

Reference: AF11/877
Enquiries to: Ms Sarah Philpott

MEMBERS

NOTICE is hereby given that the Mayor has called a Special Meeting of the Council to be held at the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, 10 Watson Terrace, Mount Gambier on the following date and time:

Tuesday 18 June 2024 - Mayoral Reception Area - Civic Centre (commencing at 5:00 pm)

For the purpose of:

1. 2024/2025 Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget - Community Consultation Feedback

Please find Agenda attached.



Sarah PHILPOTT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

06/05/2024

I hereby give notice that a Special Meeting of Council will be held on:

Date: Tuesday, 18 June 2024
Time: 5:00 p.m.
Location: Mayoral Reception Area
Civic Centre
10 Watson Terrace
Mount Gambier

AGENDA

Special Council Meeting 18 June 2024



Sarah Philpott
Chief Executive Officer
14 June 2024

Order Of Business

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1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE BOANDIK PEOPLES AS THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND WHERE WE MEET TODAY. WE RESPECT THEIR SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LAND AND RECOGNISE THE DEEP FEELINGS OF ATTACHMENT OUR FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES HAVE WITH THE LAND.

2 APOLOGIES

Nil

3 LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Nil



4 COUNCIL REPORTS

4.1 2024/2025 DRAFT ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET - COMMUNITY CONSULTATION FEEDBACK – REPORT NO. AR24/38805

Committee:	Council
Meeting Date:	18 June 2024
Report No.:	AR24/38805
CM9 Reference:	AF23/328
Author:	Julie Scoggins, Manager Financial Services
Authoriser:	Sarah Philpott, Chief Executive Officer
Summary:	A report providing Council with feedback on the public consultation for the 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget.
Strategic Plan Reference:	Goal 1: Our People
	Goal 2: Our Location
	Goal 3: Our Diverse Economy
	Goal 4: Our Climate, Natural Resources, Arts, Culture and Heritage
	Goal 5: Our Commitment

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council Report No. AR24/38805 titled '2024/2025 Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget - Community Consultation Feedback' as presented on 18 June 2024 be noted.
2. That Council notes the written submissions and questions received on the 2024/2025 Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget.
3. That Council thanks the organisations and individuals for their verbal submissions as presented at the Special Council meeting on 18 June 2024 and notes:
 -
 -
 -
4. That the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to make minor textual changes to the 2024/2025 Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget to correct typos and errors of fact and to update the Mayoral Message if required in consultation with the Mayor.



TYPE OF REPORT

Corporate

BACKGROUND

1. **Legislation** - Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1999 requires Council to have an Annual Business Plan and Budget. The Plan is Council's statement of its intended programs and outcomes for the year and the required contents of the document are laid out in Section 123 and the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 2011.
2. **Key Documents** - Council's Annual Business Plan and Budget was formulated within the guiding principles detailed in its suite of Strategic Management Plans, including the City of Mount Gambier Strategic Plan 2020-2024, Asset Management Plans (AMPs) and Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP). The Asset Management Plans, LTFP and Annual Business Plan and Budget were reviewed at the same time to ensure alignment and are intended to be reviewed together annually in future years.
3. **Public Consultation** - at the Special Council meeting on 21 May 2024, Council endorsed the draft Annual Business Plan and Budget for 2024/2025 for the purposes of public consultation in accordance with Council Policy P195 Community Consultation and Engagement and section 123 (4) of the Local Government Act.
4. Notification during the consultation period was provided through the following avenues:
 - **Media Release** - was issued on 23 May 2024 through Council's Newsroom to all local media outlets.
 - **Social Media** – A social media post was placed on Facebook on 23 May 2024, 30 May 2024, 5 June 2024, 10 June 2024 and Facebook and Instagram stories were also posted on 30 May 2024 and 10 June 2024.
 - **Media coverage** – The Border Watch 22 May 2024, The Border Watch 24 May 2024, SE Voice 21 May 2024, SE Voice 23 May 2024, SE Voice 28 May 2024, ABC South East 20 May 2024, ABC South East 22 May 2024, Mount Gambier Messenger 21 May 2024, Adelaide Advertiser 22 May 2024, Adelaide Now 25 May 2024, Sunday Mail 26 May 2024 and ABC North and West SA 22 May 2024.
 - **Have Your Say Website** - the City of Mount Gambier Council's Have Your Say website provided links to the full 2024/2025 Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget document, Council Rates FAQ, and the submission form;
 - **Council's Main Offices** - the full 2024/2025 Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget document was located at Council's Customer Service Centre and library; and
 - **Public Notice** - an advertisement was placed in the SE Voice newspaper on 28 May 2024, The Border Watch newspaper on 24 May 2024 and Mount Gambier Times newspaper on 31 May 2023.
5. **Drop-In Sessions** – Two sessions were held to allow members of the public to ask questions on the Draft ABP, LTFP and AMPs as follows:
 - 6 June 2024, 5:30pm-6:30pm, Mount Gambier Library
 - 11 June 2024, 12:00pm-1:00pm, Mount Gambier Library
6. **Special Council Meeting** - a special council meeting has been arranged pursuant with Section 123(4) (a) & (b) of the Act on 18 June 2024 to enable the public to make submissions and ask questions regarding the 2024/2025 Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget.



PROPOSAL

1. **Primary method of consultation** - The online Have Your Say City of Mount Gambier site was used as the primary method of consultation by Council to provide ease of access to the community and engagement statistics to be analysed by Council staff.
2. **Have Your Say consultation statistics** - the site provided the opportunity for the community to consult on the following documents: Draft Annual Business and Budget, Draft Long Term Financial Plan, and Draft Asset Management Plans. The statistics show that the community engaged in the followed way compared to the Draft Annual Business Plan statistics from the previous year:
 - **Total Visits** - 316 (up from 97 visits for 2023/2024).
 - **Aware Participants** - 188 people (up from 79 for 2023/24) were deemed to be 'aware' i.e. they went on the website and looked at the page but did not download a document or access tools.
 - **Informed Participants** - 140 people (up from 0 in 2023/24) were deemed to be 'informed' i.e. they had downloaded/viewed the documents.
 - **Engaged Participants** - 7 people (up from 0 in 2023/24) submitted online via the submission form or asked a question via the Q&A tool.
3. **Submissions** - The public consultation process generated 11 submissions (**Attachment 1**) on the Draft Annual Business Plan, Draft Long Term Financial Plan and Asset Management Plans (it should be noted that all submissions were included to ensure transparency):
 - **Individuals** - As per the table, 10 individuals provided submission.
 - **Groups** - 1 group provided a submission.



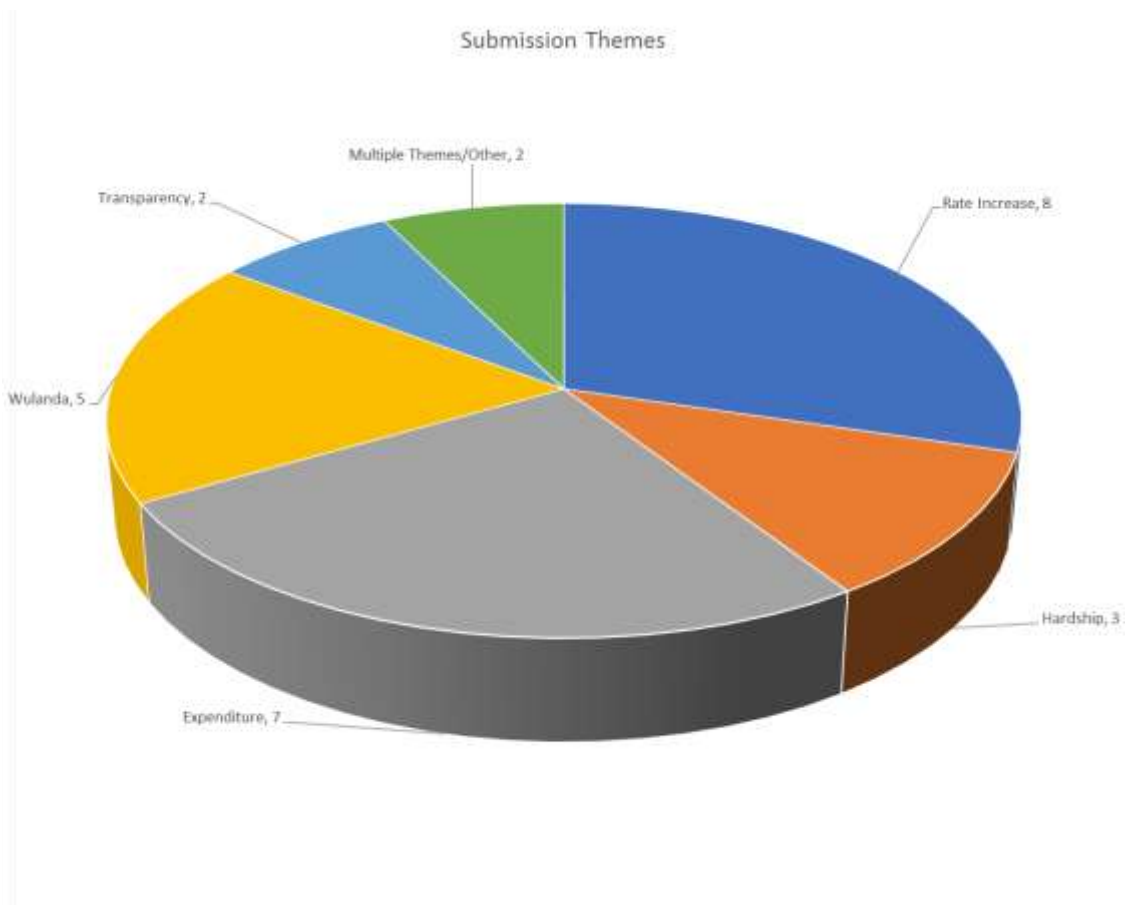
Name	Relevant Documents	Method Used	Individual/ Group	Relevant Themes
F. McIntyre	ABP, LTFP, AMPs	Have Your Say Form	Individual	Rate Increase
Respondent 1	ABP, LTFP, AMPs	Have Your Say Form	Individual	Rate Increase Hardship
Respondent 2	LTFP	Have Your Say Form	Individual	Rate Increase Hardship Expenditure
Respondent 3	ABP	Have Your Say Form	Individual	Rate Increase Expenditure Wulanda Transparency
Greg Lockwood	ABP	Have Your Say Form	Individual	Rate Increase Expenditure Wulanda
Graham Walkom	ABP, LTFP, AMPs	Have Your Say Form	Individual	Multiple Themes as per pie chart
Respondent 4	ABP, LTFP	Have Your Say Forms (2 submissions)	Individual	Rate Increase Expenditure Wulanda Transparency Waste Management
Tony Warren	ABP	Email	Individual	Rate Increase Expenditure
Pater Harpas	ABP	Email	Individual	Grant Funding Expenditure Projects Wulanda
Shayne Haggis	ABP	Email	Individual	Rate Increase Hardship Expenditure Grant Funding Transparency
Mount Gambier Residential and Ratepayers Association	ABP, LTFP, AMPs	Email	Group	Consultation Process Wulanda Depreciation Planning

It should be noted that material which may be deemed to be personal, offensive or discriminatory has been redacted, however Councillors have been provided with the un-redacted content to ensure they have received all information.

4. **Submission Responses** - Where possible (dependent upon time constraints), Council Administration responses to the submissions have been included in Attachment 2.



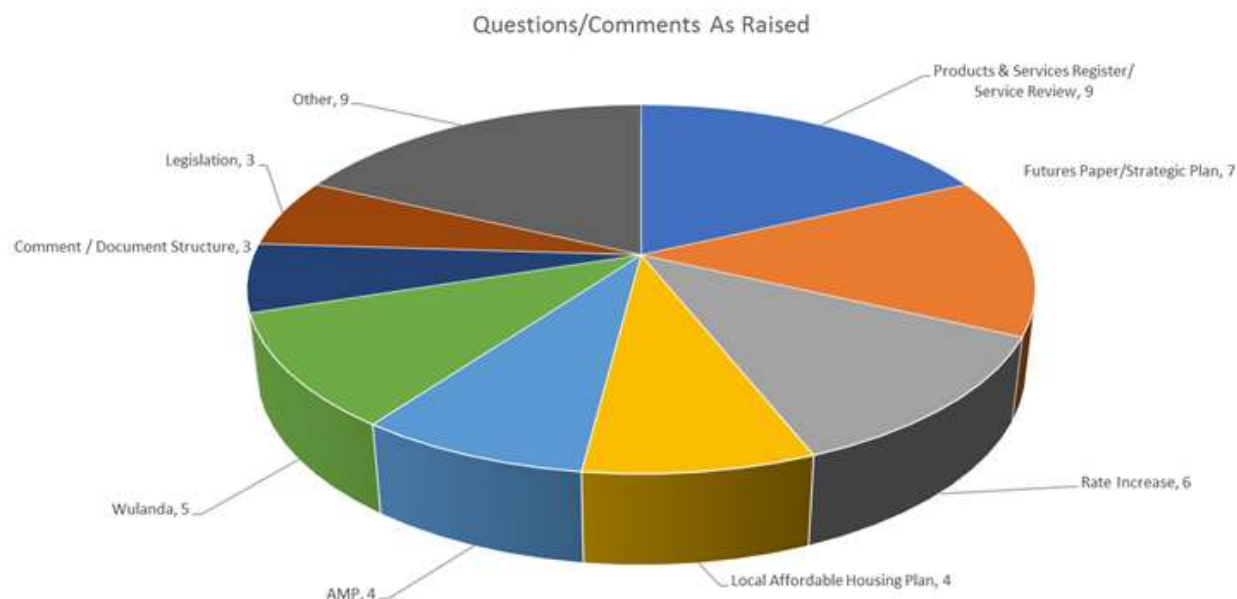
5. **Submission Key Themes** - The following themes are apparent from the submissions received:



- **Rate Increase** - Concerns raised about the quantum of the general rate increase
- **Hardship** – Concerns raised about ratepayer ability to pay.
- **Expenditure** - A request for the provision of additional budget information by activity (i.e. by type of expenditure - electricity, water, maintenance) and by function (e.g. libraries/administration).
- **Wulanda** - Requests for financial performance, depreciation and borrowings information.
- **Transparency** - In relation to projects and Wulanda.



6. **Questions** - 50 questions/comments were raised by one individual. The questions/comments have been categorised as follows:



Attachment 3 includes the questions and Attachment 4 includes the questions/comments and the Council Administration's draft responses. In summary the main themes arising were as follows:

- **Products & Services Register/ Service Review (9 Questions/Comments)** – Requesting details of a service register, service review framework etc.
- **Futures Paper/ Strategic Plan (7 Questions/Comments)** - Requesting details with regards to the futures paper, current strategic plan, Mount Gambier 2035 and strategic work plan.
- **Rate Increase (6 Questions/Comments)** - Questions/comments re. the 2023/2024 budget “smoothing for 3 years”, the reference to the state average residential rates and relationship between the rate increases in 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 and Council's Treasury Management Plan targets.
- **Local Affordable Housing Plan (4 Questions/Comments)** - Questions and comments relating to the plan which was undertaking a separate community consultation process. Comments/questions were provided to another member of Council staff so that they could be included in that consultation activity.
- **Asset Management Plans (4 Questions/Comments)** - Questions and comments referencing the quality of the documentation and suggested improvements.
- **Wulanda (5 Questions/Comments)** - Questions/comments querying whether sale of the facility had been investigated, request for budget vs actual performance details for 2023/2024, request for BR3 2023/2024 borrowings and depreciation, and centre revenue and expenditure for 2024/2025 and 2025/2026.
- **Comment/Document Structures (3 Questions/Comments)** - Questions and comments referencing the quality of the documentation and suggested improvements.
- **Legislation (3 Questions/Comments)** - Questions and comments querying legislative compliance.
- **Other (9 Questions/Comments)** - Including depreciation/valuations, expenditure, process undertaken/review process.



Attachment 3 includes one question from another individual and Attachment 4 includes Council Administration's draft response.

7. **Verbal Submissions** - Five verbal submissions have been requested for the Special Council meeting on Tuesday 18 June 2024 as follows:

- F McIntyre;
- Greg Lockwood;
- Graham Walkom;
- Vivian Hooper On behalf of Shayne Haggis; and
- The Mount Gambier and District Residents and Ratepayers Association.

8. **Audit and Risk Committee** - At the special Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 3 June 2024, the Committee reviewed the Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget and the below recommendation be presented for Council resolution at the special Council meeting on 18 June 2024.

That the Audit and Risk Committee feedback on Council's Draft 2024/2025 Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget and/or the associated processes and risks, as follows:

- *The Audit and Risk Committee acknowledge the significant work Council's administration have undertaken to prepare the Annual Business Plan and Budget 2024/2025.*
- *The Audit and Risk Committee acknowledge the importance of maintaining financial sustainability and recognises the proposed rate increase is required to support financial sustainability.*
- *The Audit and Risk Committee encourage Council to closely monitor the financial performance throughout the year in the context of the financial ratio targets.*
- *The use of the average residential rate and the waste service charge by comparison to other Council's should be considered as a guide only.*

be incorporated with the public consultation feedback to be presented to the Special Council meeting to be held on the 18 June 2024 for consideration of the adoption of the Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget.

Legal Implications

Local Government Act Section 123 (4) and the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 2011.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2023/2024 is aligned with the City of Mount Gambier Strategic Plan 2020-2024.

COUNCIL POLICY

[R105 Draft Rating Policy 2024/2025](#)

[R130 Rates General Matters](#)

[R155 Rate Rebate Policy](#)

[P195 Community Consultation and Engagement](#)

[B300 Budget Framework Policy](#)

[T150 Treasury Management Policy](#)

[Procurement Policy](#)



[Asset Accounting Policy](#)

[A900 Asset Management Policy](#)

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

Nil

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Significant Council Administration was allocated to review and respond on the submissions and in particular the questions provided to Council.

VALUE FOR MONEY

Nil

RISK IMPLICATIONS

Nil

EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The community consultation timelines and approach was aligned with that defined in the Local Government Act and Council's Policy P195 Community Consultation and Engagement Policy defines community consultation as being "part of community engagement and means a planned process by which the Council formally invites its constituents and stakeholders to comment about matters upon which Elected members are to deliberate."

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Nil

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION


Following a series of workshops and committee consideration, Council endorsed the 2024/2025 Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget for the purposes of public consultation and received three submissions from the community.

The twelve formal submissions and questions/comments provided via the Have Your Say Q&A tool are included in/attached to this report for Elected Member consideration.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1 - Submissions Provided [↓](#)
2. Attachment 2 - Submissions and Draft Administration Responses [↓](#)
3. Attachment 3 - Questions Submitted [↓](#)
4. Attachment 4 - Questions & Answers [↓](#)



	Respondent No: 1	Responded At: May 23, 2024 17:00:08 pm
	Login: Anonymous	Last Seen: May 23, 2024 17:00:08 pm
	Email: n/a	IP Address: n/a

Q1. Name [REDACTED]

Q2. Address [REDACTED]

Q3. Contact number [REDACTED]

Q4. Email [REDACTED]

Q5. Please select the plans that you would like to provide feedback on (select all that apply):
Draft 2024-2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget
Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034
Draft Asset Management Plans 2025-2034

Q6. Do you support the City of Mount Gambier proposed Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget?
No

Q7. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Annual Business Plan and Budget?
We DO NOT need a rate increase anywhere near 10%. It is ludicrous in this financial climate

Q8. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget.
DO NOT need a rate increase anywhere near 10%. It is ludicrous in this financial climate

Q9. Would you like to present your submission at the Special Council Meeting on Tuesday 18 June 2024?
Yes - Please contact me on the contact details above with further information.

Q10. Do you support the proposed Draft Long Term Financial Plans 2025-2034?
No

Q11. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Long Term Financial Plan?
DO NOT need a rate increase anywhere near 10%. It is ludicrous in this financial climate

Q12. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034.
DO NOT need a rate increase anywhere near 10%. It is ludicrous in this financial climate

Q13. Do you support the City of Mount Gambier proposed Draft Asset Management Plans 2025/2034?
No


Q14. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Asset Management Plans?
DO NOT need a rate increase anywhere near 10%. It is ludicrous in this financial climate



Q15. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft Asset Management Plans 2025-2034.

DO NOT need a rate increase anywhere near 10%. It is ludicrous in this financial climate



	Respondent No: 2	Responded At: May 23, 2024 18:54:32 pm
	Login: Anonymous	Last Seen: May 23, 2024 18:54:32 pm
	Email: n/a	IP Address: n/a

Q1. Name	[REDACTED]
Q2. Address	[REDACTED]
Q3. Contact number	[REDACTED]
Q4. Email	[REDACTED]
Q5. Please select the plans that you would like to provide feedback on (select all that apply):	<input type="checkbox"/> Draft 2024-2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget <input type="checkbox"/> Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034 <input type="checkbox"/> Draft Asset Management Plans 2025-2034
Q6. Do you support the City of Mount Gambier proposed Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget?	No
Q7. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Annual Business Plan and Budget?	Our tax money is not being spent well. Our wages have not gone up and with the ever increasing rises I will not be supporting this.
Q8. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget.	not answered
Q9. Would you like to present your submission at the Special Council Meeting on Tuesday 18 June 2024?	No
Q10. Do you support the proposed Draft Long Term Financial Plans 2025-2034?	No
Q11. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Long Term Financial Plan?	As stated above
Q12. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034.	not answered
Q13. Do you support the City of Mount Gambier proposed Draft Asset Management Plans 2025/2034?	No




Q14. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Asset Management Plans?

not answered

Q15. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft Asset Management Plans 2025-2034.

not answered



	Respondent No: 3	Responded At: May 27, 2024 06:31:15 am
	Login: Anonymous	Last Seen: May 27, 2024 06:31:15 am
	Email: n/a	IP Address: n/a

Q1. Name	[REDACTED]
Q2. Address	[REDACTED]
Q3. Contact number	[REDACTED]
Q4. Email	[REDACTED]
Q5. Please select the plans that you would like to provide feedback on (select all that apply):	Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034
Q6. Do you support the City of Mount Gambier proposed Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget?	not answered
Q7. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Annual Business Plan and Budget?	not answered
Q8. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget.	not answered
Q9. Would you like to present your submission at the Special Council Meeting on Tuesday 18 June 2024?	not answered
Q10. Do you support the proposed Draft Long Term Financial Plans 2025-2034?	No
Q11. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Long Term Financial Plan?	In the current financial crisis, i like many others will struggle with the rare rise. Maybe put the big projects on hold until things settle down instead of making already struggling people find it even harder. This is not the time for big ideas.
Q12. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034.	Like many others, with interest rates continuing to increase and basic necessities being more expensive than ever, I believe we just can not increase rates at this time. People are already struggling to make ends meet.
Q13. Do you support the City of Mount Gambier proposed Draft Asset Management Plans 2025/2034?	not answered
Q14. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Asset Management Plans?	not answered



Q15. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft Asset Management Plans 2025-2034.

not answered





Respondent No: 4

Login: Anonymous

Email: n/a

Responded At: May 30, 2024 12:56:35 pm

Last Seen: May 30, 2024 12:56:35 pm

IP Address: n/a

Q1. Name	[REDACTED]
Q2. Address	[REDACTED]
Q3. Contact number	[REDACTED]
Q4. Email	[REDACTED]
Q5. Please select the plans that you would like to provide feedback on (select all that apply):	Draft 2024-2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget
Q6. Do you support the City of Mount Gambier proposed Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget?	No
Q7. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Annual Business Plan and Budget?	<p>I cannot clearly make the connection as to where the increase in rates revenue is being spent. The document talks about increased costs and key projects, but where are those increased costs identified and why? I think further communication on the actual costs of Wulanda should be made transparent as the community were assured this project would not result in an increase in rates. And given a project of this size, it would have to have an impact on the bottom line. This may be sitting in the LTFP which I haven't reviewed, but please make it easier for community to understand what the real costs of this project have been, and continue to be.</p>
Q8. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget.	<p>I think overall the document is very professional and well put together, but would like to see more clarity on where the increase \$ in rates are going, rather than that information embedded in the financial statements.</p>
Q9. Would you like to present your submission at the Special Council Meeting on Tuesday 18 June 2024?	No
Q10. Do you support the proposed Draft Long Term Financial Plans 2025-2034?	not answered
Q11. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Long Term Financial Plan?	not answered
Q12. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034.	not answered



Q13. Do you support the City of Mount Gambier proposed Draft Asset Management Plans 2025/2034? not answered

Q14. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Asset Management Plans? not answered

Q15. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft Asset Management Plans 2025-2034. not answered



	Respondent No: 5	Responded At: Jun 06, 2024 17:12:29 pm
	Login: Anonymous	Last Seen: Jun 06, 2024 17:12:29 pm
	Email: n/a	IP Address: n/a

Q1. Name [REDACTED]

Q2. Address [REDACTED]

Q3. Contact number [REDACTED]

Q4. Email [REDACTED]

Q5. Please select the plans that you would like to provide feedback on (select all that apply):
Draft 2024-2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget

Q6. Do you support the City of Mount Gambier proposed Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget?
No

Q7. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Annual Business Plan and Budget?
The \$20.2m draft Material, Contracts, Other is not shown in the draft separately. This is misleading and covers up the operations of council. This really means that Wulanda and Library costs will not be visible and covered up and I am sure rate payers will be totally alarmed at the costs of running these 2 big ticket items. Rate payers will not see the true costs of repairs carried out by staff during the normal course of business compared to running costs. There is also an alarming cost of staff at \$16.3m in this budget where most businesses are struggling to make ends-meet and this level of staffing is a considerable portion of the total expenditure. There must be a large number of admin staff compared to actual works staff.

