

ANNUAL COMMUNITY PLAN SUMMARY

2020 – 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

The impact of drought, bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic over the past year has been extremely challenging for our country, our state and our local community.

Our Annual Community Plan, incorporating our 2020-21 budget, considers these challenges and how Council will respond in the year ahead.

In 2020-21, we will continue to address major renewal and maintenance backlog issues with our road, building and community facilities.

This important work will be carefully balanced with other community priorities, including the enhancement and activation of our main streets, renewal of our sporting facilities, in particular our public pools, and the ongoing economic development of our region.

Working together to deliver a shared vision will ensure we achieve the future success and prosperity we are all looking for.

Council looks forward to working closely with you to make our region the best it can be.

Rodney Reid
Mayor



MAJOR PROJECTS



\$100K

For the Owen Silo Art project through Federal Government drought funding



\$200K

In roadside vegetation maintenance



\$1M

Balaklava & Hamley Bridge main streets (incl. \$550K Federal Government drought funding & \$450K Council funding)



\$350K

For Blyth Cinema development through Federal Government drought funding



\$281K

To finalise the Lake Bumbunga tourism project, offset by grants totalling \$110,613 and a \$15,000 contribution from the Lochiel Progress Association, and will include a playground, with landscaping and fencing, and Loch-Eel – a centrepiece attraction on the lake.

CAPITAL PROJECTS



\$2.7M to be invested on sealed road renewals and upgrades, including a new surface on Angle Grove Road from Stone Cutter Road to Horrocks Highway (subject to external grant funding)



\$5.2m to be invested on the unsealed road network, across 37 projects totalling 103.8km



Stormwater projects protecting local towns from floodwaters totalling \$392,000



New town entry signs for both Brinkworth and Snowtown totalling \$192,000



\$60,000 to construct new school crossings at Snowtown, Brinkworth & Owen



To develop a masterplan for Port Wakefield township to take full advantage of Augusta highway duplication project

ROAD NETWORK

A key consideration in determining the Annual Community Plan has been the condition of roads.

For a number of years the community has raised concerns regarding the standard of Council's roads, particularly unsealed roads and roadside vegetation management.

This concern was reinforced through consultation on our Strategic Plan Wakefield 2030, in particular through farmer forums.

Council's road network comprises approximately 75km of sealed township roads, 138km of sealed rural roads and 1,460km of unsealed rural roads. In 2020-2021, Council aims to renew (i.e. resheet or reform) approximately 103.8km of unsealed roads compared to the 10-year annual average of only 56km.

In addition, Council will invest \$200,000 in 2020-21 to address roadside vegetation maintenance issues.

Wakefield 2030 and Council's Long Term Financial Plan will further consider ongoing strategies and budgets to address what is estimated to be a \$16.7 million roadworks backlog.

OPERATING PROJECTS

Council has identified the following operating projects for 2020-2021:

- \$215,000 for Infrastructure Asset Management Plan reviews which includes roads, buildings, community wastewater management system, stormwater systems and bridges
- \$200,000 for rubble pits remediation
- \$30,000 for Wakefield 2030 Community Strategic Plan design & production
- \$15,000 for Disability Access and Inclusion Plan
- \$10,000 Internal controls review (financial audit requirement)
- \$30,000 seed funding to support township events such as street markets, music events, food festivals etc

SPADE READY PROJECTS

- \$50,000 for Hamley Bridge Football and Netball Club concepts, detailed design and cost estimates.
- \$50,000 for Port Wakefield Caravan Park and Tidal Lagoon concept, detailed design and cost estimates
- \$10,000 for an RV Park adjacent to Lake Bumbunga, detailed design and cost estimates (entrance road, parking area, signage, dump point)
- \$50,000 for Ralli Park detailed design and cost estimates
- \$25,000 for a Port Wakefield Childcare Centre Business Case
- \$20,000 for Apex Park Balaklava detailed design and cost estimates
- \$50,000 for Balaklava Railway corridor initial investigation and concept design

