



2026/27

Annual Business Plan & Budget





- **Draft adopted by Council**
Tuesday 21 April 2026

- **Community engagement commenced**
Friday 1 May 2026, 8:30am

- **Public meeting**
Wednesday 13 May 2026, 6:30pm
Meningie Bowling Club

- **Public meeting**
Tuesday 26 May 2026, 6:30pm
Coorong Civic Centre, Tailem Bend

- **Community engagement concluded**
Friday 29 May 2026, 5:00pm

- **Community engagement submissions adopted**
Tuesday 9 June 2026

- **Adoption of final Annual Business Plan & Budget**
Tuesday 7 July 2026

Acknowledgement

OF COUNTRY

Coorong District Council acknowledges and pays respect to the Ngarrindjeri and Ngarkat People, the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet. We pay respect to all Australians who have made and continue to make a positive contribution to our culture and way of life in this country we live in and share together – Australia.



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Version History

Version	Status	Release Date
1	Draft for Council meeting and Special Audit & Risk Committee meeting <i>(both meetings held 21 April 2026 for the purpose of releasing document for community engagement)</i>	17 April 2026
2	Draft released for community engagement	1 May 2026
3	Final document for adoption by Council	3 July 2026
4	Final plan as adopted by Council	10 July 2026

Message from the **ACTING MAYOR**

It has been an honour to lead the elected body through the 2026/27 budget deliberations. This budget reflects our recently adopted 2026 – 2030 Community Vision Plan, the Long Term Financial Plan and our asset management strategies.

Balancing competing priorities has been challenging, particularly given the ongoing cost-of-living pressures facing our community. In response, Council has focused on protecting core services, renewing our asset base and advancing key strategic projects where funding allows.

Rates and external funding make up almost all of Council's revenue. This year's budget includes an average rate increase of 6.56% (comprising 4.2% CPI (inflation), 1% growth, and a 1.36% rate net increase). While keeping rates as affordable as possible, we will continue to strongly advocate to State and Federal Governments for increased grant funding to support innovation and long-term sustainability.

Our focus remains firmly on the community, and now more than ever before, we need to make appropriate investment for the benefit of future generations and the incoming elected body who will take the reins next year following the postponement of local government elections.

I sincerely thank Elected Members and staff, particularly our outgoing Interim Chief Executive Officer Myles Somers, together with our business and community representatives who have contributed to the development of this budget. Council, together with our incoming Chief Executive Officer, Scott Reardon, look forward to working closely with you over the next year to achieve effective outcomes for the Coorong district.

Jonathan Pietzsch



Message from the **INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Amidst budget preparation and balancing external influences including economic uncertainty and fluctuating cost-of-living factors, Council's focus continues to be squarely fixed on building a resilient district – one that withstands economic challenges but is forward-facing for future prosperity.

It has now been twelve months since the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA) rated our progress toward a sustained budget surplus and responsible asset renewal as 'mostly sustainable.' It is now up to the Elected Members and staff to focus on prudent spending and achieving asset management efficiencies, with these two themes embedded throughout this final plan.

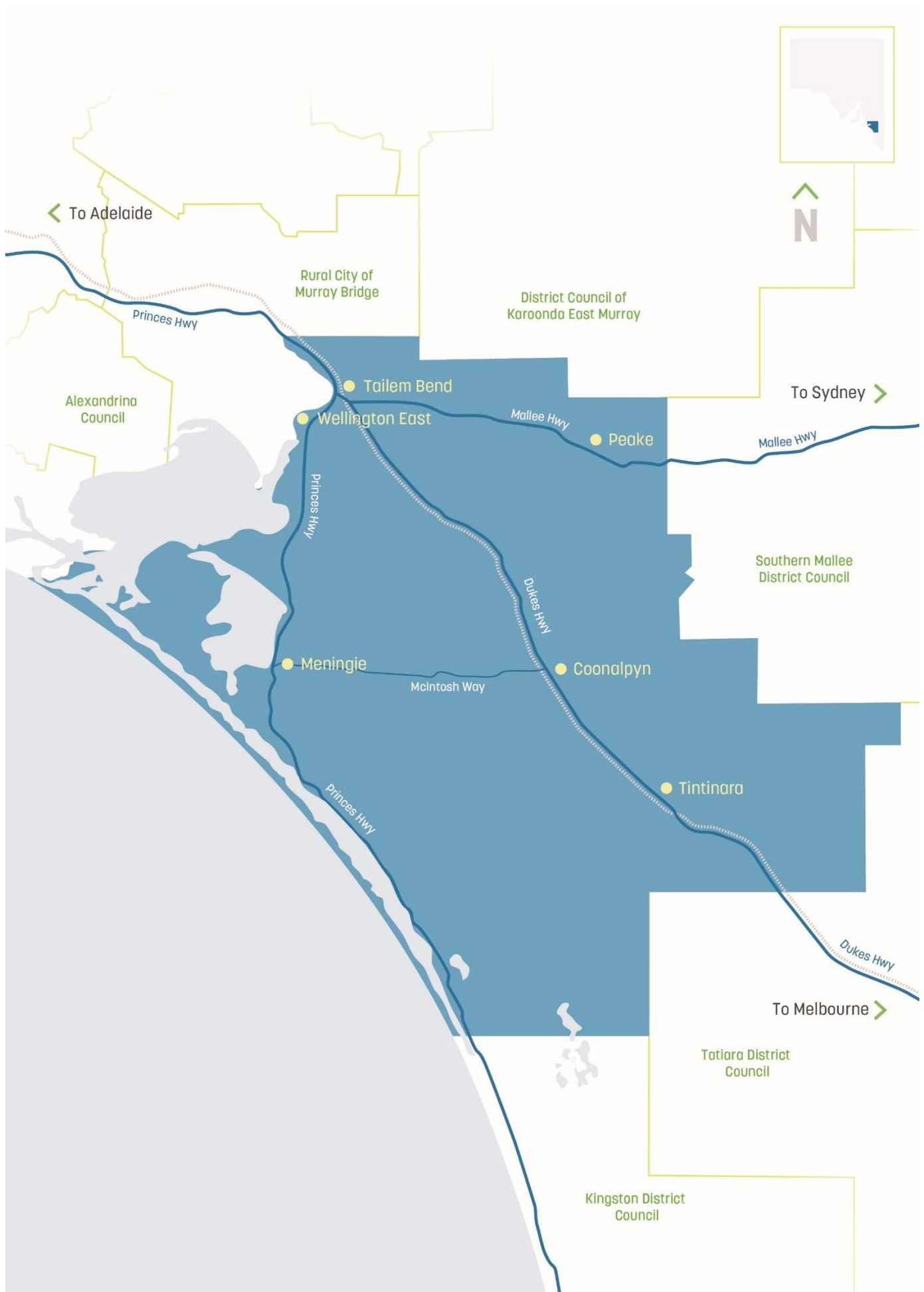
Asset management has been a recurring topic for our Chamber – particularly the last twelve months – as we dedicate time and funding to sustain and maintain the assets we own over their lifetime. As we focus on asset renewal, we're also preparing for growth within the Coorong. A key piece of work for 2026/27 will see continuation of infrastructure provision planning, setting us up for expected growth in Wellington East.