Q8. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget.
There is no detail on the \$20.2m spent on every-day running expenses including a break-down of repairs and maintenance, running costs (electricity, R&M, water, heating, staff, extra's, etc.). These should be open and broken down for all rate payers to review and not hidden as this distorts the true council position that we, the rate payers are forking out for.

Q9. Would you like to present your submission at the Special Council Meeting on Tuesday 18 June 2024?
Yes - Please contact me on the contact details above with further information.

Q10. Do you support the proposed Draft Long Term Financial Plans 2025-2034?
not answered

Q11. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Long Term Financial Plan?
not answered

Q12. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034.
not answered




Q13. Do you support the City of Mount Gambier proposed Draft Asset Management Plans 2025/2034? not answered

Q14. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Asset Management Plans? not answered

Q15. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft Asset Management Plans 2025-2034. not answered



	Respondent No: 6	Responded At: Jun 11, 2024 12:17:24 pm
	Login: [REDACTED]	Last Seen: Jun 12, 2024 03:42:03 am
	Email: [REDACTED]	IP Address: 118.211.83.232

Q1. Name graham walkom

Q2. Address
[REDACTED]

Q3. Contact number [REDACTED]

Q4. Email [REDACTED]

Q5. Please select the plans that you would like to provide feedback on (select all that apply):
 Draft 2024-2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget
 Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034
 Draft Asset Management Plans 2025-2034

Q6. Do you support the City of Mount Gambier proposed Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget? No

Q7. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Annual Business Plan and Budget?
 a) Appears to contain erroneous information as detailed in my ratepayer's audit sent separately. Please link. b) Omits information essential to make an informed decision. c) Structure and presentation of this document is unprofessional and inadequate. d) Does not comply with requirements of the Local Government Act regarding justification/consideration of ratepayers.

Q8. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget.
 To address the above a) b) c) d) reasons I have asked a number of questions on the Have Your Say website. Council confirms receiving them but has neither published the questions on the website as promised, answered the questions either on the website or otherwise as specifically promised by email it will do so. These questions to the Have Your Say website need to be specifically answered before a completed and informed submission can be made here. I am prepared to make an interim presentation. The detailed submission "Ratepayer's Audit" is essentially required to be included in full as a part of this submission and should not be redacted or edited in that process.

Q9. Would you like to present your submission at the Special Council Meeting on Tuesday 18 June 2024? Yes - Please contact me on the contact details above with further information.

Q10. Do you support the proposed Draft Long Term Financial Plans 2025-2034? No

Q11. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Long Term Financial Plan?
 a) Appears to contain erroneous information as detailed in my ratepayer's audit attached. b) Omits information essential to make an informed decision. c) Structure and presentation of this document is unprofessional and inadequate. d) 10 year financial objectives are not justified.



Q12. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034.

To address the above a) b) c) d) reasons I have asked a number of questions on the Have Your Say website. Council has neither published the questions on the website as promised, answered the questions either on the website or otherwise as specifically promised by email it will do so. These questions to the Have Your Say website need to be specifically answered before a completed and informed submission can be made here. I am prepared to make an interim presentation. The detailed submission "Ratepayer's Audit" is essentially required to be included in full as a part of this submission and should not be redacted or edited in that process. Several major spend CapEx items noted in the documents are unfunded, not least the whole proposed Strategic Plan/Community Vision. What CapEx and OpEx items will there be from these uncostered items in the next 10 years? ie the purpose of a Strategic Plan

**Q13. Do you support the City of Mount Gambier
proposed Draft Asset Management Plans
2025/2034?** No

Q14. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Asset Management Plans?

The "smoothed" 10 year asset spend projections are not credible and are unlikely to be achieved - either short term or long term contributing to significant budget blowouts

Q15. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft Asset Management Plans 2025-2034.

not answered



City of Mount Gambier's Draft 2024/25 Annual Business Plan

Ratepayer's Audit

The City of Mount Gambier approved its proposed 2024/25 Annual Business Plan and Budget (Draft) for Public comment at its May 2024 formal meeting and included significant rate rises of

General Rates up 10.2% pa.
Waste collection Rates 43% pa

The author of this audit initially approached council seeking to discuss the proposed budget in depth and in person.

Council rejected this and required that only questions asked through their "Have Your Say" website would be addressed outside of formal submissions to the council meeting on Tuesday 18 June 2024.

To review or audit a formal document like the Annual Business Plan necessarily requires a lot of investigation and questions put to those who prepared it. With the only means of doing this being one way questions and comment on the "Have Your Say" website it also requires extraordinary trust in those answering questions to do so objectively and fully. It also requires the auditor to ask many more questions than a normal personal contact audit, and to ensure questions and answers are broadbased enough to have full relevance to cover and obtain the information sought.

It requires confidence and trust from both sides.

In this audit, trust started to fray at the first hurdle and deteriorated, hence the significant number of questions leading to council declining or delaying answering them.

At this stage, the audit still needs significant feedback to compile a final submission to council.

It is unfortunate but this audit has become a hostile audit.

About the Auditor.- Graham Walkom

I am a retired electrical/mechanical engineer with some twenty years involvement with regional councils as engineer and councillor/board member serving on Section 41 Finance and Audit committees. As councillor and in administration I had a no-nonsense approach and do not shy from robust discussion if my alertness of intelligence is insulted. I have gathered considerable direct involvement in both the preparation and review of Strategic Plans and Business Plans as well as instigating and developing an effective High End Service Review, Asset Management Plans, and participation in a significant Futures Search project. I participated extensively in state commissioner activities as relevant to councils.

What this Audit is for.

This audit is for

- 1) Three C.of M.G. ratepayers in the Corriedale residential area.
- 2) The City of Mount Gambier Council at their consideration of public comments on their draft 2024/25 Annual Business Plan and associated documents.



What is audited.

The documents I consider in this submission are the draft 2024/25 Annual Business Plan, the draft Long Term Financial Plan and the documents referenced therein.

There are 46 questions asked to date (11 June 2024) and are awaiting response from council. I do not consider it possible to compile a relevant submission (i.e. to finalise this report) to council until these 46 questions have been responded to objectively and honestly as it is likely that follow up questions will be required.

Council has variously advised it will, and it will not, answer these questions so it remains unclear what information will be available to facilitate completing this audit.

Because there are no less than 10 complex documents in various states of approval that are referenced and the referenced nature being 'circular' in nature (by circular I mean the documents are not approved by council and have no authority but are referenced as authoritative documents) means that the approval of the key target documents - Draft Annual Business Plan, Draft 10 year Assets Plans and Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034, could be invalid.

ref	document	compre hendible 1-9	observations
A	C.o.M.G. Futures Paper	7	A very expansive but subjective visionary "all things to all people." ideas bank. Well prepared but far more valuable if it was grouped into standard E.I.S. categories.
B	The Draft 2024/25 A.B.P. and budget	5	Nebulous and poorly edited. No executive summary. Credibility suffers with linking to other documents not yet developed.
C	Strategic Plan (4 years)	1	Out of date. Limited if any use.
D	Asset Management Summary 2025-34	5	Appears redundant with the other 3 asset plans covering all assets
E	Infrastructure Asset Management Plan 2025-34	9	A well prepared and useful document
F	Building and Structures Asset Management Plan 2025-34	8	A well prepared and useful document. Needs location maps
G	Plant and Equipment Asset Management Plan 2025-34	9	A well prepared and useful document
H	Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-34	7	Much duplication with A.B.P. No E.I.S. impact reported from this 10yr \$800m spend. Finances poorly balanced over future years with unnecessary near term rate increases resulting.



I	Draft Local Affordable Housing Plan - May 2025	3	Preliminary and incomplete. Needs significant clarification and justification. Does not fit with C.o.M.G. User Pays Principle. referenced p13 & p34 of A.B.P.
J	Mount Gambier 2035	1	Very preliminary and incomplete. Various described as both a Community Vision and Strategic Plan confuses (ref. A.B.P. p11, L.T.F.P. p4)
K	Wulanda Rec & Conv. Centre	1	Council advises these costs "have been absorbed" with no effect on budget. Where is the report to justify this statement. Report is missing from all documents.
L	Budget agenda item - may 24, ref 19.2	5	No executive summary. Nonsense comments in the impacts on Mt Gambier from the budget. p52, p53 \$50m must have E.I.S. comment.

Preliminary Audit Indications

Whenever we seek to plan, it is always prudent to know where you were, clearly define where you are and clearly define where you are going. This is the essence of a Strategic Plan: it must be wholly strategic objectives. Subjective goals and objectives are not worth pursuing. From the ratepayer's perspective, the above documents fail to be objective in any informative or understandable way. They are 60% subjective.

Where are we now?

These documents do not make this clear. There are many references to focusing on and meeting what the community want but no justification (qualification and quantification) of this.

The above documents fail to address where we are now in any meaningful way. Council is seeking funding via taxes (rates) for a hotchpotch of services that may or may not be sought by the community. Ratepayers are not informed what these services are. The stated community services are essentially based on subjective views of an unspecified few. This current Business Plan 2024/25 introduces Affordable Housing as an additional open ended council issue. It is not a council issue.

Council must take the time to define the now before charging into an ill-considered higher than necessary costly future.

From a cursory consideration of the L.T.F.P. the current rate increases appear not necessary with significant 'fat' in the Key Financial Ratios to smooth current peaks over the 10 years considered. Indeed the documents emphasise this balancing to be the purpose of the 10 year plans and that council is obliged by policy to smooth the financial indicators within 2 years- 2027 and must raise rates significantly to do this. In direct discussion with the CEO and the Finance Manager, no such policy or references were provided..

Interim audit recommendation.

Council made a very clear and emphatic commitment to its ratepayers at the time of approving the 2023/24 Annual business plan to smooth the introduction of some solid (6.2%) rate rises over three years. Council claims to have been surprised by a sudden discovery to increase waste rates by 42% (to cover waste costs fully) and general rates up by 10.2% (to cover increased depreciation) and other expenses.

Ratepayer Audit of A.B.P. and L.T.F.P. p3



This audit does not argue with the need to cover those costs but does find the need to do it fully by 2027 at a hefty and unexpected slug to ratepayers as unjustified, particularly when council's own documents stress the low socio-economic base of Mount Gambier and fail as required by legislation to justify these rate rises other than on an emotional basis.

Council could address this matter by resolving as follows:

"The C.E.O. is directed to adjust the draft 2024/25 Annual Business Plan and Budget to limit the rise in rates to the promised 6.2% cap made in the 2023/24 Annual Business Plan and Budget and similarly to year 2025/26 in the Draft 2025 -2034 Long Term Financial Plan"



Appendix A Record of process and events regarding the Audit of the C.O.M.G. Annual Business Plan and associated documents...

Record of events

The following has been submitted to council's Have Your Say website regarding the current draft 2024/25 Annual Business Plan and Budget to explain reasoning for concern.

(Note this is a record of events in attempting to objectively consider the documents).

My excursion into budget consultation with C.O.M.G. May 2024

In the latter half of May 2024 I entertained a small delegation of ratepayers asking for my assistance with The City of Mt Gambier's proposed unreasonable rate rises that were contrary to firm assurances made by the C.O.M.G.. General rates and Waste rates were to rise 11.2% and 43% respectively.

I advised I no longer "do" social media and I had served my time on councils. They understood, but insisted as no-one else understood "council speak" and could assess the council documents. I suggested that even councillors do not understand the council documents but it is designed that way to facilitate council not getting into objective discussions with ratepayers. Ratepayers are there "to pay rates", not to question if council is doing it efficiently and effectively.

I agreed to look into the looming budget session and poked along to the May 2024 council meeting to hear debate about the budget and its release for public comment.

I was painfully disturbed to witness the worst run council meeting of the more than 400 meetings and committee meetings I had attended as councillor or ratepayer. Where there should have been genuine debate about the budget, councillors stood and presented a rehearsed pantomime with one councillor rambling on the "we simply must put rates up because other council have" theme for 11 minutes when legislated formal meeting regulations' limit is 5 minutes. When another councillor eventually took the baton Cllr 11 minutes interrupted for another minute - a serious formal offence but no point of order from the floor or rebuke from the presiding member. Difficult indeed to understand the purpose of the presiding member.

Was there a message to ratepayers from that debacle? The only one I picked up was with the mayor labouring the point twice and Cllr Jenner three times, the unjustified claim that the C.O.M.G. "has to put rates up because some other rural councils tax ratepayers more than us.". This same assertion repeatedly appears in the budget documents.

After the proposed budget was voted through to community consultation, - unanimously of course - I was not the first to leave but did not see out too many more items. The meeting mould was very apparent.

Where to from here? Council would obviously be hoping they had repelled all boarders and would not have to answer questions. Perhaps that means some hard questions are essential.

I visited the council counter and encountered a very pleasant young lass who went well beyond my assistance expectations and I walked out with the various bundle of budget

Ratepayer Audit of A.B.P. and L.T.F.P. p5



stuff daydreaming how that caliber of resident/staffer could have a direct and meaningful contribution to council's decision making rather than the moribund mobs many councils seem to be. Although to be fair, the system moulds the elected councillors to what they become. Take the extended process that has occurred to get this new budget this far. Why are the documents so convoluted and obscure? So much so that Joe(sephine) ratepayer has no hope of understanding them. Even the agenda item that introduced them to the meeting did not make sense, probably indicating that not even those composing them understand them. The process attempts to, initially, wordsmith boring motherhood statements in workshops, informal gatherings and committees in long drawn-out meetings. Unable to objectively conclude these meetings everyone is so fed up they agree to rubbish documents: and rubbish is what we have to review.

A ratepayer who attempts to make comment to council on the A.B.P. documents has first to digest :

11 Reports (Wulanda is missing)
258 pages of information or repetition
231 diagrams, tables and charts
90,300 words

Clearly council is not communicating applying the K.I.S.S.principal

One of the documents that should be in plain sight is council's strategic plan. That is the one required by legislation to define where we are and define where we are going so council and ratepayers clearly know what we are doing. It does not seem to be there. An old one yes. A current one no, but perhaps it will turn up so we can comment.

I thought to know where we were, like last year, I should start with last year's budget papers when our community was invited to comment. There were four formal submissions speaking against the 6.2% rate rise. Council dealt with them like any star chamber worth its salt. Those making those submissions were classified as not being familiar with the budget documents and council was therefore able to dismiss them as unworthy. Catch 22. C.O.M.G. prepare documents that are undecipherable; ratepayers can offer comment about the budget, but must demonstrate they understand the documents. Failing to do so means there are no objections and council can proceed with the new budget. Yes! Did you see the mayor punch the air then?

Well the budget consultation with ratepayers is taken pretty seriously in state legislation, so we should be able to get a meaningful hearing. I'll try.

City of Mount Gambier has a Have Your Say web site. It looks impressive. It links the budget documents to the site and invites us to ask questions with the clear assurance we can ask any question and it will be put onto the site for the information of others and answered. I started submitting questions last Friday. I went through all budget documents and ended up asking 40 questions by Monday morning. These documents are variously subjective and convoluted: my questions about them similar because I have not attempted to edit duplicity.

None have been posted and today (Thursday 30th May 2024) at 0900hrs I received advice council was refusing to answer as promised because they do not have the resources.

This of course means that both ratepayers and councillors are not informed on these aspects that are associated with the A.B.P..

Ratepayer Audit of A.B.P. and L.T.F.P. p6



7 June 2024

Last evening was the first of Council's Budget "drop in information session" so I asked for more information on the apparent "lock in" of council to put rates up disproportionately this year (and next) particularly when the years to follow show significant smoothing capacity is available.

The response from the C.E.O. was the same line promulgated in the budget documents - we have to, we are obliged to get our financial indicators back on target. by 2027

I asked specifically where this requirement comes from?

The C.E.O.'s response was variously: it is Council Policy; it is Treasury Policy; it is Local Government Finance Authority loan conditions. My comment was that "council can change its policy, particularly if it is inappropriate" and "Council does not have to borrow only from the L.G.F.A."

The C.E.O. advised that I could make a submission to council to change their decision if I was not happy with her explanation.

At this stage it was clear administration was not going to provide the information needed to inform why council decided as it did. I suggested council may have been misled. I thought, yes I can ask for a considered change but I need the correct information which appears hard to get.

I thought I'd give council another shot at explaining so poked along to council offices this morning.

Met with [REDACTED].

I repeated several times that what I was after was any documents provided to councillors that would have steered them to make the rates increases 2024/25 and 2025/26.

We established where to get a copy of T150 Treasury Management Policy and Budget Policy B300. Incidentally both are years out of date.

I further asked what other documents were provided to councillors - such as workshops etc. The [REDACTED] response was..."The workshop was a publicly open budget workshop. I remarked that was history and documents are not available to any attending public at that time.

I suggested a Freedom of Information request might be needed to which there was no response.

Well I have now checked both T150 and B300 and there is no requirement for council to limit Key Financial Ratios to be wholly positive or favourable to guideline targets by 2027 - none!

I know council admin is very busy but what they do not seem to realise is that legislation requires public consultations about the budget so they do need to objectively consult.

So now I need to ask a few more questions on the Have Your Say website.

They start at Q 41 below.



Appendix B Questions asked in the Audit of the C.O.M.G. Annual Business Plan and associated documents...

The following assurance is made to ratepayers and residents on the C.oM.G. website.

Q&A

"The City of Mount Gambier is committed to listening and responding to the concerns and ideas of the community and encourages all individuals to share their views.

Have a question about the:

Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget 2024/2025

Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034; or

Draft Asset Management Plans 2025-2034?

Please ask anything related to these proposed key strategic documents here."

Draft Budget 2025 Questions

In a general sense these questions go to council's integrity in its responsibilities and undertakings given to this community regarding this Draft 2025 budget and the previous (current budget 2024)

A message from the mayor to the Mount Gambier ratepayers 2023/2024 in the Annual Business Plan and Budget assures us...(page 2 of 2023/2024)

"...Council has made the difficult decision to increase rates by more than is set out in the current Long Term Financial Plan." (Note 6.2% was resolved) for 2024 and for 2025 and 2026)

"Therefore, Council has taken a smoothing approach to rate revenue increases for the next three years as we recognise the financial pressures residents and businesses are experiencing." (*and add even more -my comment*) "We are committed to providing a high level of service to our community whilst remaining financially sustainable by managing expenditure within the next ten years of the Long Term Financial Plan to minimise the effect on ratepayers."

Council agreed with the CEO's advocacy for adoption in the administration's overview of the draft budget at item 4.1 of the 23 May 2023 Special Council Meeting. and resolution.

So we believed the mayor the CEO and councillors' promise of 6.2%! We planned around this promise.

How long did that last - well not a year. This year it is up to 10.62% general rate and 43.8% waste service charge. Will they come down? Most unlikely this century. Much more likely they will be used as solid base for further increases. If we see another 6.2% next year (at least is likely, that will be 6.2% 2024: 10.6% 2025 and 8.3% 2026. I asked my 8yo grandson to work that out and he tells me its 25.1% over three years.

My question at this point is...

Q1) "How did council get this so wrong? Or did it fail dismally to effect due diligence in its planning and management?"

- Council spends significantly on its extensive 10 year plans (revised each year).

Ratepayer Audit of A.B.P. and L.T.F.P. p8



- It is required by legislation to budget and plan professionally but appears to have failed at this - how did it not see the general rate and the waste increases coming?

In the current Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget at p42 we read the following "explanation"

Benchmarking

In previous years rating did not keep up with inflation, and whilst the previously adopted LTFP and last year's ABP included an increase that was smoothed across 3 years, rating was below actual CPI for FY 2024. Last year aligned with previous years, COMG were significantly below the rural state average."

Well that may or may not be true - it depends what statistics you take. I will ask more about verification of that council explanation in my next posted question.

With council apparently wanting to blame others (they did not keep up with inflation etc) for the significant rate increases - (a Further 10.62% on top of last year's 6.2% general rate)

My further questions at this point are...

Q2) If council has been under taxing its residences and businesses below the state average over the many years as you claim, why is that not due to good management by council staff and previous councils?

Q3) Why is it bad to be grouped among the most efficient and effective councils? Why do we need to be rerated from the most effective down to average by taxing and spending more?

Q4) What other options (to raising rates significantly) did council consider to address our apparent march to unsustainability?

Next questions:

ABP ref. **PURPOSE** p6

This is clear that the ABP is "...the key operational and financial document for council."

Q5) If endorsed as is by council, does this give the administration the authority to undertake the work and expenditure as listed, without further approvals and scrutiny of council?

At the time of approving this budget and in the reviews effected by council to date, what Value for Money measure has been applied to the various budget items?

ABP ref. **STRATEGIC DIRECTION** p6

Ratepayer Audit of A.B.P. and L.T.F.P. p9



This states that the 'Futures Paper' (not included), was taken into consideration in developing this ABP. The Futures Paper states "This 'Futures Paper' has been prepared after extensive consultation with the Mount Gambier City Council and its community on what matters for future city development."

Q6) What percentage of our community were interactively involved in the final Futures Paper?

Q7) There are 27 key strategies reported in the Futures Paper. What is the implementation progress of each of these in terms of percentage complete or fully adopted? Have any key strategies been abandoned since adopting the paper?

ABP ref **Significant Influences** p7

This states "In the development of the ABP we have undertaken a review of our internal environment and broader external environment that includes social, environment, economic and planning elements. This review identifies key issues that help provide the context for the development of this plan.

Q8) This is obviously a core document relevant to understanding the ABP. Could this review report please be linked as a priority to this draft ABP we are currently asked to consider?

ABP ref **HISTORIC RATING** p7

Q9) "COMG average residential rates were significantly below the rural state average."

This theme was obviously adopted by administration and councillors in considering this matter as an agenda item as it was repeatedly referenced as the prime reason rates must rise significantly.

And yet council does not justify this assertion. Indeed the LGA and state government information links to comparative rates has Mount Gambier (in its peer group) significantly above that peer group average. This may indicate that COMG "below average" claim is [REDACTED]. What then are the councils used by COMG to make this claim and why were they chosen and others not chosen?

