

The Coorong District Council

**Annual Report
2005 - 2006**

Creating a Better Future ~ with Pride



Our Vision is:

Creating a Better Future ~ with Pride

Our Mission is:

- To provide strong leadership.
- To listen and be sensitive to the community.
- To serve the community with equality.
- To actively encourage and support enterprise for local prosperity.
- To foster community health.
- To protect and enhance the environment.

Our Core Values are:

The Coorong District Council has a commitment to balancing the following core values:

- Integrity
- Reliability
- Consistency
- Continuous improvement
- Financial responsibility
- Quality customer service
- Acting in the best interest of the community



Historic Polly's well located at Peake

CONTENTS

Mayor’s Message	1
Chief Executive Officer’s Report.....	3
Council Overview	5
Governance	6
Organisational Structure.....	10
Departmental Reports	
• Administrative Services	11
• Technical Services.....	19
• Development & Environmental Services.....	23
Statutory Information	33
Documents Available for Public Inspection	39
Rating Policy.....	40
Annual Financial Statements 2005/2006	
Murray & Mallee Local Government Association Annual Report	
Murray Mallee Community Transport Scheme Annual Report	



Coonalpyn Institute

Front Cover: Historic Point Malcolm lighthouse, the only inland lighthouse in Australia

Mayor's Message



Cr. Heather Moore

With respect I present my annual report for 2005/2006. Whilst it is difficult to give accurate quantification of the economic contribution of your Coorong District within Regional South Australia, strong investor interest indicates a growing, healthy economic future.

Land division, land management plans, individual planning amendment reports have increased particularly for our River and Lakes areas. Preparation of a Council wide Draft General Plan Amendment Report (PAR) is a culmination of extensive investigations by a committee and staff of Council to establish an up to date development plan the PAR to be a user friendly document that will provide a valuable tool for sustainable development and consideration for future economic development activities.

Changes in the way we manage the environment have rapidly accelerated. As we seek to enrich our understanding of implications of the effects of salinity on the land and water resources of the River Murray and the whole of Murray Darling Basin we are ever mindful of the integral work done with excellence by our Local Action Plan Leaders and committee of National Resource Management. These members know well their local environment and the value of well managed resources. Possible effects of climate change, limited resources and ever growing demands are met with professional vigilance by supportive planning to safe guard our assets for future generations.

The preparation by our Technical Services Department of the 2006/2010 long term plan for Coorong District Council is a supportive tool for South Australian Strategic Planning for Road Freight corridors and public passengers transport routes.

Developing new skills and achieving capacity “to do things differently” is vital to the everyday business of Council. Training courses, workshops and programs for staff and elected members are numerous. Working collaboratively with a range of government agencies for integrated planning, policy and program initiatives responsible to the needs of our community is demonstrated in part by:

- District Bushfire Prevention Plan
- Animal Management Plan
- Access to Broadband
- Waste Management planning to meet new requirements and future sustainability
- Public Passenger and Health imperative transport solutions
- Youth (15-26years) training and support programs
- Wellness and wellbeing planning and delivery of increased immunisation and home and community care services.

Council has increased vigilance in occupational health safety and injury management and planned human resource development for staff to meet high performance work targets for customer service and satisfaction.

Yes, it has been a year of intensive planning and as we move forward to a new term of Council I must pay tribute to the professional, dedicated and greatly respected leadership of the now retired, first Chief Executive Officer of Coorong District Council Mr Bill Paterson. Bill set a firm foundation for future development by placing our Council as a National leader in environmental management, a role in which he now continues for South Australia.

Tim Drew has now joined the Coorong team as Chief Executive Officer and is six months into his journey of gaining knowledge of our Coorong District Council, Community, Culture and the many wonders and demands of our most diversely beautiful, productive yet fragile Mallee, Lakes and Parks areas.

I sincerely thank my fellow elected members, senior management and all staff who with dedicated endeavours work together to provide governance, business acumen and services, to progress lifestyle and opportunity for our Coorong Community.

Please read on as we give assurance for the promotion of our location as a dynamic investment in living – the only place to be The Coorong District Council, the awakening treasure of South Australia.

Cr. Heather Moore
MAYOR

Chief Executive Officer's Report



Mr Tim Drew

I am pleased to be able to present my first Annual Report as Chief Executive Officer of The Coorong District Council. I commenced as Chief Executive Officer in January 2006, having taken over from Bill Paterson following his retirement.

Council has undergone some degree of change over the last twelve months. In addition to the retirement of the former Chief Executive Officer, the retirement of another long-serving employee, Trevor Gordon, the Manager of Technical Services, meant that Council was faced with replacing two senior staff in a short time span.

Since joining Council in January, a lot of time and effort has been devoted to preparing the 2006/07 budget and business plan, both of which were adopted by Council after the end of the 2005/06 financial year.

I have also had the enjoyable task of meeting many of the local residents, ratepayers and business operators across the Council area, in order to gain a solid understanding of the issues they face and to discuss options for Council addressing them.

Almost all councils in South Australia will be conducting elections in November, due to changes made by the State Government to the Local Government Act. This Council's election will result in a reduction in the number of councillors from 12 to 9, which was an outcome of the representation review conducted in late 2005.

This annual report is one of the most important documents that Council prepares. It is the primary means by which Council reports to the community on its performance and achievements for the year.

I hope that you find The Coorong District Council 2005/06 Annual Report informative and interesting. I have listed some of the main aspects of Council's performance and achievements for the year in the sections below.

Major Achievements

- Signing of an historic alliance agreement between The Coorong District Council and the Raukkan Community Council in August 2005. The agreement is designed to build on the existing working relationships between The Coorong District Council and its indigenous equivalent.
- Preparation of a long-term programme for Council's infrastructure assets.
- Completion of major road, footpath, drainage and streetscape projects in Taillem Bend.
- Substantial completion of Council-wide Plan Amendment Report (PAR).
- Continuous improvement in the management of the occupational health, safety and welfare of employees, highlighted by a reduction in the number of lost time injuries during 2005/06.

- Commencement of the rural broadband project, to deliver high-speed broadband internet access across the majority of the Council area.
- Processing of over 240 applications for development valued at over \$9.8 million.

Financial Performance

The financial performance for the year has been satisfactory, with Council having recorded a net surplus of over \$497,000. This amount of the surplus is noteworthy, given that the revaluation of Council's infrastructure assets led to an increase of over \$1.2 million in the depreciation expense from 2004/05.

The revaluation of Council's infrastructure assets resulted in a \$26.5 million increase in the value of assets such as roads, footpaths, stormwater drains and common effluent drainage infrastructure.

Council's cash position has also remained strong, with over \$2 million of cash and investments on hand at 30 June 2006.

Future Challenges

As Council moves into the 2006/07 financial year, there are a number of challenges that will need to be met. These challenges have arisen from a variety of sources, including legislative and regulatory change, increased community expectations, labour market skills shortages, environmental conditions and general economic conditions.