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2019-2020

- Renewal (repair to original condition) of 88km of unsealed roads and resealing of about 3km of roads.
- Completion of works on 53 separate sections of road in line with the capital works program. Only four sections are left as 'works in progress' into the next financial year.
- Ongoing remediation of old rubble pits across the region – approximately \$200,000 has been invested in the past year.
- The unveiling of town entrance signs in Lochiel and Hamley Bridge, and the start of manufacturing of new town entrance signs for Owen and Blyth.
- Delivering a comprehensive COVID-19 support package for our community.
- Securing \$1 million of Federal Government drought funding to activate Wakefield through the Blyth Cinema Expansion, Owen Silo Art project and Balaklava and Hamley Bridge main street upgrades.
- Completion of \$100,000 Kybunga Top Road bridge to support local truck movements.
- Building and launching the \$130,000 'Sounds from the Ground' nature play space at Balaklava.
- Substantial completion of the portion of the Copper Trail connecting the Shamus Liptrot Trail in Balaklava to the Walk the Yorke Trail in Port Wakefield.
- Significant program of community engagement to start developing the Wakefield 2030 Community Strategic Plan. This included community, business, industry and farmer forums attracting about 200 people.

OPERATING BUDGET

In delivering services and programs contained within this Plan, Council is targeting an operating deficit of \$1.46M.

This deficit is a result of \$14.51 M in forecast income and \$15.97 M in forecast expenditure.

The primary reason for this deficit is the advanced payment of \$1.34 M of financial assistance grants in 2019-2020, which reduced Council's 2020-2021 total grant revenue.

This Annual Community Plan outlines a total capital expenditure budget of \$12,933,668 which consists of \$7,891,851 in renewal capital works and \$5,041,818 in new capital works.

BORROWINGS

Based on Council's budget, direct borrowings will increase from \$4,143,045 at the end of 2019-2020 to \$8,440,102 at the end of 2020-2021.

Increased borrowings are primarily due to a \$1.5M net outlay on renewing existing assets, particularly roads, and a \$2.7M net outlay on new or upgraded assets which includes main street improvements in Balaklava and Hamley Bridge, sealing of Angle Grove Road, a new water truck, new depot design and spade ready projects.

Overall, key financial indicators show Council to be in a strong and financially sustainable position with borrowings well within Council's capacity at the end of 2020-2021.

RATES

Council will hold the average rate increase to 2.4%, reflecting CPI for the Adelaide March quarter. With forecast development growth of 0.5%, the total rates collected by Council will increase by 2.9%.

The annual rate increase for individual properties will vary depending on the valuation change for that property, which is provided independently by the Valuer General.

Some properties will see an actual decrease in their Council rates bill as a result of the mobile garbage bin service charge reduction.

RATING METHODOLOGY

Council will apply differential general rates by land use.

RESIDENTIAL

A rate of 0.3951 cents in the dollar for rateable properties with a land use of category (a) (Residential).

COMMERCIAL (SHOP, OFFICE, OTHER)

A rate of 0.6377 cents in the dollar for rateable properties with a land use of categories (b) (Commercial – Shop), (c) (Commercial – Office) and (d) (Commercial – Other).

INDUSTRIAL (LIGHT, OTHER)

A rate of 0.6197 cents in the dollar for rateable properties with a land use of categories (e) (Industrial – Light) and (f) (Industrial – Other).

PRIMARY PRODUCTION

A rate of 0.2940 cents in the dollar for rateable properties with a land use of category (g) (Primary Production).

VACANT LAND

A rate of 1.5505 cents in the dollar for rateable properties with a land use of category (h) (Vacant Land). Vacant Land rate in the dollar is set at 292% higher than the Residential rate in the dollar.

The increased differential rate is to encourage development of vacant land and reduce investment holdings.

OTHER

A rate of 0.4039 cents in the dollar for rateable properties with a land use of category (i) (Other).

