



Date: 24 July 2019	Embargo: None
Pages: 2	Publication: All local media

Adoption of 2019/20 Budget and Rates & Charges

The Council has formally adopted its 2019/20 Budget and Rates & Charges.

“Council has adopted a sound and financially responsible budget for the 2019/20 financial year”, Mayor Karen Redman said. “Being a major growth Council, we face many challenges, not least the demand to increase and/or expand services and capital investment”, the Mayor also noted.

“Council recognises the need to keep General rate increases as low as possible, whilst also having to consider Council’s long term financial aspirations and sustainability. The Council has adopted an increase in General Rates from existing ratepayers of a modest 2.3%, which translates to a \$0.69 per week increase for the average residential ratepayer”, the Mayor said.

The State Government recently imposed a 40% increase in the Solid Waste Levy, without any prior consultation with the sector, after the majority of Councils’ had already engaged with their communities on their draft budgets. This ‘cash grab’ and ‘cost shifting’ exercise from the State Government, on the coattails of the Solid Waste levy rate increase effectively already doubling in the last four years, will culminate in an estimated increase of \$126,000 in the levy paid by Council (the levy payable for 2019/20 is now estimated at \$715,000).

Consequently, overall Council has imposed a 2.3% General Rate increase plus a 0.6% Solid Waste levy adjustment separately recovered via the Waste Management Service Charge applied.

“Prior to this eleventh hour massive impost, the Council was proposing no increase in the Waste Management Service Charge”, Mayor Redman noted. “Our Council is continually looking to achieve cost savings and efficiencies for our community, so to get such a large unforeseen financial impost dumped on us from the State Government at the eleventh hour in our budget cycle is extremely disappointing and frustrating. We have had no choice other than to pass on the added cost to ratepayers via a \$12 increase in the Waste Management Service Charge, which equates to a 0.6% rate adjustment”, Mayor Redman said.

“Consistent with our financial targets, the Council is estimating a nominal operating surplus of \$195,000, and a net capital works investment of \$8.4m”, the Mayor noted. Key projects to be undertaken include:

- Expansion of the hard-waste collection trial undertaken for pensioners in 2018/19 to all residents
- Upgrade of the Gawler Aquatic Centre changerooms (\$539,000), which is subsidised by a Federal Government grant of \$409,000
- Transformation of the Walker Place precinct in the Town Centre (\$2.12m), which is subsidised by a State Government grant of \$1m, incorporating a shared-use public plaza space (works to include installation of trees and seating, paving, improved lighting, replacement of the Julian Tce public conveniences, and installation of a stand-alone digital wayfinding smartboard)
- Installation of new public lighting (\$231,500) at the footbridges along the Gawler Rivers linear (Tapa Pariara) path, the Willaston Oval carpark, and the Dog Park / Fitness Trail adjacent Clonlea Reserve
- 1.5kms of new footpaths (\$361,000)
- 6.6kms of road resealing (sealed roads) (\$905,000)
- 1.2kms of road resheeting (unsealed roads) (\$140,000)
- Replacement of the main stadium floor at the Gawler Sport & Community Centre (\$155,000)
- Replacement of irrigation system at Princes Park (\$109,000)
- Karbeethan Reserve Master Plan Feasibility Study (\$110,000)
- Murray Street Stage 7 Project: between the Gawler Mill Inn Bridge and the intersection with Seventh / Tenth Street (subject to Federal Government grant funding being received for 50% of the estimated project cost) (\$1,776,000). If Council is successful with its grant funding application, Council’s 50% share will be funded via the temporary deferral of other identified road infrastructure projects

In 2019/20, Council will need to pay the State Government \$2.4m as Council’s contribution towards the upgrade of Potts Road as part of the Gawler East Link Road construction, which will become a Council owned/managed road on completion of the road in early 2020.



“The Council has adopted a financially sound and responsible capital works program”, Mayor Redman noted. “In this regard, excluding the extraordinary \$2.4m payment obligation to the State Government for the Potts Road upgrade, Council’s capital works program of \$6m is being funded within Council’s own financial resources with no external loan borrowings”, the Mayor further said.

“One of Council’s key financial aspirations is to extensively reduce debt over coming years, such that the Council can incrementally rebuild future borrowing capacity to fund its next major strategic asset investment projects, such as a Regional Aquatic facility and the redevelopment of Karbeethan Reserve”, the Mayor said.

Connect with Gawler:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/townofgawler Twitter: www.twitter.com/townofgawler

Instagram: [@townofgawler](https://www.instagram.com/townofgawler) You Tube: www.youtube.com/townofgawler

ENDS

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