This plan reaffirms our commitment to keeping rates affordable while ensuring long-term sustainability. Modelling is based on an average rate increase of 6.56 percent, comprising 4.2% CPI, 1% growth and a rate net increase of 1.36%.

I thank Elected Members and all staff, together with our business and community representatives who have contributed to development of this plan. My team and the successive Chief Executive Officer look forward to working closely with you over the next year to achieve effective outcomes for the Coorong district.

Myles Somers





Council Services

Like all councils, the Coorong District Council has mandatory responsibilities under various pieces of legislation to provide services for the community. Core services include:

- Setting rates, preparing an annual budget and determining longer-term strategic plans for the district
- Street cleaning and rubbish collection
- Development planning and control
- Management of basic infrastructure including roads, footpaths, parks, street lighting and stormwater drainage
- Regulatory management activities (i.e. compliance, by-laws, car parking)
- Environmental health



In addition to its primary functions, Council delivers activities that enrich our district by encouraging community engagement, backing local events and advancing business and tourism opportunities.

Elected Members



Paul Simmons
Mayor

Elected to Council in 2018



Jonathan Pietzsch
Deputy Mayor
(Acting Mayor)

Elected to Council in 2022



Jeff Arthur
Councillor

Elected to Council in 2010



Sharon Bland
Councillor

Elected to Council in 2008



Ruth Maidment
Councillor

Elected to Council in 2022



Mick O'Hara
Councillor

Elected to Council in 2022



Brenton Qualmann
Councillor

Elected to Council in 2018



Lisa Rowntree
Councillor

Elected to Council in 2018

Strategic Planning Framework

The diagram below demonstrates the relationships between the key documents that make up Council's integrated strategic planning and reporting framework.

At each stage of the framework there are opportunities for community and stakeholder input. This document provided such an opportunity (as outlined on page two), as well as ensuring transparency and accountability to residents and ratepayers.



Measuring our Performance

Council measures its achievements and financial performance through the following processes:

- Annual review of the Long Term Financial Plan
- Production of the Annual Report with audited Financial Statements
- Quarterly budget reviews
- Quarterly progress reports against the Annual Business Plan
- Annual Business Plan & Budget community engagement

Monitoring performance is critical for ensuring accountability, transparency and the delivery of high-quality services to the community. Effective performance monitoring also allows Council to align its activities with overarching strategic objectives, while demonstrating value-for-money for ratepayers.

The types of measures that help the community hold Council accountable are high-level strategic measures, linked to the *Community Vision Plan*.

Together, we can improve community outcomes through informed decision making and understanding.



Alignment to Community Vision Plan



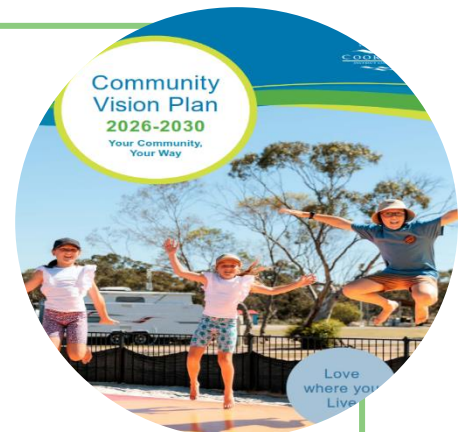
The *Local Government Act 1999* requires Council to include an outline of its objectives for the financial year, and the activities intended to achieve those objectives (whether of a financial or non-financial measure). In compiling these objectives, Council has considered:

- The goals for 2026/27
- The carry-over actions from previous annual business plans
- Maintaining financial sustainability throughout 2026/27

In April 2026, Council adopted the *Community Vision Plan 2026 – 2030*, which will guide Council's work for the next four years. Shaped by significant community input, the plan continues its focus on key pillars of:

- **Community**
- **Economy**
- **Environment**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Leadership**

The plan's objectives and key deliverables (within the 2026/27 year) have been integrated into this annual business plan and budget and will do so for the ensuing four years. On the flip side, progress reporting will commence as of publication of the 2026/27 Annual Report.





