026–27 budget
Christies Beach Tourist Park	\$1,686,258
Moana Tourist Park	\$2,343,553

Total identified expenditure: **\$4,029,811**.

OCW submits the budget material does not establish whether this expenditure is essential, discretionary, renewal-based, strategic-investment based, or operationally necessary.

OCW further submits that significant ongoing investment should not occur before the previously identified tourist parks strategy and master planning work has been completed, publicly presented and considered by Council.

OCW submits that tourist park expenditure should be reviewed against:

- adopted strategy;
 - long-term financial return;
 - renewal obligations;
 - lifecycle costs;
 - debt implications;
 - and whether expenditure is essential or discretionary.
-

5. ICT

Council's 2026–27 budget response identifies the following ICT budget detail, which was only provided after questions were specifically asked by Yvonne Wenham on behalf of OCW:

- recurrent ICT operating expenditure: **\$11.17 million**
- operating projects and capital works: **\$2.24 million**
- software and licensing costs: **\$5.52 million**
- employee costs: **\$3.1 million**
- equipment leasing: **\$1.1 million**
- contractors: **\$0.54 million**

OCW submits that this level of detail was not explicitly presented in the published draft budget in a way that allowed elected members or the public to meaningfully assess the expenditure and allocation before being asked to provide feedback.

Council also identifies a **OneCouncil Data and Staff Capability Uplift Program**.

OCW submits that the proposed uplift appears to be retrofitting existing problems of non-delivery associated with the original ICT Reform / OneCouncil implementation.

The ICT Reform / OneCouncil project was originally presented as a reform program intended to deliver efficiencies, savings and improved organisational capability. The 2018 endorsed report should therefore be considered against current ICT expenditure and capability gaps.

OCW does not accept the position recently expressed at Audit and Risk Committee that there is limited value in reviewing the past.

The past is directly relevant because Council is still carrying substantial ICT recurrent costs while simultaneously funding uplift programs to improve data capability, reporting quality and staff capability that were expected outcomes of the original reform process.

OCW submits that Council should publicly report:

- original ICT Reform cost assumptions;
- expected savings and efficiencies;
- actual total project cost;
- ongoing recurrent ICT costs;
- benefits realised;
- benefits not realised;
- remaining capability gaps;
- and whether the original financial and operational outcomes have been delivered.

OCW further submits this raises a broader governance and financial oversight question regarding whether the current ICT environment remains economically sustainable and operationally effective, or whether Council should undertake a formal business-case assessment regarding whether continuing remediation and uplift represents the best long-term financial outcome compared with replacement or alternative system approaches.

6. Accounting treatment and financial reporting

Council can provide additional financial detail beyond the statutory minimum reporting requirements legislated.

This is particularly relevant where Council itself acknowledges that current accounting treatment can mask the underlying financial position.

OCW submits that where Council is aware statutory presentation does not clearly reflect the underlying financial position, Council should provide clearer supplementary public reporting rather than relying solely on minimum legislative presentation requirements.

OCW further submits that Council should advocate for improvements to local government financial reporting requirements where existing legislative treatment reduces transparency or public understanding.

Council should lead by example by demonstrating what transparent and decision-useful local government financial reporting looks like.

7. NDIS

Council's advice states the proposed NDIS program is self-funding and at no cost to Council.

However, the budget table provided by Council identifies:

NDIS services	Income	Expenditure	Net cost
NDIS-related services	\$350,000	\$480,713	\$130,713 cost to Council

The figures contradict Council's own advice. Council has identified the proposed service as self-funding and at no cost to Council, while the budget table shows existing NDIS-related services operating at a **\$130,713 net cost to Council**.

Council has not explained the cost drivers, subsidy, overhead allocation, pricing assumptions, participation levels, or why a participant-funded service is producing a net cost to ratepayers.

Council's own 2020–21 Annual Business Plan stated Council would "monitor the funding environment for our disability programs." The current budget material does not demonstrate that this has been acquitted through a current whole-of-program review.

OCW has previously raised concerns with former CEOs about Council's role as an NDIS provider, cost recovery, market impact and reporting transparency. This is not a new issue.

OCW submits that Council should not expand NDIS-related services while the existing model is operating at a loss and has not been transparently reviewed.

NDIS services should be separately itemised in the budget and quarterly reporting.

A comprehensive review should be undertaken as a matter of urgency before any expansion is adopted. That review should identify total income, expenditure, direct and indirect staffing costs, overheads, Council subsidy, pricing assumptions, compliance costs, market impact, risks, and whether continued delivery is financially sustainable and consistent with Council's role.

8. NDIS fees and charges disclosure

Council's fees and charges schedule cites **Local Government Act 1999 section 188(1)(b)** for NDIS-related services.

The schedule does not state the actual Council fee.

Instead, it states:

"Price on application and set by NDIS price guide"

and:

“Participants access services via their NDIS plan and prices are set by the NDIS Price Guide.”

OCW submits this does not clearly disclose Council’s own fee or pricing method.

The NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits set the maximum amounts that can generally be charged for particular NDIS supports. They do not automatically set the fee charged by each provider. Council, as the service provider, still determines the actual fee it charges for each service, provided that fee sits within the applicable NDIS pricing limit.

This raises questions about whether Council’s fees and charges schedule is meeting the legislative intent and transparency obligations associated with publicly adopted fees and charge schedules under the Local Government Act 1999.

The 2025–26 Schedule of Fees and Charges shows this is not isolated to the 2026–27 budget. It also does not disclose actual NDIS fees.

OCW submits this raises a transparency and oversight concern because Council does not clearly disclose:

- the actual NDIS fees charged;
- whether it charges the maximum NDIS price limit or a lower amount;
- why NDIS-funded services produce a net cost to Council;
- and the overall NDIS service model has not been reviewed since implementation.

9. Graduate Program

Council’s budget response identifies a proposed graduate program cost of \$477,071.

OCW submits this should be clearly disclosed in the draft budget, including:

- number of graduate positions;
- business need;
- whether roles are temporary or ongoing;
- service areas supported;
- expected organisational benefit;
- and whether this is essential or discretionary expenditure.

10. OCW community feedback — Draft Budget 2026–27

On 5 May 2026, OCW published a public Facebook poll asking:

“How do you think Council should balance the budget?”

Members of the public could add their own response options and comments. OCW advised participants that community feedback may be included in this submission and sought consent before including individual comments.

Poll option	Votes
Stop spending on useless stuff	147
Reduce salary bill and expenses paid	114
Cut discretionary expenditure	87
None — show a full cost breakdown first	70
Full independent audit on every level of council	69
Cutting spend on upside down ice creams and similar artwork	66
Cut services	48
Reduce funding for consultants to perform meaningless research	15
Sell the ice cream on Beach Rd	14
Spend money on improving the quality of life of the masses and reduce spending on improving the life of the few	9
A mix of every option	7
Reduce service standards	5
Stop chasing Federal and State funding which we also have to fund	5
"I just want milk that tastes like real milk"	3
Get a DOGE	2
Increase rates	0
Increase borrowings	0

The poll was not a scientific survey. It was self-selected social media participation. However, the results show strong concern about discretionary expenditure, staffing costs, consultants, contractors, transparency, independent review, and the absence of detailed expenditure breakdowns.

Comments participants consented to OCW using included:

“I believe the real issue is not revenue, it is the way council spending, staffing, priorities, and accountability are being managed.

