

2025/2026 Business Plan and Budget Summary



City of
Mount Gambier



A message from the Mayor

The Annual Business Plan and Budget Summary outlines Council's objectives, services, programs and commitments for the 2025/2026 financial year.

Budgeting is always about balance, and this year we approached the process with careful restraint. We took into consideration the recommendations from the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA), issued in late February 2025, while thoroughly reviewing our operational and capital budgets.

Through a series of collaborative workshops with Council staff and Elected Members, we examined fees, charges, and project allocations - prioritising essential needs and postponing non-essential spending. We also engaged with our community to better understand what matters most to our residents.

As a result, the \$52.2 million budget delivers a balanced financial position and demonstrates a commitment to responsible financial management. The total rate revenue increase of 7.81% (excluding growth) is lower than the 8.4% (excluding growth) previously forecast in the Long Term Financial Plan. For the average residential ratepayer, this equates to an increase of approximately \$33 per quarter, including the Waste Service Charge (WSC).

The WSC for 2025/2026 is \$344.00 per applicable assessment, reflecting unavoidable cost pressures in landfill operations and service contracts. Despite this, the charge remains below original forecasts, due to proactive budgeting and contract management.

As part of our commitment to responsible financial management, Council reviews the rate in the dollar each year to ensure we only collect the revenue required to fund services and infrastructure for our community. Increases in property value does not mean Council collects more money. Instead, the rate in the dollar is lowered to reflect the higher property values, so that the total amount collected remains in line with the budget. This approach ensures fairness across the community by ensuring ratepayers aren't overcharged and that rates are shared equitably.

This budget supports some important projects across the city, including road upgrades, solar lighting renewal at Blue Lake/Warwar, CBD master planning and activation, and open space planning and facility improvements to meet current needs, while investing in our city's future.

Council remains committed to maintaining existing services, renewing and managing our assets and progressing strategic projects that support the long term wellbeing and economic sustainability of our city.

Lynette Martin

**Lynette Martin OAM
MAYOR**



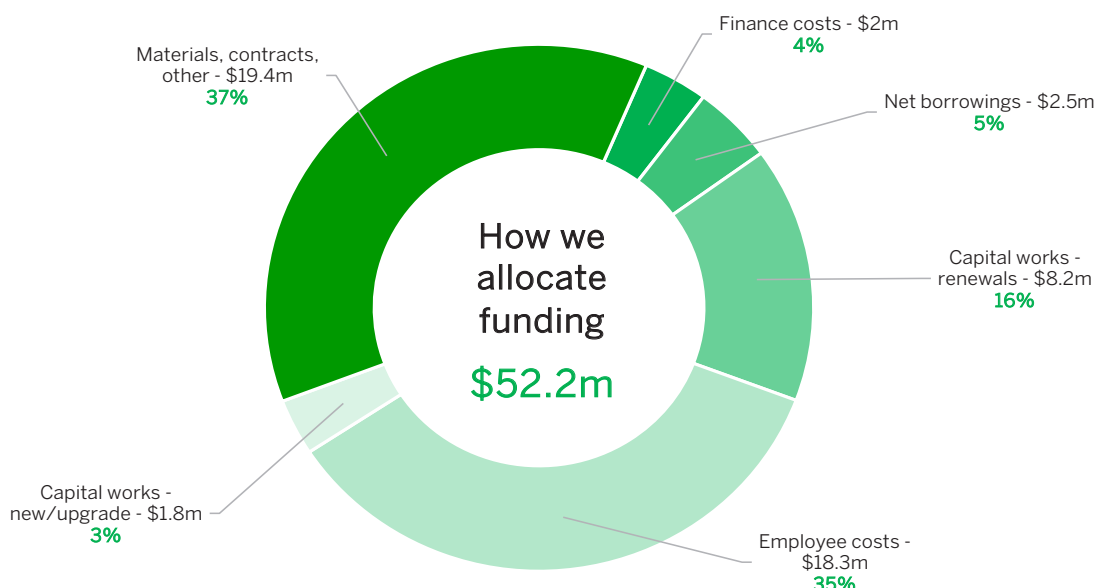
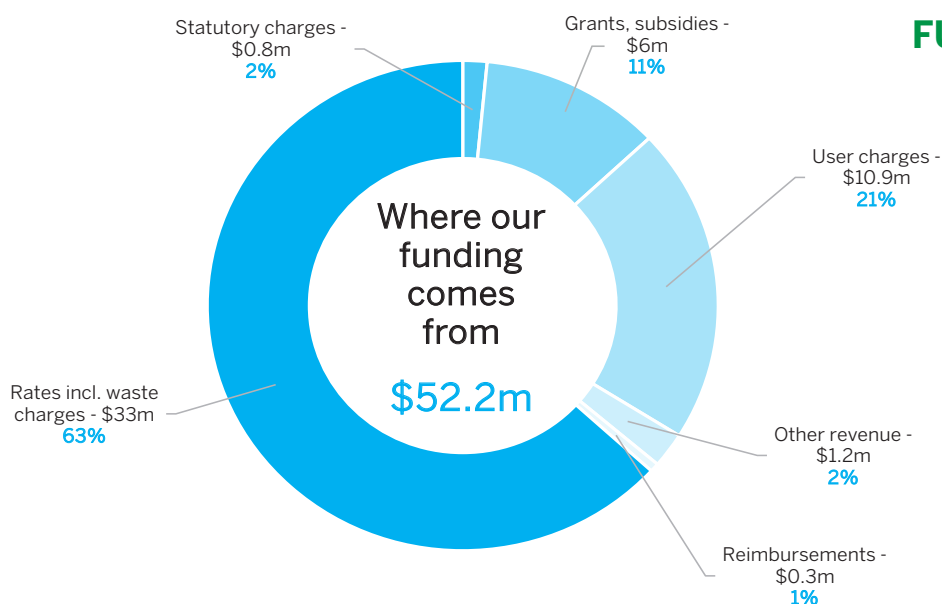
To view the City of Mount Gambier 2025/2026 Annual Business Plan and Budget, scan the QR code or visit our website - www.mountgambier.sa.gov.au