COMMUNITY

Support the Coorong Community Health Advancement & Advisory Committee in their efforts to advise Council in ways of addressing loss of services and achieving sustainable continued healthcare. ◆ ▲

Review Council's annual Community Grants, Sponsorship & Funding Program in readiness for the 2027/28 Budget. ▲



ECONOMY

Continue infrastructure provision planning for servicing and growth of Wellington East. ◆ ▲

Develop a Structure Plan focused in Meningie on public places and spaces, community centres and movements of people between areas including sporting & recreation, health services and emergency services locations. ▲



INFRASTRUCTURE

Deliver the Fulwood Avenue/Northcott Terrace, Tintinara sealed road alignment project. ◆

Pursue external funding opportunities to complement Council's commitment to Narrung jetty renewal works. ◆ ▲

Demolish surplus community toilets in Coonalpyn once new *Changing Places* facility is operational. ◆

Investigate feasibility of a hard waste collection service for consideration in 2027/28. ▲



ENVIRONMENT

Progress initiatives to empower landowners to secure firefighting water to enable bushfire resilience. ◆ ▲

Provision for replacement of Wellington East wastewater treatment facility to meet environmental requirements and support town growth. ◆



LEADERSHIP

Commence a rating review to ensure fairness and equity across ratepayers. ◆ ▲

Create an operational plan which underpins the *Community Vision Plan 2026 – 2030*. ▲

Key Budget Assumptions

Key drivers	2026/27 Budget
Consumer Price Index (Australia – annual movement)	4.2%*
Local Government Price Index	3.5%
Increase in average rates	6.56%
Decrease in kerbside waste collection charges	- \$25
Removal of Wellington East from non-potable water supply service charge	\$399**
Community Wastewater Management System charge	No change
Increase in employment costs	\$327,000***
Decrease in materials, contracts and other expenses	- \$30,000****
Depreciation	Based on useful assumption per asset class
Finance costs	Based on a combination of fixed and floating rate facilities held with the Local Government Finance Authority

* Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics | Australia – consumer price index indicator, February 2026 (released 25 March 2026)

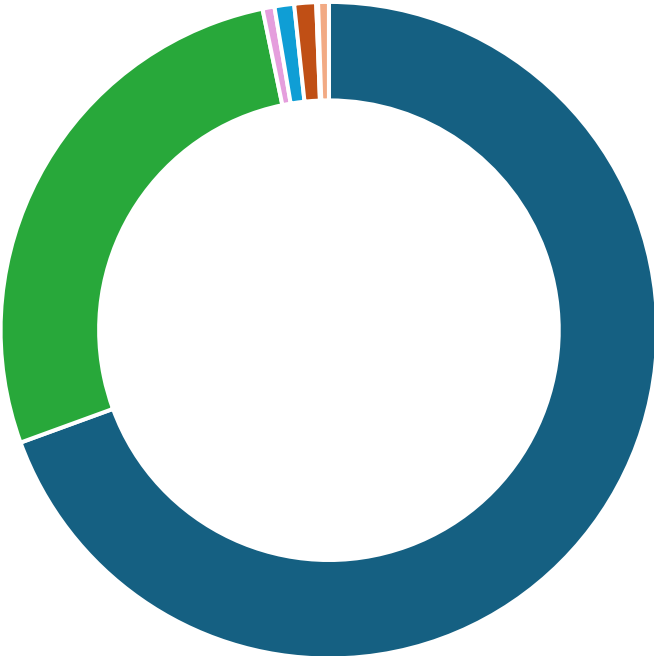
** Applicable to rateable properties located in Wellington East only

*** Increase incorporates renegotiation of two Enterprise Bargaining Agreement outcomes (for administrative and field staff respectively)

**** Figure reflects one-funding contribution received from the Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program

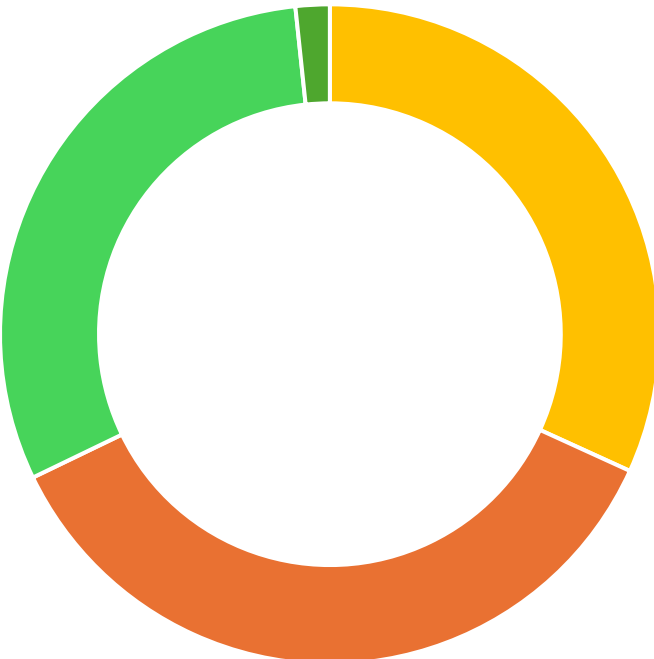


Where our funding comes from



	(\$,000)	
Rates	15,016	69%
Grants, Subsidies & Contributions	5,907	27%
User Charges	127	0.58%
Statutory Charges	209	1%
Other Income	232	1%
Reimbursements	114	0.52%
Investment Income	20	0.90%

How we allocate our funding



	(\$,000)	
Employee Costs	7,170	32%
Materials, Contracts & Other	8,122	36%
Depreciation	6,871	31%
Finance Costs – Interest & Bank Charges	377	1%

Influences, Challenges & Priorities



Rating Review

During 2026/27, Council will commence its next cyclic rating review. The review will compare the current rating structure with alternatives to determine whether the distribution of rates is equitable across all ratepayers.