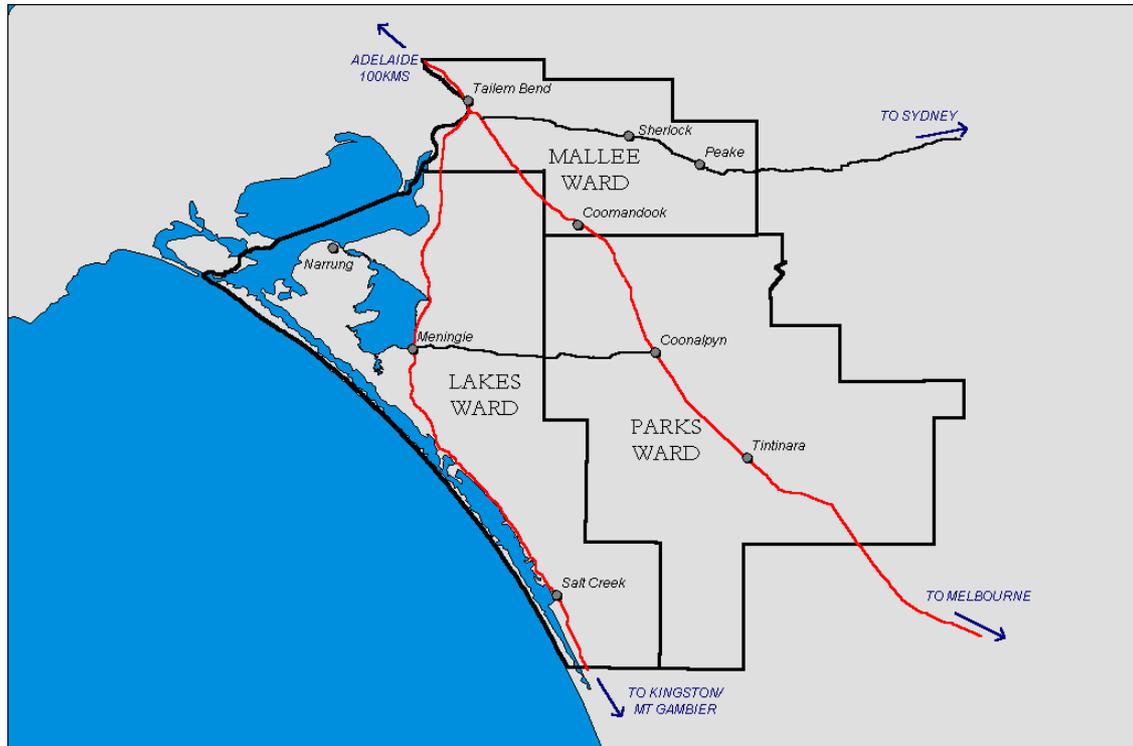
I look forward to addressing those challenges with Council as they arise, for the benefit of Council and all its constituents.

Tim Drew
Chief Executive Officer



Pelicans and seagulls at Narrung Ferry

Council Overview



Map of Council area, including ward boundaries.

Key Statistical Information	
Area	8,836 km ²
Estimated population	6,000
Sealed Roads	321km
Unsealed Roads	1,563km
Rate Revenue	\$4,071,311
Rateable Assessments	3,593

The Coorong District Council is home to a diverse range of primary production industries including cropping, livestock (sheep, cattle, pigs), dairying, commercial fishing, aquaculture, horticulture and mining.

Much of the Council area is serviced by major freight routes, including the Dukes, Mallee and Princes Highways and the Adelaide-Melbourne rail line.

The tourism industry is playing an increasingly important economic role with the major attraction in the Council area being the world-famous Coorong National Park and the River Murray and lower lakes areas which offer many forms of recreational activities.

Governance

Elected Members (Councillors)

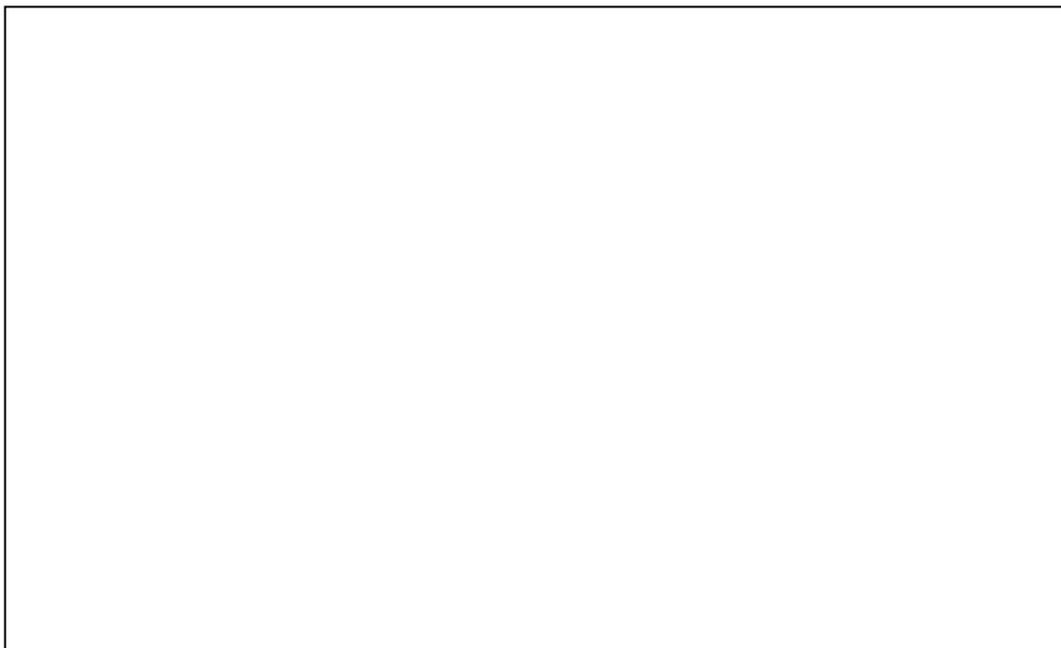


From Left to right

(back row) Cr. David Pentland, Cr. Roger Strother, Cr. Ted Freak, Cr. James Fairbairn,
Cr. Garry Appelkamp.

(centre): Cr. Keith Scobie Cr. Geraldine Dickson, Cr. Bobbie Tanner.

(front row): Cr. Dianne Woidt, Cr. Neville Jaensch, Cr. Peter Mattner, Cr. Heather Moore.



Representation

The Coorong District Council has a total 5,487 electors, who are represented by 12 Councillors elected from 3 wards. The representation quota of 457 electors per councillor is well below the average of 627 electors per councillor for similar-sized South Australian councils, as determined by the Australian Classification of Local Governments system.

Council conducted a review of its representation under Chapter 3 Part 1 Division 2 of the Local Government Act 1999, in 2005. As a result of that review, the number of councillors will be reduced to nine from twelve following the election in November 2006. The representation quota, based on the same number of electors, would then increase to 610 electors per councillor.

Under the Local Government Act 1999, the next review of the representation quota must occur by 2013. Council has not yet made a decision on when it will next conduct a review of the representation quota.

Under Section 28 of the Local Government Act, the following provisions for public-initiated submissions in relation to the adjustment of the representative structure of a council apply:

- (2) A group of at least 20 eligible electors may submit to a council a submission that the council consider a proposal—
 - (a) to alter the boundaries of the council;*
 - (b) to alter the composition of the council or the representative structure of the council (including by the creation, alteration or abolition of wards);*
 - (c) to incorporate within the area of the council a part of the State that is not within the area of a council.**
- (4) A submission under subsection (2) must—
 - (a) set out in general terms the grounds on which the submission is made and the issues that, in the opinion of the person or persons making the submission, should be considered in an assessment of the matter; and*
 - (b) nominate five persons who are willing to represent the interests of persons who would be directly affected by any proposal based on the matters raised in the submission; and*
 - (c) comply with guidelines published by the Panel.**
- (5) The eligible electors making the submission must furnish a copy of a submission under subsection (2) to the Panel in accordance with guidelines published by the Panel.*

Decision Making Structures

Full Council

Full Council, consisting of 12 elected members, one of whom is chosen by the members as the Presiding Member (Mayor) is the decision-making body on all policy and strategy matters. Ordinary meetings of the full council are held on the second Tuesday of each month and are open to the public.

Under the Local Government Act 1999, the Council sitting as an elected body is “*to act as a representative, informed and responsible decision maker in the interests of its community*”.

In order to fulfil this responsibility, Council receives reports from management and staff and on occasions seeks information from external consultants.

Committees have been formed to streamline Council business. These Committees meet regularly and make recommendations to Council.

Council’s committees are listed below.

Delegations

Another method of improving the efficiency of Council decision-making is through the delegation of specific functions or powers to a committee or to an employee of council.

