

# 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget Summary



City of  
Mount Gambier

## On behalf of Elected Members, I present the 2024/2025 City of Mount Gambier Annual Business Plan and Budget Summary.

Budget deliberations have been particularly challenging this year, as we grapple to balance priorities with the financial climate, being mindful of cost of living pressures and the provision of service delivery required to meet community expectations

and ensure that Council is positioned for long term financial sustainability.

Council delivers a whole range of services to our residents in line with community expectations and in accordance with the Asset Management Plan and the Long Term Financial Plan to maintain our assets and our city. To support that work, we have made the difficult decision to increase rates to 10.13 per cent, excluding growth in the 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget.

Like everyone within the community, Council is feeling the pressure of cost escalations and has attempted to minimise the impact of increasing costs for our ratepayers for several years. We have absorbed the impact of growth and rated below CPI, and we are now unable to continue to absorb the true additional service and waste costs and must increase rates.

This rating model enables Council to enhance services, meet key financial ratios and allows capacity to support the future growth of the organisation and the implementation of strategic plans such as Mount Gambier 2035 and the Sport, Recreation and Open Space Strategy (SROSS). We not only continue our existing services, but also have priority projects enhancing our unique local spaces, such as Umpherston Sinkhole/Balumbul and the Crater Lakes area. We are also looking forward to working with volunteers, including establishing some new programs which will make our city even more attractive and improve liveability. We are investing in the arts, and in designing the shape of our city.

I look forward to continuing to work with Elected Members and Council staff as we focus on delivering exciting and progressive projects for both residents and visitors to our city to enjoy.

**Lynette Martin OAM  
MAYOR**



## Council's proposed 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget is focused on providing a balance of capacity to maintain and improve assets and services for the community, and long term financial sustainability.

Unlocking projects will provide capacity within the organisation, review service levels and seek efficiencies. We will assess our asset management planning approach, business systems and infrastructure and workforce planning framework. Importantly, we will also begin work to explore the growth opportunities associated with Council's strategic plans. As part of the Mount Gambier 2035 Strategic Plan project to create a collective vision for our city, our community told us that they want us to deliver some great things, and we are confident that the budget being presented to you, gives us the financial capacity to work with you on that.

The average residential ratepayer will pay \$1,342\* in 2024/2025 which equates to an overall increase of \$119. The average residential rate is below the South Australian average which was \$1,898 for the metropolitan area and \$1,725 for rural areas in 2023/2024 (City of Mount Gambier was \$1,223).

Council understands the financial pressures our residents are currently facing, and we have historically endeavoured to keep rates as low as possible to ease the burden on local households. In 2020/2021 Council applied a zero rate increase to assist ratepayers during COVID, and in 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 rate increases were below the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Council is not immune to the universal surge in costs and can no longer continue to absorb compounding increases, hence the difficult decision has been made to increase rates.

City of Mount Gambier remains dedicated to offering a wide range of services to benefit our residents. We are committed to ensuring ongoing sustainability so that our assets are maintained and provided to a good standard, and where we can provide the foundations for our thriving city into the future.

