



**MEDIA RELEASE | 4 May 2023**

## **Community at the forefront of Council's draft 2023/24 Annual Business Plan and Budget**

**After significant workshopping and deliberation, the City of Victor Harbor is now seeking community feedback on its draft 2023/24 Annual Business Plan and Budget.**

The local community has been at the centre of Council's budget development, as it works to balance service delivery expectations, strategic priorities and community needs, while trying to minimise rate increases.

The proposed average rates payable increase is 6.2%, which is lower than March Quarter 2023 CPI of 7.9% (and December Quarter 2022 CPI of 8.6%). It represents an average rates payable increase of \$146 (or around \$2.80 a week).

City of Victor Harbor Mayor, Dr Moira Jenkins, said Council has absorbed a substantial proportion of rising costs through cost savings measures, but a rate increase is still necessary.

"There's no denying that inflation is creating challenges for households across the country. We can see cost of living pressures taking a toll," said Mayor Jenkins.

"We've worked extremely hard to identify cost saving opportunities in order to minimise the impact on our community, however a modest rate increase is still required to safeguard Council's financial sustainability."

The proposed 2023/24 budget forecasts a capital works program worth \$8.63 million (net), and a \$35.87 million operating budget resulting in a deficit of \$1.48 million. The deficit can be attributed to Council's corporate system replacement project and will be funded through borrowings rather than Council rates, effectively providing a breakeven position.

The replacement of Council's corporate systems software (the engine of operations) is a once-in-a-generation project that will help improve our service delivery, ensure a better customer experience and future proof the organisation.

As the corporate systems project will provide a long-term asset that will impact generations to come, the cost will be shared accordingly. Rather than funding this project through Council rates, which would mean the ratepayers of today bear all the cost, it will be funded by borrowings, to be paid back over a number of years to ensure intergenerational equity.

Other significant projects within the draft 2023/24 Annual Business Plan and Budget include:

- Progressing the Regional Community, Sport and Recreation Precinct
- Delivering a vibrant arts and culture program
- Walking the talk on climate action
- Developing a visionary, evidence-based plan for Victor Harbor's future.

Council's consultation on the draft 2023/24 Annual Business Plan and Budget is also an opportunity for the community to have their say on hard waste disposal.

The City of Victor Harbor does not currently provide a hard waste disposal service for its residents and there is no legislative requirement to do so, but Council has been investigating the possibility of providing a way for residents to dispose of hard waste.

"We want to better understand the demand for hard waste collection. We've heard requests from some of our residents for hard waste disposal, but this is an opportunity to formally gather feedback," said Mayor Jenkins.

"Providing this service would have a cost, so we also need to gauge the community's willingness to pay for it."

"Council is yet to decide if hard waste collection will be introduced, so this is an important information gathering exercise."

The community is encouraged to get involved in local decision making by providing their feedback on the draft 2023/24 Annual Business Plan and Budget before 5pm on Monday, 29 May 2023.

To learn more and have your say, visit [www.yoursay.victor.sa.gov.au](http://www.yoursay.victor.sa.gov.au) or drop into the Civic Centre (1 Bay Road, Victor Harbor).

A Public Meeting will be taking place on Thursday, 25 May 2023 from 6:30pm in the Council Chambers (1 Bay Road, Victor Harbor), and all community members and invited to attend.