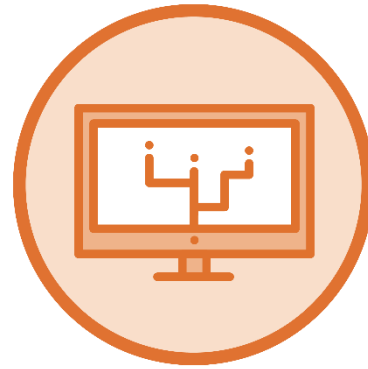
Low Rainfall

As many South Australian and Coorong primary producers continue to recover from their driest season on record, Council will consider its capital works program and support measures accordingly. While State Government driven support packages are available, the impact of low rainfall is likely to be felt across many sectors of our economy and presents as an issue of consideration for the ensuing financial year.



Political Landscape

Following the recent Federal and State Government elections, a level of stability and consistency is expected for the current term as both governments look to deliver on policy and election commitments. While State Labor policy focuses more heavily on health, housing and transport, there is no indication of major reform to council funding models, Financial Assistance Grants or cost-shifting arrangements.



Information Technology

Cyber security continues to present an increasing and significant threat to Council, necessitating robust internal controls and comprehensive staff training. During 2026/27, Council will actively review and strengthen access to all information technology systems, while empowering staff to manage the cyber security risks that are encountered on a daily basis.



Global Uncertainty

Ongoing global uncertainty driven by geopolitical tensions, inflationary pressures and economic volatility continues to flow through to Australia's economy, and, in turn, the local government sector. Cost of living pressures will place financial strain on local households as well as Council's operating and capital budgets. As the financial year unfolds, the uncertainty will require Council to be agile and measured in its response to challenging operating conditions, fuel price escalation and budget pressures.

Capital Works & Strategic Projects

Capital Renewal Expenditure

Category	Capital Work Description	2026/27 Budget (\$,000)
Roads	Sealed Roads Renewal	1,966
	Unsealed Roads Renewal	2,985
	Kerb & Gutter Renewal Program	162
	Footpath Renewal Program	48
Plant & Equipment	Plant & Equipment Renewal	797
Buildings & Structures	Buildings & Structures Renewal	463
Water	CWMS Renewal Program	199
	Stormwater Renewal Program	110
	Water Supply Capital	4
Information & Communication Technology	Laptops, Phones, Monitors & Stations	31
	Audio Visual Infrastructure	31
	Network Infrastructure	76
Total		6,872

Capital Projects New/Upgrade Recommendations

Project	Category	Program	Estimated Cost (\$,000)
1	Land	Strategic Land Acquisition	280
2	CWMS	SCADA Upgrade Meningie	150
3	Footpath	Footpath Expansion Program	100
Total			530

2026/27 External Funding

The following represents a summary of external funding that Council will receive during 2026/27, as it relates to specific projects/programs. The summary does not include 'core' external funding such as the Commonwealth Government's Financial Assistance Grants.

Funding Program	Description	2026/27 External Funding Amount
Roads to Recovery Program	Recurring federal funding to support the construction and maintenance of local roads	\$1,028,000



Funding the Business Plan

Council intends to fund the 2026/27 Annual Business Plan through raising \$12.3m in general rates.

Rate revenue is an integral part of Council's resourcing, accounting for 69 percent of total revenue.

Consequently, Council's rating strategy and policies are a key component of the annual planning process.

Apart from rate revenue, operating revenue is generated by statutory charges (development and building fees, dog registrations etc.), user charges (town hall hire, caravan park income, cemeteries etc.), investment income and State & Federal Government operating grants.

Council also sources income in the form of non-recurring grants from the State and Federal Governments (generally for a specific project or initiative of Council).

Method used to value land

Council has adopted the capital value methodology as the basis for rating within the Coorong District Council area, in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1999*.

Modelling methodology

Council will apply differential rates in 2026/27, which are determined by the use of the land or the locality of the land, and are based on the most recent valuations made by the Valuer-General.

The Valuer-General recognises the following land use categories for the Coorong District:

1. Residential
2. Commercial - Shop
3. Commercial - Office
4. Commercial - Other
5. Industry - Light
6. Industry - Other
7. Primary Production
8. Vacant Land
9. Other

The differentiating factor for Bulk Handling Zone properties is the locality of the land.

Council will raise \$12,312,146 in general rates in 2026/27, compared to \$11,284,835 raised in 2025/26; an increase of 9.1%.

This includes an average rate increase of 6.56%. The rate increase comprises the following factors:

- 1.0% growth
- 1.36% rate net increase
- 4.2% CPI

Wellington East Separate Rate

A separate rate will be introduced in the 2026/27 financial year for properties in Wellington East who benefit from the Water Supply Project with SA Water. The separate rate is for a period of three years. Further details are included on page 27.

Fixed charge

A component of the total rate will be a fixed charge on every rateable property. This fixed charge applies to all ratepayers and continues to raise less than half of the total rate revenue (before rebates and remissions) required for the 2026/27 financial year.

The reasons for including a fixed charge component are:

- *Range of services:* To deliver a range of services to the community, Council must maintain various internal support, infrastructure and administrative services. No particular group of ratepayers benefits more than any other from the provision of these services.
- *Equal contribution:* It is appropriate that all ratepayers contribute equally to the cost of administering Council's services and activities.

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.

The fixed charge will not increase in 2026/27 and will be levied uniformly on all non-contiguous assessments.

2025/26	2026/27	Change (\$)
\$200	\$200	\$0

Regional Landscape Levy

Council applies this levy pursuant to the *Local Government Act 1999* and in doing so, acts as a collection agent for the two Landscape Boards within our district – Limestone Coast and Murraylands & Riverland. It is important to note that Council does not retain this revenue, nor determine how the revenue is spent.

The Limestone Coast levy is a fixed charge per rateable property, whereas the Murraylands & Riverland levy is calculated as a percentage of the rateable land value.