The Chief Executive Officer and other staff have the delegated authority from Council to make decisions on a number of specified administrative and policy matters. These delegations are listed in Council’s policy manual and are reviewed annually.

Council has the ability to delegate a range of powers or functions to committees and staff, as outlined in the Local Government Act 1999. These delegations can be made in relation to the powers or functions vested or conferred under any piece of legislation.

The Local Government Act, does not allow for the delegation of certain powers, such as the power to make a by-law, borrow money or declare rates or charges.

Committees of Council

Committees have been formed to streamline Council business. These Committees meet regularly and make recommendations to full Council. Committee meetings are open to the public. These Committees are:

Standing Committees of Council

All report direct to Council and their minutes are included within the Council minutes

- Administrative Services Committee
- Development & Environmental Services Committee
- Technical Services Committee

Other Committees of Council

A number of committees comprising elected members, staff and the public have been established to investigate and manage particular issues. All report direct to Council and their minutes are included within the Council minutes.

- Coorong Bushfire Prevention Committee
- Coorong Communication Project Committee
- Coorong Community Links Committee
- Coorong Good Food on the Road Driving Committee
- Coorong Local Action Plan Committee
- Coorong Plan Amendment Review Committee
- CEO Performance Review Committee
- Australia Day Committee
- Animal Management Plan Committee

Community Committees of Council

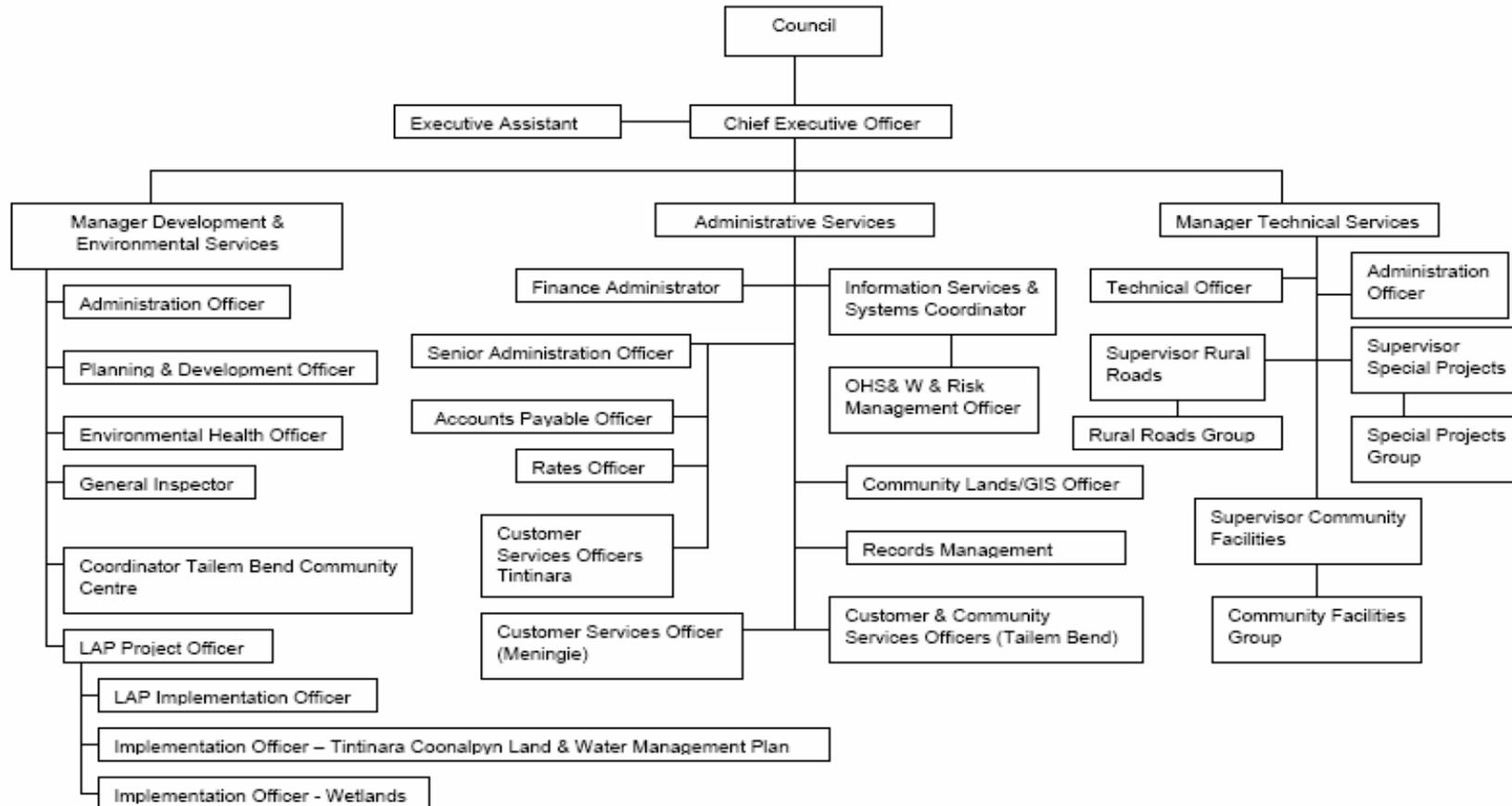
These committees mainly comprise community members and have an elected member and/or employee of Council delegated to the committee. These committees are primarily established to manage a range of council properties. These committees are listed below:

- Coonalpyn Community Hall Committee
- Coonalpyn Soldiers Memorial Swimming Pool & Caravan Park Committee
- Meningie Oval Recreation Areas Committee
- Meningie Cemetery Committee
- Moorlands Hall Committee
- Pangarinda Arboretum Committee
- Tailem Bend Cemetery Committee
- Tailem Rail Committee
- Tintinara Airfield Committee
- Tintinara Development Group
- Tintinara Health & Recreation Centre Committee
- Tintinara Homes Committee
- Tintinara Oval and Recreation Area Committee
- Tintinara War Memorial Hall Committee

Coorong District Development Assessment Panel

The Coorong District Development Assessment Panel is not a committee of Council, but is formed by Council under the Development Act 1993 to make decisions in relation to development applications not otherwise delegated to council officers.

Organisational Structure



Departmental Reports – Administrative Services

The Administrative Services Department of Council is responsible for the provision of customer service, administrative services, information technology, records management, finance, human resources, occupational health, safety and welfare and risk management activities.

Finance

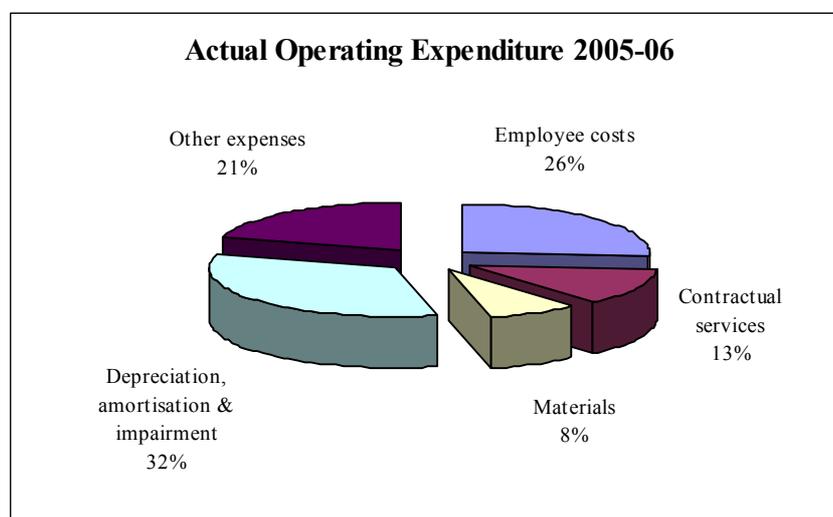
Financial Performance

Council recorded a surplus of \$497,790 for the twelve months ending 30 June 2006, a strong result given the increase in depreciation expense during the year.