ABP ref **ASSET MANAGEMENT** p8

Q10) "...there has been a significant increase in both depreciation (\$1.1m above the adopted LTFP for 2024/2025) the capital works budget and the forward works budget."

- a) Does council have a depreciation schedule? If so, how could this be incorrect to require an additional \$1.1m in depreciation in just one year?
- b) How are assets assessed for their priority to this community and from that priority, their relevant depreciation value?

ABP ref **CAPACITY CREATION-** p8

Ratepayer Audit of A.B.P. and L.T.F.P. p10



- Q11)** a) Specifically how have the community needs been established?
b) How have the efficient and effective delivery of services been defined and measured for council tone informed when considering the need for service?
c) is there comprehensive list of products and services that council provides and their annual cost?

ABP ref Hierarchy of Documents- p11

"Brings together the key planning documents to ensure that the vision, goals, and objectives set by the futures paper are implemented in the Long Term Financial Plan, Asset management Plan, and Annual business Plan.....as shown..."

Q12) Which of the 27 key strategies in the Futures Paper are specifically included in the subordinate "....key strategic management documents shown..."

ABP ref Highlights- p12

"Withpressures to deliver more and changes in consumer's expectations of council's, there is a growing need for Council's (sic) to deliver services tailored to demand."

"This Annual Business Plan will focus on maintaining services standards efficiently."

Q13) Specifically, what are the pressures to deliver more? How are they qualified and quantified so that they can be identified and rated as beneficial to all ratepayers at the expense of core services such as infrastructure?

ABP ref WULANDA. p12

Q14) Has council considered selling this facility to significantly reduce excess debt and thus provide more services to more of the community? If not why not?

ABP ref STRATEGIC WORK PLAN p12

Q15) It is very confusing how the 24/25 ABP intends to plan and fund the current Futures Paper (as approved by council) and the draft Mount Gambier 2035 which is not adopted by council, but "....will be brought to Council in June 2024 for community consultation. and the proposed ABP has "....considered the Strategic Work Plan that underpins the delivery of Mount Gambier 2035." Exactly how is this obfuscated comment explained in simple terms including how and why this proposed Mount Gambier 2035 Strategic Plan is following due process?

ABP ref UNLOCKING PROJECTS p12

3) Workforce Planning Framework -

".....creating efficiencies through the following:

- Service register and benchmarking

Ratepayer Audit of A.B.P. and L.T.F.P. p11



- Establishment of a service review framework; and
- Undertake service reviews and workforce analysis.

Q16) specifically what resources and what timeframe will address and implement these reviews and analysis? What budget amount is included in this current ABP?

ABP ref AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY p13

Q17) specifically what resources and what timeframe will address this initiative?

Q18) Has any other council at any time over the last 50 years successfully adopted an Affordable Housing Strategy?

Q19) what is the total budget in LCC terms set for this affordable housing strategy and how is it measured in value for money as a council service?

ABP ref USER PAYS PRINCIPLE and CURRENT SERVICE LEVELS p15

Q20) I note the specific CapEx items listed pp17- 21 and observe well done.

Q21) Does council have a detailed itemised list of the products and services it is providing?

Q22) Has council specifically and independently reviewed its products and services in any form apart from the generalised products and services groups?

Q23) How does council know what products and services it is providing and if those services are being provided efficiently and effectively? How does it measure these outcomes in quantised and qualified terms?

Q24) Has council conducted a specific high end product and services review and determined the value to the whole community of those products and services on a measured and comparable basis

- a) in any format?
- b) using a professionally developed Value For Money Measure?

Q25) If it has not (ref Q24), how does it measure, determine and report to council the Value for Money obtained or to be obtained when informing council prior to adoption of that service or adjustment of that service?

Ratepayer Audit of A.B.P. and L.T.F.P. p12



Q26 Has council had its products and services provision assessed for effectiveness and efficiency and had each relatively rated for Social, Environmental, Economic benefit to the community?

Q27 Council advises that it pursues Value for Money in providing its Products and Services. Does council have a professionally reviewed and adopted "Value for Money Measure"?

Q28 Does council have a current Strategic Plan - not a futures document that appears vague and subjective? How may I get a copy of that current Strategic Plan - current in the sense that it addresses the 2024/2025 year as the link provided connects to an outdated and subjective plan.

Q29 "Section 123 of the Local Government Act states that:

Each annual business plan of Council must –

(a) include a summary of the council's long-term objectives (as set out in its strategic management plans);...

(Specifically where in the draft ABP are these aspects included?)

Q30 Section 123 of the Local Government Act states that:

Each annual business plan of Council must –

(e) assess the impact of the rates structure and policies on the community based on modelling that has been undertaken or obtained by the council;

Specifically where in the draft ABP does council assess this impact?

If it still intends to do this, will it do so objectively and in a timely manner that allows public feedback so that councillors are informed before voting?

Note: KPI's are quantifiable measurements to gauge a company's overall long term performance.

Q31 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS p27, p30, p34, p37, p40

Why are these short term indicators only that do not allow residents to assess council's directions and performance over a longer term? (see Q29)

Q32 DRAFT L.T. FINANCIAL PLAN

This document appears to have also been prepared against a defunct Strategic Plan and Futures Search document, in which case may not be worth my time reviewing it: Is that the case?

Q33 L.T.F.P. Strategic Workplace p12 and p13

Ratepayer Audit of A.B.P. and L.T.F.P. p13



This appeared a poor excuse for a meaningful Strategic Plan and nothing more than a list of project management headings: Is that the case?

Q34 .L.T.F.P. OVERVIEW p2

I am guessing this document is a generic template - perhaps from the LGA: is that the case?

It does not have an Executive Summary and is therefore unable to concisely summarise the document for community distribution or any other. Why not?

Q35 .L.T.F.P. Key financial ratios - p23,24,25,26.

These are only cited for current and forward years. It is not possible to consider council's performance fully against these unless historical (prior) years are included. Therefore in tabularised form,

a) what are the 10 consecutive year forecasts from and including the initial year actual budget in 2016, for those 10 year forecasts and rate actuals, plus Operating Surplus Ratio, Net Financial Liabilities Ratio, Asset Renewal Ratio and Borrowing to Income Ratio, also for the initial budget in 2016, for the then 10 year forecasts and rate actuals?

b) what are the 10 consecutive year forecasts from and including the initial year actual budget in 2021, for those 10 year forecasts and rate actuals, plus Operating Surplus Ratio, Net Financial Liabilities Ratio, Asset Renewal Ratio and Borrowing to Income Ratio, also for the initial budget in 2021, for the then 10 year forecasts and historical rate actuals (actuals up to Q3 2024)?

Q36 A.M.P.'s Asset Management Summary.

a) Is this intended as an Executive Summary of the three A.M.P.'s?

b) Why not call it that so people can focus on what they might want?

Q37 Buildings and Structures A.M.P.

This is a thorough and logical document that includes a meaningful Executive Summary: a noticeable cut above the rest. Unfortunately it does not have a full relevant asset and conditions list. Is this soon to be provided?

Q38 Infrastructure A.M.P.

This is also a well prepared high value document. Perhaps needs fine tuning finishing. The relevant assets and their condition assessments are well presented via condition maps. It appears it needs a 100% completion date. Does council have this targeted?

Q39 Plant and Equipment A.M.P.



This is also a solid and logical document with Executive Summary. It objectively details the current status and maintenance needs for P&E. Has council expressed its gratitude to the various staff for these high class A.M.P. documents?

Q40 A.B.P. + Agenda Item 19.2 of 21 May council meeting.

I fully appreciate the efforts put in by councillors and employees on these documents, but it is clear these documents are very poor in quality and ready interpretation. Just how could any typical ratepayer understand these documents and have input?

There is no Executive Summary in several key documents including a) the agenda report to council, b) the 24/25 A.B.P., c) The 24/25 L.T.F.P. The cited 2020-24 COMG Strategic Plan is out of date. Highly unlikely any review will be completed before council will adopt the A.B.P. which may make it invalid. Would it be invalid if there is no current and relevant Strategic Plan to draw from?

The key documents relevant to the ABP (L.T.F.P. and the A.M.P's) were in previous years reviewed well in advance and independent of preparing the Annual Business Plan. Legislation requires them to be prepared with a 10 year overview: you are now doing your assessments and fine tuning at the same time, so hardly at arms length. So much for the legislation and independent preparation.

And that begs this question...just what were the parameters that council considered and set for the administration to undertake the ABP and budget review 2024/25? They should have been clearly established prior to workshops, informal etc.?

Post 6 June Drop In Questions..

Q41 L.T.F.P. Key Financial Ratios.

Apart from Fy 2025, all financial ratios (except Asset Renewal which is not relevant for this consideration) have significant "capacity" to adjust and balance out the significant rate increases proposed for 2024/25 and 2025/26 without exceeding Financial Ratio targets. The stated requirements to meet a 2027 target because of "policy" is incorrect: there is no such requirement. Why then is this target referenced? How was it introduced to become a dominant factor in budget development to the detriment of ratepayer pockets?

Q42 L.T.F.P. Key Financial Ratios.

What specific information was given to councillors in workshops or elsewhere steering them to adopt the proposed significant rate increases? Please provide all relevant documents

Q43 A.B.P. Project/Expense Items

Listed projects can always be deferred to cut spending if essential in any year. What project items (CapEx and OpEx) items were considered for removal/deferral to reduce the total budget expenses as a means to reduce expenses and reduce rate increases?

What was the prioritised list for the expense items listed in the 2024/25 draft Annual Business Plan?



Q44 Wulanda factors in expenses.

A F.A.Q. asked and answered by council on the "Have your say" website is *"Have rates increased because of Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre?"*

Answer: No, the proposed rate increase is not due to the Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre. The Council has absorbed these costs within the existing budget.

Just what do you mean by absorbed the costs into the budget but not affected the budget?

I think the question here is clear enough. What is the effect of Wulanda on the budget.

Q45 Further to Budget Review #3 (BR3)

Does council have any outstanding loans or borrowings or depreciation attributable to the Wulanda centre? If so please provide an itemised list.

Q46 Further to Budget Review #3 (BR#) Second question

What are council's costs/outgo/payments for the Wulanda centre 2023/24 (budget and actuals) specifically for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years?

What are council's income/receipts for the Wulanda centre 2023/24 (budget and actuals) and those specifically for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years?

Q47 Extent of Cost Shifting

'What CapEx and OpEx items originally incurred to facilitate development of the Wulanda project have been cost shifted to the general budget in the financial years 2021/22; 2022/23 and 2023/24 and what is planned to be cost shifted in 2024/25?'

Thank you.

Graham Walkom



Appendix C The Ratepayer Audit of the C.O.M.G. Annual Business Plan and associated documents 2024/25

The Annual Business Plan and associated documents include an unfunded reference to a Draft Local Housing Plan. It is unclear the status of this plan within the context of the Annual Business Plan but it seems to have been inappropriately referenced in the A.B.P.

I have attempted to make relevant comment about the Housing Plan and submitted the comments to council as comment on the Housing Plan. It may or may not be relevant to the 24/25 A.B.P.

Graham Walkom Comments on the C.o.M.G. Draft Local Housing Plan.

Plan: (noun) - a detailed proposal for doing or achieving something.

Mount Gambier is (according to census data) a disadvantaged area of Australia, but located within the large south-east area which is by contrast an advantaged area. This is not addressed in the report. It needs to be for obvious reasons.

Providing housing to some and not others has always been a state issue and quest and never gone well. Australia now has the Federal Government providing \$13 billion to address national housing issues. So far that has not gone well either. It has never been a Local Council responsibility, and if the federal funds are to be pitched just to the lowest income quartile, ten times that amount will not make clear headway.

This emotive quest has been slipped into the 2024/25 City of Mount Gambier Draft Annual Business Plan as an uncosted major initiative. Perhaps the report's target group is the 30.5% in the lower quartile \$0-756 income per household. They would get \$1925.92 per household once only, or after government administration costs, half that. \$1000 will not buy much of a house, even a very small pod.

It is not possible to see this as anything other than a very costly folly requiring a bottomless pit of money to which C.o.M.G. seems excited to commit.

If I was asked to assess the Value for Money for C.o.M.G. in this (I am sure I will not be), the Economics indicator is Typical rates (per ratepayer) \$2000p.a. but to provide a rental house to the target group a subsidy is needed over 20 years of \$>15,000p.a. per household.

Very easy to see this developing into a monstrous cost burden for C.o.M.G. with the potential to make the Wulanda \$60million debacle fade to insignificant.

Calling an issue a crisis does not necessarily make it a crisis. If it is a crisis, an objective plan is needed and that requires specific definition of where we are now - not subjective and emotive comment, and requires specific definition of where, how and when we are going.

On this issue, much more importantly it requires a clear understanding of what council **will not** be doing.


1. **Question 1:** Does council have other plans or information on how this proposal will specifically unfold for Mt Gambier?

Ratepayer Audit of A.B.P. and L.T.F.P. p17



2. **Question 2:** This document is a poor attempt to justify a need, has any modelling of any description been effected for Mt Gambier? Any costings to council objectively crunched?
3. **Question 3:** The Draft L.A.H.P. suggests that smaller units of housing may be the answer. Yes, possibly as the Current block size in Mt Gambier is very large (700 - 1000m²) with proportionally oversized houses. Community Housing is rare but still costly.
e.g. Corriedale Units were occupied earlier this year. 3 BR single story houses of 200m² footprint on 300m² community title lots...hardly compact housing.
Other examples of successful cluster housing are of course the Woodlands (c200 units) and Hallmont (c100 units) estates with 2BR 150m² and 3BR 180m² units working well as retirement homes. Very very doubtful that something like this would work as family affordable homes: headed for ghettos and slums, but works for retirement housing: Does council have a 'shovel ready' development to put to S.A.G and the Feds?
4. **Question 4** The document states that Mt Gambier currently has 12,785 dwellings 13,499 employed residents and 2.24 persons/household. Those numbers clearly indicate there is no housing problem at all. 27,771 residents of which 28,127 are already housed.
Where is the problem? You very clearly have some work to do to objectively justify the need.
What state and federal grants are being provided for professional assessment and the overall project objective?
5. **Question 5** The council resources to get this far (Draft Plan) has obviously been significant - What are council's costs so far - total resources? There is no budget item for this current year or draft 2024/25. What is the expected C.o.M.G. resources for this project 2024/25?
6. **Question 6** Does Council honestly believe that any form of 3BR housing could be viably developed and rented out for 30% of the income of the lower quartile. From my knowledge of residential construction issues and costs Mt Gambier needs NatHERS 8* thermal rating for all new housing. The new 7* is NOT sufficient with ballooning energy costs.
If we Include land development costs for a 250m² lot, 3BR 150m² a 6* energy rated home would be c \$580k, a 7* c\$630k, and 8*c\$700k.



	Respondent No: 7	Responded At: Jun 12, 2024 12:21:19 pm
	Login: Anonymous	Last Seen: Jun 12, 2024 12:21:19 pm
	Email: n/a	IP Address: n/a

Q1. Name	[REDACTED]
Q2. Address	[REDACTED]
Q3. Contact number	[REDACTED]
Q4. Email	[REDACTED]
Q5. Please select the plans that you would like to provide feedback on (select all that apply):	Draft 2024-2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget
Q6. Do you support the City of Mount Gambier proposed Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget?	Yes
Q7. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Annual Business Plan and Budget?	not answered
Q8. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget.	Council Commitment - Transparency. In relation to Wulanda and the annual operating financial performance, council will be aware there exists in the community significant comment and opinions regarding Wulanda's ongoing operating costs. To fully inform the community, it will be important that council provide an annual profit and loss financial statement. I expect MGCC would be monitoring this with the detail readily available for sharing with the community. Proactively making this available will conform with councils transparency commitment and be a positive step in keeping the community fully informed.
Q9. Would you like to present your submission at the Special Council Meeting on Tuesday 18 June 2024?	No
Q10. Do you support the proposed Draft Long Term Financial Plans 2025-2034?	not answered
Q11. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Long Term Financial Plan?	not answered
Q12. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034.	not answered
Q13. Do you support the City of Mount Gambier proposed Draft Asset Management Plans 2025/2034?	not answered




Q14. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Asset Management Plans?

not answered

Q15. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft Asset Management Plans 2025-2034.

not answered



	Respondent No: 8	Responded At: Jun 12, 2024 13:18:10 pm
	Login: Anonymous	Last Seen: Jun 12, 2024 13:18:10 pm
	Email: n/a	IP Address: n/a

- Q1. Name [REDACTED]
- Q2. Address [REDACTED]
- Q3. Contact number [REDACTED]
- Q4. Email [REDACTED]
- Q5. Please select the plans that you would like to provide feedback on (select all that apply): Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034
- Q6. Do you support the City of Mount Gambier proposed Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget? not answered
- Q7. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Annual Business Plan and Budget? not answered
- Q8. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget. not answered
- Q9. Would you like to present your submission at the Special Council Meeting on Tuesday 18 June 2024? not answered
- Q10. Do you support the proposed Draft Long Term Financial Plans 2025-2034? Yes
- Q11. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Long Term Financial Plan? not answered



Q12. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034.

Waste Management. Unfortunately household waste volumes are likely to increase in line with our population increases plus consumer waste with more and more packing coming into the system will place an ongoing priority on waste management. Notwithstanding many other forms of waste. This all leads into extra costs that impact on the financial plans. My submission revolves around the following: 1) RISK to the water table - putting things into the ground is a potential risk to the water table which is fundamental to the region. While landfill has been the traditional way, progress in waste disposal has come a long way and there may better solutions. Have other processing options been or will be explored taking into account the future growth in this area, that can eliminate this risk and/or reduce the financial cost. 2) CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY GENERATION - tied into the above is there an opportunity to reduce gas emissions by converting the waste into some form of energy? 3) RECYCLE - some excellent initiatives have occurred with recycling outside the recycle and reuse centres. A couple being Lakes Rotary collections at supermarkets and St Martin's school collecting bottle tops and bread tags which go to Robe. However St Martins no longer provide this service. Is there a way for this to continue, together with other initiatives, via council incorporating more volunteers/service groups into recycling projects to increase the volume of materials recycled.

**Q13. Do you support the City of Mount Gambier
proposed Draft Asset Management Plans
2025/2034?** not answered

Q14. What are the key reasons why you don't support the proposed Asset Management Plans?

not answered

Q15. Please provide any further comments you have regarding the proposed Draft Asset Management Plans 2025-2034.

not answered



From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Emails](#)
Subject: Rate increase
Date: Sunday, 2 June 2024 7:01:56 PM

****CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of this Organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe**.

City Council,

It was with great disappointment that i read our rates will increase by 10%.

That is unbelievable and shows how inept you lot are.

You obviously cant handle money and budget accordingly.

Warmambool for example are only looking at 2.5% increase.

I would suggest for starters in getting out a red pen and start cutting services that we cant afford and living within our means, just like the normal people you represent have to do.

Regards Tony Warren.

[REDACTED]

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This email has been checked for viruses by Avast antivirus software.
www.avast.com



From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Emails](#); [REDACTED]
Subject: Submission
Date: Thursday, 13 June 2024 4:15:08 PM

****CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of this Organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe**.

Hello,

My name is Peter Harpas, a local resident and ratepayer for the Mount Gambier City Council.

I would like to make a submission to the council regarding the current Budget Draft Plan and for the submission to be considered for inclusion in the next Council Meeting 18th June 2024.

1. How much does the Council receive annually from funding provided by the federal Government?
2. Is this Federal Government funding calculated on a percentage of annual Federal Government tax revenue?
According to the ABS, the Federal Government's total Tax revenue for the year 2022 - 2023 was 755.8 Billion Australian dollars. Now 0.005% of 755.8 Billion is 37,790,000 Million Dollars.
3. Why have we only received as noted on the budget plan at 5.1 million in Federal Grants?
4. The employee costs will be increased by \$450,000 in the next financial year. Can Council provide a breakdown and categorical summary outlining how all that extra \$450,000 will be spent? Ie: How much will be to fund new employees and how much will be spent on training for employees and so forth.
5. Will any funding be allocated to increase opening hours at the information centre/area located next to the Blue Lake? I believe this space is vital to the community and has the potential to offer a central hub for community engagement and tourism.
6. Given the current Budget is going to have an increase in rates and ratepayers will be affected financially. Given these tough financial times, Why is it Necessary for the council to spend some \$99,000 on the beacon Art project? Could this project be postponed until the council is in a better financial situation? What alternatives has the council investigated to severely minimise the cost of this project?
7. Can Council provide the ratepayers and the community a yearly statement for the operating costs of the Walunga Recreation and Convention Centre. Including the incomings and outgoings of the centre, management costs (fees), Loans and repayments, interest for loan etc?
8. Where has the extra \$15,000 grant to the Pioneers Basketball club come from?
As a result of this grant increase, have other local sporting clubs missed out on funding due to this \$15,000 deficit?



Yours Sincerely

Peter Harpas



UNOFFICIAL

Dear Council Members,

I am making this submission to express my opposition to the substantial rate rise proposed by the council. My concern lies in the deviation from the core responsibilities of council and instead towards what seems to be an expansion into welfare type services, reminiscent of a third tier of government. This trend, worsening over the decades, is now exacerbated by economic uncertainties and the erosion of the middle class, leading to an unsustainable reliance on government services.

Working-class families attempting to chase the ever-increasing dream of home ownership are being pressured by high interest rates, increasing inflation and taxation, including council rates. The proportion of household incomes dedicated to homeownership maintenance has surpassed wage growth, reflecting both governmental fiscal carelessness and overspending. This ongoing cycle of funding populist projects and services, coupled with an inefficient and costly bureaucracy, unfairly burdens ratepayers.

I advocate that the responsible thing to do is live within our means and work to align community expectations with the finite resources of ratepayers. Rather than resorting to significant rate hikes to finance expansive infrastructure projects and welfare programs, the council should prioritize efficiency and cost reduction especially during these times of economic uncertainty.

Regarding the rationale put forward of aligning our rates with other councils', it is important to consider the unique character of our town and how our vision is to be an affordable place to live. Our affordability, including housing costs, has traditionally been a distinguishing feature that has attracted people to our region. It would be detrimental to relinquish this advantage by substantially increasing rates, potentially signalling a lack of distinctiveness in our council's leadership.

While acknowledging the impact of COVID-19 on expenses, it's essential that the council commits to dissecting the underlying causes. It has been soundly argued that the financial burden stems not from the virus itself but from governmental responses. I urge the council to reflect on lessons learned from these responses to ensure prudent financial management in the future.

The ballooning bureaucracy, consuming over half of ratepayers' charges, demands scrutiny. What value for money do ratepayers receive from this sizable workforce? Are efficiency and user experience actively measured and improved?

Moreover, questions arise from the Annual Business Plan and Budget, indicating potential oversights and inefficiencies in project allocations. Transparency and accountability are paramount, especially concerning project costs and grant assumptions. I would be interested in understanding what measures are being implemented out of the budget to improve these areas? Does the \$80,000 for AV systems for council chambers provide the capacity for the livestreaming of council meetings? Does the allocation of \$60,000 for IT allow for the collection of customer feedback when accessing a service?

In summary, proposing a substantial rate rise amidst financial hardships necessitates a reassessment of priorities. Fiscal restraint and a focus on core responsibilities are imperative. Streamlining bureaucracy and fostering a conducive environment for community initiatives can achieve desired outcomes without overburdening ratepayers.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Yours Sincerely

UNOFFICIAL



UNOFFICIAL

Shayne Haggis

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Sincerely,

UNOFFICIAL





Mount Gambier and District Residents and Rate Payers Association Incorporated

The Association wishes to acknowledge the inordinate time and workload that Council officers have put into the development of these documents.

The Association recognises the complexity of the issues and commends the staff in attempting to balance the competing issues of budget versus community expectations from their perspective.