SERVICES PROVIDED BY COUNCIL

The City of Mount Gambier delivers a broad range of services to support and enhance the community. Some of these include the operation and upkeep of local infrastructure such as roads, parks, gardens, playgrounds, street lighting, public amenities, cemeteries, sport and recreation facilities, Mount Gambier Library, the Riddoch Arts and Cultural Centre, Waste Transfer Station, ReUse Market and Caroline Landfill, along with the provision of community events, visitor servicing, environmental sustainability initiatives and waste collection. Council is also required to undertake animal control, and parking, building, planning and public health regulation.

The Annual Business Plan outlines Council's planned services, programs, and projects for 2025/2026. Its goal is to provide effective services while advancing the city's long-term priorities, as identified in the City of Mount Gambier 2024-2028 Strategic Plan. The objectives for the year align with Council's Long Term Financial Plan and Asset Management Plans, ensuring the ongoing financial sustainability and responsible management of Council's resources, while also giving consideration to the recent advice provided by the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA).

FUNDING AND EXPENDITURE SUMMARY 2025/2026



Download the My Local Services app to receive kerbside bin collection reminders, report an issue and get handy recycling tips.



2024/2025 OBJECTIVES

During the 2024/2025 financial year 95% of Council's annual objectives were achieved or are in progress.

Some of the key achievements are outlined below.

2025/2026 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

With finite resources, pressures to deliver more and changes in consumer expectations of services, there is a growing need for Council to deliver services tailored to demand.

Some of the key highlights in the 2025/2026 budget are listed below.

What we achieved in 2024/2025		Key objectives for 2025/2026	
<p>Learn to ride space completed at the Railway Lands</p>		<p>\$361,000 public lighting upgrade including Blue Lake/ Warwar solar lighting and CBD</p>	
	<p>Essential services maintained including 1,079,966 kerbside bin collections</p>		<p>Further development and implementation of CBD Master Plan</p>
<p>More than \$470,000 distributed through the Grants and Sponsorship Program</p>		<p>Renewal of James Street toilet facilities</p>	
	<p>\$11.6 million invested in asset renewal and upgrade</p>		<p>\$10 million allocated to asset renewal and upgrade</p>
<p>Adoption of Community Vision Mount Gambier 2035 and 2024-2028 Strategic Plan</p>	<p>MOUNT GAMBIER  A community vision for our regional capital</p>	<p>Rail Trail extension to O'Leary Road</p>	
	<p>153,161* attendees at Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre *as at 31 May 2025</p>		<p>Adoption and implementation of Waste and Resource Recovery Master Plan</p>

RATES INFORMATION

RATES

Rates are Council's main source of revenue. Council has determined to raise differential rates based on the use of the land. Land use is recognised by state taxing agencies and is easily identified and understood by communities. It is therefore considered the most appropriate method for applying different rates by the majority of councils.

VALUATION

Council continues to use the capital value determined by the Office of the Valuer-General as the basis for valuing land within this council area.

FIXED CHARGE

A fixed charge ensures all rateable properties pay a base amount to the cost of administering council activities and maintaining the services and infrastructure that supports each property.

WASTE SERVICE CHARGE

The Waste Service Charge (WSC) reflects the cost of providing the kerbside waste service provision to the community and is charged on the basis of the service being available at the property. The WSC was introduced four years ago when it was seperated from general rates to highlight the cost of waste management.

REGIONAL LANDSCAPE LEVY

Councils are required under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* to collect the levy on all rateable properties on behalf of the State Government. The levy helps to fund the operations of regional landscape boards who have responsibility for the management of the State's natural resources. Council collects this levy on behalf of State Government and does not retain the revenue nor determine how the revenue is spent.



14,924
rateable
properties



Fixed
charge

+



Variable
charge
(property value x
differential rate)

+



Waste
Service
Charge

=



Council
rates

+



Regional
Landscape
Levy

=



Total rates
payable

RATING ANALYSIS	2025/ 2026	2024/ 2025
Fixed Charge	\$683.90	\$634.65
Waste Service Charge	\$344.00	\$311.00
Residential cents in the \$	0.182106	0.187051
Primary Production / Other cents in the \$	0.182106	0.187051
Commercial / Industry / Vacant Land cents in the \$	0.491686	0.505038

RATES ASSISTANCE

Council is committed to supporting our community during challenging times. If you are having difficulty keeping up with your rate payments, please contact us as soon as possible for a confidential discussion. We are here to help and can work with you to arrange a flexible payment plan tailored to your circumstances.

HOW THE BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET IS DEVELOPED

The Annual Business Plan and Budget is set and adopted by Elected Members.

Elected Member and Audit and Risk Committee workshops were held to develop the budget and discuss priorities.

Community members were invited to provide feedback on the Draft 2025/2026 Annual Business Plan and Budget from 23 May to 17 June 2025 and two public information sessions were held.

Elected Members adopted the Annual Business Plan and Budget for the 2025/2026 financial year on 24 June 2025.