Overall operating expenditure increased by over 23% from 2004/05, primarily due to the increased level of depreciation, which was a direct result of the infrastructure asset revaluation. Depreciation expenses increased from 25% of Council's expenditure in 2004/05 to 32% in 2005/06.

The revaluation of Council's infrastructure assets led to an increase in valuation of over \$26 million. By undertaking the revaluation, Council has also received an unqualified audit opinion on its annual financial statements for 2005/06.

Council remains in a healthy cash position, with over \$2 million in cash and investments at 30 June 2006. This is a similar position to the preceding financial year.



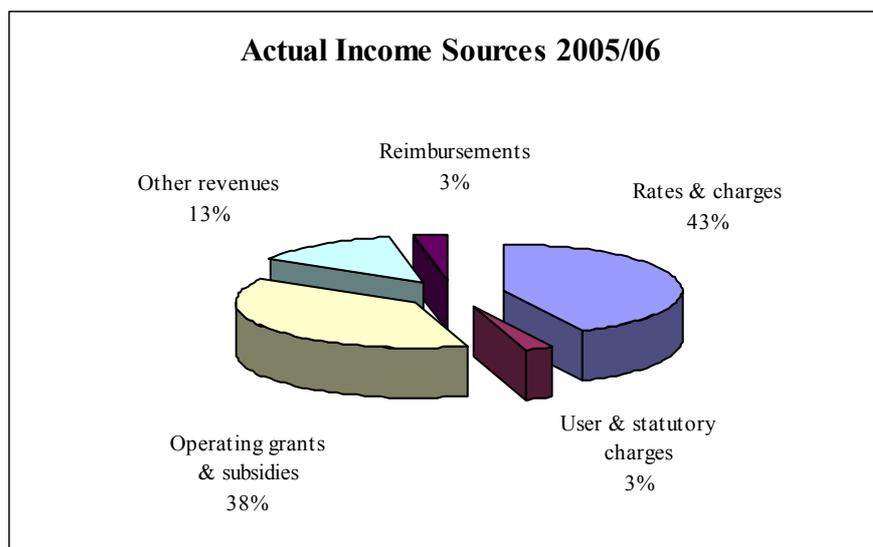
Rates and Valuations

The rateable capital value of properties in The Coorong District Council in 2005/06 was \$917,622,558, an increase of \$178,501,189 over the 2004/05 rateable value of \$739,121,369.

The total general rates raised for 2005/06 were \$3,878,400 which was an increase of \$217,731 over rates raised in 2004/05 of \$3,660,669, a 5.95% increase. All rates and charges accounted for 43% of Council's income in 2005/06, as per the chart below.

The increase in valuations enabled the rate in dollar for urban rates to drop to 0.372 cents in the dollar in 2005/06 from 0.44 cents in the dollar in 2004/05 and the rate in dollar for rural rates to drop to 0.322 cents in the dollar in 2005/06 from 0.4 cents in the dollar in 2004/05.

The fixed charge component of the general rate was increased to \$250 in 2005/06 an increase of \$55 from the fixed charge of \$195 in 2004/05.



Occupational Health, Safety & Welfare

The Coorong District Council is a member of the Local Government Association (LGA), a body which was granted a self insurance licence by the State Government in 1986.

Each year the LGA's Regional Risk Coordinator in conjunction with The Coorong District Council's OHS/Risk Officer conducts an Occupational Health & Safety Self Audit, a tool for auditing OHS performance and review.

The OHS&W key performance indicators audit score of 33.2% out of a possible 35% was a commendable result achieved Council with the 2004/2005 score being 26.8% out of a possible 30% this clearly shows continuous improvement.

The audit process identified areas demonstrating Council's commitment to the health, safety and welfare of its employees, contractors and third parties.

The OHS&W Committee monitors progress on corrective actions to ensure they are effective and to demonstrate evaluation of these actions on an ongoing basis. Council's Leadership Team also monitors progress on corrective actions, to ensure they are completed and evaluated for effectiveness.

The Local Government Association is keeping us well informed with monthly injury statistics and six monthly performance reports. The data below is taken from our last report. As shown below there have been 2 claims during 2005/06.

Statistical Performance 2000 - 2006

Year	No. of Claims	No. of LTIs*	LTI* Days	Frequency Rate	Duration Rate	Incident Rate	5 Day No.	1 Year No.
2000/01	4	1	5	9.4	5.0	1.9	1	0
2001/02	9	2	2	20.0	1.0	4.0	0	0
2002/03	6	4	55	36.4	13.8	7.3	1	0
2003/04	2	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0
2004/05	3	1	1	8.5	1.0	1.7	0	0
2005/06	2	1	2	7.7	2.0	1.5	0	0

* LTI (Lost time injuries)

Note: all data is derived from the June 2006 CATS (Claims Analysis Tracking System) Statistics – all years are subject to development, due to ongoing long term claims.

The Corporate Health Group again has provided Skin Cancer Screenings and Fitness Assessments for all employees. OHS training courses conducted during the year have included Health and Safety Representatives Level 1, Emergency First Aid, Work Zone Traffic Management, Manual Handling and Visual Display Unit Training.

The Regional Risk Coordinator provides an analysis of significant injuries for the past five years 2001 – 2005 (inclusive) and compares it with data of 2000 – 2004. For the purpose of this analysis significant injuries are those injuries that have a net cost which exceeds \$1,000. (see table below).

There were seven significant claims for the period 2001-2005 compared with eleven during 2000-2004. Of these, there were five sprains or strains of joints and adjacent muscles, one superficial injury and one toxic effects poisoning substances claim.

The number of injuries associated with all claims for the 2000-2004 and 2001-2005 period and the associated net cost are contained in the table below.

The high cost of sprains, strains of joints & adjacent muscles is due to three large claims that occurred in 2001, 2002 and 2003. The cumulative cost of these 3 claims was approximately \$28,000. These claims have now been finalised.

Nature of Injury	2000-2004		2001-2005	
	No.	Cost (\$)	No.	Cost (\$)
Sprains, strains of joints and adjacent muscles	16	48,669	12	33,744
Open wound	2	190	5	512
Superficial injury	2	1,340	2	1,340
Bruising (skin intact)	3	223	3	223
Foreign body eye	3	573	2	231
Poisoning, toxic effects	2	2,496	1	1,095
Disorders of muscle, tendons & soft tissue	1	4,166	0	0
Total	29	57,657	25	37,145

Focus on the reduction of manual handling injuries should continue for The Coorong District Council. In addition the healthy lifestyle program has emphasised the need for a skin cancer prevention program. The program implemented throughout local government in South

Australian has revealed that one in four persons screened for skin cancers have some form of skin cancer requiring referral for treatment or monitoring.

Mental stress disorder claims have also been on the increase and the difficulty of rehabilitation for these employees leads to very high cost claims. As with any occupational health and safety issue, prevention is better and less costly than cure or treatment, an Employee Assistance Program is therefore recommended to be reviewed on a regular basis.

The table below lists the targets set for 2004/2005 and achievements against those targets, as well as the targets 2005/2006. Results for the 2005/06 financial year were not available for inclusion in this report.

Category	Target 2004/05	Result 2005/06	Target 2005/06
Claims	<10	3.0	<3
Lost time injuries	<1	1.0	<1
Lost time injury days	<18	2.0	<7
Frequency rate	<12	8.5	<8
Duration rate	<8	1.0	<8
Claims in excess of five days lost	<1	0.0	<1
Claims in excess of one year lost time	<1	0.0	<1

Risk Management

Council's risk review is conducted annually in May by the Regional Risk Coordinator for the Local Government Association's Mutual Liability Scheme.

