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Property Valuation Hikes / Solid Waste Levy

Residents and Business owners in the Town of Gawler area should not be concerned following the front page of *The Advertiser* today.

The paper states that *'thousands of South Australians will pay hundreds of dollars more a year in Council rates and government charges because of a statewide reassessment of property valuations'*.

Mayor Redman advised Gawler ratepayers, "The current valuation data received from the Valuer-General indicates that the overwhelming majority of residential properties in Gawler (**approximately 96% of over 10,000 residential properties**) have had no change to their property valuation."

Further Mayor Redman states "What this means in respect to Gawler Council's consideration when deciding on its 2019/20 Budget is that Council will only increase the residential rate in the dollar to match the percentage increase to the level of total General Rate revenue required to fund the budget and no more".

Council is soon to decide whether that rate increase is either a **3%** (or as resolved by Council) increase in General rate revenue required as funded via a 3% increase in the General rate in the dollar.

The Advertiser story indicates that Treasurer Rob Lucas said the *'Valuer-General was independent and there was no windfall for Government in increased levies'*. The same also applies to Local Government rates, which was unfortunately not reported in the story.

Mayor Redman advises, "In this regard, it is important to note that each Council establishes (and then consults) on its annual budget, with the budget then dictating the level of General rate revenue required to fund the myriad of community services to be provided by a Council as part of its annual Budget / Business Plan. We don't raise any additional funds not needed".

Thus, the General rate set by a Council is declared on the basis of only providing the level of General rate revenue required in the Budget. Consequently, in the event of major spikes in property valuations, Gawler Council **reduces its General rate in the dollar to compensate**, thereby eliminating any notion of a sudden 'cash windfall' in the event of major valuation increases.

With regard to the recently announced massive 40% increase in the State Government Solid Waste Levy, which has suddenly been imposed on Local Government by the State Government at the 'eleventh hour' with no prior consultation, Council has not yet decided whether it will pass on the additional \$126,000 expense via a \$12 increase in the Waste Management Service Charge applied. Prior to this, Council was proposing **no increase** in the \$186 Waste Management Charge from the 2018/19 financial year. The 40% increase in the State Government Solid Waste Levy is unfortunately cost-shifting from the State Government – noting that the levy has already exorbitantly increased from \$52 per tonne in 2014/15 to \$100 per tonne in 2018/19, which translates to the levy effectively already doubling within the space of just four years. The total Solid Waste Levy that will be payable by Council in the 2019/20 financial year will now be in the order of \$715,000.

Council will be further considering its draft 2019/20 Budget at the Special Council meeting on 2 July 2019, in advance of the adoption of its annual budget at the subsequent Special Meeting to be held on 16 July 2019.

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The media may make contact with Mayor Karen Redman on 0421 839 359