FIXED CHARGES

A fixed charge ensures that all rateable properties make a base level contribution as Council delivers services and activities to support the whole community.

A fixed charge recognises there is a cost in creating and maintaining the physical infrastructure that supports each property in the region. In 2020-2021 the fixed charge will be \$320, which is unchanged from 2019-2020.

VALUATION ANALYSIS

The Valuer General has provided Council with a valuation update, with Wakefield Regional Council's total proposed capital value being \$2,357,906,260 (including current non-rateable properties valuations of \$35,226,409).

This year's revaluation as at 27 July 2020 has seen primary production capital valuations increase overall by 8.5% and vacant land valuations decrease by 8.6%, mainly due to a reduction in the number of vacant land properties.

Other land use categories have only seen minor changes compared to the previous year.

Overall, there has been an increase of 6.3% across all land use categories compared to last year.

COMMUNITY WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM LEVY

Council provides Community Wastewater Management Systems (CWMS) to defined properties in the townships of Balaklava, Blyth, Hamley Bridge, Port Wakefield and Snowtown.

Council will recover the cost of operating and maintaining the service through a service charge.

The collected CWMS levy will increase by CPI of 2.4% from the 2019-2020 financial year and will be as follows:

- \$427 for each unoccupied property unit
- \$557 for each occupied property unit

MOBILE GARBAGE BIN LEVY

The Council provides a mobile garbage bin collection and disposal service within a defined area of the region. The service charge is levied in accordance with legislation to recover the cost of providing this service. As a result of retendering Council's mobile garbage bin services contract in 2019-2020, residents and commercial businesses will see a service charge reduction of approximately 20% in 2020-2021.

This will result in savings of around \$64 per residential service charge and \$57 per commercial service charge.

Charges will be as follows:

- \$218 for 2 bins service (commercial businesses)
- \$246 for 3 bins service (residential and other)

Residential services shall consist of two 240 litre and one 140 litre bins provided to the property.

REGIONAL LANDSCAPE LEVY

From 1 July 2020, the Natural Resources Management Levy will be replaced by the Regional Landscape Levy, due to the introduction of the Landscape South Australia Act 2019.

Council is required under this Act to collect the Landscape Levy on behalf of the Landscape Administration Fund for distribution to the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board. In 2020-2021 Council will collect \$388,529 on behalf of the Landscape Administration Fund but Council does not retain this revenue or directly determine how the revenue is spent.

SUPPORT

DISCRETIONARY & MANDATORY REBATES

Council considers discretionary rebates of up to 100% of Council rates to not-for-profit, sporting & community organisations upon application and in accordance with legislation.

Council provides these rebates in recognition and support of local groups and the positive social and community benefits they provide.

Additionally, Council applies mandatory rebates as required by legislation.

POSTPONEMENT OF RATES FOR SENIORS

State senior card holders can apply to Council for the postponement of payment of rates on their principal place of residence.

To apply to postpone payment of rates please contact the Council office.

If a postponement of the payment of rates occurs, interest will accrue on the amount affected by the postponement.

Rates charged remain as a charge on the land and must be paid upon sale, transfer or other such transactions that result in the prescribed rate payer and/or owner of the land no longer qualifying to receive a postponement of rates.

COMMUNITY HARDSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

Council acknowledges the extreme and difficult circumstances that have presented in 2020, specifically the impact of COVID-19, which may result in ratepayers experiencing financial difficulty.

Council has adopted a 'Hardship Policy' which provides information to ratepayers who may be experiencing difficulty in paying their rates as a result of more general financial hardship. Ratepayers who may be experiencing financial difficulty – either due to COVID or for any other reason – are encouraged to contact the Council Office for a confidential discussion.

This Annual Community Plan Summary document includes highlights of our full plan, which can be found at www.wrc.sa.gov.au or as a hard copy at Wakefield Regional Council's office, Scotland Place, Balaklava.

To request a hard copy, call WRC 8862 0800