The risk management review covers most areas of Council's operations and specifically targets those areas that have high levels of civil liability exposures or areas that require a formal risk management approach to prevent potential civil liability claims. As the key pieces of legislation that are administered by local government, focus is given to compliance with Local Government Act 1999 and the Development Act 1993.

Risk Review Summary

Section	Council Score	Maximum Score	Percentage
1. Risk & emergency management / professional indemnity	135	155	87%
2. Committee & non employment management	90	95	95%
3. Contract management	85	90	94%
4. Legislative requirements – land	110	110	100%
5. Asset management programmes & systems – land	95	100	95%
6. Land use (lease/licence/permit activities)	75	90	83%
7. Legislative requirements – roads	75	80	94%
8. Road management programmes & systems	70	80	87.5%
TOTAL SCORE	735	800	92%

These results show that Council's risk management practices are progressing at a steady rate. Last year's risk review result was 95% compared to this year's result of 92%, which shows that Council needs to continue to address risk management requirements, with improvement in some areas required in 2007.

With the risk management programs that Council has in place continuous improvement should continue to be attained.

Human Resources

The 2005/06 financial year saw the retirement of two significantly long serving employees, resulting in two out of three Managers leaving the service of Council. Manager of Technical Services, Trevor Gordon, was farewelled after 41 years of local government service. Council held a farewell dinner for Trevor Gordon in recognition of his service to the Council and the former District Council of Peake. The Coorong Employees Social Club hosted a function at Peake in July 2005 to farewell Trevor Gordon and to recognise staff who had served more than 10 years in local government.



**Manager Technical Services Trevor Gordon,
retiring after 41 years of local government service.**

The following employees received certificates of service and commemorative gifts in recognition of their local government service:

Kym Cleggett	35 years
Ron Downs	35 years
Trevor Symonds	35 years
Clarry Fisher	29 years
Rowland Krueger	27 years
Greg Liebelt	26 years
Bill Paterson	26 years
Esme Lawrence	26 years
Ian Appleton	24 years
Clyde Harrison	23 years
Tom Selby	23 years
Ian Millard	19 years
Ian Shepherd	18 years
Garry Gibbs	18 years
Nat Traeger	18 years
Kevin Lee	16 years
Catherine Sleep	13 years
Ken Bottroff	12 years
John Purvis	12 years
Rick Schulz	11 years
Chris Hartmann	11 years

Bill Henderson was successfully recruited to replace Trevor Gordon as the Manager Technical Services.

The previous Chief Executive Officer, Bill Paterson, retired in December 2005 and elected members, staff and Bill's family attended a farewell function at the Meningie Bowling Club. Bill served all his 26 years of local government service at Meningie, originally as the District Clerk of the District Council of Meningie and later as the Chief Executive Officer of The Coorong District Council after amalgamation.



Mayor Cr. Neville Jaensch congratulates Bill Paterson on a long and rewarding career.

Having commenced the recruitment process nearly 12 months prior to Bill Paterson's retirement, Tim Drew was appointed Chief Executive Officer and commenced with Council in January 2006.



Tim Drew at his first Council meeting as Chief Executive Officer of The Coorong District Council.

During 2005/06, eight other employees left the services of Council, a turnover rate of 16.18%. This represented a higher than average industry turnover of 10.66%.

Staff absenteeism during the year was an average of 36.85 hours per employee, which was slightly below the industry rate of 37.57 hours per employee.

Council experienced a reduction in both its annual and long service leave liability, due to the resignation of staff with significant long service leave entitlements during the 2005/06 financial year.

Minor organisational change occurred as a result of the employment of a full time administration officer in the Development & Environmental Services Department, and two full time customer service officers at the Taillem Bend Office.

The resignation of the graduate Engineer resulted in a role change in the Technical Services Department. A position of Technical Support Officer will replace this role and is to be filled in the 2006/07 year.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Council has a commitment to equal employment opportunity and this is reflected by the inclusion of a relevant policy in Council's Human Resource policy. The purpose of the policy is to create a workplace which is free of discrimination and in which all people are permitted equal access and opportunity to progress to the full extent of their ability.

More specifically, the policy:

- Ensures that the selection of individuals for employment and promotion is based solely on the principle of merit, that is, the best person will be selected on the basis of his/her skills, qualifications, experience and knowledge.
- Establishes a set of procedures to deal with discrimination effectively.
- Ensures all staff are kept well informed about policies, procedures and implementation strategies.

Whilst all employees have a personal responsibility in the practical application of this policy, specific responsibility rests with management and employees involved in recruitment, employee administration and training.

Accordingly, interview panels as determined within the guidelines of the Human Resource Policy are aware of equal employment opportunity principles and, whenever possible and relevant, panels have gender balance.

Statistical Staffing Numbers

Category	30 June 2006	30 June 2005
Full Time Equivalents	61.15	55.2
Total No Males	49	47
Total No Females	28	23

As at 30 June 2006	Male	Females
Total Employees	49	28
Full Time Permanent	39	12
Part Time Permanent	2	3
Casual	8	12
Trainees	0	1

Two employees are fully funded by a direct grant.

Information Technology

The Coorong Rural Broadband Project

Following a successful application for grant funding from the South Australian State Government to assist with the building of the Coorong Rural Broadband Network, and the signing of a contract with Agile Communications, planning for the building phase commenced in February 2006.

Construction of the new broadband network commenced during April 2006 with the first equipment installed on the existing towers of the Coorong Communication network, detailed as milestone two in the broadband contract. During May, work commenced on the five new towers of milestone three, with this work completed by 30 June 2006.

Testing and commissioning of milestones two and three was completed by the above date and service to the northern area of Council commenced. With the coverage provided by the first two milestones, and the existing coverage provided by the Agile installed DSLAMs in Meningie, Tintinara, Tailem Bend and Coonalpyn, approximately seventy percent of the Coorong population had access to broadband by the 30 June 2006.



One of the tower sites constructed for the Coorong Rural Broadband Project.



Coorong Rural Broadband Project Committee. Signing of the contract.

Departmental Reports - Technical Services

Responsibilities

The Technical Services Department is responsible for providing a wide range of services associated with the construction and maintenance of community assets, including roads and drainage, parks, gardens and reserves, waste management, water supplies and community wastewater management systems.

During 2005/2006, Council adopted a schedule of strategic management goals in order to set its strategic direction into the foreseeable future relating to road maintenance and construction, waste management and footpaths.

Although not specifically considered as a strategic management goal, the question of an appropriate sealed road network throughout the district was also addressed.

These goals have been developed and included in a five year Long Term Programme which was adopted by the Council in July 2006.

This programme will be reviewed annually and extended so that the Council will have an on-going rolling five year programme. The review of the Programme will occur prior to consideration of each annual budget. In this regard the Programme will have a major influence when setting the annual budget.

The Programme will provide both structure and confidence to Council's decision making processes in the future.



Trevena Road Taillem Bend after reseal and new kerbing.

The 2005/2006 Year in Summary

The Technical Services Department has continued its annual commitment to major maintenance of the roads system by:

- Resheeting or reconstruction of approximately 44 kms of open surfaced roads at a cost of \$940,700.
- Resealing of approximately 3.5 kms of sealed roads including Narrung Road, Kulde Road and Old Dukes Highway at a cost of \$126,300.
- Carried out regular maintenance programmes on roads, footpaths, reserves and other Council infrastructure.

The Technical Services Department had a full and productive year with the following major activities being completed or substantially commenced.

- North Terrace/Trevena Road including Station Drive, Gollan Street, Carter Road and Jervois Terrace, Taillem Bend, have been completed with provision of footpath paving, drainage works and landscaping. This project was funded through the Special Local Roads Programme and the Roads to Recovery Programme. The total cost to complete the roads was \$732,700.
- Commencement of construction and sealing of approximately 3 kms of Poltalloch Road at a cost of \$175,300. This project will be continued during 2006/2007.



Poltalloch Road at Princes Highway intersection.