Before any rate increase is imposed on the community, there should be a full internal review and independent audit of council operations, including:

- Executive salaries, allowances, and vehicle benefits
- Job descriptions, staffing structures, and whether the right people are in the right roles
- Credit card use and discretionary spending
- Office expenses, stationery, subscriptions, consultants, and administration costs
- Project spending and whether essential safety works are being prioritised over non-essential or cosmetic projects
- All current and proposed capital works, with a clear focus on community need, safety, roads, infrastructure, and basic services

No expense should be considered too small to review. Residents are already under financial pressure, and council should demonstrate that every dollar is being spent responsibly before asking the community to pay more.

We need transparency, accountability, and a serious overhaul of the current structure, not another burden placed on ratepayers.”

— [REDACTED]

(37 people agreed)

“Without a full breakdown of expenses it is irresponsible to pass a budget or ask the rate payers to agree or disagree to proposed budget. Borrowing more funds when council cannot repay from income received is disastrous. The monies from land that is/has been sold was to come off council debt. That should happen as was declared previously.

Transparency and accountability are the purview of elected councillors.

Rate payers are under financial stress at present and that needs to be considered.”

— [REDACTED]

(19 people agreed)

“City of Onkaparinga needs to balance the budget the same way households have to: cut non-essential spending first. Protect core services, trim bureaucracy and then stop growth in wages and overheads that outpace our ratepayers ability to pay.

Rates being lifted should be the last resort, not the first!”

— [REDACTED]
(10 people agreed)

“One of my big gripes with the Council spending is the amount of time and resources spent on matters not within their publicly accepted purview - e.g. Climate change, the date on which Australia Day is celebrated etc.”

— [REDACTED]
(9 people agreed)

“Totally agree.
Most of us HAVE to live on a budget based on ‘WANTS’ & ‘NEEDS’ we might want something but do we need it & can we pay for it !

What gives the Council the right to treat OUR money we pay them irresponsibly?
They are paid to manage our - RUBBISH, ROADS, RESERVES, RATES & Community Facilities not build empires & self promote themselves!! 🤔”

— [REDACTED]
(4 people agreed)

“Also stop watering the (unwanted) trees dumped on our lawns/pavements when its bucketing with rain! I’m in Aldinga on Pridham it was full on rain when I left this morning at 6:45 am this morning and my wipers were full on getting out of my driveway and the truck was watering across the road. Still driving around Aldinga now watering. Its madness!”

— [REDACTED]
(4 people agreed)

“The council should completely resign because they are a corporation. And then we can get back our real council that gets its authority from the People”

— [REDACTED]
(7 people agreed)

“an audit on contractors!”

(5 people agreed)

OCW submits the feedback demonstrates significant community concern about transparency, discretionary expenditure, staffing, contractors, accountability, and confidence in Council’s budget process.

11. Mayor’s survey

Following Council endorsing the formal community engagement approach for the 2026–27 draft budget, the Mayor separately created and promoted her own public survey seeking resident views relevant to councillor decision-making during the budget process.

OCW submits this raises governance and process questions regarding:

- the purpose of the additional survey;
- how the information gathered was intended to be used;
- whether the survey formed part of the formally endorsed engagement process;
- whether the results were provided to all elected members;
- whether the survey created a parallel consultation process outside the formally adopted community engagement framework;
- and how the results were submitted, interpreted and used for decision-making.

OCW submits this raises public confidence issues regarding the integrity, consistency and transparency of budget consultation and decision-making processes.

13. Debt strategy and long-term financial planning

OCW submits it is negligent that Council has not publicly updated its debt strategy since 2021 despite:

- ESCOSA’s substantial unsustainability findings;
- Council’s own acknowledgement that the financial position is “precarious”;
- significant increases in borrowings;
- interest rate volatility;
- inflationary pressures;
- and major future capital and operating commitments.

OCW submits that long-term debt planning should not rely on assumptions embedded across multiple documents without a current publicly adopted debt strategy clearly setting out:

- debt purpose;
- debt ceilings;
- repayment methodology;
- borrowings versus renewal principles;
- intergenerational equity principles;
- risk thresholds;
- interest exposure;
- and debt reduction pathways.

OCW submits that a revised debt strategy should be publicly consulted on and adopted before further major long-term financial commitments are undertaken.

14. Debt presentation and borrowings

Council's draft 2026–27 budget states **new borrowings of \$5.97 million**, while also presenting a budgeted debt position of **\$129.9 million**.

Budget Review 3 for 2025–26 states borrowings at **30 June 2026** are forecast to be **\$109.916 million**, a reduction of **\$9.8 million** compared with Budget Review 2.

OCW submits that this creates a material debt reporting issue.

The public and elected members should not be required to reconcile materially different debt figures across separate budget papers, quarterly reviews, carry-forward assumptions and financial statements.

Council should clearly explain the movement between:

- the **\$109.916 million** forecast debt position at 30 June 2026;
- the **\$5.97 million** in proposed new borrowings;
- and the **\$129.9 million** budgeted debt position.

OCW submits that the absence of a clear reconciliation weakens financial oversight and makes it difficult to assess Council's true borrowing position, debt trajectory, carry-forward impacts and exposure if the full capital works program is delivered.

Debt reporting should be transparent, reconciled, decision-ready, and clearly reported to the public before the budget is adopted.

15. Public hearing process and verbal submissions

OCW submits that Council should reintroduce a formal public hearing process for annual business plan and budget submissions.

Prior to COVID-19, members of the public were able to verbally address Council regarding their submissions and concerns before final budget adoption.

OCW submits this provided an important accountability and transparency mechanism by allowing:

- members of the public to directly address elected members;
- clarification of written submissions;
- discussion regarding whether concerns had been addressed in the final budget report;
- and public visibility of the issues raised before Council determined the final budget.

OCW submits the current process does not adequately facilitate this.

While individuals may request to speak to their submissions through existing public participation mechanisms, that opportunity is not prominently or clearly communicated as part of the formal budget engagement process.

OCW submits many members of the community would not reasonably understand that such an opportunity may exist.

OCW further submits that budget engagement material and final budget reports should explicitly identify:

- whether verbal submissions can be made;
- how members of the public may request to speak;
- when those hearings or presentations will occur;
- and how elected members will consider and respond to issues raised before final budget adoption.

OCW submits this would improve transparency, accessibility and public confidence in Council's budget consultation and decision-making process.

16. Final submission position

OCW submits that Council should not adopt the 2026–27 budget without first addressing the transparency, oversight and financial governance issues identified in this submission.

OCW submits that Council should:

- provide a clear breakdown of operating expenditure;
- identify essential versus discretionary spending;
- itemise major cost increases;
- review service areas operating at a loss;
- provide clearer debt reporting;
- update its debt strategy;
- and ensure elected members and the public have sufficient information to assess the budget before adoption.

A Safe Trail for McLaren Vale

Connecting the Shiraz Trail to McLaren Vale's winery precincts — safely, sustainably, and without a car.