Following our community meeting of 12 06 2024 we have the following issues to raise;

1. It was clear that the questions/issues raised by Mr Walkolm in his presentation to the Association addressed many of the fine detail that has been raised by the community, as such we support these questions and we do not plan to address these issues again and look forward to the Council's response.
2. We raise more general issues which were raised such as;
 - (I) Process – we note that the submissions are due at 5.00 pm today. The Agenda is due for publication tomorrow, less than 1 clear business day.
Is this an appropriate timeframe to consider the submissions?
 - (II) We note the confluence of multiple major public documents for endorsement which does not allow the community to focus on specific issues.
 - (III) We note the irregularities in the consultation process clarity which has been addressed by the Association.
 - (IV) We note the comments from the community members who attended the community sessions that noted that Council answers were evasive in their opinion.

It was clear from the public meeting we conducted that the following issues (apart from the questions of a highly technical nature from Mr Walkolm which need to be answered) that:

1. Wulanda
The community demands that the clear financial impact of Wulanda be articulated in the budget. Irrespective of the cost shifting that the community is concerned about, the ongoing costs need to be clearly articulated (as minimum income vs costs) to allow the community to assess value for money.
2. The true cost be articulated for Wulanda in terms of finance cost related to payment of this facility, and the subsequent financial viability of this facility.
3. The existing loan facilities that the Council has undertaken and the conditions that have been imposed on Council by the LCLGA finance authority.
4. The Irregularities in the depreciation schedule that has been questioned by members of the community.
5. The lack of objective planning rather than subjective planning that seems to be a feature of the documents presented to the public.





Mount Gambier and District Residents and Rate Payers Association Incorporated

We note that in our meeting there were great concerns about lack of detail with the 5 goals of the Council, and concerns were raised that goals were poorly described and subjective rather than objective.

We are happy to discuss this further and look forward to having the opportunity to do so on Tuesday June 18th from 5.00pm.

Regards,

Di Ind
Chairman
MGDRRA



Responses To Individual Submissions

Name	Questions/Comments	Draft Council Administration Response
F. McIntyre	DO NOT need a rate increase anywhere near 10%. It is ludicrous in this financial climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank You - Thank you for your feedback. Please find below the draft responses to your submission. • Balanced Approach - Council needs to balance maintaining and improving assets and services with long-term financial sustainability. Due to past efforts to minimize rate increases, we now face the necessity of raising rates to cover growing costs and ensure future sustainability. Council explored many options and held seven workshops to arrive at this decision. • Proposed General Rate Increase - A proposed general rate increase of 10.24% (excluding growth) is under consideration to ensure organisational capacity and achieve key financial targets aligned with Council's Treasury Management Policy and debt funding agreement by 2026/2027. • Key Financial Ratios - This rating model enables Council to achieve its key financial ratio targets and provide organisational capacity to support population growth to date, the future growth of the organisation, implement strategic plans such as Mount Gambier 2035 and the Sport Recreation and Open Space Strategy (SROSS) and fund Council's depreciation/capital works program. • Asset Valuations - When Council proposed to smooth rates over the 3 years for the 2023/2024 budget it stated that this excluded the impact of asset valuations for Infrastructure (roads, footpaths, etc) and Buildings and Structures. Councils across South Australia, like City Of Mount Gambier have faced similar challenges as a result of asset valuations and have increased their rates as a response to increased depreciation and the cost of their capital works programs. Council's depreciation of \$11.9m is \$1.1m above the adopted LTFP (equivalent to a 4.83% increase in general rates). • Verbal Submission - We look forward to your verbal submission.
Respondent 1	Our tax money is not being spent well. Our wages have not gone up and with the ever increasing rises I will not be supporting this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank You – Thank you for your feedback. Please find below the draft responses to your submission. • Balanced Approach - Council needs to balance maintaining and improving assets and services with long-term financial sustainability. Due to past efforts to minimize rate increases, we now face the necessity of raising rates to cover growing costs and ensure future sustainability. Council explored many options and held seven workshops to arrive at this decision. • Proposed General Rate Increase - A proposed general rate increase of 10.24% (excluding growth) is under consideration to ensure organisational capacity and achieve key financial targets aligned with Council's Treasury Management Policy and debt funding agreement by 2026/2027. • Key Financial Ratios - This rating model enables Council to achieve its key financial ratio targets and provide organisational capacity to support population growth to date, the future growth of the organisation, implement strategic plans such as Mount Gambier 2035 and the Sport Recreation and Open Space Strategy (SROSS) and fund Council's depreciation/capital works program. • Asset Valuations - When Council proposed to smooth rates over the 3 years for the 2023/2024 budget it stated that this excluded the impact of asset valuations for Infrastructure (roads, footpaths, etc) and Buildings and Structures. Councils across South Australia, like City Of Mount Gambier have faced similar challenges as a result of asset valuations and have increased their rates as a response to increased depreciation and the cost of their capital works programs. Council's depreciation of \$11.9m is \$1.1m above the adopted LTFP (equivalent to a 4.83% increase in general rates). • Hardship - As per Council's draft Rating Policy included in the Draft Annual Business Plan document: <i>Any ratepayer experiencing difficulties in meeting rates payments or experiencing hardship will be able to access payment plans tailored to meet their particular circumstances. All arrangements are strictly confidential.</i>
Respondent 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the current financial crisis, i like many others will struggle with the rare rise. Maybe put the big projects on hold until things settle down instead of making already struggling people find it even harder. This is not the time for big ideas. • Like many others, with interest rates continuing to increase and basic necessities being more expensive than ever, I believe we just can not increase rates at this time. People are already struggling to make ends meet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank You - Thank you for your feedback. Please find below the draft responses to your submission. • Balanced Approach - Council needs to balance maintaining and improving assets and services with long-term financial sustainability. Due to past efforts to minimize rate increases, we now face the necessity of raising rates to cover growing costs and ensure future sustainability. Council explored many options and held seven workshops to arrive at this decision. • Proposed General Rate Increase - A proposed general rate increase of 10.24% (excluding growth) is under consideration to ensure organisational capacity and achieve key financial targets aligned with Council's Treasury Management Policy and debt funding agreement by 2026/2027.



Responses To Individual Submissions

Name	Questions/Comments	Draft Council Administration Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Financial Ratios - This rating model enables Council to achieve its key financial ratio targets and provide organisational capacity to support population growth to date, the future growth of the organisation, implement strategic plans such as Mount Gambier 2035 and the Sport Recreation and Open Space Strategy (SROSS) and fund Council's depreciation/capital works program. • Asset Valuations - When Council proposed to smooth rates over the 3 years for the 2023/2024 budget it stated that this excluded the impact of asset valuations for Infrastructure (roads, footpaths, etc) and Buildings and Structures. Councils across South Australia, like City Of Mount Gambier have faced similar challenges as a result of asset valuations and have increased their rates as a response to increased depreciation and the cost of their capital works programs. Council's depreciation of \$11.9m is \$1.1m above the adopted LTFP (equivalent to a 4.83% increase in general rates). • Hardship - As per Council's draft Rating Policy included in the Draft Annual Business Plan document: <i>Any ratepayer experiencing difficulties in meeting rates payments or experiencing hardship will be able to access payment plans tailored to meet their particular circumstances. All arrangements are strictly confidential.</i>
Respondent 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I cannot clearly make the connection as to where the increase in rates revenue is being spent. The document talks about increased costs and key projects, but where are those increased costs identified and why? • I think further communication on the actual costs of Wulanda should be made transparent as the community were assured this project would not result in an increase in rates. And given a project of this size, it would have to have an impact on the bottom line. This may be sitting in the LTFP which I haven't reviewed, but please make it easier for community to understand what the real costs of this project have been, and continue to be. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank You - Thank you for your feedback. Please find below the draft responses to your submission. • Asset Management - Further to condition audits and valuations undertaken during this financial year for our major asset classes there has been a significant increase in both depreciation (<u>\$1.1m above the adopted LTFP for or 4.83% of the rate increase in 2024/2025</u>), the capital works budget and the forward works program (the projects that have been included in the Capital Expenditure section of the ABP document (Pages 16-21) . We have seen the cost of construction increase and the condition audits have informed the works that need to be undertaken. • Growth - Over previous years, the organisation has not increased its staffing capacity to reflect the growth in the community and increased cost of service. This was particularly evident during 2021 where we saw significant growth in our city. • Capacity to Deliver - Capacity Creation - Capacity has been created in a number of different ways: to deliver the ABP: • FTEs - An additional 1.5 FTEs have been included in the FY 2025 budget to support volunteer management and the delivery of the trails activation plan. • Resource – The capacity of 2 FTEs, which is expected to either be Council staff or consultants/contractors. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Strategic Work Plan - Individual projects such as the Business Systems review have been scheduled, with an ongoing allocation over the life of the LTFP in recognition of the need to resource for future priorities and growth. ➢ CBD Activation - An ongoing allocation has been included in the FY 2025 in response to community feedback. • Inflationary pressures - Higher than expected inflation has resulted in significantly higher costs for materials, contracts, services and utilities. • Highlights - Page 12-13 of the ABP document shows a list of key priorities for 2024/2025.
Greg Lockwood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The \$20.2m draft Material, Contracts, Other is not shown in the draft separately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wulanda Draft 2024/2025 Budget - We note the interest in understanding the revenue and expenditure for Wulanda in actual terms and for future forecasts. The net cost of running the centre is estimated to be c\$1.4m for 2024/2025. • Wulanda Annual Performance Reporting - Given that Wulanda has been operating for just over one year the first full year of operations and financial results are expected to be reported to Council by the end of the first quarter of 2024/2025. • Thank You - Thank you for your feedback. Please find below the draft responses to your submission.



Responses To Individual Submissions

Name	Questions/Comments	Draft Council Administration Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is misleading and covers up the operations of council. • This really means that Wulanda and Library costs will not be visible and covered up and I am sure rate payers will be totally alarmed at the costs of running these 2 big ticket items. • Rate payers will not see the true costs of repairs carried out by staff during the normal course of business compared to running costs. • There is also an alarming cost of staff at \$16.3m in this budget where most businesses are struggling to make ends-meet and this level of staffing is a considerable portion of the total expenditure. There must be a large number of admin staff compared to actual works staff. • There is no detail on the \$20.2m spent on every-day running expenses including a break-down of repairs and maintenance, running costs (electricity, R&M, water, heating, staff, extra's, etc.). These should be open and broken down for all rate payers to review and not hidden as this distorts the true council position that we, the rate payers are forking out for. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wulanda Draft 2024/2025 Budget - We note the interest in understanding the revenue and expenditure for Wulanda in actual terms and for future forecasts. The net cost of running the centre is estimated to be c\$1.4m for 2024/2025. • Wulanda Annual Performance Reporting - Given that Wulanda has been operating for just over one year the first full year of operations and financial results are expected to be reported to Council by the end of the first quarter of 2024/2025. • Review of 2024/2025 Budget – Council staff undertook a detailed line by line and function by function review during the budget process. Elected Members reviewed an operating statement for each department of Council that showed the direct costs attributable. • Further Analysis Of Operating Expenditure – The final Annual Business Plan document will include a breakdown of the operating budget by function e.g. Sports and Recreation and Administration/Support Services. • Actual Information - Actual expenditure is analysed further in the notes to the audited financial statements (which show professional fees other than legal fees e.g. audit fees, consultants fees, legal fees, and contractors).
Graham Walkom	Submission as per form in and "Ratepayer's Audit" in attachment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank You - Thank you for your feedback. Please find responses to your Questions and Answer included in Attachment 3. • Verbal Submission - We look forward to your verbal submission.
Respondent 4	<p>Council Commitment - Transparency. In relation to Wulanda and the annual operating financial performance, council will be aware there exists in the community significant comment and opinions regarding Wulanda's ongoing operating costs.</p> <p>To fully inform the community, it will be important that council provide an annual profit and loss financial statement.</p> <p>I expect MGCC would be monitoring this with the detail readily available for sharing with the community. Proactively making this available will conform with councils transparency commitment and be a positive step in keeping the community fully informed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank You - Thank you for your feedback. Please find below the draft responses to your submission. • Wulanda Draft 2024/2025 Budget - We note the interest in understanding the revenue and expenditure for Wulanda in actual terms and for future forecasts. The net cost of running the centre is estimated to be c\$1.4m for 2024/2025. • Wulanda Annual Performance Reporting - Given that Wulanda has been operating for just over one year the first full year of operations and financial results are expected to be reported to Council by the end of the first quarter of 2024/2025.
Respondent 4	<p>Waste Management. Unfortunately household waste volumes are likely to increase in line with our population increases plus consumer waste with more and more packing coming into the system will place an ongoing priority on waste management.</p> <p>Not withstanding many other forms of waste. This all leads into extra costs that impact on the financial plans.</p> <p>My submission revolves around the following:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank You - Thank you for your feedback. Please find below the draft responses to your submission. <p>1) RISK to the water table - putting things into the ground is a potential risk to the water table which is fundamental to the region.</p> <p>Caroline Landfill is an Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) licenced site that is governed in accordance with an EPA approved Landfill Environment Management Plan (LEMP). To summarise, the LEMP is the governing document that covers site management, site development, regular environmental monitoring and reporting on stormwater management, leachate management, groundwater management and landfill gas management. It also includes the site closure and post closure obligations that Council must comply.</p>



Responses To Individual Submissions

Name	Questions/Comments	Draft Council Administration Response
	<p>1) RISK to the water table - putting things into the ground is a potential risk to the water table which is fundamental to the region. While landfill has been the traditional way, progress in waste disposal has come a long way and there may better solutions. Have other processing options been or will be explored taking into account the future growth in this area, that can eliminate this risk and/or reduce the financial cost.</p> <p>2) CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY GENERATION - tied into the above is there an opportunity to reduce gas emissions by converting the waste into some form of energy?</p> <p>3) RECYCLE - some excellent initiatives have occurred with recycling outside the recycle and reuse centres. A couple being Lakes Rotary collections at supermarkets and St Martin's school collecting bottle tops and bread tags which go to Robe. However St Martins no longer provide this service. Is there a way for this to continue, together with other initiatives, via council incorporating more volunteers/service groups into recycling projects to increase the volume of materials recycled.</p>	<p>While landfill has been the traditional way, progress in waste disposal has come a long way and there may better solutions. Have other processing options been or will be explored taking into account the future growth in this area, that can eliminate this risk and/or reduce the financial cost.</p> <p>In October 2023 Council endorsed a 2023-2030 Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy that can be found on our website. This strategy identifies 3 key objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 1: Increase landfill diversion • Objective 2: Provide high quality waste and resource recovery services and infrastructure that support the local economy • Objective 3: Financially sustainable waste services <p>This Strategy, in conjunction with the Waste and Resource Recovery Masterplan that is currently being developed will reshape our current waste and resource recovery system. In an everchanging waste management landscape the Waste and Resource Recovery Masterplan will provide Council with a solid platform for future actions and opportunities, including promoting the local circular economy.</p> <p>2) CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY GENERATION - tied into the above is there an opportunity to reduce gas emissions by converting the waste into some form of energy?</p> <p>A Landfill Gas Agreement between City of Mount Gambier and LMS Energy Pty Ltd was signed in January 2022 making the landfill site available to LMS for the extraction of landfill gas emanating from the landfill gas field for (among other things) operating a gas utilisation facility. Initially LMS propose to flare the landfill gas until such time sufficient gas is extracted to install electricity generation equipment to feed electricity into the SA Power network.</p> <p>3) RECYCLE - some excellent initiatives have occurred with recycling outside the recycle and reuse centres. A couple being Lakes Rotary collections at supermarkets and St Martin's school collecting bottle tops and bread tags which go to Robe. However St Martins no longer provide this service. Is there a way for this to continue, together with other initiatives, via council incorporating more volunteers/service groups into recycling projects to increase the volume of materials recycled.</p> <p>Yes, Council have a number of initiatives that include collaborating with the local service groups and the provision of 'drop off points' at the Civic Centre and the Library that extend beyond bottle tops and bread tags. More information can be found here</p>
<p>Tony Warren</p>	<p>City Council,</p> <p>It was with great disappointment that i read our rates will increase by 10%.</p> <p>That is unbelievable and shows how inept you lot are.</p> <p>You obviously cant handle money and budget accordingly.</p> <p>Warmambool for example are only looking at 2.5% increase.</p> <p>I would suggest for starters in getting out a red pen and start cutting services that we cant afford and living within our means, just like the normal people you represent have to do.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank You - Thank you for your feedback. Please find below the draft responses to your submission. • Balanced Approach - Council needs to balance maintaining and improving assets and services with long-term financial sustainability. Due to past efforts to minimize rate increases, we now face the necessity of raising rates to cover growing costs and ensure future sustainability. Council explored many options and held seven workshops to arrive at this decision. • Proposed General Rate Increase - A proposed general rate increase of 10.24% (excluding growth) is under consideration to ensure organisational capacity and achieve key financial targets aligned with Council's Treasury Management Policy and debt funding agreement by 2026/2027. • Key Financial Ratios - This rating model enables Council to achieve its key financial ratio targets and provide organisational capacity to support population growth to date, the future growth of the organisation, implement strategic plans such as Mount Gambier 2035 and the Sport Recreation and Open Space Strategy (SROSS) and fund Council's depreciation/capital works program.



Responses To Individual Submissions

Name	Questions/Comments	Draft Council Administration Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Valuations - When Council proposed to smooth rates over the 3 years for the 2023/2024 budget it stated that this excluded the impact of asset valuations for Infrastructure (roads, footpaths, etc) and Buildings and Structures. Councils across South Australia, like City Of Mount Gambier have faced similar challenges as a result of asset valuations and have increased their rates as a response to increased depreciation and the cost of their capital works programs. Council's depreciation of \$11.9m is \$1.1m above the adopted LTFP (equivalent to a 4.83% increase in general rates). • Review Of Budgets - The budget created by Managers across the organisation supported by the Finance team were reviewed by the General Managers and the Manager Financial Services. \$0.7m of costs/additional revenue were identified to improve the operating result.
Shayne Haggis	<p>I am making this submission to express my opposition to the substantial rate rise proposed by the council. My concern lies in the deviation from the core responsibilities of council and instead towards what seems to be an expansion into welfare type services, reminiscent of a third tier of government. This trend, worsening over the decades, is now exacerbated by economic uncertainties and the erosion of the middle class, leading to an unsustainable reliance on government services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank You - Thank you for your feedback. Please find below the draft responses to your submission. • Legislation - Local Government has a wide range of obligations under sections 6 and 7 of the Local Government Act providing for the welfare, wellbeing and interests of individuals and groups, protecting the environment, promoting the area, and providing infrastructure.
	<p>Working-class families attempting to chase the ever-increasing dream of home ownership are being pressured by high interest rates, increasing inflation and taxation, including council rates. The proportion of household incomes dedicated to homeownership maintenance has surpassed wage growth, reflecting both governmental fiscal carelessness and overspending. This ongoing cycle of funding populist projects and services, coupled with an inefficient and costly bureaucracy, unfairly burdens ratepayers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardship - As per Council's draft Rating Policy included in the Draft Annual Business Plan document: <i>Any ratepayer experiencing difficulties in meeting rates payments or experiencing hardship will be able to access payment plans tailored to meet their particular circumstances. All arrangements are strictly confidential.</i> <p>Your comments on housing are noted.</p>
	<p>I advocate that the responsible thing to do is live within our means and work to align community expectations with the finite resources of ratepayers. Rather than resorting to significant rate hikes to finance expansive infrastructure projects and welfare programs, the council should prioritize efficiency and cost reduction especially during these times of economic uncertainty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Reviews - Council undertakes service reviews to consider service levels, quality and delivery and efficiency. • Unlocking Projects - As detailed in the ABP and LTFP the unlocking projects are focused more on this. • Internal Audit Program - Council has adopted an internal audit program that reviews key services/processes undertaken by Council. • ESCOSA Review - It is worth noting that ESCOSA's review of the LTFP that will be undertaken in the 2024/2025 year will include a review of 10 years of history and the most recently adopted forward 10 years from the LTFP. The recommendations from this review will be published in Council's next 4 ABP documents with details of what Council is doing to address the feedback.
	<p>Regarding the rationale put forward of aligning our rates with other councils', it is important to consider the unique character of our town and how our vision is to be an affordable place to live. Our affordability, including housing costs, has traditionally been a distinguishing feature that has attracted people to our region. It would be detrimental to relinquish this advantage by substantially increasing rates, potentially signalling a lack of distinctiveness in our council's leadership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Consideration – As per the draft ABP, the comparison to average is one of the considerations and there are many others, including the impact of growth, and inflationary pressures. • Individual Council Comparisons - During the public Elected Member budget and LTFP workshops, information comparing average residential and other differential rates to other individual councils was also presented. At the request of Elected Members additional Councils were included in the analysis presented to provide the required level of information on the basis that they were similar to COMG.