Dehy Road, Meningie

- **Tailem Central Car Park**

Following further community consultation a final concept design and detailed construction design were completed with the intention of commencing construction during 2006/2007. The Council was successful in being awarded a grant of \$100,000 towards the construction of this project.



Retaining Wall, East Terrace Meningie

- **Retaining Wall, East Terrace, Meningie**

A retaining wall was constructed with the co-operation with SA Water along the eastern side of East Terrace to support an eroded embankment which exposed a section of water main.

- **Waste Management**

Council was active during the financial year in preparing a land environment management plan for the extension of the Tailem Bend landfill site. This plan was prepared following negotiations with the Environment Protection Authority.

Also, as part of Council's objective to rationalise the number of landfills in the district, landfills at Meningie and Coonalpyn will be closed in 2006/07 and both sites will be developed as transfer stations. The level of service in both these towns is expected to be maintained with the redevelopment of these facilities

- **Stormwater Drainage**

As part of Council's environmental responsibilities two gross pollutant traps were installed in a section of existing stormwater drainage to trap gross waste which enters the drainage system. These traps effectively prevent the transport of waste into the River Murray.

- **Coonalpyn Swimming Pool**

Council retiled both the main pool and toddlers pools at Coonalpyn and also provided a concrete paved area under the shade area. This project was undertaken with the assistance of the local community which provided volunteer labour.

Gazebo

The Coonalpyn community also assisted by erecting a new gazebo in the area of the Coonalpyn rest area.

- **Plant Replacement**

During the financial year Council continued with its objective of providing and maintaining a modern and efficient range of plant and equipment.

Council acquired the following major items of plant:

- Grader for construction activities.
- 2.5 Tonne truck for town maintenance activities.
- 115 HP Tractor for rural roads resheeting works.
- Vibrating roller with trailer for road maintenance and construction.
- Two Front deck mowers for Coonalpyn/Tintinara.

Council has also ordered a replacement bulldozer which will be delivered during November 2006.



Front Deck mower being used at Tintinara

- **Irrigation**

As part of its commitment to protect the environment and to reduce water usage, Council has introduced a computer controlled irrigation system in the reserves and parks of Tailem Bend. The system allows radio control by the use of a mobile phone.

- **Community Wastewater Management Schemes**

Council has continued its programme of upgrading the pumps associated with the Meningie community wastewater management scheme with the replacement of the pumps in Narrung Road.

Because of increased development in Tailem Bend, and as part of Council's goal to be in position to attract development, consultants have been employed to investigate the present capacity of the Tailem Bend Community Wastewater Management Scheme and to report back with recommendations regarding possible extensions and improvements. The final report will be available during early 2006/2007.

- **Other Projects**

During the year Council has been involved in several smaller projects which have improved the overall amenity for residents. Such projects include various landscaping projects and columbariums at the Tailem Bend and Meningie cemeteries.

Departmental Reports - Development & Environmental Services

Responsibilities

The Development and Environmental Services Department is responsible for Planning and Development, Public and Environmental Health, Animal Management, Bushfire Management, Environmental Management and Sustainability.

Planning and Development

A large amount of interest in development has been shown in the district during the 2005/06. Council staff worked diligently on the Sweetwater Canal development that incorporates the development of 300 allotments adjacent to Lake Albert at Meningie. Development approval has been granted and a final decision from the Federal Government is expected on this development in 2006/07. Further substantial subdivisions of residential allotments were approved in Tailem Bend where a total of 38 new residential allotments have been approved and in Meningie where 37 new residential allotments have been approved (not including Sweetwater)

The Development Assessment Commission also provided Provisional Planning consent for a chicken processing plant in Tailem Bend that will employ approximately 14 persons when fully operational.

Council has received a substantial number of development applications for the division of rural lands. The Development Assessment Panel has expressed concern that these land divisions are essentially intended for rural living type uses rather than agriculture. The Coorong District Wide Plan Amendment Report contains new provisions which are intended to manage the effects of pressure to create rural living uses in our rural lands.

Summary of Development Plan Assessment

The number of development applications received for dwellings was similar to 2004/05 however the value of the applications was lower. The application approval process has become more complicated with changes to development legislation that now include requirement of energy efficiency. The requirement for referral to the Department of Water Land and Biodiversity Conservation for development adjacent to the River Murray and Lakes also causes some delays in processing development applications.

Development Policy Planning

Council's Development and Environmental services in 2005/06 has been finalising the Warrengie Plan Amendment Report. A Plan Amendment Report for East Wellington is currently being drafted for the consideration of the Planning Amendment Committee.

Council Wide General Plan Amendment Report is presently out for public consultation and this process will close on 27 October 2006. The size of the project of thoroughly amending

Council's existing development plan has meant that the exhibition of this plan was delayed by two months.

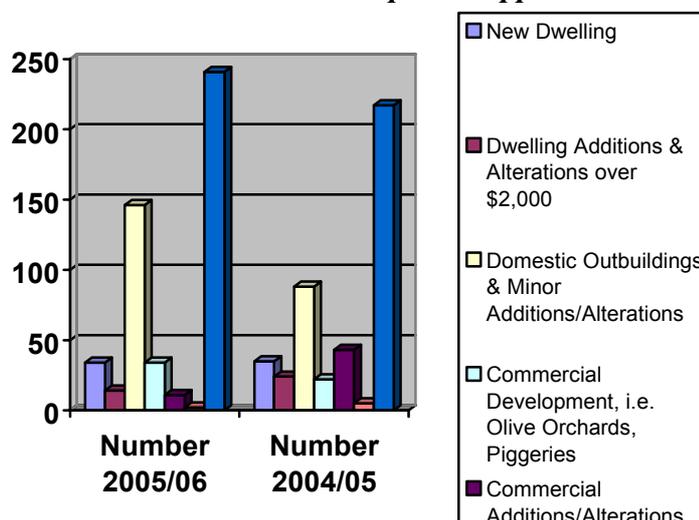
Further policy planning requirements will occur as a result of legislative amendments by the State Government.

Building Rules Assessment

Recent changes to the development act will see greater demands placed on Council's building surveying responsibilities with the increase from four star energy rating to five stars and the auditing of Council's building assessment process. The recent changes to system indicators reporting and the fee distribution changes have placed a greater onus on checking process.

Development Type	2005/06 No.	Value (\$)	2004/05 No.	Value (\$)
New Dwelling	34	\$3,372,282	35	\$5,092,235
Dwelling Additions & Alterations over \$2,000	14	\$468,250	24	\$922,400
Domestic Outbuildings & Minor Additions/Alterations	146	\$1,160,912	88	\$577,544
Commercial Development, i.e. Olive Orchards, Piggeries	34	\$4,561,176	22	\$2,663,650
Commercial Additions/Alterations	11	\$206,210	43	\$823,225
Swimming Pools	2	\$54,507	5	\$54,987
TOTAL:	241	\$9,823,337	217	\$10,134,041