Submitted to: City of Onkaparinga Your Say Budget Engagement 2026–27 | May 2026

AT A GLANCE

What we are asking for	Allocation of part of the existing \$517,000 shared use trail budget to investigate, design, and construct the Vaughtons Track shared trail in McLaren Vale
What it connects	Shiraz Trail / Visitor Centre → Warners Road winery precinct → Seaview Road precinct including the incoming Lancemore Resort & Spa
Total trail length	Approx. 2.1 km — two segments along an existing proclaimed public road reserve
Land required	None — the trail corridor is already public land vested in Council. No acquisition needed
Estimated cost	\$280,000–\$380,000 (Stage 1). Grant funding via ORSR proposed — minimal direct burden on Council budget
Who benefits	Cyclists, walkers, families, visitors, winery operators, tourism businesses, and all road users who share dangerous roads with cyclists
Why now	The Lancemore Resort & Spa — 124 rooms, five-star — opens at the trail's northern terminus in late 2027

The Problem — Getting Around McLaren Vale on a Bike is Dangerous

McLaren Vale is one of South Australia's great cycling destinations. The existing Shiraz Trail and Coast to Vines network already attract tens of thousands of users annually, demonstrating strong established demand for safe cycling infrastructure within the region. But riders trying to reach the wineries on in the northern portion from the Shiraz Trail face a serious problem: there is no safe route.

- Victor Harbor Road — a high-speed arterial road with no bike lane, no verge, and fast-moving traffic
- Olivers Road — a narrow, vergeless rural road with no safe space for cyclists or walkers

This is not just a problem for cyclists. Removing cyclists and pedestrians from Victor Harbor Road and unsafe sections of Olivers Road improves safety outcomes for all road users, including motorists. Families and visitors who are not confident enough to ride on busy roads simply do not go — and the businesses along these corridors miss out on their custom.

The Solution — A Trail That Already Has a Home

We have identified a solution that does not require Council to buy any land, negotiate with any private landowner, or seek any state government approval.

There is a 2.1 km proclaimed public road reserve — the Vaughtons Track corridor — running from near the Shiraz Trail and Visitor Centre north to Seaview Road via Warners Road. This land is already owned by Council. It is currently unformed and overgrown, but the corridor is there, the tenure is clear, and the only thing missing is the path itself. Unlike many trail projects, this corridor presents minimal tenure risk because the land is already vested in Council ownership.



Base map: SAPPA © SA Government | Indicative only.

The Trail — Where It Goes

The Trail — Where It Goes

The map below shows the proposed trail alignment overlaid on the official SAPPA cadastral base map. The dotted boundary lines visible on the base map are existing proclaimed public road reserves already vested in Council ownership. The red corridor indicates the proposed shared-use trail alignment.

- Segment A (~980 m) — Visitor Centre north to Warners Road: sealed asphalt, consistent with the Shiraz Trail standard
- Segment B (~1,100 m) — Warners Road north along Vaughtons Track to Seaview Road: compacted roadbase (Stage 1), sealed asphalt upgrade timed before Lancemore Resort opens (Stage 2)
- Destinations reached: Lloyd Brothers, Bekkers, In Praise of Shadows, Lancemore Resort, Beach Road Wines, Mollydooker, SC Pannell, Swell Brewing Co., d'Arenberg — without using Victor Harbor Road or vergeless Olivers Road

South Australia has already demonstrated the economic and tourism value of regional cycling infrastructure through projects such as the Amy Gillet Trail, Riesling Train, Barossa Trail and Barossa Cycle Hub, which successfully combined tourism activation, visitor servicing and safer active transport connections.

The Moment — McLaren Vale's Biggest Tourism Investment in Decades

The Lancemore McLaren Vale Resort & Spa — 124 rooms, five-star — is under construction at 212 Seaview Road. It is anticipated to open in late 2027. This is the most significant hospitality investment McLaren Vale has seen in a generation.

The resort sits at the northern terminus of the proposed trail. If the trail is not in place when the resort opens, McLaren Vale will be telling its highest-value visitors to use a dangerous road.

What We Are Asking Council to Do

- Recognise the Vaughtons Track corridor as a priority trail project for McLaren Vale in the 2026–27 program
- Allocate part of the existing \$517,000 shared use trail budget to investigate and design the trail — with the majority of construction funding through the ORSR grant program
- Partner on the grant application — grant programs of this type require or prefer a council as the lead applicant
- Commit to completing the trail before the Lancemore Resort opens in late 2027

What This Costs — and What It Delivers

WHAT IT COSTS	WHAT IT DELIVERS
Stage 1 (sealed Segment A + roadbase Segment B): \$280,000 – \$380,000 Full sealed trail (both segments): \$420,000 – \$580,000 <i>Grant funding sought for majority of construction cost. Council's direct contribution may be as low as in-kind support and ongoing maintenance.</i>	• 2.1 km of safe off-road shared trail — the missing link in the McLaren Vale cycling network • Safe access to 10+ visitor destinations currently reachable only via dangerous roads • Cyclists and pedestrians removed from Victor Harbor Road and Olivers Road • A sealed trail at the doorstep of the Lancemore Resort on opening day • Extended Shiraz Trail brand northward into the region's most commercially active precinct • A regional cycling network worthy of a world-class wine destination

In Summary

McLaren Vale already has the land. It already has the Shiraz Trail. It is about to welcome a five-star resort whose guests will want to explore the region on foot and by bike. The Vaughtons Track trail is the connection that makes all of that work — safely, sustainably, and without asking visitors to share a road with fast-moving traffic. As visitation to McLaren Vale continues to grow, safe active transport connections between tourism precincts will become increasingly important community infrastructure.

We respectfully ask Council to prioritise this project in the 2026–27 budget and to partner with us in securing the appropriate supplementary grant funding to make it happen.

Table 4: Late submissions

Participant comments (verbatim)	
In the context of the Draft ABP, I would like to enquire as to when Council is likely to resume kerbing, gutter and footpath works on St Andrews Terrace - south of the Victor Harbor Road tunnel. These works were originally promised for 2022, but were abandoned at the new footbridge immediately south of the tunnel due to "budgetary constraints", while the plan was to complete works up to St Johns Terrace. I note considerable similar upgrade works proposed for Sellicks Beach, O'Sullivan's Beach etc. in Council's planning, while the aforementioned works on St Andrews Terrace remain unfinished 5 years after commencement, and the state of the shoulder bitumen continues to deteriorate and erode away (see attached images). When does Council plan to complete the promised roadway upgrade of St Andrews Terrace, Willunga South?	
	
Ive been a homeowner in Onkaparinga for 5 years now. the cost of living is too high already, i work 50 hours a week just to get by. you say its a small rise but everyones doing it. Mortgage, fuel, food, bills. they are all going up please dont join the club of things that are stopping me from eating at night just to keep the lights on.	
I think I saw somewhere you wanted feedback on the budget for 2026-27. I thought the deadline was the week after it was so I missed out but I wanted to share that I don't agree with the budget at all. Especially if there's all these hidden costs and the surplus is imaginary. For so so many years the council keeps promising that the debt will go down but it keeps going up and the same promise repeated. If you need to cut back on services then do it. It's surely not possible to keep living beyond one's means. I sometimes when I can't sleep look at the credit card costs to the council and some of them beggar belief. I notice the travel reports hasn't been updated since December 2025 too.	