Calculation of Rates

Council general rates are determined by multiplying the applicable rate in the dollar by the capital valuation of rateable land, plus adding the fixed charge.

Rating Structure

Council's overarching financial strategy provides clear direction on the allocation, management and use of financial resources.

In proposing its rate revenue for 2026/27, Council considered the following in order to inform decisions about the rating system:

- Influences, challenges and priorities (listed on pages 16 – 17)
- The *Community Vision Plan 2030 - 2026*
- Rating Policy
- Current economic environment

Income also includes separate charges for waste management, Community Wastewater Management Systems, the revenue derived (as a collection agent) for Regional Landscape Boards on behalf of the State Government and non-drinking water provision (where relevant) (see page 22).

The table on page 22 summarises the general rate forecasts used to generate the revenue stream for the 2026/27 Annual Business Plan & Budget. The forecast information is based on the valuations provided by the Office of the Valuer General as at 30 June 2026.

Rate in the Dollar

Residential	0.002630	Industrial – Other	0.003155
Commercial – Shop	0.003155	Primary Production	0.002235
Commercial – Office	0.003155	Vacant Land	0.004339
Commercial – Other	0.003155	Other	0.002629
Industrial - Light	0.003155	Bulk Handling	0.007499

Service Charges

Kerbside Waste

Council provides a kerbside waste management collection service to residential and commercial properties within defined areas of the district. The service charge is levied in accordance with legislation to recover the cost of providing this service.

2025/26	2026/27	Change (\$)
\$348	\$323	-\$25

Non-Drinking Water

On each eligible assessment of rateable and non-rateable land in Peake, charges for non-drinking water will be applied on a 100% cost recovery basis. The full recovery model, as mandated by State Government, has been staged over the last three financial years.

	Charge 2025/26	Charge 2026/27
Supply charge	\$280 per annum	\$399 per annum
Usage charge	\$1.47 per kilolitre	\$1.58 per kilolitre

Wastewater Management

The Community Wastewater Management Systems (CWMS) at Meningie, Tailem Bend, Tintinara and Wellington East are designed to collect, treat, re-use and/or dispose of primary treated effluent from septic tanks on individual properties. The 'occupied' unit includes an amount for future septic tank desludging (every four years). Council's model is based on the guidelines set by the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA).

OCCUPIED (1,657 connections)		
Charge 2025/26	Charge 2026/27	Planned Income
\$780	\$780	\$1,292,460

VACANT (171 connections)		
Charge 2025/26	Charge 2026/27	Planned Income
\$749	\$749	\$128,079

Rates Revenue *(as at 3 July 2026)*

General Rates Revenue	2025/26 (as adopted)	2026/27	Notes
Rates	10,660,639	11,662,764	(a)
Fixed Charge	817,342	809,762	(b)
General Rates (GROSS)	11,477,981	12,472,526	(c)
Less: Mandatory and Discretionary Rebates	129,950	95,396	(d)
Less: Rate Capping and Single Farm Enterprise Provision	63,196	64,984	(e)
General Rates	11,284,835	12,312,146	(f)

$$(f) = (a) + (b) - (d) - (e)$$

Other Rates (inc. service charges)	2025/26 (as adopted)	2026/27	Notes
Regional Landscape Levy	518,604	528,665	(g)
Waste Collection	791,352	739,993	(h)
Non-Drinking Water Supply	72,240	15,162	(i)
Community Wastewater Management System	1,423,318	1,420,539	(j)
<i>Total Service Charges</i>	<i>2,805,514</i>	<i>2,704,359</i>	<i>(k)</i>
Total General Rates and Service Charges	14,090,349	15,016,504	(l)

$$(k) = (g) + (h) + (i) + (j)$$

$$(l) = (f) + (k)$$

Notes

(g) 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 figure stated here represents fixed charge (Limestone Coast) and a separate rate (Murraylands & Riverland).

Growth in number of Rateable Properties

(as at 3 July 2026)

	2025/26 (as adopted)	2026/27	Notes	Change
Number of rateable properties	5,275	5,289	(m)	0.265%

Notes

(m) Growth

As defined in the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 2011* regulation 6(2) – growth is where new properties have been created which has added rateable properties to Council's ratepayer base. Growth can also increase the need and expenditure related to infrastructure, services and programs which support these properties and residents.



Average General Rates per Category

(as at 3 July 2026)

	2025/26 (as adopted)	2026/27	Average Weekly Change	Notes
Average Residential	\$1,246.75	\$1,373.62	\$2.44	(n)
Average Commercial & Industrial	\$2,073.83	\$2,709.85	\$3.92	(n)
Average Primary Production	\$5,098.14	\$5,517.73	\$8.07	(n)

Notes

(n) Average

The average is based on the total of all rateable properties in the land use category and is indicative only.

Table 1 summarises the general rate forecasts used to generate the revenue stream for the 2026/27 Annual Business Plan & Budget.

Table 1: Differential Rates Revenue (excluding mandatory rebates)

	Total expected revenue		No. of rateable properties		Average per rateable property		Rate in \$
	2025/26 (\$)	2026/27 (\$)	2025/26	2026/27	2025/26 (\$)	2026/27 (\$)	2026/27
Residential	2,321,683	2,632,422	2,218	2,243	1,246	1,373	Refer page 22
Commercial – Shop	32,249	35,162	51	51	832	889	
Commercial – Office	3,920	4,433	5	5	984	1,086	
Commercial – Other	362,007	357,967	136	128	2,861	2,996	
Industry – Light	13,158	17,312	20	22	857	986	
Industry – Other	17,521	19,270	21	21	1,034	1,117	
Primary Production	7,386,401	8,024,448	1,508	1,509	5,098	5,517	
Vacant Land	340,283	387,441	576	568	790	882	
Other	91,123	83,160	137	125	866	865	
Bulk Handling Zone	92,294	101,147	8	8	11,736	12,843	

Wellington East Water Supply

Council, in partnership with SA Water, is delivering a major upgrade to convert Wellington East's current non-drinking (river) water system into a safe, reliable drinking water supply.