Responses To Individual Submissions

Name	Questions/Comments	Draft Council Administration Response
	<p>While acknowledging the impact of COVID-19 on expenses, it's essential that the council commits to dissecting the underlying causes. It has been soundly argued that the financial burden stems not from the virus itself but from governmental responses. I urge the council to reflect on lessons learned from these responses to ensure prudent financial management in the future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Development - In the development of the budget, each budget area gave consideration to internal and external environmental factors for instance known legislation, contractual or material costs, benchmarking, market conditions and trends over the last three and a half years.
Shayne Haggis	<p>The ballooning bureaucracy, consuming over half of ratepayers' charges, demands scrutiny. What value for money do ratepayers receive from this sizable workforce? Are efficiency and user experience actively measured and improved?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Costs as a proportion of total operating expenditure - It should be noted that this is broadly in line with previous budgets. • 2024/2025 Draft Increase in Employee Costs - There are a number of factors that have driven the increase in employee costs including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Staff Costs Annual Increase - As per Council's enterprise agreement. ➢ Increase in employer superannuation contributions - 0.5% as per legislation. ➢ Service Reviews - A full year of services such as cleaning and buildings maintenance that were services that were brought in house in 2023/2024. ➢ FTEs - An additional 1.5 FTEs have been included in the FY 2025 budget to support volunteer management and the delivery of the trails activation plan. ➢ Resource - The capacity of 2 FTEs, which is expected to either be Council staff or consultants/contractors. • Efficient and effective delivery of services - : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Service Reviews Undertaken To Date - Service reviews have been undertaken to date with results presented to Council for their approval. ➢ Review of 2024/2025 Budget - Elected Members reviewed an operating statement for each department of Council that showed the direct costs attributable.
	<p>Moreover, questions arise from the Annual Business Plan and Budget, indicating potential oversights and inefficiencies in project allocations. Transparency and accountability are paramount, especially concerning project costs and grant assumptions. I would be interested in understanding what measures are being implemented out of the budget to improve these areas? Does the \$80,000 for AV systems for council chambers provide the capacity for the livestreaming of council meetings? Does the allocation of \$60,000 for IT allow for the collection of customer feedback when accessing a service?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback - Your feedback is noted. We have included project budgets, allocation of grant funding and project descriptions to promote transparency. • AV systems for council chambers \$80k - The AV for Council is about improving the overall IT and communications equipment, Council is not proposing to live stream as a recent communication survey indicated a very limited interest • IT allocation \$60k - The \$60k is for the purchase of IT infrastructure assets and is not for the collection of customer feedback when accessing a service. It is worth noting that the Business Systems 'Unlocking Project' will be aiming to improve customer service and experience.
	<p>In summary, proposing a substantial rate rise amidst financial hardships necessitates a reassessment of priorities. Fiscal restraint and a focus on core responsibilities are imperative. Streamlining bureaucracy and fostering a conducive environment for community initiatives can achieve desired outcomes without overburdening ratepayers. Thank you for considering my submission. Yours Sincerely</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balanced Approach - Council needs to balance maintaining and improving assets and services with long-term financial sustainability. Due to past efforts to minimize rate increases, we now face the necessity of raising rates to cover growing costs and ensure future sustainability. Council explored many options and held seven workshops to arrive at this decision. • Proposed General Rate Increase - A proposed general rate increase of 10.24% (excluding growth) is under consideration to ensure organisational capacity and achieve key financial targets aligned with Council's Treasury Management Policy and debt funding agreement by 2026/2027. • Key Financial Ratios - This rating model enables Council to achieve its key financial ratio targets and provide organisational capacity to support population growth to date, the future growth of the organisation, implement strategic



Responses To Individual Submissions

Name	Questions/Comments	Draft Council Administration Response
		<p>plans such as Mount Gambier 2035 and the Sport Recreation and Open Space Strategy (SROSS) and fund Council's depreciation/capital works program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Valuations - When Council proposed to smooth rates over the 3 years for the 2023/2024 budget it stated that this excluded the impact of asset valuations for Infrastructure (roads, footpaths, etc) and Buildings and Structures. Councils across South Australia, like City Of Mount Gambier have faced similar challenges as a result of asset valuations and have increased their rates as a response to increased depreciation and the cost of their capital works programs. Council's depreciation of \$11.9m is \$1.1m above the adopted LTFP (equivalent to a 4.83% increase in general rates). • Verbal Submission - We look forward to the verbal submission.
Peter Harpas	<p>My name is Peter Harpas, a local resident and ratepayer for the Mount Gambier City Council. I would like to make a submission to the council regarding the current Budget Draft Plan and for the submission to be considered for inclusion in the next Council Meeting 18th June 2024.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank You - Thank you for your feedback. Please find below the draft responses to your submission.
	<p>1. How much does the Council receive annually from funding provided by the federal Government?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022/2023 - As per Council's Audited Financial Statements, COMG received \$6,267k from the Commonwealth Government (noting that some of this included capital grants for Wulanda).
	<p>2. Is this Federal Government funding calculated on a percentage of annual Federal Government tax revenue? According to the ABS, the Federal Government's total Tax revenue for the year 2022 - 2023 was 755.8 Billion Australian dollars. Now 0.005% of 755.8 Billion is 37,790000 Million Dollars.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculations - Council receives different grants from the Commonwealth Government calculated by applying different methodologies, for example Roads to Recovery and Financial Assistance Grants. Please note that this question will require a more detailed response that will be provided in our formal response to you.
	<p>3. Why have we only received as noted on the budget plan at 5.1 million in Federal Grants?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023/2024 Annual Business Plan and Budget - The numbers that are quoted relate to last year's adopted Annual Business Plan and Budget rather than the Draft for 2024/2025. • 2024/2025 Operating Grants - Operating grants of \$5.7m have been included in this budget and relate to a number of different grants including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Roads to Recovery - Recurring grants based on a five year program; ➢ Financial Assistance Grants - Noting that in the last 2 years Council has been paid more than a 100% allocation of the grant (i.e. they also received a forward payment of some or all of the following year's grant allocation). ➢ Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Grants - 4 phases of this grant have been allocated to Council over the previous few years, next year and the year after.
	<p>4. The employee costs will be increased by \$450,000 in the next financial year. Can Council provide a breakdown and categorical summary outlining how all that extra \$450,000 will be spent? I.e: How much will be to fund new employees and how much will be spent on training for employees and so forth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023/2024 Annual Business Plan and Budget – The numbers that are quoted relate to last year's adopted Annual Business Plan and Budget rather than the Draft for 2024/2025. • 2024/2025 Draft Increase in Employee Costs - There are a number of factors that have driven the increase in employee costs including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Staff Costs Annual Increase - As per Council's enterprise agreement. ➢ Increase in employer superannuation contributions - 0.5% as per legislation. ➢ Service Reviews - A full year of services such as cleaning and buildings maintenance that were services that were brought in house in 2023/2024.



Responses To Individual Submissions

Name	Questions/Comments	Draft Council Administration Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ FTEs - An additional 1.5 FTEs have been included in the FY 2025 budget to support volunteer management and the delivery of the trails activation plan. ➤ Resource - The capacity of 2 FTEs, which is expected to either be Council staff or consultants/contractors.
	<p>5. Will any funding be allocated to increase opening hours at the information centre/area located next to the Blue Lake? I believe this space is vital to the community and has the potential to offer a central hub for community engagement and tourism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review - The Visitor Servicing model is currently under review. More information will be publicly available by the end of June that will address this question.
	<p>6. Given the current Budget is going to have an increase in rates and ratepayers will be affected financially. Given these tough financial times, Why is it Necessary for the council to spend some \$99,000 on the beacon Art project? Could this project be postponed until the council is in a better financial situation?</p> <p>What alternatives has the council investigated to severely minimise the cost of this project?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023/2024 Annual Business Plan and Budget – The numbers that are quoted relate to last year’s adopted Annual Business Plan and Budget rather than the Draft for 2024/2025. • Beacon Art Project - The budget is allocated across two years with year 2 as 2024/2025 with a budget of \$66k.
<p>Mount Gambier and District Residents and Rate Payers Association Incorporated</p>	<p>The Association wishes to acknowledge the inordinate time and workload that Council officers have put into the development of these documents.</p> <p>The Association recognises the complexity of the issues and commends the staff in attempting to balance the competing issues of budget versus community expectations from their perspective.</p> <p>Following our community meeting of 12 06 2024 we have the following issues to raise;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank You - Thank you for your feedback. Please find below the draft responses to your submission.
	<p>1. It was clear that the questions/issues raised by Mr Walkom in his presentation to the Association addressed many of the fine detail that has been raised by the community, as such we support these questions and we do not plan to address these issues again and look forward to the Council’s response.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback – Your feedback is noted. Mr Walkom’s submission and draft Council Administration responses have been included in this agenda item.
	<p>2. (I)Process – we note that the submissions are due at 5.00 pm today. The Agenda is due for publication tomorrow, less than 1 clear business day. Is this an appropriate timeframe to consider the submissions?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration - You will note from the agenda that the majority of submissions or questions raised have been answered. The Council report has been issued 3 clear days prior to the meeting (aligned with standard Council meeting deadlines). We are committed to providing Elected Members with adequate time to consider the submissions.
	<p>(II) We note the confluence of multiple major public documents for endorsement which does not allow the community to focus on specific issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Review - Council took the decision in 2021 to review the ABP, LTFFP and AMPs on an annual basis to ensure consistency and continuing financial sustainability. The ABP is developed in the context of the previous LTFFP and also acts as Year 1 of the LTFFP so that the longer term impact of decisions taken in the development of the budget are fully understood by Elected Members and the Community.
	<p>(III) We note the irregularities in the consultation process clarity which has been addressed by the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Consultation – We note that the public consultation and Have Your Say website was established aligned with other COMG community engagement activities, previous consultations on the ABP, LTFFP and AMPs and also aligned



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	<p>Association.</p>	<p>with other South Australian Councils. Further to a meeting with the Mount Gambier and District Residents and Rate Payers Association the commentary on the website was amended to provide greater clarity.</p>
	<p>(IV) We note the comments from the community members who attended the community sessions that noted that Council answers were evasive in their opinion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback - The feedback is noted. This is the first time that Council has organised such sessions for the community. In a session such as this it is challenging to provide in depth answers, Council Administration staff provided the community with guidance with regards to accessing information in the public domain for such items as borrowings and asset valuations. • Future Sessions - After each annual process, Council undertakes a post implementation review to understand feedback and work with Elected Members to make changes to future processes as required. Your feedback will be considered.
	<p>It was clear from the public meeting we conducted that the following issues (apart from the questions of a highly technical nature from Mr Walkolm which need to be answered) that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wulanda - The community demands that the clear financial impact of Wulanda be articulated in the budget. Irrespective of the cost shifting that the community is concerned about, the ongoing costs need to be clearly articulated (as minimum income vs costs) to allow the community to assess value for money. 2. The true cost be articulated for Wulanda in terms of finance cost related to payment of this facility, and the subsequent financial viability of this facility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wulanda Draft 2024/2025 Budget - We note the interest in understanding the revenue and expenditure for Wulanda in actual terms and for future forecasts. The net cost of running the centre is estimated to be c\$1.4m for 2024/2025. • Wulanda Annual Performance Reporting - Given that Wulanda has been operating for just over one year the first full year of operations and financial results are expected to be reported to Council by the end of the first quarter of 2024/2025.
	<p>3.The existing loan facilities that the Council has undertaken and the conditions that have been imposed on Council by the LCLGA finance authority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borrowings - The LTFP shows Council's overall forecast 2023/2024 borrowings (page 26) as \$34.5m (as also shown in the Budget Review 3 report). • Annual Reporting - Aligned with T150 Council's Treasury Management Policy annual reporting on Council's investments and borrowings is reported to the Audit and Risk Committee and forms part of the public agendas. The last report was provided to the Audit and Risk Committee in November 2023. <p>The targets were aligned with the terms of the special conditions of the loan with the LGFA (Local Government Financing Authority) accepted by Council at the Special Council meeting on 23 March 2021 (as follows):</p> <p>REPORT RECOMMENDATION</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Council Report No. AR21/17395 titled 'Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre Funding' as presented on 23 March 2021 be noted. 2. That Council accept the special conditions of the loan approval for the Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre imposed by the Local Government Finance Authority and will, as forecast in the current adopted Long-Term Financial Plan, not later than the end of the financial year ending 30 June 2027 have achieved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A positive Operating Surplus Ratio • Net Financial Liabilities Ratio less than 100%; • Asset Renewal Ratios which align with forecasts set out in the Long-Term Financial Plan • That Council not undertake any capital projects or increase the costs of operations through new or enhanced services other than as set out in the Long-Term Financial Plan.



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<p>Mount Gambier and District Residents and Rate Payers Association Incorporated</p>	<p>4. The Irregularities in the depreciation schedule that has been questioned by members of the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depreciation Schedule - Is included on page 1 of the Asset Management Plan Summary based on 30 June 2023 (i.e. prior to revaluations). The depreciation budget has been calculated taking the financial impact of valuations into consideration. • Australian Accounting Standards Requirement - Australian Accounting Standards require assets to be periodically independently revalued. Generally accepted accounting practice is for this to occur at least once every five years. The purpose to ensure that financial statements provide a more accurate representation of financial position. • Maintenance Priority - Maintenance/renewal plans are informed by condition audits which provide information about the condition of the asset and when action should be taken to renew/intervene with maintenance activities. The more detailed approach and methodology is included in the Asset Management Plans. • Council Policy - Council's Asset Accounting Policy provides further direction including that revaluations are performed at sufficient frequency to reduce material difference at reporting date and also states whether these valuations should be carried out by internal staff or external consultants. <p>a) Asset Revaluations - The local government sector as a whole has seen a significant increase in asset valuations. This has been recognised when the unaudited valuations have been reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee (for Infrastructure and Buildings and Structures assets) and also as part of the external audit process. It should also be noted that these valuations in the case of Infrastructure assets have been undertaken by external consultants for the first time. Council staff have worked with external consultants to undertake benchmarking reviewing asset lives to ensure that the impact of the revaluation was minimised as far as possible. It should be noted that revaluations were completed for major Infrastructure classes as at 30 June 2023 and Buildings and Structures and other Infrastructure classes as at 1 July 2023.</p> <p>b) Asset Valuations - As per Australian Accounting Standards assets are valued at fair value as per AASB13 Fair Value Measurement, the approach and methodology is as defined in the reports we receive from external valuers and included in the reports provided to the Audit and Risk Committee and included in Council's audited financial statements.</p>
	<p>5. The lack of objective planning rather that subjective planning that seems to be a feature of the documents presented to the public.</p> <p>We note that in our meeting there were great concerns about lack of detail with the 5 goals of the Council, and concerns were raised that goals were poorly described and subjective rather than objective.</p> <p>We are happy to discuss this further and look forward to having the opportunity to do so on Tuesday June 18th from 5.00pm.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation - The ABP document includes annual objectives and KPIs aligned with legislation as shown below: <i>Aligned with Section 123 (2):</i> <i>(b) include an outline of—</i> <i>(i) the council's objectives for the financial year; and</i> <i>the activities that the council intends to undertake to achieve those objectives; and</i> <i>(iii) the measures (financial and non-financial) that the council intends to use to assess the performance of the council against its objectives over the financial year;</i> • Verbal Submission - We look forward to your verbal submission.



From: [Have Your Say Mount Gambier](#)
To: [City Emails](#)
Subject: A new question has been added to Q&A
Date: Thursday, 23 May 2024 10:14:09 PM

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Hi there,

Just a quick heads up to let you know that a new question has been asked at Draft Annual Business Plan & Budget 2024-2025, Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034 and Draft Asset Management Plans 2025-2034 by [REDACTED]

The question that was asked is:

Draft Budget 2025 Questions In a general sense these questions go to council's integrity in its responsibilities and undertakings given to this community regarding this Draft 2025 budget and the previous (current budget 2024) A message from the mayor to the Mount Gambier ratepayers 2023/2024 in the Annual Business Plan and Budget assures us... (page 2 of 2023/2024) "...Council has made the difficult decision to increase rates by more than is set out in the current Long Term Financial Plan." (Note 6.2% was resolved) for 2024 and for 2025 and 2026) "Therefore, Council has taken a smoothing approach to rate revenue increases for the next three years as we recognise the financial pressures residents and businesses are experiencing." (and add even more -my comment) "We are committed to providing a high level of service to our community whilst remaining financially sustainable by managing expenditure within the next ten years of the Long Term Financial Plan to minimise the effect on ratepayers." Council agreed with the CEO's advocacy for adoption in the administration's overview of the draft budget at item 4.1 of the 23 May 2023 Special Council Meeting, and resolution. So we believed the mayor the CEO and councillors' promise of 6.2%! We planned around this promise. How long did that last - well not a year. This year it is up to 10.62% general rate and 43.8% waste service charge. Will they come down? Most unlikely. Much more likely they will be used a solid base for further increases. If we see another 6.2% next year (at least is likely, that will be 6.2% 2024, 10.62 2025 and 6.2% 2026. I asked my 8yo grandson to work that out and he tells me its 23.2%. My question at this point is... Q1 "How did council get this so wrong? Or did it fail dismally to effect due diligence in its planning and management?" Council spends significantly on its extensive 10 year plans (revised each year). It is required by legislation to budget and plan professionally but appears to have failed at this - how did it not see the general rate and the waste increases coming? In the current Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget at p42 we read the following "explanation" Benchmarking In previous years rating did not keep up with inflation, and whilst the previously adopted LTFP and last year's ABP included an increase that was smoothed across 3 years, rating was below actual CPI for FY 2024. Last year aligned with previous years, COMG were significantly below the rural state average." Well that may or may not be true - it depends what statistics you take. I will ask more about verification of that council explanation in my next posted question. With council apparently wanting to blame others (they did not keep up with inflation etc) for the significant rate increases - (a Further 10.62% on top of last year's 6.2%) My further questions at this point are... Q2) If council has been taxing its residences and businesses below the state average over the many years as you claim, why is that not due to good management by council staff and previous councils? Q3) Why is it bad to be grouped among the most efficient and effective councils? Why do we need to be rerated from the most effective down to average by taxing and spending more? Q4) What other options (to raising rates significantly) did council consider to address our apparent march to unsustainability?



Please DO NOT reply to this email. If you want to provide an answer to this question, sign into your site and respond to the question from within the Q & A tool.

Regards

Bang The Table Team



From: [Have Your Say Mount Gambier](#)
To: [City Emails](#)
Subject: A new question has been added to Q&A
Date: Saturday, 25 May 2024 11:36:20 PM

****CAUTION: This email originated from outside of this Organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe**.**

Hi there,

Just a quick heads up to let you know that a new question has been asked at Draft Annual Business Plan & Budget 2024-2025, Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034 and Draft Asset Management Plans 2025-2034 by [REDACTED]

The question that was asked is:

ABP ref. PURPOSE p6 This is clear that the ABP is "...the key operational and financial document for council." Q5) If endorsed as is by council, does this give the administration the authority to undertake the work and expenditure as listed, without further approvals and scrutiny of council? At the time of approving this budget and in the reviews effected by council to date, what Value for Money measure has been applied to the various budget items? ABP ref. STRATEGIC DIRECTION p6 This states that the 'Futures Paper' (not included), was taken into consideration in developing this ABP. The Futures Paper states "This 'Futures Paper' has been prepared after extensive consultation with the Mount Gambier City Council and its community on what matters for future city development." Q6) What percentage of our community ratepayers and/or residents were interactively involved in the final Futures Paper? 2011? Q7) There are 27 key strategies reported in the Futures Paper. What is the implementation progress of each of these in terms of percentage complete or fully adopted? Have any key strategies been abandoned since adopting the paper? ABP ref Significant Influences p7 This states "In the development of the ABP we have undertaken a review of our internal environment and broader external environment that includes social, environment, economic and planning elements. This review identifies key issues that help provide the context for the development of this plan. Q8) This is obviously a core document relevant to understanding the ABP. Could this review report please be linked as a priority to this draft ABP we are currently asked to consider? ABP ref HISTORIC RATING p7 Q9 "COMG average residential rates were significantly below the rural state average." This theme was obviously adopted by administration and councillors in considering this ABP Draft as an agenda item as it was repeatedly referenced or stated by administration and councillors as the prime reason rates must rise significantly. And yet council does not justify this assertion. Indeed the LGA and state government information links to comparative rates has Mount Gambier (in its peer group) significantly above that peer group average. This may indicate that COMG "below average" claim is bullshit. What then are the councils used by COMG to make this claim and why were they chosen and others not chosen? ABP ref ASSET MANAGEMENT p8 Q10 "...there has been a significant increase in both depreciation (\$1.1m above the adopted LTFP for 2024/2025) the capital works budget and the forward works budget." a) Does council have a depreciation schedule? If so, how could this be incorrect to require an additional unforeseen \$1.1m in depreciation in just one year? b) How are assets assessed for their prioritised worth to this community and from that priority, their relevant depreciation value and maintenance priority? ABP ref CAPACITY CREATION- p8 Q11 a) Specifically how have the community needs been established? b) How have the efficient and effective delivery of services been defined and measured for council to be informed when considering the need for service? c) is there total comprehensive list of products and services that council provides and their individual annual cost?



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Regards

Bang The Table Team



From: [Have Your Say Mount Gambier](#)
To: [City Emails](#)
Subject: A new question has been added to Q&A
Date: Monday, 27 May 2024 4:08:58 PM

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Hi there,

Just a quick heads up to let you know that a new question has been asked at Draft Annual Business Plan & Budget 2024-2025, Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034 and Draft Asset Management Plans 2025-2034 by [REDACTED]

The question that was asked is:

ABP ref CAPACITY CREATION- p8 Q11 a) Specifically how have the community needs been established? b) How have the efficient and effective delivery of services been defined and measured for council tone informed when considering the need for service? c) is there comprehensive list of products and services that council provides and their annual cost? ABP ref Hierarchy of Documents- p11 "Brings together the key planning documents to ensure that the vision, goals, and objectives set by the futures paper are implemented in the Long Term Financial Plan, Asset management Plan, and Annual business Plan....as shown..." Q12 Which of the 27 key strategies in the Futures Paper are specifically included in the subordinate "...key strategic management documents shown..." ABP ref Highlights- p12 "Withpressures to deliver more and changes in consumer's expectations of council's, there is a growing need for Council's (sic) to deliver services tailored to demand." "This Annual Business Plan will focus on maintaining services standards efficiently." Q13 Specifically, what are the pressures to deliver more? How are they qualified and quantified so that they can be identified and rated as beneficial to all ratepayers at the expense of core services such as infrastructure? ABP ref WULANDA. p12 Q14 Has council considered selling this facility to significantly reduce excess debt and thus provide more services to more of the community? If not why not? ABP ref STRATEGIC WORK PLAN p12 Q15 It is very confusing how the 24/25 ABP intends to plan and fund the current Futures Paper (as approved by council) and the draft Mount Gambier 2035 which is not adopted by council, but "...will be brought to Council in June 2024 for community consultation. and the proposed ABP has "...considered the Strategic Work Plan that underpins the delivery of Mount Gambier 2035." Exactly how is this obfuscated comment explained in simple terms including how and why this proposed Mount Gambier 2035 Strategic Plan is following due process? ABP ref UNLOCKING PROJECTS p12 3) Workforce Planning Framework - ".....creating efficiencies through the following: Service register and benchmarking Establishment of a service review framework; and Undertake service reviews and workforce analysis. Q16 specifically what resources and what timeframe will address and implement these reviews and analysis? What budget amount is included in this current ABP? ABP ref AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY p13 Q17 specifically what resources and what timeframe will address this initiative? Q18 Has any other council at any time over the last 50 years successfully adopted an Affordable Housing Strategy? Q19 what is the total budget in LCC terms set for this affordable housing strategy and how is it measured in value for money as a council service? ABP ref USER PAYS PRINCIPLE and CURRENT SERVICE LEVELS p15 Q20 I note the specific CapEx items listed pp17- 21 and observe well done. Q21 Does council have a detailed itemised list of the products and services it is providing? C22 Has council specifically and independently reviewed its products and services in any form apart from the generalised products and services groups? Q23 How does council know what products and services it is providing and if those services are being provided efficiently and



effectively? How does it measure these outcomes in quantised and qualified terms? Q24 Has council conducted a specific high end product and services review and determined the value to the whole community of those products and services on a measured and comparable basis a) in any format? b) using a professionally developed Value For Money Measure? Q25 If it has not (Q24), how does it measure, determine and report to council the Value for Money obtained or to be obtained when informing council prior to adoption of that service or adjustment of that service? Q26 Has council had its products and services provision assessed for effectiveness and efficiency and had each relatively rated for Social, Environmental, Economic benefit to the community? Q27 Council advises that it pursues Value for Money in providing its Products and Services. Does council have a professionally reviewed and adopted "Value for Money Measure"? Q28 Does council have a current Strategic Plan - not a futures document that appears vague and subjective? How may I get a copy of that current Strategic Plan - current in the sense that it addresses the 2024/2025 year as the link provided connects to an outdated and subjective plan. Q29 "Section 123 of the Local Government Act states that: Each annual business plan of Council must – (a) include a summary of the council's long-term objectives (as set out in its strategic management plans);.... (Specifically where in the draft ABP are these aspects included? Q30 Section 123 of the Local Government Act states that: Each annual business plan of Council must – (e) assess the impact of the rates structure and policies on the community based on modelling that has been undertaken or obtained by the council; Specifically where in the draft ABP does council assess this impact? If it still intends to do this, will it do so objectively and in a timely manner that allows public feedback so that councillors are informed before voting? Note: KPI's are quantifiable measurements to gauge a company's overall long term performance. Q31 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS p27, p30, p34, p37, p40 Why are these short term indicators only that do not allow residents to assess council's directions and performance over a longer term? (see Q29) Q32 DRAFT L.T. FINANCIAL PLAN This document appears to have also been prepared against a defunct Strategic Plan and Futures Search document, in which case may not be worth my time reviewing it: Is that the case? Q33 L.T.F.P. Strategic Workplace p12 and p13 This appeared a poor excuse for a meaningful Strategic Plan and nothing more than a list of project management headings: Is that the case? Q34 .L.T.F.P. OVERVIEW p2 I am guessing this document is a generic template - perhaps from the LGA: is that the case? It does not have an Executive Summary and is therefore unable to concisely summarise the document for community distribution or any other. Why not? Q35 .L.T.F.P. Key financial ratios - p23,24,25,26. These are only cited for current and forward years. It is not possible to consider council's performance fully against these unless historical (prior) years are included. Therefore in tabularised form, a) what are the 10 consecutive year forecasts from and including the initial year actual budget in 2016, for those 10 year forecasts and rate actuals, plus Operating Surplus Ratio, Net Financial Liabilities Ratio, Asset Renewal Ratio and Borrowing to Income Ratio, also for the initial budget in 2016, for the then 10 year forecasts and rate actuals? b) what are the 10 consecutive year forecasts from and including the initial year actual budget in 2021, for those 10 year forecasts and rate actuals, plus Operating Surplus Ratio, Net Financial Liabilities Ratio, Asset Renewal Ratio and Borrowing to Income Ratio, also for the initial budget in 2021, for the then 10 year forecasts and historical rate actuals (actuals up to Q3 2024)? Q36 A.M.P.'s Asset Management Summary. a) Is this intended as an Executive Summary of the three A.M.P.'s? b) Why not call it that so people can focus on what they might want? Q37 Buildings and Structures A.M.P. This is a thorough and logical document that includes a meaningful Executive Summary: a noticeable cut above the rest. Unfortunately it does not have a full relevant asset and conditions list. Is this soon to be provided? Q38 Infrastructure A.M.P. This is also a well prepared high value document. Perhaps needs fine tuning finishing. The relevant assets and their condition assessments are well presented via condition maps. It appears it needs a 100% completion date. Does council have this targeted? Q39 Plant and Equipment A.M.P. This is also a solid and logical document with



Executive Summary. It objectively details the current status and maintenance needs for P&E. Has council expressed its gratitude to the various staff for these high class A.M.P. documents? Q40 A.B.P. + Agenda Item 19.2 of 21 May council meeting. MY CONCLUSION I fully appreciate the efforts put in by councillors and employees on these documents, but it is clear these documents are very poor in quality and ready interpretation. Just how could any average ratepayer understand them and suggest changes or ideas as you are asking. There is no Executive Summary in either the report to council or the A.B.P.. The cited 2020-24 COMG S.P. is out of date and not relevant unless fully reviewed. The key S.P. documents relevant were typically reviewed well in advance and independent of preparing the A.B.P.: Legislation requires them to be prepared with a 10 year overview: you are now doing your assessments and fine tuning at the same time. So much for the legislation and independent preparation. And that begs my final question. ...just what were the parameters that council considered and set for the administration to undertake the ABP and budget review 2024/25? They should have been clearly established prior to workshops, informal etc.? Thank you.