Table 5: Comments provided via Facebook

Form	Comments (verbatim)
Comment	Allow more buskers !! Please * Way too much paperwork with the current process. I still haven't even received a reply from a email written months ago. Makes people not want to share what they create in the space and environment. Big killer on vibes and earnings.
Council Reply	City of Onkaparinga response: Hi [REDACTED], Appreciate your feedback and would be happy to follow up about your email. Would you please DM us with the email address you used to contact council?
Reply	City of Onkaparinga yeah, he's wanting to help brighten up the district while us rate payers with risks from a 'verge' are ignored despite the fact of being a high rate payer and then threatens with fines if we pay for the risk to be removed. I know from my parents experiences, Local government looked after rate payers much better years ago!
Reply	City of Onkaparinga please respond to all emails you received from everyone.
Reply	[REDACTED] Also ask councillor Cr Marion Themeliotis - Thalassa Ward - City of Onkaparinga - she's good at helping people
Reply	[REDACTED] really, I got a 'no' to the request I put in despite her talking with the relevant dept head. My request was to remove risk to my property & associated lives from something on council land. If I remove the risk myself they'll give me a huge fine! If what has me worried does occur, I'll sue the council for \$m's.
Reply	[REDACTED] I also have dual citizenship but have always entered countries on their respective passports
Reply	[REDACTED] no surprise there mate, employees in council offices these days are lazy pricks when it comes to rate payers or individuals wanting to brighten up social areas. The only area we're they're fast and positive responses is to volunteers to help with the councils services.
Comment	Dont increase council rates!!!
Reply	[REDACTED] So which services do you want cut? Costs have gone up, so they either (a) put rates up to match, or (b) cut services, or (c) borrow money (which would be stupid). So if you don' want option A, then which services would you like to see reduced?

Reply	██████████ how about this wasteful, dodgy council stop wasting our money and start spending wisely instead of putting more pressure on the residents.
Reply	██████████ how about cutting councillors wages
Comment	City of Onkaparinga can we have a greater breakdown of the outgoing expenses to make a better informed decision on this budget. Your asking us for our opinion on limited data and that's not doable.
Reply	██████████ from my experience it's the norm for Onkaparinga. What makes me laugh these days is the councillors themselves. Until recent years they were all volunteers there to help ensure rate payers got value for money and improve the districts. These days the councillors are much younger with little experience and aiming at impressing specific political parties so they progress their political careers, with Mayors being paid upto \$100k!
Comment	I am tired of wasting my time going to Have Your Say on the council's website and being ignored... We had lots of stuff printed out for a new town centre to give Aldinga Beach a central area with a lovely walkway surrounded by cafes and other such shops, places to sit and much shade with tree planting, and now for some reason, many years later we are going to get two story town houses built with some shops in the same area rather than what we all voted for, so forget trying to have your say with this council... Doesn't work!!
Reply	██████████ they don't care as long as they get paid
Comment	Get back to basics and drop all these PC projects which benefits very few. I can't afford them and neither can many thousands.
Reply	██████████ spot on mate, like state & federal govts, they spend a high %age of funds on projects for minority groups and use expensive "contractors" to complete the projects that end up costing them about double original budgeted cost.
Reply	██████████ Agree!
Comment	The CEO can take a pay cut and start taking care of my nature strip as technically it's their land as times are tough

Reply	██████████ yep and the weird thing is the limitations on what we're allowed to do on the verges. Living in Coromandel Valley I see huge branches coming off gum trees just about every day. Next to my driveway is the gum tree trunk growing at close to 45 degrees and a huge branch angled branch directly across my driveway. It could break off easily as a car is parked, a visitor walks, an ambulance is parked in my driveway, the postie is at my letterbox, all of which would lead to the council being sued 100's of thousand dollars or even more if it happens to an ambulance and I can't be rushed to hospital until it's too late. But my 3 requests have been rejected. Even my local councillor hasn't demanded that it happen. If I hire an arborist to cut the branch off, the council will fine me! It make me feel like not paying their "rates" which in area, are about the highest they bloody charge and all we get for that is our bins emptied. They spend nothing on social improvements while they spend millions in cheap suburbs like Hackham.
Comment	funny you guys sent us the wrong valuation of our properties for our latest rates,
Comment	You better Get Off You Back Side And Some Counsel Work And Get Ready For One Counsel In S A And Get Ready To Get Real Jobs
Comment	Stop spend rate payers money on ridiculous art installations like the ice cream.
Comment	Not sure that you want my response.....
Reply	██████████ wouldn't listen anyway.
Comment	Worsecouncil
Comment	Dump the corporation crap and the expensive CEO and bring back the council that actually did things for the community instead of corporate money making only.....we are not an endless money pit for you to abuse your corporate power crap!!!!
Comment	Stop printing and posting unnessary glossy brochures
Reply	██████████ and posters advertising for us to have our say.
Reply	██████████ Hear, hear!!
Comment	City of Onkaparinga Employ 1000 People And 80 Percent Of There Work Is Done By Private Contractors Am Being Asking The Counsel To Clear The Storm Water Drains For 20 Years They Complete Block And They Refused Also Sweep The Road The Only Time The Sweep The Road Is Wen That Rash Is Down Under Is Disgrace Shame Am Not Sure What 1000 people Doing All Day They Maybe Getting Bored For Doing Nothing

Comment	One Counsel Lake In Brisbane And Wee Can Save Lots Right Payers Money
Comment	What a [REDACTED] joke. Our say as ratepayers is never acted upon. This [REDACTED] is a waste of time.
Comment	Reduce the CEO's salary by at least \$150k per year, she's not worth that money, STOP all council vehicles from being used for private use, STOP council waste, STOP councillors perks (drinks, food, parties etc), only pay contractors for the WORK THEY DO. There you go just cutting these would probably save council \$300k it doesn't take a genius to work out that council is spending way more than they're earning, so instead of ripping off ratepayers with exorbitant and unnecessary rate increases, "cut the fat" from council waste.
Comment	CPI at 4.9% is too much already- we can't afford the extra "growth" of another 0.9% in addition.
Comment	You sure?
Comment	Sent my feedback. Spend our rates on infrastructure and no woke climate or gender BS.
Comment	Connect the STEDS system to main sewerage. 136 houses in Morphett Vale. Antiquated.
Comment	Time for promised pavements, like o halloren lane Hackham, line markings, yellow no parking lines required in some places, weeding around all areas, the area tided up, lounges and other items removed from kerbs. The thousand trolleys removed from all over, especially honeypot rd. Same old shit, same old council. Can't afford it, the ceo can
Comment	Surely this is satire
Comment	What's the point they already have set there agenda only way when elections are on vote them out .
Comment	Have your say they will listen to you Honestly they will
Comment	Bring back free green waste voucher. I don't use playground, community bus. Cut back on the amount of gov cars, take a pay drop for councilors, and ease up on social entertainment events. Use the rate money on footpaths and that sort of thing.

