

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## City of Onkaparinga to retain water assets and cease divestment process immediately

The City of Onkaparinga will continue to own and operate its water assets following an extensive strategic review that explored potential divestment.

The council had been considering whether it should own and operate Community Wastewater Management Scheme (CWMS) assets—which serve approximately 4500 households in Onkaparinga without access to SA Water’s wastewater network—and the Water Business Unit’s stormwater harvesting/alternative water supply scheme.

The assets' strategic review included three community engagement stages—most recently in June-July 2023—and proposals from water industry operators regarding potential ownership and/or management of the assets.

City of Onkaparinga CEO Phu Nguyen said elected members had determined to retain the water assets, explore opportunities to improve the operations and financial sustainability of the assets, and develop an advocacy plan.

"This was a lengthy, detailed and comprehensive review that has enabled the Council to make a fully informed decision on the ownership of council’s water assets,” he said.

"It balanced community feedback alongside key principles that guided the process. Importantly, it provides a clear decision and direction to move forward.

"Key principles that guided this process included financial value, service levels, cost to the community, risk, environment and water security.

"Throughout these engagements, it was clear there was strong community desire for the assets to remain in the council’s ownership, which contributed to the elected members' decision.

"There is, however, significant investment required to ensure these water assets can provide the services our communities need into the future."

Further reports will be presented to Council next year outlining opportunities to improve the financial sustainability of the water assets.

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