Please DO NOT reply to this email. If you want to provide an answer to this question, sign into your site and respond to the question from within the Q & A tool.

Regards

Bang The Table Team



From: [Have Your Say Mount Gambier](#)
To: [City Emails](#)
Subject: A new question has been added to Q&A
Date: Thursday, 23 May 2024 7:22:22 PM

****CAUTION: This email originated from outside of this Organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe**.**

Hi there,

Just a quick heads up to let you know that a new question has been asked at Draft Annual Business Plan & Budget 2024-2025, Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034 and Draft Asset Management Plans 2025-2034 by [REDACTED]

The question that was asked is:

I note with concern the rising annual costs of expenses for Materials, Contracts and Other as a line item in the financial statements indicatively in the 2023 adopted budget of \$14.4m, the 2024 adopted budget of \$20.1m - a 19% rise and this draft budget 2025 of 16.8% rise respectively. This would appear unsustainable. In approving the 2025 budget, what specific review did council effect to attempt to get this rise under control? What action has been taken by council to reduce this progressive rise of this expense line? What amounts within this line item has been expended (or for 2025 forecast) over these three years for a) professional fees other than legal, b) legal fees, c) contractors. thank you

Please DO NOT reply to this email. If you want to provide an answer to this question, sign into your site and respond to the question from within the Q & A tool.

Regards

Bang The Table Team



From: [Have Your Say Mount Gambier](#)
To: [City Emails](#); [REDACTED]
Subject: A new question has been added to Q&A
Date: Saturday, 8 June 2024 8:29:28 PM

****CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of this Organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe**.

Hi there,

Just a quick heads up to let you know that a new question has been asked at Draft Annual Business Plan & Budget 2024-2025, Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034 and Draft Asset Management Plans 2025-2034 by [REDACTED]

The question that was asked is:

Post 6 June Drop In Questions.. Q41 L.T.F.P. Key Financial Ratios. Apart from Fy 2025, all financial ratios (except Asset Renewal which is not relevant for this consideration) have significant "capacity" to adjust and balance out the significant rate increases proposed for 2024/25 and 2025/26 without exceeding Financial Ratio targets. The stated requirements to meet a 2027 target because of "policy" appears incorrect: no such requirement is apparent from council's relevant documents. Why then is this target referenced and apparently used to inflate rate rises this 2024/25 year and 2025/26? How and why was it introduced to become a dominant factor in budget development to the unnecessary detriment of ratepayers? Q42 L.T.F.P. Key Financial Ratios. What specific information was given to councillors in workshops or elsewhere steering them to adopt the proposed significant rate increases? Please provide all relevant documents Q43 A.B.P. Project/Expense Items Listed projects can always be deferred to cut spending if essential in any year. What project items (CapEx and OpEx) items were considered for removal/deferral to reduce the total budget expenses as a means to reduce expenses and reduce rate increases? What was the prioritised list for the expense items listed in the 2024/25 draft Annual Business Plan?
Thank you.

Please DO NOT reply to this email. If you want to provide an answer to this question, sign into your site and respond to the question from within the Q & A tool.

Regards

Bang The Table Team



From: [Have Your Say Mount Gambier](#)
To: [City Emails](#); [REDACTED]
Subject: A new question has been added to Q&A
Date: Monday, 10 June 2024 12:52:53 PM

****CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of this Organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe**.

Hi there,

Just a quick heads up to let you know that a new question has been asked at Draft Annual Business Plan & Budget 2024-2025, Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034 and Draft Asset Management Plans 2025-2034 by [REDACTED]

The question that was asked is:

Q44 Wulanda factors in expenses. A F.A.Q. asked and answered by council on the "Have your say" website is "Have rates increased because of Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre?" Answer: No, the proposed rate increase is not due to the Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre. The Council has absorbed these costs within the existing budget." Just what do you mean by absorbed the costs into the budget but not affected the budget? This could only be the case if all income equalled all expenses. I think the question here in F.A.Q. is clear enough. "What is the effect of Wulanda on the budget." Q45 Further to Budget Review #3 (BR3) Does council have any outstanding loans or borrowings or depreciation attributable to the Wulanda centre? If so please provide an itemised list. Q46 Further to Budget Review #3 (BR#) Second question What are council's costs/outgo/payments for the Wulanda centre 2023/24 (budget and actuals) specifically for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years? What are council's income/receipts for the Wulanda centre 2023/24 (budget and actuals) and those specifically for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years?

Please DO NOT reply to this email. If you want to provide an answer to this question, sign into your site and respond to the question from within the Q & A tool.

Regards

Bang The Table Team



From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Emails](#)
Subject: Have your Say Annual Draft Business Plan 2024-25
Date: Thursday, 13 June 2024 2:00:05 PM

****CAUTION: This email originated from outside of this Organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe**.**

Dear Madam, Sir ,

I have been unable to register through "Have your say" and am asking you to record the following question on my behalf.

"What is the total cost for the Wulanda Recreation Centre since inception until today for concept design, design, professional fees (all), tendering, contract, carparking, roadworks, and finishing including landscaping."

Yours Sincerely Nada Clark



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL

Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

OVERVIEW

Draft Budget 2025 Questions In a general sense these questions go to council's integrity in its responsibilities and undertakings given to this community regarding this Draft 2025 budget and the previous (current budget 2024) A message from the mayor to the Mount Gambier ratepayers 2023/2024 in the Annual Business Plan and Budget assures us...(page 2 of 2023/2024) "...Council has made the difficult decision to increase rates by more than is set out in the current Long Term Financial Plan." (Note 6.2% was resolved) for 2024 and for 2025 and 2026) "Therefore, Council has taken a smoothing approach to rate revenue increases for the next three years as we recognise the financial pressures residents and businesses are experiencing." (and add even more -my comment) "We are committed to providing a high level of service to our community whilst remaining financially sustainable by managing expenditure within the next ten years of the Long Term Financial Plan to minimise the effect on ratepayers." Council agreed with the CEO's advocacy for adoption in the administration's overview of the draft budget at item 4.1 of the 23 May 2023 Special Council Meeting. and resolution. So we believed the mayor the CEO and councillors' promise of 6.2%! We planned around this promise. How long did that last - well not a year.

This year it is up to 10.62% general rate and 43.8% waste service charge. Will they come down?

Most unlikely. Much more likely they will be used a solid base for further increases. If we see another 6.2% next year (at least is likely, that will be 6.2% 2024, 10.62 2025 and 6.2% 2026. I asked my 8yo grandson to work that out and he tells me its 23.2%. My question at this point is...

COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

Commentary noted.

Q1 "How did council get this so wrong? Or did it fail dismally to effect due diligence in its planning and management?"

Council spends significantly on its extensive 10 year plans (revised each year). It is required by legislation to budget and plan professionally but appears to have failed at this - how did it not see the general rate and the waste increases coming?

In the current Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget at p42 we read the following "explanation" Benchmarking In previous years rating did not keep up with inflation, and whilst the previously adopted LTFP and last year's ABP included an increase that was smoothed across 3 years, rating was below actual CPI for FY 2024.Last year aligned with previous years, COMG were significantly below the rural state average." Well that may or may not be true - it depends what statistics you take. I will ask more about verification of that council explanation in my next posted question. With council apparently wanting to blame others (they did not keep up with inflation etc) for the significant rate increases - (a Further 10.62% on top of last year's 6.2%) My further questions at this point are...

QUESTION 1 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

Like many Councils in the Local Government sector asset valuations have a significant impact on the budget (this was unknown at the time of last year's budget - please refer to the highlighted section below for an extract from last year's Adopted ABP and LTFP highlighting the risk). This was the first time that Council had used an external provider to undertake condition audits and valuation for the Infrastructure asset class. It is also worth noting that the unaudited valuation reports detailing the impact of the valuations on the balance sheet and depreciation were taken to



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL

Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

the Audit and Risk Committee and for two major asset categories have been reviewed by Council's external auditors.

RISKS TO THE BUDGET Page - 15 COMG ABP 2023/2024

It should be noted that there are a number of risks that have not been considered in this year's Annual Business Plan and Budget as their impact at this time is unknown:

- **Infrastructure Condition Audit and Valuation** - The valuation for this category of assets is due as at 30 June 2023 which will have an impact on the future capital works program and depreciation.
- **Buildings Condition Audit Valuation** - The valuation is scheduled at this stage to be undertaken as at 1 July 2023 which is also expected to have an impact on depreciation and the valuation of the capital works program. The condition audits will be undertaken over two years that will inform the future maintenance and renewals program for this significant asset class Ongoing
- **Inflationary Pressures** - Inflation is based on current forecasts. Any further increases will put additional pressure on the budget.

COMG Adopted LTFP 2024-2033 – Pages 6 and 7:

Exclusions - The following potential significant investment/items are excluded from this version of the LTFP:

- **Infrastructure Condition Audits and Valuation** - The condition audits and valuation for this significant asset category are due for completion in FY 2023 (as at 30 June 2023). At this stage Council does not have information to incorporate in this version of the LTFP. The result of these condition audits/valuation are expected to have an impact on both depreciation and the value of the capital forward works program. A comprehensive review will be undertaken in preparation for the FY 2023 financial statements with the results to be incorporated in the next version of the LTFP to be undertaken in December 2023.
- **Buildings Condition Audits and Valuation** - The condition audits are scheduled across the next two financial years with the valuation for this asset category due for completion in FY 2024 (as at 1 July 2023). At this stage Council does not have information to incorporate in this version of the LTFP. The result of these condition audits/valuation are expected to have an impact on both depreciation and the value of the capital forward works program. A comprehensive review will be undertaken in preparation for the FY 2024 financial statements with the results to be incorporated in the next version of the LTFP to be undertaken in December 2023.
- **Caroline Landfill Depreciation** - Further work will be undertaken aligned with the development of the draft masterplan. This is expected to further define the cost of future cell construction, capping and the post closure provision and unwinding of net present value.

The Draft LTFP document has a section that details what has changed from the previously adopted version of the LTFP as follows:

Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034 Page 5:

- **General Rates** – Council's rating strategy has been reviewed, where Council Staff and Elected Members worked together to develop and review a number of options that would provide a balance between community expectations, the achievement of financial targets and the capacity required to deliver this LTFP (refer to rating section).



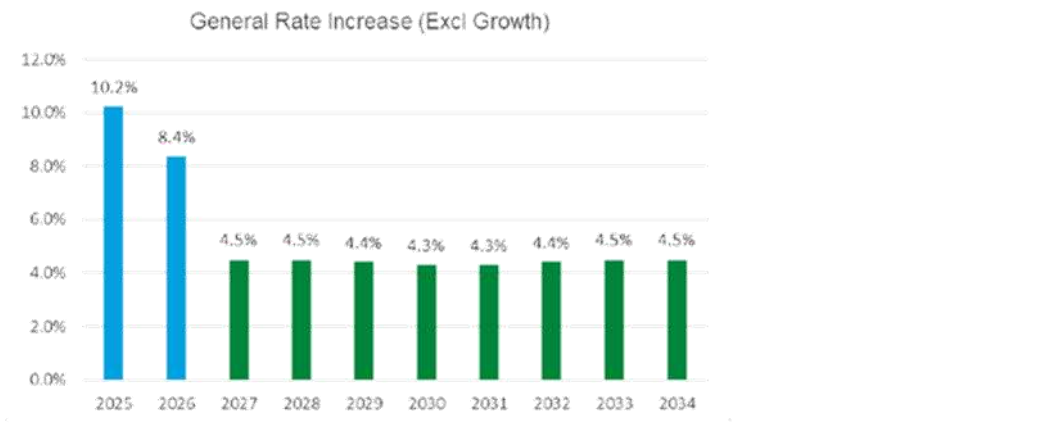
QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL
Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

- **Waste Management** - Further to a review of the cost of service a proposed increase was presented that ensured that the revenue collected via the Waste Service charge covered the costs incurred by Council to deliver this service to the community (refer to rating section).

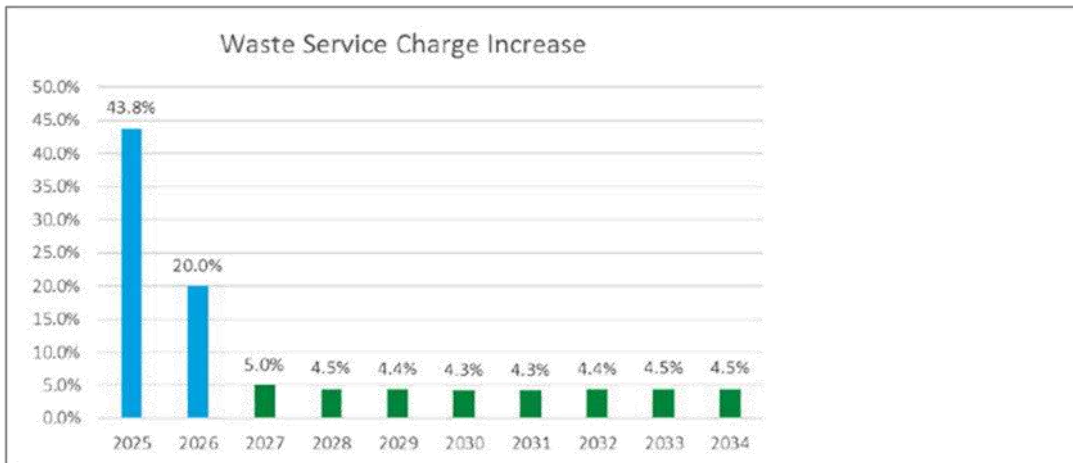
Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034 Page 6:

- **Asset Management** - Further to condition audits and valuations undertaken during this financial year for our major asset classes there has been a significant increase in both depreciation (\$1.1m above the adopted LTFP for or 4.83% of rates 2024/2025), the capital works budget and the forward works program. We have seen the cost of construction increase and the condition audits have informed the works that need to be undertaken.
- **Valuations** - The last version of the LTFP stated that the impact of the valuations for the Infrastructure and Buildings and Structures asset classes had been excluded. The previous version of the LTFP assumed that valuations would be undertaken periodically rather than indexing annually. Market conditions have meant that from FY 2026 CPI has been applied to asset classes annually to consider increases in value.

The increases in future years have been included in the LTFP document in section 7. Rate Setting
Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2035-203 pages 15 and 16 as shown below:



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL
Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom



QUESTION 2

Q2) If council has been taxing its residences and businesses below the state average over the many years as you claim, why is that not due to good management by council staff and previous councils?

QUESTION 2 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- Commentary is noted.
- **Annual Review** - Council reviews its budget, LTFP and AMPs on an annual basis to consider delivery of all services and ensure that it is sustainable for the long term.

QUESTION 3

Q3) Why is it bad to be grouped among the most efficient and effective councils? Why do we need to be rerated from the most effective down to average by taxing and spending more?

QUESTION 3 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- Commentary is noted.
- **Balanced Approach** - Council strives for a balance in the delivery of services and affordability, along with ensuring it is financially sustainable for the long term.

QUESTION 4

Q4) What other options (to raising rates significantly) did council consider to address our apparent march to unsustainability?

QUESTION 4 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Financial Sustainability** - As detailed in the CEO's Statement of Financial Sustainability Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034 Page 14:

Our Financial Sustainability:

Council has three Key Financial Indicators (KFIs) per Council's Treasury Management Policy that measure financial sustainability. It should be noted that all three KFIs achieve the targets set by Council's Treasury Management Policy (T150) as shown below:

- **Operating Surplus Ratio** - *The ratio is positive over the 10 year period with an average ratio of 2.8%, achieving a positive ratio from FY 2027 onwards.*
- **Net Financial Liabilities Ratio** - *The average ratio over the 10 years is 55.2%, achieving a ratio of less than 100% in 2025.*



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL

Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

- **Asset Renewal Ratio** - The Asset Renewal Ratio is 100% over the 10 years of the LTFP, aligned with the forward works program and Asset Management Plan.

These indicators are evaluated in more detail within this document and together, show that Council will achieve its financial sustainability in the medium to long term.

A number of funding/revenue/cost saving options were considered in the development of the draft ABP and LTFP including the following:

- **Other Revenue Levers** - Other revenue levers were considered in the review of the Annual Business Plan and LTFP with increases in statutory fees (planning and development assessment fees) and other income (open space contributions) reflecting current development projections.
- **Grant Opportunities** - Some grant opportunities were reviewed (e.g. Roads to Recovery and Financial Assistance Grants), however, at the time of preparation no clarity had been received from Federal Government with regards to the quantum, timing, and terms of the grants. It should be noted that Roads to Recovery in particular may have a material impact on the future revenue of Council.
- **Savings and revenue opportunities** - As explained in the ABP document were considered during the budget process that improved the operating result by \$0.7m (further to a line by line review of the budget).

QUESTION 5

Q5) If endorsed as is by council, does this give the administration the authority to undertake the work and expenditure as listed, without further approvals and scrutiny of council?

At the time of approving this budget and in the reviews effected by council to date, what Value for Money measure has been applied to the various budget items?

QUESTION 5 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Procurement** - Council has a procurement policy and supporting framework that allows Council staff to spend within budget and within their financial delegations. For tenders of over \$500k reports are brought to Council aligned with policy.
- **Procurement Policy** - Council's procurement policy references value for money throughout the document including evaluation criteria used to select suppliers of goods and services to council. <https://cdn.mountgambier.sa.gov.au/general-images/Council-Policy-Procurement.pdf>
- **Value For Money Applied To Budget** - Council undertakes reviews of services and project planning including business and financial analysis reported to Council for decision. Council also considers social, economic and environmental impacts of services and projects
- **Strategic Work Plan** - All projects are evaluated by the cross-organisational management team against various criteria before being included in the budget and presented to Council.

QUESTION 6

Q6) What percentage of our community ratepayers and/or residents were interactively involved in the final Futures Paper? 2011?

QUESTION 6 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Futures Paper** - The Futures Papers were originally created in 2011. While they lead to the current strategic plan engagement numbers at that time is not directly relevant.



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL

Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

- **Community Engagement** - All of the Strategic Management Plans are provided to the community for feedback at the time of their development.

QUESTION 7

Q7) There are 27 key strategies reported in the Futures Paper. What is the implementation progress of each of these in terms of percentage complete or fully adopted? Have any key strategies been abandoned since adopting the paper?

ABP ref Significant Influences p7 This states "In the development of the ABP we have undertaken a review of our internal environment and broader external environment that includes social, environment, economic and planning elements. This review identifies key issues that help provide the context for the development of this plan.

QUESTION 7 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Futures Paper** - The Futures Paper influences the Strategic Plan 2020-2024, which in turn influences the ABP, LTFP and AMPs. Mount Gambier 2035 will replace the Futures Paper as the new overarching community vision document supported by the new Strategic Plan 2024-2028, which will be developed after the adoption of Mount Gambier 2035 and before November in line with legislation.
- **Progress Against The Current Strategic Plan** - It can be confirmed that there was a report based on the full year progress against the Strategic Plan as at June 2023 presented in August 2023. <https://cdn.mountgambier.sa.gov.au/agendas-minutes/Council-Agenda-15-August-2023-Website-PDF.pdf>
- **Annual Objectives, KPIs and Projects** - Regular reporting is provided to Council throughout the course of each year.
- **Annual Objectives Progress** - Progress against the ABP annual objectives (which are the annual delivery of the longer term strategic plan objectives) are reported quarterly to Council as part of the public agenda. <https://cdn.mountgambier.sa.gov.au/agendas-minutes/Council-Agenda-20-February-2024-Website-PDF.pdf> The most recent report will be included in the June 2024 Council agenda.

QUESTION 8

Q8) This is obviously a core document relevant to understanding the ABP. Could this review report please be linked as a priority to this draft ABP we are currently asked to consider?

QUESTION 8 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Separate Review Document** - There is no separate review document as this was reviewed throughout the process.
- **Interpretation** - We believe this question relates to the review of internal and external environments.
- **Budget Development** - In the development of the budget, each budget area gave consideration to internal and external environmental factors for instance known legislation, contractual or material costs, benchmarking, market conditions and trends over the last three and a half years.
- **Significant Influences** - External influences has been considered and are shown in both the ABP and LTFP documents.



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL

Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

- **Elected Member Engagement** - We took Elected Members through the external environment in which we were constructing the ABP and LTFF and the pressures faced by the organisation at one of the budget workshops.
- **Strategic Risk Review** - Council undertakes ongoing reviews of the strategic environment in which it operates and reflects these by way of review of its strategic risk register. The quarterly report is reviewed by Council's Executive and the Audit and Risk Committee. The most recent report was presented at the June 2024 Audit and Risk Committee meeting (as included in the June 2024 Council agenda).

QUESTION 9

Q9 "COMG average residential rates were significantly below the rural state average." This theme was obviously adopted by administration and councillors in considering this ABP Draft as an agenda item as it was repeatedly referenced or stated by administration and councillors as the prime reason rates must rise significantly. And yet council does not justify this assertion. Indeed the LGA and state government information links to comparative rates has Mount Gambier (in its peer group) significantly above that peer group average. This may indicate that COMG "below average" claim is [REDACTED]. What then are the councils used by COMG to make this claim and why were they chosen and others not chosen?

QUESTION 9 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Information Source** - The average residential rates numbers quoted in the ABP/LTFF documents and supporting Council reports are based upon information provided by the LGA and also sourced from individual council Annual Business Plan documents.
- **Budget Consideration** - However, as per the draft, the comparison to average is one of the considerations and there are many others, including the impact of growth, and inflationary pressures.
- **Individual Council Comparisons** - During the public Elected Member budget and LTFF workshops, information comparing average residential and other differential rates to other individual councils was also presented. At the request of Elected Members additional Councils were included in the analysis presented to provide the required level of information on the basis that they were similar to COMG.