**Sarah Philpott  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

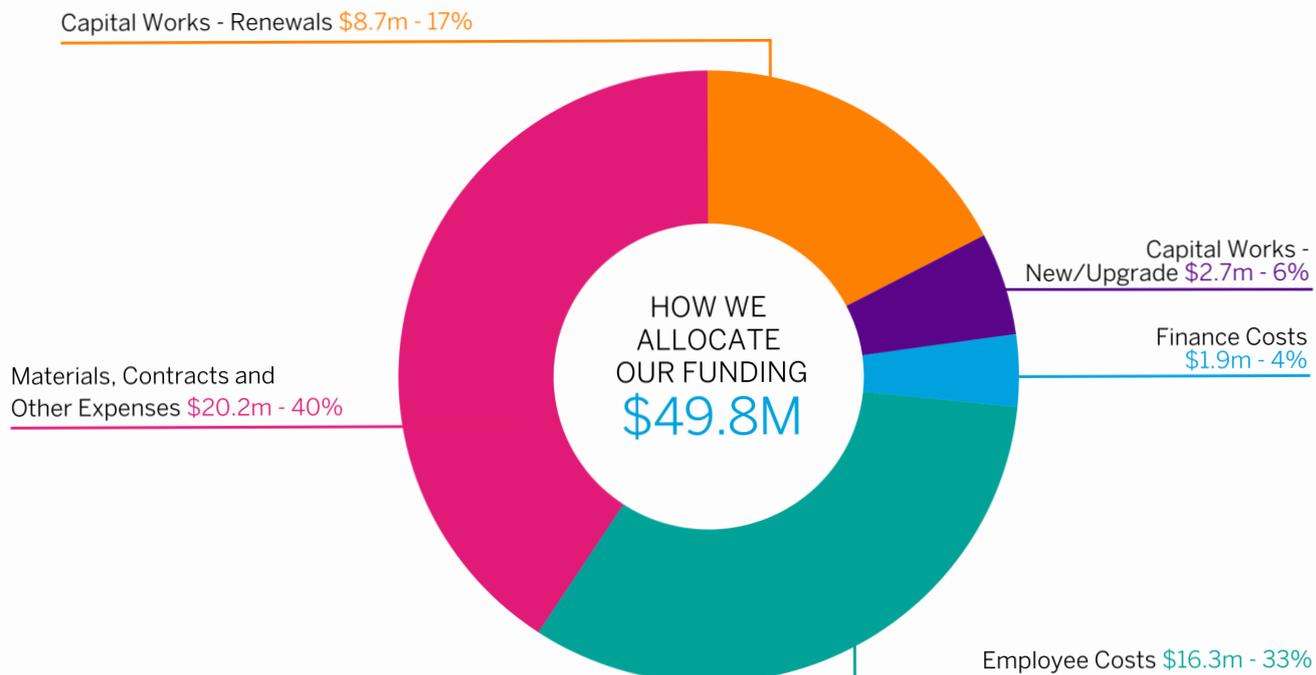
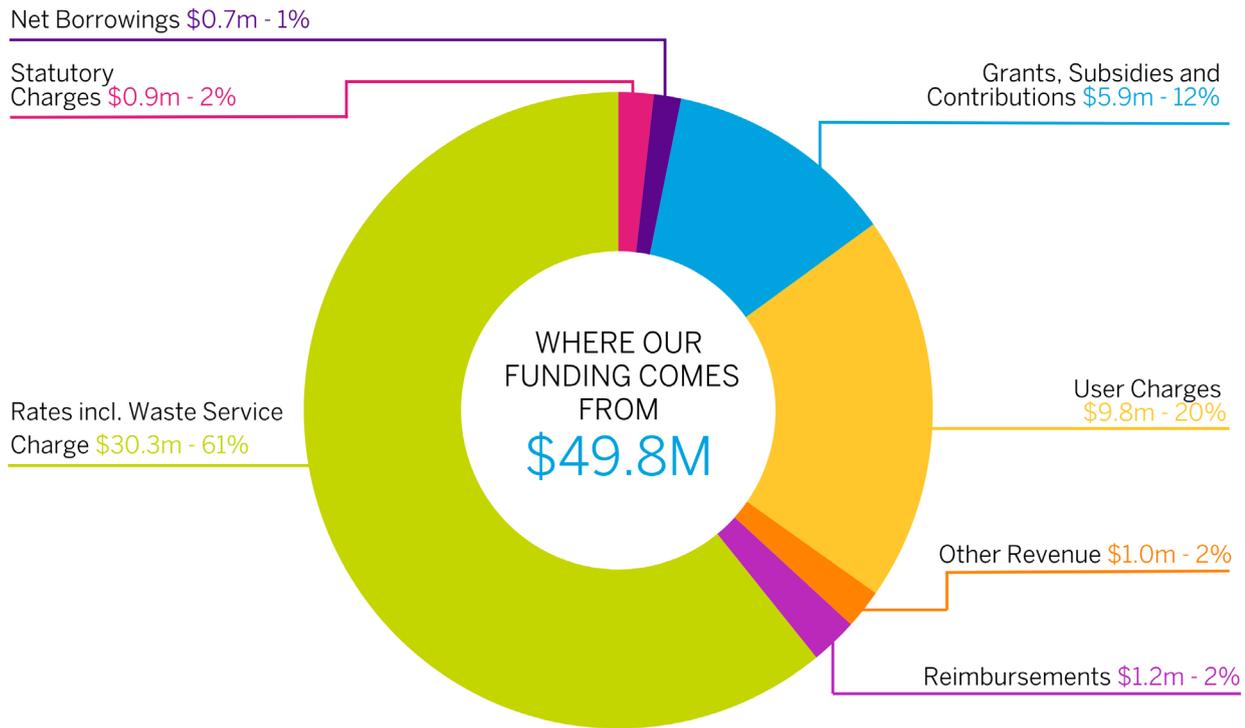
The City of Mount Gambier 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget outlines the services, programs and activities Council plans to deliver over the next 12 months. The objectives and key initiatives outlined in the plan are guided by the vision and goals set out in the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, Long Term Financial Plan and Asset Management Plans. These documents can be viewed on our website - [www.mountgambier.sa.gov.au](http://www.mountgambier.sa.gov.au)

## SERVICES PROVIDED BY COUNCIL

The City of Mount Gambier provides a wide range of services for the benefit of the community, including managing and maintaining infrastructure such as local roads, parks, gardens and playgrounds, cemeteries, the Library, Riddoch Arts and Cultural Centre, Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre, Caroline Landfill, sporting grounds and street lighting.

