



District Council of Loxton Waikerie

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MEDIA RELEASE

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District Council of Loxton Waikerie freezes 2020-21 rate rises to support community in times of uncertainty

Rates rises will be frozen for the second consecutive year by the District Council of Loxton Waikerie to support the community amid the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic and ongoing drought.

Chief Executive Officer David Beaton said Council's 2020-21 Draft Annual Business Plan – which is currently open for public consultation – had a strong focus on “responsibility and sustainability”.

“We have taken a conservative approach to the Plan, so we can support local ratepayers and residents affected by the economic downturn; while still maintaining a healthy balance sheet, so we can support local projects that will have long-term benefit to the community,” Mr Beaton said.

“The financial year predictions for 2020-21 are difficult for the community, with the issues of COVID-19, drought for our dryland farming areas, and indications of low water allocations for our horticulture sector; coupled with increased household expense pressures requiring a response from Council to support the community.

“To do this we are setting a budget based on a 0% rate increase. Council will offer an easier deferral application for those adversely affected by COVID-19 and primary producers who may be required to buy additional fodder and water over the next year until conditions improve, without any interest penalty.”

Mayor Leon Stasinowsky said completing projects which were already underway and projects that have already received State or Federal funding were a priority for Council in developing the 2020-21 Plan.

“These are tough times and we've taken a hard look at what we can do to ensure we are fiscally responsible and can maintain our long-term focus on financial sustainability, by having an operating surplus of \$395,000 heading forwards,” Mr Stasinowsky said.

“Funding to maintain and redevelop our wide network of sealed and unsealed roads is another key area of focus, recognising the local economic driver that is our horticultural and agricultural sector and its need for reliable freight routes.

“However, we are also mindful of on-going maintenance and depreciation costs associated with over 260 buildings owned by council and to address this we will investigate opportunities for multi-use community facilities as well as reviewing all Council buildings to ensure they are adequate for the future.”

Public consultation on the 2020-21 Draft Annual Business Plan is open until 5pm, June 4, 2020. Feedback must be provided in written form and sent via email to council@loxtonwaikerie.sa.gov.au or posted to PO Box 409, Loxton SA 5333.

The Draft Plan is available to view at council’s website (www.loxtonwaikerie.sa.gov.au).

Further comments are available from:

David Beaton, District Council of Loxton Waikerie Chief Executive Officer

or

Leon Stasinowsky, District Council of Loxton Waikerie Mayor

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