Reply	██████████ Mowing median strips too.
Reply	██████████ good luck with that, the ignorant clowns won't listen to anything the rate payers suggest.
Reply	██████████ I agree. Also Onkaparinga Council should put extra funding towards opening the swimming centre sooner. There doesn't seem to be a lot of activity there lately while ratepayers are losing fitness from the extended closure, which reflects on added strain on medical expenses!
Reply	Council's don't use government cars
Comment	Here's a novel idea. Spend nothing at all for 6 months and pay down the council debts.
Reply	██████████ Too true.
Comment	I've built a house in a new development. SOME council strips have been landscaped by council and some haven't. Council says ask developers and developers say ask council. Why some and not others. I ran out of money building through this housing crisis shitshow I can't afford to landscape YOUR land. You come and water 1 tree but the weeds remain.
Comment	Don't increase rates. No fru fru projects. Stick to basics. Please!
Comment	I don't know where council expects people to continually find more money for higher rates? Keep rates down, stick to basics, like mowing media strips, getting weeds out of roads along those media strips. Council needs to tighten its belt too! Bet most rate payers wish they could just put up their income rate but, the reality is, they don't get to do that. Help curb inflation.
Comment	It's so sad to see families struggling trying to do the right thing and buy a house. Then they are hit with rate rises /interest rates rises petrol /food and huge childcare fees just to earn a few extra dollars.why should we have to fund huge wages and wasted overspends from this council the area has gone down hill something shocking over the years looking very outdated and shabby never see any workers around and relies on volunteers too much.trouble of been such a big expanding area with new subdivisions going up too much money spent making them look good. Need tobe there for our community.
Comment	Virtual signally as you rip taxpayers off blind. Seem legit
Comment	Unsure why the value of my property keeps increasing so you can put the rates up? I paid a set price for my home. That wont change. I'm not going to sell, so it is still only worth what i paid to me. Or are you increasing rates on potential profit which will never happen?

	Just making it up to screw us more? Rates should be based on purchase price. If a property is sold, then issue an adjustment in accordance.
Comment	Good start would be fix the Sam willoughby international bmx track. Has been sitting for nearly 2 years deserted and cant be raced on. World titles is in Australia this year and should have been at SWI bmx track. The rushed botch job of the council to get the track open was a waste of money. The clubs volunteers spent over 6000 hours making the track ridable but due to sub standard works the track is now a ghost town. No racing. No gate practice absolute shamefull effort by the council.
Reply	It's Marion councils not Onkaparinga. Onkaparinga even contributed to their facility. But agree. City of Marion really have screwed our riders.
Comment	Can't even get a return email from the council.
Reply	██████████ maybe send it with an overdue rates notes
Comment	\$1/4B investment, take the "project" bit out of that and make it all services so that you get thumbs up from actual rate payers rather than the high amount of renters and those living in houses at govt expense!
Comment	Double dipping. From increased valuation then a % increase on top of that Do the sums.
Comment	pathetic greedy council.....
Comment	With the price of homes going up in value the council will be getting more money, so to get that extra money and also add on the CPI please explain why?
Comment	Lip service. Onk Council never listen or respond. Fish roots at the head. Hi Moira!
Comment	You are sucking us dry re rates. Is that clear enough??? Stop this nonsense and listen for once. We can't keep this up. You have a lot of retirees that just don't know where they are going to raise the money from.... For gods sake. You waste sooooo much money on ridiculous things. BUDGET what a joke, that word is not in your vocabulary. SPEND Is the only one you recognise. My opinion, our opinions, won't change a single thing about your agenda.

Comment	You increase your rates by cpi. You receive increase rates from valuation. Meaning the real % increase is greater than cpi overtime. Unfair.
Comment	St nicholas park and BMX track needs urgent fixing and upgrading please
Comment	Could you please do more for the wildlife in our park and reserves like Gemmel Tassie reserve where there is room for more trees and flowering natives. Also nest boxes in trees are welcome for birds and possums. Special warning on teenage e-bikers going rogue in the reserve and in roads! How is that safe and legal? Is there any communication on this you could address to the neighbouring?
Reply	██████████ how about the locals plant and adopt one tree/bush each. \$2.50 each, from the state govt nursery won't break the bank, and when you go walking in "your" reserve, each planter can keep an eye on what they're planted? In regards to idiots "going rogue" how about just calling the police - they are ultimately the ones who need to address these problems, not some poor council worker.
Reply	██████████ the city council has been warned via email and online request. If any accident happens (mud on footpath or on the road..) they will have their share of responsibility. As for the trees we would back up any initiative of the sort, but you should know that (as a family) through letters and phone calls since 2018 we had new eucalyptus trees and almond trees planted between the heritage olive tree drive way and the age care homes. Our two last interventions was about the damages to the root system of the significant grey box eucalyptus and those olive trees by those ebikets going off track...hence a fence around one of them to signal their importance. Waiting for completion of the city council actions (fences and logs to protect on which we could sit on, information signs, trimming of heritage trees and revegetation..).
Comment	The link to provide feedback is in the post
Comment	Ripping the the people off again
Comment	Basically this council are totally irrelevant and out of touch with ratepayers.
Comment	Don't even bother. They don't take on any feedback. It's a puppet show
Comment	Disgusting council all need to be sacked and replaced.

Comment	Pick up the bins and keep the parks clean All these other money wasting crap should be scrapped
Comment	In my experience, "Your Say" simply provides lip service to any discussions. I have not yet seen any of these overturn decisions that Council have already set their minds to.
Comment	Referendum to abolish council?
Comment	What's the point? The self centered bastards don't a shit what what we rhink....
Comment	So provide councillors and rate payers a list of services council deemed "essential" that makes decisions much more informed
Comment	You already earn thousands from each house hold, raising rates makes housing more unaffordable and the homeless rate in onkaparinga is rising. You could have hired a local CEO supporting Australian jobs instead of paying \$40,000 to relocate which could've made a huge difference to services provided to onkaparinga residents! Rates have already doubled since COVID times and so another rise makes it most difficult from families who moved into the area because it was affordable!
Reply	██████████ rates have not doubled since covid. You may pay more because house values have skyrocketed but the percentages the council takes has increased by about 20%. \$40,000 relocation is literally .01% of this budget so not even pennies in the scheme of things and a good CEO can add significant value to an organization.
Reply	██████████ that doesnt excuse the 40k relocation fee. We really do not need a CEO and a mayor. 400k cut right there.
Reply	██████████ so, clearly you don't have any idea what the roles are or the reason why we have both, so you may want to delete this.
Reply	██████████ no i am aware. I am also aware its a legal requirement. We do not need to oay the ceo 400k however
Reply	██████████ so, clearly you don't have any idea what the roles are or the reason why we have both, so you may want to delete this. Lets also consider, that \$40,000 could help bring in a CEO with a lifetime of experience running fast growing councils, boosting efficiency, and making sound financial choices, saving millions. But hey yeah lets just hire someone based on their location not their experience.
Comment	Raising rates and decreasing services. Wow, you guys are really for the people. Perhaps decrease the abhorrent wage of the CEO. This is quite possibly the worst council in SA.

Comment	Reduce the CEO salary down to a more respectable wage, stop all council vehicles from being used for private use, scrap all council perks, stop council waste... these savings alone would stop rate rises
Reply	██████████ stop dreaming. Do you really think they care?
Reply	██████████ exactly
Comment	We say drop the rates but its another screw job by you guys..typical. worst council in SA.
Comment	There are many new houses that have been built In Onkaparinga who will all be paying council rates, not to mention the large blocks that have had knock-downs and rebuilds of numerous homes on one block, what are you doing with all this extra revenue? We realise that you have increases to tackle just like the rest of us but the council income has increased considerably and things are not adding up. Perhaps less spending internally would be a good place to start? No more international trips and a closer inspection of expenditure by staff would be wise.
Comment	How about an independent bookkeeper/accounting firm go through the council paperwork and find out just what our ever rising Rates are being spent on . I'll start with the 40k spent on relocating the CEO from NZ.
Reply	██████████ and the upside down icecream statue for Beach Road...another \$40k!
Comment	Your rates are already at a level that is criminal! You should give rebates to single parents, on low income, and charge depending on number of people living in the home, NOT value of the house!!!
Reply	██████████ Not how it works in any council area, in line with the Local Government Act.
Reply	██████████ I know. It's still not fair though
Comment	What you deem essential? Like forking millions for arts n stuff, yet majority of us would vote no to that and lower rates. Why not list everything you plan on doing, the cost and let ppl vote. The lowest gets turfed. Because your priorities have been off for years

