

## **ECONOMIC GROWTH, TOURISM, SUSTAINABILITY ARE FOCUS FOR MID MURRAY COUNCIL IN 19/20**

Projects to boost the region's economic and tourism potential and a push to increase sustainability are key priorities for the Mid Murray Council as it prepares for 2019-20.

An \$8.5 million capital projects program will deliver new visitor attractions and improved community facilities under the Council's *Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2019-20*, which was released for community feedback this week.

Mayor Dave Burgess said works would begin or continue on projects that have the potential to deliver significant returns for the district such as the Murray Coorong Trail, Swan Reach Deep Water Mooring Facility and River Murray Dark Sky Reserve accreditation bid.

"Tourism is a vital industry across our region and the development of these projects will add substantially to the Mid Murray's reputation as a premier destination," Mayor Burgess says.

Funding has been set aside to prepare an Economic Development Strategy for the region and for business cases for commercial opportunities to be drawn up as the Council continues its efforts to boost the district's economic growth.

Mayor Burgess says the Council was mindful of the need to keep cost pressures low for ratepayers in the coming financial year, which has been reflected in its proposed 3.6% general rate rise for existing properties and an additional 0.5% will be raised from growth (Development of new housing etc).

"In balancing the Council's need to provide efficient services and infrastructure, we are also committed to minimising the impact on our ratepayers," he says.

"This rate increase equates to a conservative average annual increase of \$52 per household, per year.

"In line with our plans to be as efficient as possible, Council will also review its services to ensure they are as cost-effective as possible and to identify any necessary improvements."

Council's Chief Executive Officer Ben Scales said financial sustainability was also a focus of the Council's *Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2019-29*, which has also been released for public comment.

"This plan sets out a clear path to steer the Council towards greater long-term financial sustainability by improving the operating result each year, until we reach a surplus in 2027/28," Mr Scales says.

"We believe this is achievable without sacrificing essential services or infrastructure by finding efficiencies in the way we operate.

“The Council is committed to finding proactive ways to ensure we are getting the best value for money and delivering the most effective outcomes for our ratepayers and our community.”

Other priorities in the plan include Mannum’s Mary Ann Reserve, which is set for an upgrade. The first stage of works will include road improvements and the introduction of one-way traffic, along with more accessible parking and landscaping. A 10-year building program will also be created for the recently acquired Mannum Institute.

Improving the region’s roads remains a focus, with the new financial year seeing the completion of the \$3.2m Truro to Eudunda Road upgrade and the continuation of the Dutton Bridge replacement. A Regional Freight Route Review will be undertaken and the re-sheeting of unsealed roads will continue across the district.

Investments will also be made in wastewater, with the implementation of the Cowirra Community Wastewater Management Scheme (CWMS) and the finalisation of designs and costings for the Wongulla scheme.

The Council’s *Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2019-20* is open for public comment until Wednesday, 5 June. Submissions can be made via email, post or online at [www.mid-murray.sa.gov.au](http://www.mid-murray.sa.gov.au).

Further, a public meeting will be held to hear submissions on the plan, to run in conjunction with the Council’s next formal meeting at the Cambrai Council Chambers on Tuesday, 11 June at 9.30am.

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