The multi-staged project will replace the Council-run non-potable river water scheme with a fully compliant potable water network.

Once construction is complete, ownership and operation of the full supply system will transfer to SA Water.

220 properties currently connected to Council's non-potable scheme will benefit, with those not currently connected being able to do so during or after the transition period (if available).

Council has advocated for over a decade for improved reliability and long-term water security for one of its fastest growing communities.



Separate rate applicable

Council has resolved that a separate rate will apply to the properties that will be serviced by the Wellington East Water Supply service (drinking water supply administered by SA Water).

Following public consultation on the project, two payment options have been made available:

- Up-front payment before 1 May 2026, or
- A separate rate for three years commencing from 2026/27, with a one-off 2.5% administration fee added to the first year



Up-front payment of
\$2,750
 made by 1 May 2026

- OR -

				Quarterly effect on rates			
	Contribution	Admin Charge	Annual Total Contribution	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Year 1	\$ 917.00	\$ 68.75	\$ 985.75	\$ 246.45	\$ 246.45	\$ 246.45	\$ 246.40
Year 2	\$ 916.50	---	\$ 916.50	\$ 229.15	\$ 229.15	\$ 229.10	\$ 229.10
Year 3	\$ 916.50	---	\$ 916.50	\$ 229.15	\$ 229.15	\$ 229.10	\$ 229.10

Rating

Payment of Rates

Council rates are billed quarterly in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1999*.

Rates may be paid as follows:

- Internet – using the BPAY services (through participating banks)
- Phoning Council on 1300 785 277 and using your Mastercard or VISA
- In person at any Australia Post outlet or Coorong District Council office

Rates are payable in four equal (or approximately equal) instalments on or before the following dates:

- Friday 4 September 2026
- Friday 4 December 2026
- Friday 5 March 2027
- Friday 4 June 2027

SEPTEMBER 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

DECEMBER 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

MARCH 2027

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

JUNE 2027

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Discretionary and mandatory rebates

The *Local Government Act 1999* requires councils to provide a mandatory 100% rates rebate for land used by:

- Health services
- Religious purposes
- Public cemeteries; and
- The Royal Zoological Society of South Australia

A mandatory rates rebate of at least 75% (or more, at Council's discretion) is applied to land used by:

- Community and service organisations
- Educational purposes

In addition, Council has the discretion to rebate up to 100% of rates for several other purposes, including:

- Securing strategic development of an area
- Assisting or supporting business
- Where the rebate is considered by Council to be appropriate to provide relief in order to avoid what would otherwise constitute—
 - a liability to pay a rate or charge that is inconsistent with the liabilities that were anticipated by Council in its annual business plan

- Where the land is being used by an organisation which in the opinion of Council, provides a benefit or service to the local community
- Accommodation for the aged or people living with a disability

Ratepayers (excluding those in the Bulk Handling Zone) may apply for a one year discretionary rebate to limit any increase in their general rates for 2026/27 (when compared to the rates liability for the same assessment in the 2025/26 year) for a property that is not their primary place of residence where the general rate payable for that land exceeds the 2025/26 general rate payable by more than 15%. The rebate is available on application and provided that:

- The application is lodged by 30 September 2026
- The application is submitted in writing in the form approved by Council by 30 September 2026
- The increase in general rates is not attributable to capital improvements or a change in land use or zoning

- Council is satisfied the conditions of eligibility have been met
- The property was not acquired by the ratepayer after 30 June 2025

Postponement of rates for seniors

A ratepayer who holds a State Seniors Card may apply to Council to postpone any part or all of their annual rates in excess of \$500 on a long-term basis.

The deferred amount is subject to a monthly interest charge, with the accrued debt being payable on the transfer or sale of the property.

To apply for a Seniors Postponement of rates, please contact 1300 785 277 and speak to the Finance Officer – Rates.

Hardship arrangements

Council is committed to supporting ratepayers who are experiencing financial hardship through the provision of flexible rates payment options. Council will treat ratepayers experiencing payment difficulties with respect, empathy and confidentiality, with a focus on helping them maintain control over their financial situation.

Rate capping

Principal ratepayers may apply for a rate cap (relief) of general rates for the 2026/27 year for their principal place of residence where the general rate payable for the land exceeds the 2025/26 general rate payable by more than 15%. The rebate is available on application and provided that:

- The application is lodged by 30 September 2026
- The application is submitted in writing in the form approved by Council by 30 September 2026

- Council is satisfied the conditions of eligibility have been met
- The increase in general rates is not attributable to capital improvements or a change in land use or zoning
- The property was not acquired by the ratepayer after 30 June 2025

Single farm enterprise

If your farm comprises a single farm enterprise (SFE) under the *Local Government Act 1999*, you are eligible for the treatment of land as a SFE for the purposes of imposing one fixed charge. To apply for SFE status please visit our website or email council@coorong.sa.gov.au Applications close 31 December 2026.





ESCOSA Local Government Advice

On 30 April 2022, amendments to the *Local Government Act 1999* came into operation. The amendments introduced an advisory scheme for the purposes of providing ratepayers with confidence that the rates they pay are set at the level necessary for their council to provide the services they need and value.

The Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA) is the advisory body and all 68 South Australian councils are subject to the scheme. Coorong District Council participated in the scheme during the 2024/25 financial year.

Council is obliged under the Act to publish the scheme's advice and Council's response in its 2026/27 Annual Business Plan (and subsequent plans, until the next cycle of the scheme). The advice addressed to Council can be [viewed here](#).