Comment	One walk down any trail, bike track or street in the onkaparinga area will show you that none of these people give a shit about the area. They care only for money. Rubbish and syringes in water ways, mattresses strewn throughout the area. Even the council offices at noarlunga literally have trash piling up against fences. City of Onkaparinga is an absolute joke, full of people who seek only to fill their pockets.
Comment	This council has got to be the biggest joke in Australia
Comment	What a joke! The mayors allowances per year are more than most people's salaries, and they're paid monthly in advance! It's on the city of onkaparinga website. Some of them choose not to have their personal expenses paid by the public, but a lot don't. Just another criminal ripping off the public
Comment	We spend millions on a simple corner road. When there is no need. No one benefited. What 5 million gone.
Comment	"Tough choices for the year ahead" Tough like funding \$40K relocation expenses for a council staff member? Tough like a \$40K ice cream cone art piece? Or tough like many families simply trying to keep their head above water?
Reply	██████████ That ice cream is absurd
Comment	What a joke! The mayors allowances per year are more than most people's salaries, and they're paid monthly in advance! It's on the city of onkaparinga website.
Comment	Trying to suppress social media comments are we? Only going to "listen " to comments on the have your say.... incredibly hard to use page? Voting at council elections has a new focus for us now and getting in on a hand full of votes may cease.
Reply	██████████ Your Say is NOT hard to use. Have you even tried?
Reply	██████████ Yes.
Comment	How in the ██████ does borrowing more, reduce debt? Is this a Labor plan?
Comment	Is there any other drop in session available for community who are unable to attend on the 30th? I personally have a commitment that would be very detrimental for me to miss if I wanted to come to the drop in session. I want to provide feedback but have a couple of things I want to clarify first.

Council Reply	City of Onkaparinga response: Hello [REDACTED] We welcome your feedback and there are a number of ways you can have your say: Online form https://yoursay.onkaparinga.sa.gov.au/draft-annual-business-plan-and-budget-2026-27 E-mail mail@onkaparinga.sa.gov.au Post City of Onkaparinga, PO Box 1, Noarlunga Centre, SA 5168 Personal delivery Customer Service Centre, Ramsay Place, Noarlunga Centre We've also added more FAQ, explainers and fact sheets that you can download from our Your Say page https://yoursay.onkaparinga.sa.gov.au/draft-annual-business-plan-and-budget-2026-27
Comment	Very hard to look at a budget with proper figures. No drill down on each heading to see what is spent where. A very random way of "have a look at our budget".
Comment	Who are they accountable to. Is it the premier?
Reply	[REDACTED] The Minister for Local Government.
Reply	[REDACTED] perhaps he needs to check things out.
Comment	People are at breaking point with home budgets and an interest rate rise yesterday has put even more stress on the family budget..then you raise the council rates again. Well done ..how about an independent audit on the books at the council?
Reply	[REDACTED] I suggested the same thing, funnily enough, I'VE not heard back from them
Reply	[REDACTED] Yes I've seen lots of compliments about it and just what the council is speaking our money on and it's CRICKETS
Reply	[REDACTED] Rates rises are driven by govt spending.
Comment	Absolutely disgraceful.
Comment	How about cutting back on council staff and spending first.
Comment	The RBA target inflation is 2% nothing has changed. Someone has to be the adults in the room if govt is the state's biggest employer at 15+ % this behaviour of pigs at the trough is driving up rates further inflation.

Comment	Onkaparinga you are an absolute disgrace. That's putting it nicely too. New CEO definitely living up to her reputation of screwing the community.
Comment	Why don't you stick to the Local Government index which is far more relevant to councils than CPI
Reply	Totally agree.
Reply	██████████ makes for some interesting reading https://adelaide.edu.au/research/south-australian-centre-for-economicstudies/local-government-price-index/ No way can council justify their proposal.
Comment	You can get stuffed...greedy ██████ council , not paying the increase plus the valuer general property increase!!
Comment	There needs to be independent auditing done. Think I'll talk to a few people i know. Over this council rorting the ratepayers and diddling the books. The public isn't your personal ATM
Reply	████████████████████ they should look into Nat Cook MP and the Sammy D Foundation. Their main office is never open only stores a dusty bus. They only visit a handful of schools Nation wide a year. Where's all the funding going
Comment	You won't listen to our feedback.... Less services and higher rates is what the onkaparinga council do best.
Comment	What is the expected additional revenue from increases to valuations on properties in Onkaparinga from the previous year? Is the intention of Council to put that money to reduce debt or absorb into this years budget and spend?
Reply	That's not how rates work.
Reply	██████████ i believe the property value is used similar to a handicap in golf to level the playing field. The increase to rates is the hit
Reply	██████████ If they charged the same amount per rateable \$ as last year there would still be an increase in revenue as all properties I guarantee would have increased. That is the difference I am referring to
Reply	██████████ i think u missed the handicap point / how cost are divided here is the long explanation
Reply	██████████ I understand that. The question remains. What is the difference between last years evaluation of properties to this years. That would show the extra revenue raised without raising the council rates.

Comment	Stop putting the rates up
Comment	So if rates go up by the current CPI, will they go down next year if CPI reduces? Or if CPI comes down soon, will we get a refund?
Comment	Any excuse to plunder more money from ratepayers. Council needs to tighten their own belt to help with the budget. Paying a CEO an exorbitant salary is outrageous, cutting her salary and package to \$150k, and making her pay for her own moving costs, or take the costs out of her salary is a great place to start. Ratepayers get shafted because of council's ineptitude. Stop all council vehicles from being used for private use, cancel council credit cards, make councillors/mayor pay for their own stuff, and let them claim it back at tax time. There's a starting point for council to reduce wasteful spending..... Maybe the councillors and mayor can come up with other savings, to ease the burden on ratepayers, and reduce the rates rise..... But I doubt this will happen..... they like their snouts in the trough too much
Comment	Yep up the rates & do diddly squat for it, bloody disgrace this council !!
Comment	Get it right! The headline inflation rate is 4.6% NOT 4.9%. While the TRIMMED mean inflation (the Reserve Bank's PREFERRED MEASURE OF UNDERLYING INFLATION) REMAINED STEADY AT 3.3%. Trying to sneak in a bit extra?? Council needs to keep increases as low as possible- there are a lot of households who cannot absorb increases proposed! While you are all at it, deciding on how to splash ratepayers money around, do what households have to do---- CUT DISCRETIONARY SPENDING, STICK TO ESSENTIALS ONLY.
Council Reply	City of Onkaparinga response: Hi [REDACTED] Thanks for your comment. Council has used the Adelaide CPI as a reference point for several years when discussing cost pressures, as it reflects movements in prices faced locally rather than a national average. We acknowledge that different CPI measures are used for different purposes, including headline CPI and trimmed mean inflation. Our reference to the Adelaide CPI is not intended to overstate impacts, but to explain the local cost environment that influences council's operating expenses over time. We recognise that cost pressures are being felt by many households, and this is front of mind for Council when setting rates and considering spending priorities. Feedback provided through consultations such as Your Say continues to be considered alongside financial sustainability and essential service delivery. Below is the capital city comparison chart from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/consumer-price-index-australia/latest-release#capital-cities-comparison
Reply	City of Onkaparinga whose figures are these? If from government, which department?