The Annual Business Plan sets out Council's proposed services, programs and projects for 2024/2025. It aims to maintain an efficient service for the community and continued progress towards the longer term objectives of the city as set out in the City of Mount Gambier 2020-2024 Strategic Plan. Specific objectives for the year are consistent with Council's Long Term Financial Plan and Asset Management Plans to ensure the long term sustainability of Council's financial performance and position.

## FUNDING AND EXPENDITURE SUMMARY 2024/2025



## 2023/2024 ANNUAL OBJECTIVES

30 annual objectives were included in the 2023/2024 Annual Business Plan adopted by Council in June 2023, including existing service delivery.

14 objectives are ongoing, five are in progress, six are deferred, one is not yet started and four are complete.

## 2024/2025 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

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

This Annual Business Plan will focus on maintaining service standards efficiently.

Highlights in 2023/2024		Some objectives for 2024/2025	
<p><b>156,208*</b> <b>attendees</b> at Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre <small>*as at 31 May 2024</small></p> 		<p><b>CBD activation and events</b> Allocation to support CBD activation and additional events</p> 	
	<p><b>1,057,014 kerbside bin lifts</b> completed in 2023/2024</p>		<p><b>Visitor servicing</b> Implementation of a new visitor servicing model</p>
<p><b>Mount Gambier 2035</b> Development of a draft community vision to inform Council's Strategic Plan to 2035</p>	<p><b>MOUNT GAMBIER 2035</b>  A community vision for our regional capital</p>	<p><b>Crater Lakes activation</b> Commencement of the Crater Lakes Trails Plan and further fire recovery</p>	
	<p><b>Shared Path Master Plan</b> A framework highlighting future improvements to the quality, connectivity and safety of shared paths throughout the city</p>		<p><b>\$11.4 million</b> capital program for renewal and upgraded assets</p>
<p><b>Dog and Cat Management Plan</b> 2024-2028 Dog and Cat Management Plan developed and endorsed</p>		<p><b>Master planning</b> for parks and recreation areas</p>	
	<p><b>Volunteer Program</b> Volunteer Management Plan developed and endorsed</p>		<p><b>Waste management</b> Implementation of strategy and master planning</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 will continue to use the capital value determined by the Office of the Valuer-General as the basis for valuing land within the council area.

## FIXED CHARGE

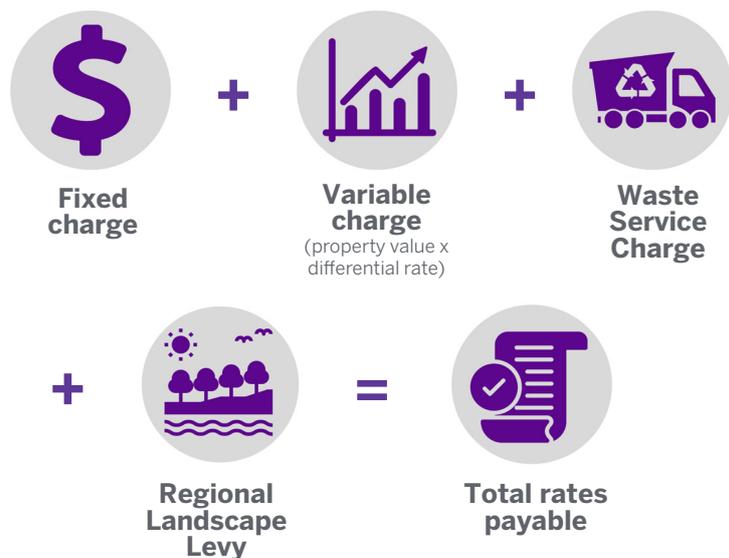
A fixed charge ensures all rateable properties pay a base amount to the cost of administering council activities and maintaining the services and infrastructure that supports each property.

## WASTE SERVICE CHARGE

To highlight the cost of waste management, Council adjusted its rating structure in 2021/2022 to remove the waste component from the general rates and introduce it as a new separate fixed Waste Service Charge (WSC).

## 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.



**14,795**  
rateable  
properties

## RATING ANALYSIS

	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025
Fixed Charge	\$566.60	\$634.65
Waste Service Charge	\$217.70	\$311.00
Residential cents in the \$	0.19147	0.187051
Primary Production / Other cents in the \$	0.19147	0.187051
Commercial / Industry / Vacant Land cents in the \$	0.51697	0.505038

## RATES ASSISTANCE

Council encourages ratepayers who are experiencing financial difficulties and are unable to meet standard rate payments to contact the rates office at the earliest opportunity to discuss options for alternative payment arrangements. Council encourages ratepayers to communicate with Council to arrange a flexible approach. Payment arrangements can be negotiated and all enquiries are treated confidentially.

## 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 2024/2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget.

On 25 June 2024 Elected Members adopted the Annual Business Plan and Budget for the 2024/2025 financial year.

## CITY OF MOUNT GAMBIER

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