The savings identified in the Annual Business Plan (i.e. decrease in materials and contracts expenses, maintain current staffing base, use of Cash Advance Deposits to avoid interest on principal loan amount) align with Council's surplus target from year five of its Long Term Financial Plan, as identified by ESCOSA.

ESCOSA key advice findings

ESCOSA found Coorong District Council to be in a mostly sustainable position, considering its average expected growth in properties of 0.5% per annum over the next ten years, the planned average rate increases in line with the Long Term Financial Plan and in recognition of its ongoing capacity in asset valuation and management.



ESCOSA recommended that Council:

✓ Complete

○ In progress

1.	Review and approve its long term financial plan annually (including its 10-year projections and all relevant assumptions) to:	○
	a. Better inform its decision making b. Provide transparent information for ratepayers, and c. Meet <i>Local Government Act 1999</i> legislated requirements	
2.	Review its inflation forecasts in its budget and forward projections each year.	✓
3.	Use a credible independent source for inflation assumptions and identify any variations from that source.	✓
4.	Identify any other underlying assumptions affecting revenue and cost estimates in Annual Business Plan and Long Term Financial Plan.	✓
5.	Monitor income against forecasts to enable timely adjustment of budgeted expenditure if required.	✓
6.	Continue to monitor cost growth in its budgeting, including cost related to asset maintenance and depreciation expenses and/or review services provided in the context of costs.	✓
7.	Review depreciation expense to ensure its alignment with asset conditions, value and useful life.	✓
8.	Report any actual and projected cost savings in its annual budget (and Long Term Financial Plan, as appropriate), to provide evidence of constraining cost growth and achieving efficiency across its operations and service delivery.	✓
9.	Continue to review asset valuations based on condition at least every four years with annual indexing in the intervening years.	○
10.	Continue to measure deferred asset renewals and develop a plan to reduce them over time.	○
11.	Adhere to the principles underpinning its Long Term Financial Plan projections to provide sufficient funding to the renewal of its assets, rather than prioritising initiatives that involve new or upgraded infrastructure.	✓
12.	Assess asset conditions and determine service requirements for asset classes where inspections are out of date and update this information in Asset Management Plans.	○
13.	Continue to develop asset management maturity by updating all Asset Management Plans and reviewing at least every four years.	○
14.	Consider limiting future increases in rates to reduce any emerging affordability risk in the community.	✓

Council response

Council accepts the review findings and concurs with the recommendations made therein. Council remains committed to ensuring long term financial sustainability through sound asset management planning and adherence to its Long Term Financial Plan. A definitive action plan will be developed and overseen by Council's Finance and Audit & Risk Committees, in response to recommended actions.



Appendix 1

2026/27 Financial Statements

Statement of Comprehensive Income	2025/26 Budget (\$,000)	2026/27 Budget (\$,000)
Income		
Rates	14,090	15,017
Statutory Charges	202	209
User Charges	123	127
Grants, Subsidies & Contributions	6,338	5,907
Investment Income	18	20
Reimbursements	110	114
Other Income	234	232
Total Income	21,116	21,626
Expenses		
Employee Costs	6,842	7,170
Materials, Contracts & Other Expenses	8,152	8,122
Depreciation	6,286	6,871
Finance Charges	354	377
Internal Charges	(250)	(250)
Total Expenses	21,384	22,290
Total Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	(268)	(664)
Amounts Specifically Received for New/Upgraded Assets	0	0
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(268)	(664)

Statement of Financial Position	2025/26 Budget (\$,000)	2026/27 Budget (\$,000)
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash & Cash Equivalents	268	33
Trade & Other Receivables	1,764	1,561
Inventories	688	857
Total Current Assets	2,720	2,451
Non-Current Assets		
Financial Assets	3,634	2,434
Infrastructure, Property, Plant & Equipment	176,384	176,754
Total Non-Current Assets	180,018	179,188
Total Assets	182,738	181,640
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Trade & Other Payables	881	879
Borrowings	0	0
Short Term Provisions	858	858
Total Current Liabilities	1,739	1,737
Non-Current Liabilities		
Borrowings	7,367	6,568
Provisions	286	286
Total Non-Current Liabilities	7,653	6,854
Total Liabilities	9,392	8,591
Net Assets	173,345	173,048
Equity		
Accumulated Surplus	34,712	34,043
Asset Revaluation Reserve	137,026	137,398
Other Reserves	1,607	1,607
Total Equity	173,345	173,048

Statement of Cash Flows	2025/26 Budget (\$,000)	2026/27 Budget (\$,000)
Cash Flows from Operating Activities		
Receipts		
Operating Receipts	21,097	21,605
Investment Receipts	18	20
Total Operating Receipts	21,115	21,625
Payments		
Payments to Suppliers and Employees	(14,743)	(15,042)
Finance Payments	(354)	(377)
Total Operating Payments	(15,097)	(15,419)
Net Cash provided by (or used in) Operating Activities	6,018	6,206
Cash Flows from Investing Activities		
Receipts		
Grants Specifically for New or Upgraded Assets	0	0
Sale of Replaced Assets	146	159
Repayment of Loans from Community Groups	0	20
Total Capital Receipts	146	179
Payments		
Capital Expenditure on Renewal/Replaced Assets	(6,286)	(6,871)
Capital Expenditure on New Assets	(515)	(530)
Loans Made to Community Groups		(50)
Total Capital Expenditure Payments	(6,801)	(7,451)
Net Cash provided by (used in) Investing Activities	(6,655)	(7,272)
Repayment of Loan Principal	(1,116)	(1,216)
Add Borrowings (New Loans)	2,000	850
Net Cash provided by (or used in) Investing Activities	884	(366)
Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash	247	(1,432)
Cash and Cash Equivalents at start of reporting period	21	1,465
Cash & Cash Equivalents at end of the reporting period	268	33