Council Reply	City of Onkaparinga response: [REDACTED] The Australian Bureau of Statistics, which is the official source for CPI data. The link was posted at the end, but here it is again for you. Just click on "Capital Cities Comparison". You can change the view from graph to table, which is easier to read and shows the exact figures. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/consumer-price-index-australia/latest-release
Reply	City of Onkaparinga so council staff sit in budgeting meetings with councillors and tell them it's not as bad as it looks spending more. While having an auditor tell you your spending and budget are in a precious position and councils choice is just to spend more money it doesn't have. Slash your spending and pay off the debt you would have spent our money on, on pointless ðŸ’©. You didn't need to blow 40k on an upside down ice cream that's an utter eye sore. Or \$600 a tree. I know damn well you could have gotten them much cheaper but council also lets them die by not watering them regularly. So \$600 a tree wasted. I'm sure there is plenty council could do to trim the fat off the bottom line but you choose not to and keep spending on the wants over prioritisation for the needs. This council needs to dissolve and hand back to state government. Utter disgrace
Comment	Bunch of crooks. How about you stop wasting our money.
Comment	[REDACTED] these people couldn't even run a convenience store without bankrupting it ~...
Comment	A 5% increase is awful. Rates have already skyrocketed due to artificially inflated house values due to the housing shortage. If you're still in the red after making so much more in rates you need to have a look at how the council is run compared with others. We just got another mortgage rate increase too.
Comment	City of Onkaparinga we've had to trim the fat on everything in our lives the past couple of years while you guys just keep hiking our rates & reducing services. We have no more fat to trim. How about you trim your own fat this time before you dive into our empty pockets again.
Comment	With expected new housing be be constructed in the next 12 months, and an increase of 4.9% the council is set to increase their income by about \$8 million in the next 12 months.... \$1million of said "new" income will come out of the pockets of the brand new home owners in the area..... just another nail in the coffin of what was an affordable country to live in.
Comment	Just remember. WE VOTE!!!
Comment	Bring back free green waste drop off.And a def no to rate increases.Enough already
Comment	It means an excuse to increase rates and fleece people of as much money as possible, then waste it.

Appendix A

To City of Onkaparinga,

I am writing to provide feedback on the Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2026–27.

I do not support the proposed budget in its current form. While I accept that Council must fund essential services, infrastructure renewal and community facilities, I am deeply dissatisfied with the priorities reflected in this proposal, particularly at a time when many residents are under serious financial pressure.

The draft budget proposes a \$262.42 million spend and a 3.3% general rate increase, with the increase to be updated before adoption. Council also notes that the budget is significantly funded through rates, with rates making up 70.7% of budget funding and 79% of operating income. At the same time, Council's own community feedback states that only 45% of residents believe their income is enough to meet their needs. In the current cost of living, housing and rental environment, this should be treated as a serious warning.

Against that background, I do not believe Council has demonstrated that this budget reflects appropriate restraint, value for money, or sufficient sensitivity to ratepayer hardship.

My concerns are heightened by Council's past governance and integrity issues. Whether Council considers those matters historical or resolved, the community's trust has been damaged. That means any proposal involving commercial partnerships, private operators, major upgrades, procurement decisions or discretionary spending must be held to a higher standard of transparency than normal. It is not enough to simply state that projects align with strategic themes. Council needs to clearly show why each project is necessary, how it was selected, who benefits, what alternatives were considered, and why ratepayers should fund it.

I am particularly concerned about the proposed joint development of the STRYKR driving range at Port Noarlunga. The draft budget lists this as a key highlight and key activity, and the Long Term Financial Plan refers to a \$1.75 million investment into a commercial partnership with an anticipated eight-year payback period. If this relates to the STRYKR project, then the community should be provided with the full business case, procurement evaluation, probity assessment, expected financial return, risk assessment, conflict-of-interest declarations, and explanation of why this arrangement was preferred over an existing local business.

It is difficult to support ratepayer funds or Council assets being used to support a private commercial venture, particularly where the selected operator is understood to be an interstate, multinational business with no direct ties to South Australia. This is even more concerning if an established local business was available, capable, and

passed over. Council regularly talks about supporting local economies and local businesses; this decision appears inconsistent with that principle.

I also object to the proposed Council contribution toward the Moana Surf Life Saving Club upgrade. I recognise the role surf lifesaving clubs play in community safety. However, the proposed upgrade is listed at \$3.8 million, with Council contributing \$1.25 million, or 33%, while the club itself contributes \$416,000, or 11%. In the current financial climate, Council should not be placing this level of burden on ratepayers without a much clearer explanation of why this is essential, why the club cannot contribute more, what other funding options were pursued, and whether the works can be staged or reduced.

I am also concerned about the continued major investment in the Noarlunga Aquatic Centre. The draft budget identifies the ongoing refurbishment of the Noarlunga Aquatic Centre as a major project, including roof renewal, pool plant upgrades, internal improvements, a new pool shell, and electrification of pool heating. While some external funding is noted, this remains a large and highly specific spend on a facility that appears to directly serve only a portion of the broader council community.

I do not oppose community recreation facilities in principle. However, when households are under significant financial stress, Council needs to be far clearer about why this level of investment is justified, how many ratepayers actually use the facility, what the ongoing operating and maintenance costs will be, what revenue it generates, and whether the same funding could deliver broader community benefit if directed toward essential infrastructure across the whole council area.

This is particularly frustrating when many residents continue to experience poor road conditions, including potholes, rough surfaces, poor sealing, uneven repairs and generally bumpy local roads. Road quality affects far more residents on a daily basis than discretionary or highly specific facility upgrades. While the budget refers to road renewal projects and resealing, the lived experience for many residents is that basic road maintenance is still not good enough. Council should be prioritising safe, durable, well-maintained roads before committing significant funds to projects with narrower community benefit.

The same concern applies to bus stops and basic public transport infrastructure. Many bus stops across the council area still do not have proper shelter, leaving residents exposed to heat, rain and wind. This is a basic accessibility and liveability issue, particularly for older residents, people with disability, students, workers, and residents who rely on public transport because they cannot afford or do not have access to a car. It is difficult to accept major spending on selected recreational and commercial projects when basic infrastructure such as sheltered bus stops remains inadequate.

Council should be prioritising core services and essential infrastructure: roads, footpaths, stormwater, waste, coastal protection, community safety, basic asset renewal, public transport access, and support for residents experiencing hardship. Discretionary spending, commercial ventures, and upgrades that substantially benefit specific organisations or private operators should be deferred, reduced, or funded through non-rate revenue.

I am also concerned about the message being sent by senior executive remuneration. The recent appointment of a new CEO, reportedly on a salary package exceeding \$400,000 per year, sits poorly with a proposed rate increase and continued pressure on households. Residents are being asked to pay more while many are already struggling with mortgage repayments, rent increases, utilities, food, fuel and insurance. Council must demonstrate that restraint applies at the top of the organisation, not just to ratepayers.

