

# The rate increase explained

The draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2024–25 is focused on budget repair.

The proposed rate increase is 6.8 per cent, plus rates from new properties (growth).

We will still deliver \$158.29 million in services, programs and asset maintenance, and \$73.57 million in new projects and initiatives for the community.

## Why is the rate increase 6.8 per cent?

Council has run at an operating deficit for seven consecutive years, and we need to act now to return to a balanced budget as soon as possible.

Setting the rate at 6.8 per cent, plus a range of other measures detailed in the draft Annual Business Plan and Budget, will return us to a balanced budget. Each year we need to balance the external pressures—such as rising inflation and material and service cost increases—with what the community expects us to deliver.

In addition this year, we need to return to a balanced budget, so hard decisions were made about the rate and other measures, to make sure we achieve this.

The actions we are taking also align with recommendations from the Essential Services Commission of SA regarding our ongoing financial sustainability.

## Southern Vales ward

### Suburbs

- Aldinga (part)
- Blewitt Springs
- Hackham
- Hackham West
- Huntfield Heights
- Kangarilla
- Kuitpo
- McLaren Flat
- McLaren Vale
- Old Noarlunga
- Onkaparinga Hills
- Seaford Heights
- Sellicks Hill
- Tatachilla
- The Range
- Whites Valley
- Willunga
- Willunga South

**What has council done to find savings?**

We have identified a \$2.48 million reduction in employee costs in addition to previously identified savings of \$2.5 million. Through better calculation of depreciation on stormwater assets we have also achieved a \$2 million saving.

As part of our continual review of contracts, materials and other expenses we have delivered a further saving of \$700,000.

The combined total of these items is \$7.68 million in savings.

We are also continually focused on alternative funding and revenue sources to reduce the reliance on rates in the longer term.

**Will residents still get the services, maintenance and projects they need?**

Yes. We will continue to provide essential services and maintenance across our growing city.

This includes waste services, maintenance of assets including roads, footpaths, parks, libraries and community centres, and a range of important support services for disadvantaged people.

City-wide projects totalling more than \$73.57 million will be delivered including the annual road resealing program, urgent and general roadworks, bushfire preparedness, tree pruning, footpaths, and lighting upgrades and maintenance.

**What can I do if I am having difficulty paying my rates?**

We recognise that some ratepayers are experiencing ongoing financial hardship and we can assist by providing a range of options to manage payment of rates that are outstanding or will soon become overdue.

In the first instance please contact our Customer Relations team on 8384 0666 to discuss the options that may best suit your circumstance.

To make an application for hardship, contact an accredited financial counsellor to assist you with this process.

To find a local financial counsellor, please phone the National Debt Helpline on 1800 007 007 or visit [ndh.org.au/talk-to-a-financial-counsellor](http://ndh.org.au/talk-to-a-financial-counsellor).

The financial counsellor will then contact us, either with you or on your behalf, to progress your application. All details supplied are confidential.

Ratepayers who hold a State Seniors Card can apply to postpone payment of rates on their principal place of residence each year. Seniors must pay \$500 of their rates each year but can postpone payment of any amount levied above this.

Postponed rates remain as a charge on the land and are not required to be repaid until the property is sold or disposed of. Monthly interest charges apply to amounts postponed.

You can find more information on hardship policies, rebates, and concessions at [onkaparingacity.com/rebates](http://onkaparingacity.com/rebates)

Important projects for  
**Southern Vales ward**

**\$1,715,000**

road upgrades at Malpas Road, Tatachilla

**\$1,675,000**

road reconstruction and upgrade for heavy vehicle access at Bakewell Drive and Ostrich Farm Road, McLaren Vale

**\$575,000**

irrigation renewal at Willunga Golf Course

**\$274,700**

new footpaths on Tatachilla Road and Hardy Avenue, McLaren Vale

**\$165,000**

deck improvements to Pedler Creek bridge along the Coast to Vines shared-use path at McLaren Vale