QUESTION 10

Q10 "...there has been a significant increase in both depreciation (\$1.1m above the adopted LTFF for 2024/2025) the capital works budget and the forward works budget." a) Does council have a depreciation schedule?

If so, how could this be incorrect to require an additional unforeseen \$1.1m in depreciation in just one year? b) How are assets assessed for their prioritised worth to this community and from that priority, their relevant depreciation value and maintenance priority?

QUESTION 10 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Depreciation Schedule** - Is included on page 1 of the Asset Management Plan Summary based on 30 June 2023 (i.e. prior to revaluations). The depreciation budget has been calculated taking the financial impact of valuations into consideration.
- **Australian Accounting Standards Requirement** - Australian Accounting Standards require assets to be periodically independently revalued. Generally accepted accounting practice is for this to occur at least once every five years. The purpose to ensure that financial statements provide a more accurate representation of financial position.



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL

Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

- **Maintenance Priority** - Maintenance/renewal plans are informed by condition audits which provide information about the condition of the asset and when action should be taken to renew/intervene with maintenance activities. The more detailed approach and methodology is included in the Asset Management Plans.

- **Council Policy** - Council's Asset Accounting Policy provides further direction including that revaluations are performed at sufficient frequency to reduce material difference at reporting date and also states whether these valuations should be carried out by internal staff or external consultants.

a) Asset Revaluations - The local government sector as a whole has seen a significant increase in asset valuations. This has been recognised when the unaudited valuations have been reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee (for Infrastructure and Buildings and Structures assets) and also as part of the external audit process. It should also be noted that these valuations in the case of Infrastructure assets have been undertaken by external consultants for the first time. Council staff have worked with external consultants to undertake benchmarking reviewing asset lives to ensure that the impact of the revaluation was minimised as far as possible. It should be noted that revaluations were completed for major Infrastructure classes as at 30 June 2023 and Buildings and Structures and other Infrastructure classes as at 1 July 2023.

b) Asset Valuations - As per Australian Accounting Standards assets are valued at fair value as per AASB13 Fair Value Measurement, the approach and methodology is as defined in the reports we receive from external valuers and included in the reports provided to the Audit and Risk Committee and included in Council's audited financial statements.

QUESTION 11

Q11 a) Specifically how have the community needs been established?

b) How have the efficient and effective delivery of services been defined and measured for council tone informed when considering the need for service?

c) is there comprehensive list of products and services that council provides and their annual cost?

ABP ref Hierarchy of Documents- p11 "Brings together the key planning documents to ensure that the vision, goals, and objectives set by the futures paper are implemented in the Long Term Financial Plan, Asset management Plan, and Annual business Plan.....as shown..."

QUESTION 11 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

a) Establishment of Community Needs:

- **Mount Gambier 2035** - Feedback obtained in the development of the community vision and new strategic plan.
- **Community Consultation** - Council consult on a range of strategies including: SROSS, Shared Path Masterplan and the Dog and Cat Masterplan 2024-2028 (refer to Council's Have Your Say site that includes details of previous consultations).
- **Customer Requests For Services** - As provided by members of the public.
- **Section 7 Of The Local Government Act** - Defines the services that Council must provide.

b) Efficient and effective delivery of services:

- **Service Reviews Undertaken To Date** - Service reviews have been undertaken to date with results presented to Council for their approval.
- **Review of 2024/2025 Budget** - Elected Members reviewed an operating statement for each department of Council that showed the direct costs attributable.



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL

Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

c) Comprehensive List of Products and Services and Annual Cost:

- **Service Register** - As per the answers to the other questions the service register will be developed in 2024/2025.
- **Cost Of Service - Full Cost Attribution** - Aligned with legislation and an action plan agreed with Council's external auditors, the principles for full cost attribution have been developed. This will be implemented for this financial year-end in actual terms and for the 2024/2025 budget.

QUESTION 12

Q12 Which of the 27 key strategies in the Futures Paper are specifically included in the subordinate "...key strategic management documents shown..." ABP ref Highlights-p12 "Withpressures to deliver more and changes in consumer's expectations of council's, there is a growing need for Council's (sic) to deliver services tailored to demand." "This Annual Business Plan will focus on maintaining services standards efficiently."

QUESTION 12 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **This Consultation** - This public consultation is on the Draft Annual Business Plan and as such questions relating to the status of other documents are not relevant.
- **Futures Paper** - The Futures Paper influences the Strategic Plan 2020-2024, which in turn influences the ABP, LTFP and AMPs.
- **Progress Reporting** - Progress against annual objectives and the strategic plan have been included in Council's public agenda. Four reports are produced each year that detail progress against annual objectives and the August 2023 report also detailed the progress for the year against the Strategic Plan. Quarterly reports have been published that detail the progress against annual objectives and the report in August 2024 will detail the full year delivery of annual objectives and the final report against the current strategic plan.
<https://cdn.mountgambier.sa.gov.au/agendas-minutes/Council-Agenda-15-August-2023-Website-PDF.pdf>

QUESTION 13

Q13 Specifically, what are the pressures to deliver more?

How are they qualified and quantified so that they can be identified and rated as beneficial to all ratepayers at the expense of core services such as infrastructure?

QUESTION 13 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Pressures** - Faced by Council include the following:
 - **Growth** - Over previous years, the organisation has not increased its staffing capacity to reflect the growth in the community and increased cost of service. This was particularly evident during 2021 where we saw significant growth in our city.
 - **Cost Shifting** - Requirements of other levels of government e.g. waste master planning and public health.
 - **Feedback** - Feedback from the community through Mount Gambier 2035 and also the via Customer Requests For Services.
- **Services Summary** - Aligned with the Local Government Act, the ABP document includes a summary of the services provided allocated to strategic goals.
- **Workforce Planning Framework** - On page 12 the unlocking project (Workforce Planning Framework) defines the deliverables for this financial year as:

Developing organisational knowledge and creating efficiencies through the following:



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL

Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

- *Service register and benchmarking;*
 - *Establishment of a service review framework; and*
 - *Undertake services reviews and workforce analysis.*
- **KPIs** - The KPI on page 40 also states that Council will
"Develop a service register, service review framework and commence workforce analysis.

QUESTION 14

Q14 Has council considered selling this facility to significantly reduce excess debt and thus provide more services to more of the community? If not why not?

QUESTION 14 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Wulanda Completion** - Wulanda was completed in the 2022/2023 financial year and as such no review has been undertaken.
- **Funding of Wulanda** - It is appropriate that the Wulanda facility was funded with borrowings in recognition of intergenerational equity and the fact that the facilities will be used and enjoyed by the community for many years.
- **Debt Structure** - The mix between fixed and variable debt has been developed aligned with Council's Treasury Management Policy and working closely with the Local Government Financing Authority (LGFA). The LTFP shows how Council intends to reduce debt levels over the 10 year period (from a peak debt position of \$36.6m in FY 2025 to \$2.8m in FY 2034).
- **T150 Treasury Management Policy** - Council's Treasury Management Policy supports the structure and quantum of Council's debt.
https://cdn.mountgambier.sa.gov.au/general-images/T150-Treasury-Management_2023-05-24-053436_bzhl.pdf

QUESTION 15

Q15 It is very confusing how the 24/25 ABP intends to plan and fund the current Futures Paper (as approved by council) and the draft Mount Gambier 2035 which is not adopted by council, but "....will be brought to Council in June 2024 for community consultation. and the proposed ABP has "....considered the Strategic Work Plan that underpins the delivery of Mount Gambier 2035."

Exactly how is this obfuscated comment explained in simple terms including how and why this proposed Mount Gambier 2035 Strategic Plan is following due process?

ABP ref UNLOCKING PROJECTS p12 3) Workforce Planning Framework - ".....creating efficiencies through the following: **Service register and benchmarking** **Establishment of a service review framework;** and **Undertake service reviews and workforce analysis.**

QUESTION 15 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Feedback** - Thank you for the feedback that it's unclear about the relationship between the current strategic documents and those currently under development, such as Mount Gambier 2035, we will update the final version of the Annual Business Plan and Budget and LTFP to more accurately explain the relationships and status of these documents.
- **Futures Paper** - The Futures Paper influences the Strategic Plan 2020-2024, which in turn influences the ABP, LTFP and AMPs.
- **Mount Gambier 2035** - Is under development. Please refer to the Council agenda item for 18 June item 19.1 for a comprehensive consultation summary on this process.



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL

Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

- **Project Delivery** - The delivery of the projects in the Strategic Work Plan over the next 3 years are expected to support the delivery of Council's new Strategic Plan following Mount Gambier 2035. Year one that has been outlined shows what is expected to be delivered in 2024/2025 and supports the current Strategic Plan legislated obligations and Council resolutions.
- **Budget Allocation** - Where additional funding is required to support the project work to be undertaken this has been included as operating projects under each of the Strategic Goals e.g. CBD Activation \$100k, SROSS Masterplan \$50k, Strategic Work Plan Delivery \$400k, Business Systems Review \$115k, Work Force Plan \$50k and Rating Strategy Development \$20k.
- **Foundational Projects** - In summary, these strategic projects are critical in driving efficiency, improving service delivery, and ensuring sustainable development, ultimately benefiting both the Council and the community. They have been called the "Unlocking Projects" with further details provided below:

1. Asset Management Plan

- The Asset Management Plan (AMP) provides a comprehensive framework for managing council assets, leading to more informed and strategic decision-making.
- By maintaining and managing assets proactively, the AMP helps reduce long-term costs associated with repairs and maintenance
- The plan identifies potential risks and outlines mitigation strategies, ensuring that assets are safe and reliable.
- Efficient asset management means better maintained public facilities, roads, parks, and utilities, enhancing the overall quality of life.
- Regular maintenance and timely upgrades reduce the risk of asset failures, ensuring public safety.
- The community benefits from increased transparency regarding how public funds are used to maintain and improve local infrastructure.

2. Business Systems

- The business systems project will streamline internal processes, reducing paperwork and manual tasks, and improving overall productivity.
- Enhanced data collection and analysis capabilities will support better planning and resource allocation.
- An integrated business system ensures that various departments can work seamlessly together, using one source of truth.
- A modern business system can offer improved online services, making it easier for residents to access information and perform transactions with the council.
- Enhanced data analytics will enable the council to identify and address community needs more swiftly and effectively.

3. Workforce Plans

- The Workforce planning and service review will ensure that services align with the council's strategic goals and long-term vision, supporting sustainable development and growth
- It will ensure that the right number of employees with the appropriate skills are in place, optimizing staffing levels and reducing unnecessary labor costs.
- Succession planning by preparing for future leadership needs will ensure continuity and stability within the council.
- Reviews can introduce innovative practices and technologies, improving overall service efficiency and effectiveness.

QUESTION 16



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL

Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

Q16 specifically what resources and what timeframe will address and implement these reviews and analysis?

What budget amount is included in this current ABP? ABP ref AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY p13

QUESTION 16 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Funding** - No additional funding has been allocated in the ABP to fund the delivery of the Draft Local Affordable Housing Plan.
- **Timeframe** - Timeframes are as included in the Strategic Workplan as 2024/2025. The plan is scheduled for adoption in July 2024 with implementation to follow.
- **Community Consultation** - For the Draft Local Affordable Housing Plan has been undertaken with the community (closing on 14 June 2024). Questions raised have been forwarded to Council staff as part of the public consultation process.

QUESTION 17

Q17 specifically what resources and what timeframe will address this initiative?

QUESTION 17 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Funding** - No additional funding has been allocated in the ABP to fund the delivery of the Draft Local Affordable Housing Plan.
- **Timeframe** - Timeframes are as included in the Strategic Workplan as 2024/2025. The plan is scheduled for adoption in July 2024 with implementation to follow.
- **Community Consultation** - For this plan has been undertaken with the community (closing on 14 June 2024). Questions raised have been forwarded to Council staff as part of the public consultation process.

QUESTION 18

Q18 Has any other council at any time over the last 50 years successfully adopted an Affordable Housing Strategy?

QUESTION 18 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **This Consultation** - This public consultation is on the Draft Annual Business Plan and as such questions relating to the status of other documents are not relevant.
- **Community Consultation** - For the Draft Local Affordable Housing Plan has been undertaken with the community (closing on 14 June 2024). Questions raised have been forwarded to Council staff as part of the public consultation process.

QUESTION 19

Q19 what is the total budget in LCC terms set for this affordable housing strategy and how is it measured in value for money as a council service?

ABP ref USER PAYS PRINCIPLE and CURRENT SERVICE LEVELS p15

QUESTION 19 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Funding** - No additional funding has been allocated in the ABP to fund the delivery of the Draft Local Affordable Housing Plan. As the implementation plan is progressed additional budget if required would be identified as part of a future budget process.
- **This Consultation** - This public consultation is on the Draft Annual Business Plan and as such questions relating to the status of other documents are not relevant.



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL

Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

- **Community Consultation** - For the Draft Local Affordable Housing Plan has been undertaken with the community (closing on 14 June 2024). Questions raised have been forwarded to Council staff as part of the public consultation process.
- **Council's Role** - The City of Mount Gambier recognises its ability to influence this work through:
 1. Community and commercial partnerships;
 2. Advocacy;
 3. Strategic land use planning; and
 4. Incentives and opportunities.

QUESTION 20

Q20 I note the specific CapEx items listed pp17- 21 and observe well done.

QUESTION 20 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

Commentary - The comments made are noted.

QUESTION 21

Q21 Does council have a detailed itemised list of the products and services it is providing?

QUESTION 21 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Services Summary** - Aligned with the Local Government Act the ABP document includes a summary of the services provided allocated to strategic goals.
- **Workforce Planning Framework** - On page 12 the unlocking project (Workforce Planning Framework) defines the deliverables for this financial year as:

Developing organisational knowledge and creating efficiencies through the following:

 - *Service register and benchmarking;*
 - *Establishment of a service review framework; and*
 - *Undertake services reviews and workforce analysis.*
- **KPIs** - The KPI on page 40 also states that Council will
"Develop a service register, service review framework and commence workforce analysis.

QUESTION 22

C22 Has council specifically and independently reviewed its products and services in any form apart from the generalised products and services groups?

QUESTION 22 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Services Summary** - Aligned with the Local Government Act the ABP document includes a summary of the services provided allocated to strategic goals.
- **Service Reviews Undertaken To Date** - Service reviews have been undertaken to date with results presented to Council for their approval.
- **Review of 2024/2025 Budget** - Elected Members reviewed an operating statement for each department of Council that showed the direct costs attributable.
- **Workforce Planning Framework** - On page 12 the unlocking project (Workforce Planning Framework) defines the deliverables for this financial year as:



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Developing organisational knowledge and creating efficiencies through the following:

- *Service register and benchmarking;*
- *Establishment of a service review framework; and*
- *Undertake services reviews and workforce analysis.*

- **KPIs** - The KPI on page 40 also states that Council will
"Develop a service register, service review framework and commence workforce analysis."

QUESTION 23

Q23 How does council know what products and services it is providing and if those services are being provided efficiently and effectively?

How does it measure these outcomes in quantised and qualified terms?

QUESTION 23 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Services Summary** - Aligned with the Local Government Act the ABP document includes a summary of the services provided allocated to strategic goals.

- **Workforce Planning Framework** - On page 12 the unlocking project (Workforce Planning Framework) defines the deliverables for this financial year as:

Developing organisational knowledge and creating efficiencies through the following:

- *Service register and benchmarking;*
- *Establishment of a service review framework; and*
- *Undertake services reviews and workforce analysis.*

- **KPIs** - The KPI on page 40 also states that Council will
"Develop a service register, service review framework and commence workforce analysis."

- **Service Reviews Undertaken To Date** - Service reviews have been undertaken to date with results presented to Council for their approval.

QUESTION 24

Q24 Has council conducted a specific high end product and services review and determined the value to the whole community of those products and services on a measured and comparable basis

a) in any format?

b) using a professionally developed Value For Money Measure?

QUESTION 24 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Service Reviews Undertaken To Date** - Service reviews have been undertaken to date with results presented to Council for their approval.

- **Services Summary** - Aligned with the Local Government Act the ABP document includes a summary of the services provided allocated to strategic goals.

- **Review of 2024/2025 Budget** – Council staff undertook a detailed line by line and function by function review during the budget process. Elected Members reviewed an operating statement for each department of Council that showed the direct costs attributable.

- **Workforce Planning Framework** - On page 12 the unlocking project (Workforce Planning Framework) defines the deliverables for this financial year as:

Developing organisational knowledge and creating efficiencies through the following:

- *Service register and benchmarking;*



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL

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- *Establishment of a service review framework; and*
 - *Undertake services reviews and workforce analysis.*
- **KPIs** - The KPI on page 40 also states that Council will *"Develop a service register, service review framework and commence workforce analysis."*

QUESTION 25

Q25 If it has not (Q24), how does it measure, determine and report to council the Value for Money obtained or to be obtained when informing council prior to adoption of that service or adjustment of that service?

QUESTION 25 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Services Summary** - Aligned with the Local Government Act the ABP document includes a summary of the services provided allocated to strategic goals.
- **Workforce Planning Framework** - On page 12 the unlocking project (Workforce Planning Framework) defines the deliverables for this financial year as:

Developing organisational knowledge and creating efficiencies through the following:
 - *Service register and benchmarking;*
 - *Establishment of a service review framework; and*
 - *Undertake services reviews and workforce analysis.*
- **KPIs** - The KPI on page 40 also states that Council will *"Develop a service register, service review framework and commence workforce analysis"*
- **LGFA Terms** - Council cannot undertake new services without the prior approval of the LGFA (under the terms of the Wulanda loan).
- **Council Review** - Council receives comprehensive briefings and Council reports as services are changed, reviewed or improved.

QUESTION 26

Q26 Has council had its products and services provision assessed for effectiveness and efficiency and had each relatively rated for Social, Environmental, Economic benefit to the community?

QUESTION 26 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Social, Environmental and Economic Benefit** - Council undertakes reviews of services and project planning including business and financial analysis reported to Council for decision. Council also considers social, economic and environmental impacts of services and projects.
- **Services Summary** - Aligned with the Local Government Act the ABP document includes a summary of the services provided allocated to strategic goals.
- **Workforce Planning Framework** - On page 12 the unlocking project (Workforce Planning Framework) defines the deliverables for this financial year as:

Developing organisational knowledge and creating efficiencies through the following:
 - *Service register and benchmarking;*
 - *Establishment of a service review framework; and*
 - *Undertake services reviews and workforce analysis.*



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL

Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

- **KPIs** - The KPI on page 40 also states that Council will *"Develop a service register, service review framework and commence workforce analysis"*
- **Internal Audit Program** - Council has adopted an internal audit program that reviews key services/processes undertaken by Council.

QUESTION 27

Q27 Council advises that it pursues Value for Money in providing its Products and Services. Does council have a professionally reviewed and adopted "Value for Money Measure"?

QUESTION 27 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Services Summary** - Aligned with the Local Government Act the ABP document includes a summary of the services provided allocated to strategic goals.
- **Workforce Planning Framework** - On page 12 the unlocking project (Workforce Planning Framework) defines the deliverables for this financial year as:

Developing organisational knowledge and creating efficiencies through the following:
 - *Service register and benchmarking;*
 - *Establishment of a service review framework; and*
 - *Undertake services reviews and workforce analysis.*
- **KPIs** - The KPI on page 40 also states that Council will *"Develop a service register, service review framework and commence workforce analysis"*
- **Procurement** - As stated in Council's procurement policy "Council is committed to implementing fair, transparent and competitive purchasing and contracting practices achieving optimum value for money outcomes aligned to the Council's strategic objectives, community expectations and the requirements of any special funding sources". It also states that "Value for money outcomes can be achieved through balanced consideration of financial and non-financial factors relevant to the procurement". <https://cdn.mountgambier.sa.gov.au/general-images/Council-Policy-Procurement.pdf>

QUESTION 28

Q28 Does council have a current Strategic Plan - not a futures document that appears vague and subjective?

How may I get a copy of that current Strategic Plan - current in the sense that it addresses the 2024/2025 year as the link provided connects to an outdated and subjective plan.

QUESTION 28 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Current Strategic Plan Link** - The current Strategic Plan link document is provided on Council's "Have your Say " website for this public consultation activity under Supporting Documents - City of Mount Gambier - Strategic Plan 2020 - 2024.
- <https://www.haveyoursaymountgambier.com.au/draft-annual-business-plan-budget-2024-2025>
- **Progress Against The Current Strategic Plan** - As per the previous response about the Strategic Plan, it can be confirmed that there was a report based on the full year progress against the Strategic Plan as at June 2023 presented in August 2023. <https://cdn.mountgambier.sa.gov.au/agendas-minutes/Council-Agenda-15-August-2023-Website-PDF.pdf>

QUESTION 29

Q29 "Section 123 of the Local Government Act states that: Each annual business plan of Council must – (a) include a summary of the council's long-term objectives (as set out in



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Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

its strategic management plans);.... (Specifically where in the draft ABP are these aspects included?

QUESTION 29 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Strategic Plan Alignment** - This document includes a summary of the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan document (Page 25) and also provides a summary of the strategic plan objectives within each goal section (pages 27, 30, 34 and 37). Annual objectives and KPIs are also included that are linked to the strategic plan.

QUESTION 30

Q30 Section 123 of the Local Government Act states that: Each annual business plan of Council must – (e) assess the impact of the rates structure and policies on the community based on modelling that has been undertaken or obtained by the council; Specifically where in the draft ABP does council assess this impact?

If it still intends to do this, will it do so objectively and in a timely manner that allows public feedback so that councillors are informed before voting?

Note: KPI's are quantifiable measurements to gauge a company's overall long term performance.

-QUESTION 30 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Rating Strategy** - In the rating strategy section we have worked with the LGA using the template provided to Councils as best practice to ensure compliance with the Local Government Act 1999.
- **Rating Policy** - The following references included in Council's draft R105 Rating Policy (as included in the Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget document):
 - Page 57 4.6 Business Impact Statement;
 - Page 58 4.8 Fixed Charge; and
 - Page 63 4.23 Rate Relief Options.

QUESTION 31

Q31 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS p27, p30, p34, p37, p40 Why are these short term indicators only that do not allow residents to assess council's directions and performance over a longer term? (see Q29)

QUESTION 31 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Legislation** - The ABP document includes annual objectives and KPIs aligned with legislation as shown below:

Aligned with Section 123 (2):

(b) include an outline of—

- (i) the council's objectives for the financial year; and*
- the activities that the council intends to undertake to achieve those objectives; and*
- (iii) the measures (financial and non-financial) that the council intends to use to assess the performance of the council against its objectives over the financial year;*

- **Progress Against The Current Strategic Plan** - As per the previous response about the Strategic Plan, it can be confirmed that there was a report based on the full year progress against the Strategic Plan as at June 2023 presented in August 2023. <https://cdn.mountgambier.sa.gov.au/agendas-minutes/Council-Agenda-15-August-2023-Website-PDF.pdf>



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL

Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

QUESTION 32

Q32 DRAFT L.T. FINANCIAL PLAN This document appears to have also been prepared against a defunct Strategic Plan and Futures Search document, in which case may not be worth my time reviewing it: Is that the case?

QUESTION 32 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Strategic Plan Alignment** - The document is aligned with the emerging Mount Gambier 2035, current 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, current Futures paper and the current Strategic Work Plan 2024-2027.

QUESTION 33

Q33 L.T.F.P. Strategic Workplace p12 and p13 This appeared a poor excuse for a meaningful Strategic Plan and nothing more than a list of project management headings: Is that the case?

QUESTION 33 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Comment** - The comment is noted.
- **Strategic Work Plan** - is a snapshot of Council's key priorities for the next three years. This plan has been informed by the current 2020-2024 Strategic Plan and pulls together projects that are legislatively required, decided by way of Council resolution or focus on continuous improvement. Future ABPs will be informed by the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan informed by Mount Gambier 2035 (community vision).