I request that Council amend the draft budget before adoption by:

1. Removing, deferring or substantially reducing funding connected to the STRYKR driving range until the full business case, procurement process and probity review are published.
2. Reassessing the Moana Surf Life Saving Club upgrade and requiring a higher contribution from the club, additional state/federal funding, staged delivery, or a reduced scope before committing ratepayer funds.
3. Publishing a full cost-benefit breakdown for the Noarlunga Aquatic Centre refurbishment, including usage numbers, operating costs, revenue forecasts, future maintenance costs, and the expected direct benefit to ratepayers across the whole council area.
4. Reprioritising spending toward essential services, asset renewal and community hardship support.
5. Increasing focus on road quality, including pothole repairs, road surface condition, poor sealing, uneven roads and long-term road maintenance standards.
6. Accelerating upgrades to bus stops that currently do not have shelter, particularly in areas relied on by older residents, students, workers, people with disability and residents without private transport.
7. Reviewing whether the proposed rate increase can be reduced, capped, or offset by savings in discretionary spending.
8. Publishing clearer information about commercial partnerships, expected financial returns, risk exposure, lease arrangements and long-term obligations.

9. Providing clearer public reporting on executive remuneration, organisational savings, consultant spending, procurement decisions and major project governance.
10. Applying a stronger "local benefit" test to procurement and commercial partnerships, particularly where local businesses may be disadvantaged.

Council's own Community Vision refers to trust, strong community voice and people feeling confident that their views will be listened to. Those principles need to be demonstrated through the budget, not just referenced in it.

In its current form, I do not believe this budget adequately reflects the financial reality facing many residents. I ask Council to reconsider its priorities, reduce discretionary spending, provide greater transparency, and ensure ratepayer money is directed first and foremost toward essential services and genuine community need.

Regards,

Appendix B

As the CPI has come in a full 1% above what was expected for the quarterly update, the council should be limiting the impact to its ratepayers, who are already affected by the rising CPI, and consider the following points:

- The main driver affecting the council with these results is temporary fuel cost rises; rather than just applying the increased CPI across all council services, the council should instead take steps to manage fuel costs and present an increase proposal based on these costings in isolation.
 - The current quarter's CPI figures do not take into account the government's halving of the fuel excise, which is a lagging indicator and will not show up until next quarter's figures.
 - We are approving an annual budget, but the increase in fuel prices is a temporary impact; we do not know if they will come down next week or next year. There should be a control in place so that if an increase to the council budget is approved based on fuel prices, an expected surplus results if fuel prices return to normal. This amount should not be absorbed by other activities and should be returned to residents as part of the next budget cycle.
- Housing costs are another driver for the figure, even though the rise is lower than last year. Housing cost measures have been driven by consumer electricity prices (not council or business electricity prices) due to the cessation of government energy grants, not a sudden increase in the costs of construction. Again, this is something that affects the ratepayer, not the council, and should not be used to justify an increase in rates.

The CPI figures hurt the residents far more than they impact council costs, and to take the full CPI amount into the council budget would be doubling the residents' financial burden for no reason. There is a lot of fat in the council's budgets which can be trimmed (see my other responses to the budget), and this is a time to show restraint and help residents rather than harvest the opportunity for increased rates without justification.

Key statistics

In the 12 months to March 2026:

- The Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 4.6%, up from 3.7% in the 12 months to February 2026.
- The largest contributors to annual inflation were Housing (+6.5%), Transport (+8.9%) and Food and non-alcoholic beverages (+3.1%).
- Trimmed mean inflation was 3.3%, unchanged from 3.3% in the 12 months to February 2026.

In the month of March, the CPI rose 1.1% in original terms and rose 1.1% in seasonally adjusted terms.

Housing group (+6.5%)



Over the past 12 months the Housing group rose 6.5%, down from a 7.2% rise in the 12 months to February 2026. The main contributors to the annual rise were Electricity (+25.4%), New dwellings (+4.5%) and Rents (+3.7%).

Electricity

Electricity costs rose 25.4% in the 12 months to March 2026. The annual rise in electricity costs is primarily related to Commonwealth and State Government electricity rebates being used up by households. This is down from a 37.0% rise in the 12 months to February 2026 due to the timing of rebate payments in 2025.

Excluding the impact of the Commonwealth and State Government electricity rebates over the previous year, electricity prices rose 3.9% in the 12 months to March. This reflects annual price reviews by energy retailers in July 2025.

Submission – City of Onkaparinga Draft Budget

To the Elected Members and Administration of City of Onkaparinga,

I write to express serious concern regarding the proposed 2026–27 budget, particularly the continued increase in council debt and the proposal to increase rates above CPI at a time when many households are already under significant financial pressure.

The budget appears to reflect an ongoing pattern of expenditure growth that is not sufficiently grounded in prudent financial management or core local government responsibilities. Instead, the direction of spending increasingly appears driven by ideological ambitions, expansionary projects, and discretionary initiatives that exceed the reasonable expectations of ratepayers.

Rising Debt and Financial Sustainability

A responsible council should prioritise long-term financial sustainability, debt restraint, and the protection of essential services. Increasing debt during a period of elevated cost of living pressures raises serious questions about financial discipline and strategic priorities.

Debt itself is not inherently inappropriate; however, borrowing should be reserved for clearly justified infrastructure investments with demonstrable long-term community benefit and sound economic rationale. Instead, the current trajectory suggests an institutional reliance on borrowing to sustain a growing expenditure base.

This approach risks:

- transferring financial burdens onto future ratepayers;
- reducing council's financial flexibility during economic downturns;
- increasing future interest and servicing costs;
- normalising structurally high expenditure levels; and
- creating pressure for continual rate increases in future years.

The community deserves greater transparency regarding:

- which projects are essential versus discretionary;
- the long-term debt servicing implications;
- the projected debt-to-revenue ratio over coming years; and
- what expenditure reductions were genuinely considered before proposing higher rates.

Rates Increases Above CPI

The proposal to increase rates above CPI is difficult to justify given the economic circumstances facing residents, retirees, farmers, and small businesses across the region.

Many households are already experiencing:

- increased mortgage and rent costs;
- rising electricity and insurance expenses;
- higher food and transport costs; and
- broader economic uncertainty.

Council should not assume that ratepayers possess unlimited capacity to absorb ongoing increases beyond inflation.

If residents and businesses must tighten their budgets during difficult economic conditions, council should demonstrate the same restraint. [A rates](#) increase above CPI sends the message that council expenditure growth has become prioritised over affordability and financial responsibility.

Focus on Core Functions

Local government performs an important role in maintaining roads, waste collection, community safety, parks, libraries, and essential infrastructure. However, many ratepayers are increasingly concerned that councils are expanding into areas that are political, ideological, or outside traditional core responsibilities.

Council should refocus on:

- essential infrastructure maintenance;
- asset renewal;
- service efficiency;
- financial sustainability; and
- measurable value for ratepayers.

Before increasing debt and imposing above-inflation rate rises, council should undertake a comprehensive review of discretionary spending, administrative growth, consultancy expenditure, and non-essential programs.

Conclusion

The current budget direction risks undermining community confidence in council's financial stewardship.

I respectfully submit that council should:

1. reconsider any rates increase above CPI;
2. reduce reliance on debt-funded expenditure;

3. prioritise essential services and infrastructure;
4. conduct a thorough review of discretionary spending; and
5. adopt a more disciplined and sustainable long-term financial strategy.

Ratepayers expect council to exercise the same financial prudence that households and businesses are being forced to adopt in the current economic climate.

Yours faithfully,