2005/06 & 2004/05 Development Applications



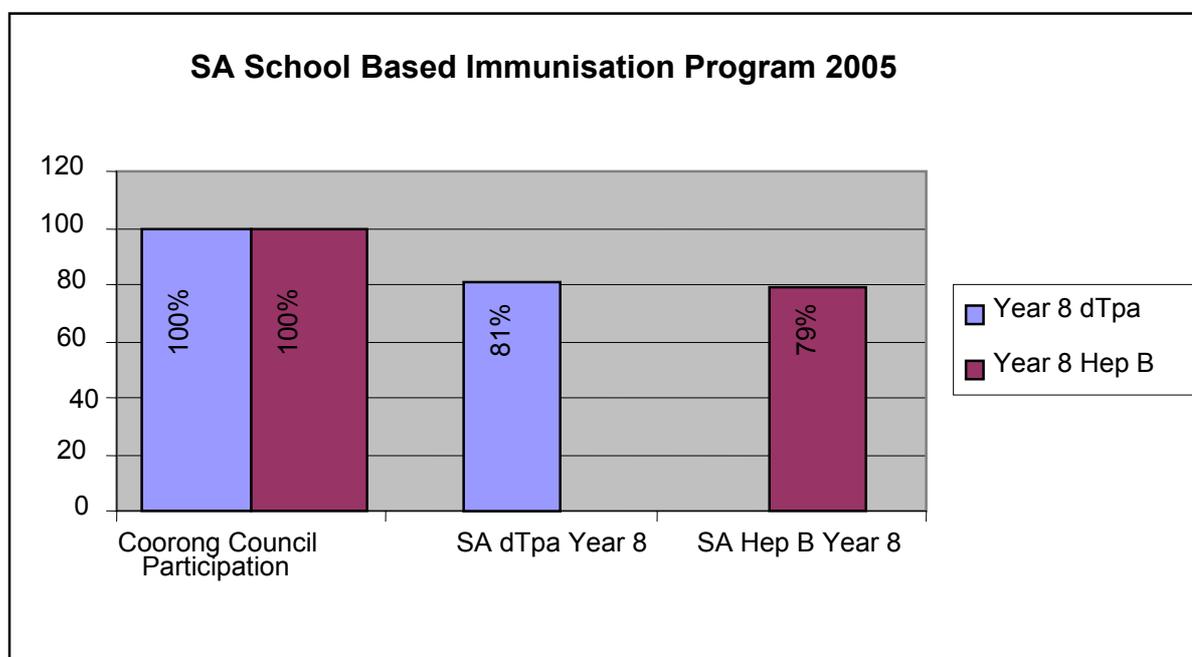
Public and Environmental Health

Disease Control

The Coorong District Council has conducted a range of food shop and waste control systems inspections and has also investigated complaints relating to issues covered under the Public and Environmental Health Act 1987.

Council's Environmental Health Officers followed up and resolved approximately 40 health complaints lodged with Council.

The school based immunisation program within the Coorong Council District has achieved participation results over the state average. This graph provides details of the School based immunisation results that has been provided from South Australian Immunisation Co-ordination Unit based upon data provided to them at the time of this report.



Council has commenced the systematic pumping out of residential properties with septic tanks that are connected to Council's septic tank effluent drainage schemes (STEDs).

The decision to carry out the systematic pumping of septic tanks was a result of Council being able to maintain the STEDs infrastructure to a manageable level and extend the longevity of each of the schemes, as well as comply with the Public Environmental Health Act Waste Control Regulations. Council has four towns that are on STEDs schemes and the Septic Tanks will be pumped on a four yearly basis by a licensed contractor.

Council has continued its contractual alliance with the University of Adelaide Mosquito Research Laboratory to monitor and dose known mosquito sites within the Council area. Twenty one confirmed cases of Barmah Forest Virus and forty confirmed cases of Ross River Virus were reported to Council.

The State Government has awarded the University of South Australia a \$50,000 grant to begin a field study to determine which fauna may be arbovirus vectors.

Council successfully cleaned up twenty-nine unsightly properties under Council's Order Making policy.

Food Safety and Nutrition

The Coorong Good Food on the Road Program provides the opportunity for the Coorong District Council's community and the travelling public the choice of healthy and nutritious foods from the food outlets within the district, as well as a food choice for people with special dietary requirements.

The current high level of obesity in the community highlights the importance of a balanced diet, combined with appropriate physical activity, which has become a significant message of various health promotion strategies.

Food recall notifications are provided to Council via Food Safe Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ). During the reporting period Council forwarded appropriate recalls to relevant food businesses and conducted a large number of follow-up checks to ensure retailers complied with recalls.

Five improvement notices under Part 5 of the Food Act 2001 were served on businesses in 2005/06.



Coorong Community Links Committee

Health Care and Community

The Coorong Community Links Committee (CCLC) is a committee of Council that brings together all the representatives from various health agency providers within the council area. The committee receives substantial recurrent funding through the Office for the Ageing and Home and Community Care.

The Tailem Bend Community Centre is a facility operated by one staff member and a number of volunteers. It provides services to persons who are aged, have a disability or are disadvantaged and is supported by the Coorong District Council through HACC funding and a Council rate subsidy.



Tailem Bend Community Centre



Hey Hay Project – one of the straw sculptures place in Tailem Bend

The CCLC also obtained a grant from Country Arts SA for the Hey Hay project. The aim of the project was to indicate the importance of primary production to the district. The various straw sculptures were assembled by volunteer members of the Tailem Bend community with the assistance of artists, and featured various farm and native animals and also incorporated community health messages. It was estimated that over the two week project, in excess of ten thousand people viewed the various sculptures. The launch was attended by 130 people including ABC radio presenter Mr Peter Goers and businessmen Mr Allan Scott.

Council was again involved in the National Youth Week in April 2006. The Coorong Calling Youth project aim was to provide an opportunity for youth mentoring and incorporated the Power Community Youth (Port Adelaide Football Club) with the opportunity to address and inspire the future leaders within our community.



Participants in Coorong Calling Youth 2006

The renovations to the Tailem Bend Senior Citizens and Community Function Centre were completed and have been the subject of many positive comments from the Senior Citizens community. The centre has met a community need for a small to medium size function centre and is now utilised on regular basis for a variety of purposes.

Health Promotion

Council's General Inspector and Environmental Health Officer conducted the PETPEP program in local schools to educate children on how to remain healthy and safe around pets, how to look after and treat their pets, the responsibilities associated with dog ownership and how to behave around strange dogs.



Council staff and volunteers presenting to school children during the PETPEP Program.

Delegations

Authorised officers have been delegated powers under the Public and Environmental Health Act 1987 and the Food Act 2001 by Council. Council employs 3 authorised officers.

Fire Prevention

Pursuant to the Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 The Coorong District Bushfire Prevention Committee and the fire prevention officer prepared The Coorong District Bushfire Prevention Plan for The Coorong District Council. After public consultation this plan was adopted by Council. This plan is subject to yearly updates.

Animal Management

Pursuant to the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 Council was required to adopt a plan that not only covers dog and cat management but sets in place an Animal Management Plan that will manage most matters concerning animals encountered within our district.

The Coorong District Council Animal Management Committee prepared Council's Animal Management Plan, which was adopted after public consultation.

Environmental Management and Sustainability

The implementation of the State Government's Natural Resource Management (NRM) Plan has seen the southern and eastern parts of the Council area coming under the South East NRM region, whilst the northern and western portions into the South Australia Murray Darling Basin NRM region. This has created some problems due to the fact that Council must deal with two separate regions when liaising with the NRM Board.

The Coorong Local Action Plan committee maintained its on ground works program and Landcare officers have remained proactive in the delivery of projects including the control of ground water recharge, the protection of remnant native vegetation and wetlands, the promotion of sustainable agriculture production, the expansion of ground water monitoring (including the installation of additional sampling wells), the logging of monitoring stations on GPS and the maintenance of monitoring stations.

Landcare

Local Action Plan On-ground Works Incentives (Devolved Grants)

The Local Action Plan (LAP) Committee is now in its 10th year of on-ground works. More than 120,000 hectares of works have been completed to date.

The 2005/06 LAP On-Ground Works Program to date included:

Revegetation	19 ha
Native vegetation and wetlands protected	640 ha
Perennial PASTURES	6,424 ha
Fodder shrubs	74 ha
Farm forestry	12 ha
Saltland pastures	129 ha
Leveling sand drift	22 ha
Stabilizing wind erosion	152 ha
Clay spreading	626 ha
Fencing the above options	130 km



Example of Farm Forestry. This plantation is near Meningie.

Drought Impacts on the LAP program

We have had a significant number of projects that have been withdrawn or that have failed this year. About 30 % of projects were either not performed or reduced in area. These were mostly revegetation and perennial pasture projects. Most of the projects that involved wind erosion and clay spreading were undertaken early in the year, when conditions were still quite good. The completed projects vary in success.