Uniform Presentation of Finances	2025/26 Budget (\$,000)	2026/27 Budget (\$,000)
Income		
Rates	14,090	15,017
Statutory Charges	202	209
User Charges	123	127
Grants, Subsidies & Contributions (Capital)	1,072	1,028
Grants, Subsidies & Contributions (Operating)	5,266	4,879
Investment Income	18	20
Reimbursements	110	114
Other Income	234	232
	21,116	21,626
Expenses		
Employee Costs	6,842	7,170
Materials, Contracts & Other Expenses	8,152	8,122
Depreciation, Amortisation and Impairment	6,286	6,871
Finance Costs	354	377
	21,384*	22,290*
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	(268)	(664)
Net Outlays on Existing Assets		
Capital Expenditure on Renewal and Replacement of Existing Assets	(6,286)	(6,871)
Add back Depreciation Expense	6,286	6,871
Proceeds from Sale of Replaced Assets	146	159
	146	159
Net Outlays on New and Upgraded Assets		
Capital Expenditure on New and Upgraded Assets	(515)	(530)
Amounts received specifically for New or Upgraded Assets	0	0
	(515)	(530)
Annual Net Impact to Financing Activities	(637)	(1,035)

* includes internal recharging allocation of \$250k

Operating Surplus Ratio	2025/26	2026/27
	(1.3%)	(3.1%)

Net Financial Liabilities Ratio	2025/26	2026/27
	17.6%	21.1%

Asset Renewal Funding Ratio	2025/26	2026/27
	100%	100%



Appendix 2

Capital Works Program –
2026/27 Summary

2026/27 Roads – Sealed Program

Road Name	Suburb	Nature of Works	Location	Estimated Project Cost
Fulwood Avenue	Tintinara	AC10 reseal and re-alignment	Fulwood Avenue to Elizabeth Street	\$ 200,000
Kulde Road*	Tailem Bend	50mm asphalt overlay	Travena Road to Athol Grove	\$ 218,256
Narrung Road**	Narrung	14/7mm + shoulder construction	Campbell Park to Block K Road	\$ 450,000
Tynan Road	Sherlock	14/7mm reseal	Dukes Highway (north 11kms)	\$ 847,744
Granites Road	Tailem Bend	AC10 profile and replace	Station Drive and First Avenue	\$ 250,000

* Kulde Road: \$720k Special Local Roads Program application (\$1.07m total)

** Narrung Road: \$820k Special Local Roads Program application (\$1.27m total)

2026/27 Roads – Unsealed Program

Road Name	Suburb	Nature of Works	Length	Estimated Project Cost
Cantara Road	Bunbury	Resheet	9.0 kms	\$ 540,000
Deepwater Road	Deepwater	Resheet	4.5 kms	\$ 270,000
Taunta Hut Road	Deepwater	Resheet	5.5 kms	\$ 330,000
Yarindale Road	Field	Resheet	4.0 kms	\$ 240,000
Nine Mile Road	Malinong	Resheet	6.0 kms	\$ 360,000
Westbrook Road	Tailem Bend	Resheet	2.0 kms	\$ 120,000
Kielow Road	Netherton	Resheet	4.0 kms	\$ 240,000
Two Wells Road	Tintinara	Resheet	1.2 kms	\$ 90,000
Moonee Hills Road	Meningie	Resheet	9.0 kms	\$ 675,000
Masons Lookout Road	Ashville	Resheet	2.0 kms	\$ 120,000

2026/27 Roads – Footpath Program

Road Name	Suburb	Nature of Works	Location	Estimated Project Cost
Granites Road*	Tailem Bend	Intersection works	Railway Terrace intersection	\$ 200,000
Kulde Road	Tailem Bend	Asphalt reseal	Stanley Street to Athol Grove	\$ 48,000

* Black Spot funding application submitted – 100% grant funded if successful.

If not successful, consider a component of the designed works to deliver via footpath renewal funding.

2026/27 Roads – Buildings Program

Project Name	Suburb	Scope	Cost
Narrung Landing*	Narrung	Landing renewal works	\$ 250,000
Coonalpyn Works Depot	Coonalpyn	Renewal/change of facilities	\$ 101,000
Tailem Bend Playground	Tailem Bend	Replacement of rubberized soft fall	\$ 92,000
Coonalpyn Community Toilets	Coonalpyn	Demolition of redundant toilet block	\$ 20,000

* Narrung Landing budget to be quarantined as potential co-funding for an upcoming grant opportunity

2026/27 Water & Wastewater Program

CWMS Renewal Program

Site	Description	Cost
Seymour Street, Wellington East	Pump chamber: replace guide rails and lid upgrade	\$ 60,000
Seymour Street, Wellington East	Pump chamber: re-lining program	\$ 100,000
Various	Chamber lid replacement program	\$ 99,000

2026/27 Water & Wastewater Program

Stormwater Renewal Program

Site	Description	Cost
Princes Highway, Meningie	Pit reconstruction at bakery entrance	\$ 50,000
Narrung Road, Meningie	Pit reconstruction, damaged side entry pit	\$ 30,000
Dukes Highway, Tintinara	Two trafficable side entry pit replacements	\$ 35,000

2026/27 Water & Wastewater Program

Water Supply Renewal Program

Site	Description	Cost
Peake Water Supply System	Nominal amount for emergency renewals	\$ 4,000

2026/27 Information Technology Program

Project	Description	Cost
Information Technology Equipment	Laptops, phones, monitors, docking stations	\$ 31,000
Audio-Visual Infrastructure	Televisions, data projectors, sound systems	\$ 31,000
Network Infrastructure	Servers, switches, WiFi, systems backup	\$ 76,000



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