QUESTION 34

Q34 .L.T.F.P. OVERVIEW p2 I am guessing this document is a generic template - perhaps from the LGA: is that the case?

It does not have an Executive Summary and is therefore unable to concisely summarise the document for community distribution or any other.

Why not?

QUESTION 34 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **LGA Template** – We have not used a specific template, however, we have checked the document against legislative requirements.
- **Overview** - There is an overview that explains the purpose of the document and a summary of the financial position and how the plan was developed.
- **CEO's Statement Of Financial Sustainability** - The summary is included in the CEO's Statement of Financial Sustainability.\ as per Page 10 (aligned with legislation).
- **Feedback** - Your feedback is noted.

QUESTION 35

Q35 .L.T.F.P. Key financial ratios - p23,24,25,26. These are only cited for current and forward years. It is not possible to consider council's performance fully against these unless historical (prior) years are included. Therefore in tabularised form,

a) what are the 10 consecutive year forecasts from and including the initial year actual budget in 2016, for those 10 year forecasts and rate actuals, plus Operating Surplus Ratio, Net Financial Liabilities Ratio, Asset Renewal Ratio and Borrowing to Income Ratio, also for the initial budget in 2016, for the then 10 year forecasts and rate actuals?



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL

Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

b) what are the 10 consecutive year forecasts from and including the initial year actual budget in 2021, for those 10 year forecasts and rate actuals, plus Operating Surplus Ratio, Net Financial Liabilities

QUESTION 35 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Overview** - This consultation is based on the current ABP and LTFP, additional retrospective analysis has not been undertaken to respond to this question, however, information is available (as shown below).
- **Actual Performance** - Actual performance is included in the audited financial statements on Council's website from 2008/2009 - 2022/2023.
<https://www.mountgambier.sa.gov.au/council/financial/annual-financial-statements>.
- **Actual performance compared to the adopted budget** - is produced each year (aligned with legislation) and is included in Audit and Risk Committee and Council agendas in the public domain. Previous LTFP documents are also included in Council agendas also available on Council's website.
- **ESCOSA Review** - It is worth noting that ESCOSA's review of the LTFP that will be undertaken in the 2024/2025 year will include a review of 10 years of history and the most recently adopted forward 10 years from the LTFP.

QUESTION 36

- **Q36 A.M.P.'s Asset Management Summary.** a) Is this intended as an Executive Summary of the three A.M.P.'s?
b) Why not call it that so people can focus on what they might want?

QUESTION 36 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Commentary** - The comment has been noted. The Summary is intended to be a document that summarises the three AMP's.

QUESTION 37

Q37 Buildings and Structures A.M.P. This is a thorough and logical document that includes a meaningful Executive Summary; a noticeable cut above the rest. Unfortunately it does not have a full relevant asset and conditions list. Is this soon to be provided?

QUESTION 37 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- This will be updated in the next review and presented in the 2025/2026 Budget reports.

QUESTION 38

Q38 Infrastructure A.M.P. This is also a well prepared high value document. Perhaps needs fine tuning finishing. The relevant assets and their condition assessments are well presented via condition maps. It appears it needs a 100% completion date. Does council have this targeted?

QUESTION 38 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

Asset Renewal Funding Ratio Target - Council's target included in the LTFP is to deliver 100% of the asset management plan. This is included in a number of key documents:

- **Annual Business Plan** - Details the target of 100%
- **LTFP** - Details the target of 100%
- **B300 Budget Management Policy** - The policy principles include the following:

7.4 Asset Management Plans - Will inform budget capital maintenance programs for renewal and replacement to prevent costly deterioration of infrastructure and maintain



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL

Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

an adequate level of investment on existing assets to ensure satisfactory levels of service on an annual average basis.

Policy Review - It should be noted that this policy is due for review in November 2025.
<https://cdn.mountgambier.sa.gov.au/general-images/B300-Budget-Framework-Policy.pdf>

- **T150 Treasury Management Policy** - Was reviewed by the Audit Committee in November 2021 and adopted by Council in November 2021. This revision included the introduction of the Key Financial Indicators targets.

The Treasury Management Policy includes the following reference:

6.3 Key Financial Indicators (KFIs) - Council ensures long term financial sustainability using key financial indicators in its LTFP. Council has the following targets:

- **Operating Surplus Ratio** – To achieve a positive operating surplus ratio by FY 2027.
- **Net Financial Liabilities Ratio** – Achieve a target of less than 100% of total operating revenue by FY 2027; and
- **Asset Renewal Funding Ratio** - Maintain asset renewal funding ratio of greater than or equal to 100% of the Asset Management Plan.

Policy Review - It should be noted that this policy is due for review in November 2024.
https://cdn.mountgambier.sa.gov.au/general-images/T150-Treasury-Management_2023-05-24-053436_bzhl.pdf

QUESTION 39

Q39 Plant and Equipment A.M.P. This is also a solid and logical document with Executive Summary. It objectively details the current status and maintenance needs for P&E.

Has council expressed its gratitude to the various staff for these high class A.M.P. documents?

QUESTION 39 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Thanks** - Council staff have been thanked by Elected Members and Senior Management for the considerable amount of work undertaken to develop and present the suite of documents.

QUESTION 40

Q40 A.B.P. + Agenda Item 19.2 of 21 May council meeting. MY CONCLUSION I fully appreciate the efforts put in by councillors and employees on these documents, but it is clear these documents are very poor in quality and ready interpretation.

Just how could any average ratepayer understand them and suggest changes or ideas as you are asking.

There is no Executive Summary in either the report to council or the A.B.P.. The cited 2020-24 COMG S.P. is out of date and not relevant unless fully reviewed. The key S.P. documents relevant were typically reviewed well in advance and independent of preparing the A.B.P.:

Legislation requires them to be prepared with a 10 year overview: you are now doing your assessments and fine tuning at the same time. So much for the legislation and independent preparation.



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL
Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

QUESTION 40 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Comments** - Noted.
- **Annual Review** - Council took the decision in 2021 to review the ABP, LTFP and AMPs on an annual basis to ensure consistency and continuing financial sustainability. The ABP is developed in the context of the previous LTFP and also acts as Year 1 of the LTFP so that the longer term impact of decisions taken in the development of the budget are fully understood by Elected Members and the Community.
- **Executive Summaries** - Whilst not titled "Executive Summary" there are summaries in all documents as follows:
 - **Annual Business Plan and Budget** - Includes "A Message From the Mayor" and "A Message From The CEO" which is a generally accepted summary used by South Australian Councils.
 - **LTFP** - There is an overview section and the CEO's Statement of Financial Sustainability that are summaries.
- **Strategic Management Plan (SMP) Documents** - The SMP documents have two roles when developed with the ABP, initially the previously adopted documents set the target for the ABP (which has been the case when building the ABP with Elected Members and as shown in the Council reports and documents), and subsequently to take a financially prudent view by looking at the longer term impact of decisions made in the following year on the next 9 years.
- **Mount Gambier 2035** - The Local Government Act requires Councils to develop the Strategic Plan within two years of the Election (i.e. by November 2 years into the Council term). This for many Councils means that they will be developing the ABP whilst the Strategic Plan is being developed. To ensure that the documents that are being developed now are aligned with the future strategic plan, this has been influenced by the draft community vision and the Strategic Work Plan.

QUESTION 40A

- **And that begs my final question...just what were the parameters that council considered and set for the administration to undertake the ABP and budget review 2024/25?**
- **They should have been clearly established prior to workshops, informal etc.? Thank you.**

QUESTION 40A - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Parameters sessions** - were held with members of the Audit and Risk Committee and Elected Members prior to the budget and LTFP workshops.
- **Parameters** - The parameters that were discussed were inflation, the target key financial indicators and the key financial indicator targets as per the previously adopted LTFP.

QUESTION 40 B

I note with concern the rising annual costs of expenses for Materials, Contracts and Other as a line item in the financial statements indicatively in the 2023 adopted budget of \$14.4m, the 2024 adopted budget of \$20.1m - a 19% rise and this draft budget 2025 of 16.8% rise respectively.

This would appear unsustainable. In approving the 2025 budget, what specific review did council effect to attempt to get this rise under control?

What action has been taken by council to reduce this progressive rise of this expense line?



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL

Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

What amounts within this line item has been expended (or for 2025 forecast) over these three years for a) professional fees other than legal, b) legal fees, c) contractors. thank you

QUESTION 40 B - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

Review of Budget Increases - Prior to endorsing the budget for public consultation a number of steps were taken:

- **Review** - The budget created by Managers across the organisation supported by the Finance team were reviewed by the General Managers and the Manager Financial Services. \$0.7m of costs/additional revenue were identified to improve the operating result.
- **Approach** - The majority of the expenditure reviewed on a line-by-line basis was within the "Materials, Contracts and Other" category.
- **Methodology** - A bottom-up approach to budgeting was undertaken in the development and review of the budget with Managers and Council's Executive. The proposed budget was compared at the past 3 years of actual expenditure, the half year expenditure for the current year and the current year forecast. Budget principles (that were communicated across the organisation, and to the Audit and Risk Committee and Elected Members were applied (including inflation to be included only where there was a contractual agreement for operating expenditure)).
- **Actual Information** - Actual expenditure is analysed further in the notes to the audited financial statements (which show professional fees other than legal fees e.g. audit fees, consultants fees, legal fees, and contractors).

QUESTION 41

Q41 L.T.F.P. Key Financial Ratios. Apart from Fy 2025, all financial ratios (except Asset Renewal which is not relevant for this consideration) have significant "capacity" to adjust and balance out the significant rate increases proposed for 2024/25 and 2025/26 without exceeding Financial Ratio targets.

The stated requirements to meet a 2027 target because of "policy" appears incorrect: no such requirement is apparent from council's relevant documents.

Why then is this target referenced and apparently used to inflate rate rises this 2024/25 year and 2025/26?

How and why was it introduced to become a dominant factor in budget development to the unnecessary detriment of ratepayers?

QUESTION 41 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

Target Ratios - The Draft LTFP shows that Council's Treasury Management Policy targets are met by 2026/2027. The requirement to achieve these ratios is included both in the Council agenda (ABP and LTFP reports) and the draft documents (as has been the case for the 2022/2023 ABP and 2023-2032 LTFP and the 2023/2024 ABP and 2024-2033 LTFP) as referenced below:

- **Council Agenda 21 May 2024 - Item 19.2 Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget For Public Consultation Page 47**

Financial Targets – as per Council Treasury Management Policy, we have clear targets for 2026/2027 including a positive Operating Surplus Ratio, Net Financial Liability Ratio of less than 100% and an Asset Renewal Funding Ratio of 100%. Our Budget and Long Term Financial Plan needs to ensure we meet these targets in that year and for all future years.



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL
Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

- **Council Agenda 21 May 2024 - Item 19.2 Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget For Public Consultation Summary Table Page 49 - Table as shown below:**

Summary	Key Measure	Adopted Budget 2024	Draft Budget 2025	Adopted LTFP 2025	Target
Revenue Assumptions	General Rate Increase (excluding growth)	5.53%	10.24%	5.7%	5.7%
	Assessment Growth	0.67%	1.00%	0.5%	0.5%
	Waste Service Charge	6.2%	43.8%	6.2%	6.2%
Key Financial Indicators	Operating Surplus Ratio	-6.7%	-3.5%	-4.3%	> \$0 by FY 2027
	Net Financial Liabilities	117%	100%	108%	< 100% by FY 2027
	Asset Renewal Funding Ratio	100%	100%	100%	> or = 100%
Operating Expenditure	Operating expenditure (\$'m)	45.1	50.3	46.0	
Capital Expenditure	Asset Renewals (\$'m)	5.8	8.7	6.6	
	New/Upgrade (\$'m)	3.9	2.7	0.7	

- **Draft 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget Document Pages 23-24 -** The key financial ratios are defined in terms of the purpose, calculation and target.
- **Council Agenda 21 May 2024 - Item 19.3 Draft Long Term Financial Plan For Consultation Pages 142-143**

5.Revised LTFP - The draft Long Term Financial Plan has been updated to consider changes from 2023/24 onwards.

Scenario	Average Ratio	Min Target	Yr Target Achieved	No of years above target ratio	Average Ratio	Max Target	Yr Target Achieved	Peak Ratio	Peak Year	No of years below target ratio
Adopted LTFP	2.1%	0.0%	2027	7	61.5%	100.0%	2026	117.20%	2024	8
Draft LTFP	2.8%	0.0%	2027	8	54.3%	100.0%	2025	99.66%	2025	10

Based upon the analysis summarised in the table above it can be seen that the Draft LTFP achieves (over the long term) the Key Financial Indicators (KFI) targets as included in the Draft Treasury Management Policy (on average over the LTFP) and by the target date of FY 2027:

- **Operating Surplus Ratio** - The average operating surplus ratio over the ten years is 2.8% (target of positive ratio by FY 2027) and is higher than the average included in the previously adopted LTFP.
- **Net Financial Liabilities Ratio (NFL)** - The target of a ratio of lower than 100% by FY 2027 is achieved and on average the target of lower than 100% is achieved over the 10 years of the LTFP.
- **Asset Renewal Funding Ratio** - Over the 10 years of the LTFP the renewal capital expenditure is aligned with the Asset Management Plans and as such the ratio is 100%.
- **Council Agenda 21 May 2024 - Item 19.3 Draft Long Term Financial Plan For Consultation Page 145**

Financial Targets – as per Council Treasury Management Policy, we have clear targets for 2026/2027 including a positive Operating Surplus Ratio, Net Financial Liability Ratio of less than 100% and an Asset Renewal Funding Ratio of 100%. Our Budget and Long Term Financial Plan needs to ensure we meet these targets in that year and for all future years.

Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2034 Document - Includes multiple references to Key Financial Indicator targets and T150 Treasury Management Policy as follows:



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL
Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

Page 7 - Significant Influences and Challenges - Includes the following:

Key Financial Indicators:

The following targets have been set in line with the adopted T150 Treasury Management Policy:

- **Operating Surplus Ratio %** - Positive surplus ratio by FY 2027.
- **Net Financial Liabilities Ratio %** - Net Financial Liabilities Ratio of lower than 100% to be achieved by FY 2027.
- **Asset Renewal Funding Ratio %** - 100% or greater throughout the duration of the LTFP.

If any of the targets are not achieved (i.e. if growth or CPI is lower than planned), this will mean that other assumptions will need to be changed to ensure that the targets set by the LTFP are achieved.

Page 14 - CEO's Statement of Financial Sustainability - Includes the following:

Our Financial Sustainability:

Council has three Key Financial Indicators (KFI) per Council's Treasury Management Policy that measure financial sustainability. It should be noted that all three KFIs achieve the targets set by Council's Treasury Management Policy (T150) as shown below:

- **Operating Surplus Ratio** - The ratio is positive over the 10 year period with an average ratio of 2.8%, achieving a positive ratio from FY 2027 onwards.
- **Net Financial Liabilities Ratio** - The average ratio over the 10 years is 55.2%, achieving a ratio of less than 100% in 2025.
- **Asset Renewal Ratio** - The Asset Renewal Ratio is 100% over the 10 years of the LTFP, aligned with the forward works program and Asset Management Plan.

These indicators are evaluated in more detail within this document and together, show that Council will achieve its financial sustainability in the medium to long term.

Page 22 - Key Financial Ratios - Includes the following:

Treasury Management Policy - The following graphs and accompanying commentary are set against targets included in the adopted "Treasury Management Policy" as shown below:

6.3 Key Financial Indicators (KFIs)

- Council ensures long term financial sustainability using key financial indicators in its LTFP. Council has the following targets:
 - **Operating Surplus Ratio** – To achieve a positive operating surplus ratio by FY 2027.
 - **Net Financial Liabilities Ratio** – Achieve a target of less than 100% of total operating revenue by FY 2027; and
 - **Asset Renewal Funding Ratio** - Maintain asset renewal funding ratio of greater than or equal to 100% of the Asset Management Plan."

Page 23, 24, and 25 - Key Financial Ratios - Includes the following:

- The key financial ratios are defined in terms of the purpose, calculation and target.



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL

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T150 Treasury Management Policy - Was reviewed by the Audit Committee in November 2021 and adopted by Council in November 2021. <https://cdn.mountgambier.sa.gov.au/agendas-minutes/Audit-Committee-Agenda-08-11-2021.pdf>

This revision included the introduction of the Key Financial Indicators targets (highlighted in the Audit Committee report) with all changes shown in the attachment. It should be noted that the Treasury Management Policy is referenced in the ABP and LTFP reports.

The Treasury Management Policy includes the following reference:

6.3 **Key Financial Indicators (KFIs)**

Council ensures long term financial sustainability using key financial indicators in its LTFP. Council has the following targets:

- **Operating Surplus Ratio** – To achieve a positive operating surplus ratio by FY 2027.
- **Net Financial Liabilities Ratio** – Achieve a target of less than 100% of total operating revenue by FY 2027; and
- **Asset Renewal Funding Ratio** - Maintain asset renewal funding ratio of greater than or equal to 100% of the Asset Management Plan.

Review of T150 Treasury Management Policy - It should also be noted that the current policy was adopted in November 2021 with a review date of November 2024.

https://cdn.mountgambier.sa.gov.au/general-images/T150-Treasury-Management_2023-05-24-053436_bzhl.pdf

The targets were aligned with the terms of the special conditions of the loan with the LGFA (Local Government Financing Authority) accepted by Council at the Special Council meeting on 23 March 2021 (as follows):

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council Report No. AR21/17395 titled 'Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre Funding' as presented on 23 March 2021 be noted.
2. That Council accept the special conditions of the loan approval for the Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre imposed by the Local Government Finance Authority and will, as forecast in the current adopted Long-Term Financial Plan, not later than the end of the financial year ending 30 June 2027 have achieved:
 - A positive Operating Surplus Ratio
 - Net Financial Liabilities Ratio less than 100%;
 - Asset Renewal Ratios which align with forecasts set out in the Long-Term Financial Plan
 - That Council not undertake any capital projects or increase the costs of operations through new or enhanced services other than as set out in the Long-Term Financial Plan.

QUESTION 42

Q42 L.T.F.P. Key Financial Ratios. What specific information was given to councillors in workshops or elsewhere steering them to adopt the proposed significant rate increases?

QUESTION 42 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

Elected Members were provided with number of rating scenarios at the public budget/LTFP workshops that considered the following:

Key Financial Indicator Targets:



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL

Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

- **Operating Surplus Ratio** - To achieve a positive operating surplus ratio by FY 2027.
- **Net Financial Liabilities Ratio** - Achieve a target of less than 100% of total operating revenue by FY 2027; and
- **Asset Renewal Funding Ratio** - Maintain asset renewal funding ratio of greater than or equal to 100% of the Asset Management Plan."

Other Considerations:

- Rating Practicality;
- Organisational Capacity; and
- Tranche 3 ESCOSA SMP Advice Scheme.

Council's s92 Code of Practice for Access to Meetings and Documents accessible [here](#)

Clause 6 *Information and briefing sessions*

6.10 There is no obligation for councils to make documents provided to council members at information or briefing sessions available to the public. In addition, documents presented to information or briefing sessions that are closed to the public because they comprise information or a matter listed in section 90(3) are confidential at law.

6.11 Absent a specific decision of the Council or Chief Executive Officer to the contrary, documents presented to information or briefing sessions are not publicly available and documents presented to information or briefing sessions that are closed to the public are confidential.

QUESTION 43

Q43 A.B.P. Project/Expense Items Listed projects can always be deferred to cut spending if essential in any year.

What project items (CapEx and OpEx) items were considered for removal/deferral to reduce the total budget expenses as a means to reduce expenses and reduce rate increases?

What was the prioritised list for the expense items listed in the 2024/25 draft Annual Business Plan? Thank you.

QUESTION 43 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Operating Result Review** - The budget created by Managers across the organisation supported by the Finance team were reviewed by the General Managers and the Manager Financial Services. \$0.7m of costs/additional revenue were identified to improve the operating result.
- **Capital Expenditure Review** - Attention was especially given to expenditure on renewal of assets, maintaining services and addressing growth. For new assets the focus was also on capacity to deliver with design in year 1 and construct in year 2.
- **Projects List** - Operating and capital projects included in the ABP have been included in the Draft 2024-2025 ABP document.

QUESTION 44



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL

Submitted by Mr Graham Walkom

Q44 Wulanda factors in expenses. A F.A.Q. asked and answered by council on the "Have your say" website is "Have rates increased because of Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre?" Answer: No, the proposed rate increase is not due to the Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre. The Council has absorbed these costs within the existing budget."

Just what do you mean by absorbed the costs into the budget but not affected the budget?

This could only be the case if all income equalled all expenses. I think the question here in F.A.Q. is clear enough. "What is the effect of Wulanda on the budget."

QUESTION 44 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Comparison to Adopted LTFP** - The adopted LTFP included Wulanda operations for 2024/2025. As such the LTFP target and the budget both include Wulanda operations.
- **Draft 2024/2025 Budget** - We note the interest in understanding the revenue and expenditure for Wulanda in actual terms and for future forecasts. The net cost of running the centre is estimated to be c\$1.4m for 2024/2025.
- **Annual Performance Reporting** - Given that Wulanda has been operating for just over one year the first full year of operations and financial results are expected to be reported to Council by the end of the first quarter of 2024/2025.

QUESTION 45

Q45 Further to Budget Review #3 (BR3) Does council have any outstanding loans or borrowings or depreciation attributable to the Wulanda centre? If so please provide an itemised list.

QUESTION 45 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Budget Review 3** - Is outside of the scope of this consultation that is focused on the Draft Annual Business Plan, LTFP and AMPs.
- **Borrowings** - The LTFP shows Council's overall forecast 2023/2024 borrowings (page 26) as \$34.5m (as also shown in the Budget Review 3 report).
- **Annual Reporting** - Aligned with T150 Council's Treasury Management Policy annual reporting on Council's investments and borrowings is reported to the Audit and Risk Committee and forms part of the public agendas.

QUESTION 46

Q46 Further to Budget Review #3 (BR#) Second question What are council's costs/outgo/payments for the Wulanda centre 2023/24 (budget and actuals) specifically for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years?

What are council's income/receipts for the Wulanda centre 2023/24 (budget and actuals) and those specifically for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years?

QUESTION 46 - COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Budget Review 3** - Is outside of the scope of this consultation that is focused on the Draft Annual Business Plan, LTFP and AMPs.



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA COUNCIL'S HAVE YOUR SAY Q&A TOOL
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- **Actual Performance** – Actual performance is outside of the scope of this consultation. It should, however, be noted that Wulanda's actual revenue is shown in the notes to the financial statements.
- **Draft 2024/2025 Budget** - We note the interest in understanding the revenue and expenditure for Wulanda in actual terms and for future forecasts. The net cost of running the centre is estimated to be c\$1.4m for 2024/2025.
- **Annual Performance Reporting** - Given that Wulanda has been operating for just over one year the first full year of operations and financial results are expected to be reported to Council by the end of the first quarter of 2024/2025.

QUESTION 47

What CapEx and OpEx items originally incurred to facilitate development of the Wulanda project have been cost shifted to the general budget in the financial years 2021/22; 2022/23 and 2023/24 and what is planned to be cost shifted in 2024/25?

QUESTION 47 COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

- **Response** - Council Administration is unable to answer this question as it is unclear. Further clarity is required before a formal response can be provided.



Question Submitted – Nada Clark

Dear Madam, Sir ,

I have been unable to register through "Have your say" and am asking you to record the following question on my behalf.

"What is the total cost for the Wulanda Recreation Centre since inception until today for concept design, design, professional fees (all), tendering, contract, carparking, roadworks, and finishing including landscaping."

Yours Sincerely Nada Clark

Draft Council Administration Response:

As per the link below:

<https://www.mountgambier.sa.gov.au/news/opening-date-announced-for-wulanda>



5 MEETING CLOSE