The LAP is not able to carry over funding for incomplete and withdrawn projects to next year and landholders will need to reapply for funding next year.

Funding changes in 2005/06 include:

- The LAP applies separately for funding from each NRM region from 05/06 (SA MDB & SE).
- Funding must be accounted for separately in each region and cannot cross boundaries.
- Separate NRM Tracker data bases will be required for NRM each region.
- Separate reporting will be required for each region.
- The SE NRM Board is operating on financial years, and the SA MDB NRM Board is currently operating on calendar years.
- A limited on-ground works program was offered to landholders in the Tatiara Hundreds of Makin & McCallum to cater for the implementation of the Land and Water Management Plan for the Tintinara Coonalpyn prescribed wells area.

Employment for the Coorong District Local Action Plan

- The two full time LAP Project Officers are jointly funded by the South East (SE) and South Australian Murray Darling Basin (SA MDB) NRM Boards and The Coorong District Council.
- A Wetland Planning Officer is funded by the SA MDB NRM Board. The Wetland Planning Officer works over the Coorong District, Goolwa to Wellington, Mannum to Wellington and Mid Murray LAP areas, and will be an employee of The Coorong District Council, but based in Mount Barker.

Bureau of Rural Science Funding

Funding has been approved for community based groundwater monitoring from the Bureau of Rural Science. All 7 projects submitted at very short notice were fully funded. The projects will commence on 1 July 2006.

Local Action Plan Review

Actions undertaken from the 2004 Review of the LAP include:

- High priority areas for revegetation report completed.
- New targets and priority hundreds completed.
- 15 new piezometers network installed at 5 locations in the LAP area.

NRM Act 2004 and NRM Boards

A considerable amount of time has been spent dealing with the new NRM Act and the implications for The Coorong District Council area. Under the new regional delivery arrangements the Council area is split, with approximately two thirds of the area going to the South East NRM Region and the remainder staying within the South Australian Murray Darling Basin NRM Region.

This has significant impacts on the way the LAP operates in the future. Council and the LAP have been proactive in presenting options for the new NRM Boards to consider when dealing with the Council area.

NRM Plans and Investment Strategies

The LAP had had significant input into the preparation of both the South East and South Australian Murray Darling Basin NRM Boards Investment Strategies to ensure the continuation of funding to priority projects within this area.

Groundwater Monitoring in LAP Area

The LAP has a contract from the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation to undertake all groundwater monitoring in the area. Over 200 bores and piezometers are monitored for groundwater depth and salinity levels. The monitoring is essential for measuring the progress of the LAP on-ground works program to address groundwater recharge, urban salinity in the Tintinara and Coomandook township areas as well as providing information to assist in the water allocation process in the Tintinara Coonalpyn prescribed wells area and the Peake Sherlock prescribed wells area.



Revegetation works undertaken at Morella not far from Salt Creek. The first photo shows the direct seeding farrows. The second photos is three years later at the same location.

Ramsar Wetlands of International Significance

The LAP Committee is working with the Department of Environment and Heritage to implement wetland restoration works in the Coorong and Lower Lakes Ramsar area. This has involved working with local landholders, National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Aboriginal Lands Trust, to co-ordinate large scale revegetation programs and the reinstatement of more natural water flows into wetlands which have been isolated by human activity.

Lower Lakes Project Officer

A Lower Lakes Project Officer position has been funded in the latest Round of SA MDB NRM Board Community Grants. This officer has 50% of his time allocated to the Lakes and Coorong that are in the Coorong District Council area. Much of Project Officer's time will be spent implementing Ramsar on-ground works around the Lower Lakes and Coorong. He will also be supervising wetland planning and addressing coastal and estuarine issues. The current employment arrangements with the Goolwa to Wellington LAP based in Murray Bridge will continue.

Wetland management plans have been completed for Waltowa, Narrung and Terringie wetlands and baseline surveys carried out at the Yalkuri and Poltalloch wetlands.

Coorong & Mallee Farm Forestry Network

The Coorong & Mallee Farm Forestry Network was busy during the year and membership increased to a total of 22 members.

Three field days were held around the district: two focused on pruning and plantation maintenance and one on tree establishment. At the tree establishment day, attendees witnessed a variety of tree establishment methods including mechanical planting and hand planting. Previous plantings were inspected and management discussed. The group was also addressed by a representative of the Oil Mallee Company (WA) who are establishing oil mallee trials in the district.

Three members attended a Master Tree Grower's course held in the Adelaide Hills and highly recommend the course to be held locally in the future.

Two editions of the 'Coorong & Mallee Farm Forester' have been produced and distributed to members.



Wetlands fenced off near Salt Creek

Irrigator Groups

Two irrigator groups have been formed in the Council area the Meningie Narrung Lakes Irrigators Association and the Upper South East Water Resources Group (in the Tintinara Coonalpyn Prescribed Wells Area).

Both groups have similar aims and objectives:

- To provide a structured and formal facility for those involved in the local irrigation industry to efficiently and effectively represent their experiences and requirements.
- To promote and facilitate productivity, efficiency and responsible management or any other relevant matters.

The LAP is in a position to support both groups financially as well as with Project Officer time. This will include administrative support, workshops, field days and other activities.

Tintinara-Coonalpyn Land and Water Management Plan

Planning processes

The Tintinara-Coonalpyn Land and Water Management Planning process entered its first round of four consultation meetings in the first month of the 2005/06 financial year.

During August – October, the draft plan was written, being approved for release by the SE NRM Board in November. The final community consultation meeting was held in December. The final version of the Tintinara-Coonalpyn Land and Water Management Plan was approved in March 2006.

Negotiations were held to transfer the implementation of the LWMP to the Coorong District LAP late in the financial year.

The launch of the LWMP was planned during the 2005/06 financial year, but did not occur until 28 July 2006.

Actions

The Land and Water Management Planning Officer supervised the SE NRM Board Tintinara salinity risk assessment, which was completed in November 2005. A number of actions recommended in this report have been implemented by Council and the community.

A piezometer was installed by the Coorong District LAP near the Tintinara stormwater basins to monitor the salinity of groundwater around these recharge points, and to help identify water reuse potential.

Funding for the Tintinara weather station was obtained by the Upper South East Irrigators Association in November, with assistance from the LWMP. The approvals for the weather station site and funding commitments for installation were obtained by the LWM Planner during the remainder of the financial year.

A commitment to funding from the Community Water Grants program, for an innovative stormwater reuse program in Tintinara was obtained.



Saltbush planted near Coomandook

Information Statement

An Information Statement is available as a separate document in accordance with legislative requirements, however the contents are included in this Annual Report.

Access to Council Documents

Documents available for inspection

The following documents are available for public inspection at the Council offices free of charge. Some items are available on Council's website www.coorong.sa.gov.au. Members of the public may purchase copies of documents for a fee as per fees and charges register.

- Council Agendas & Minutes
- Standing Committee Agendas
- Standing Committee Minutes
- Policy Manual
- Strategic Plan
- Budget Statements
- Annual Report
- Register of Fees and Charges
- Council By-Laws
- Annual Financial Statements
- Planning Application Register
- Building Application Register
- Register of Elected Members
- Allowance & Benefits
- Officers Register of Remuneration
- Register of Public Streets & Roads
- Assessment Book

Other information requests

Requests for other information not included in the above documents are considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 1991.

Under this legislation, an application fee and a search fee must be forwarded with the completed request form as provided for under the Act, unless the applicant is granted an exemption in accordance with the Act.

Should the applicant require copies of any document inspected pursuant to a Freedom of Information request, charges as set will apply.

Freedom of Information Request Forms should be addressed to:

Chief Executive Officer
Coorong District Council
PO Box 28
MENINGIE SA 5264

Applications will be responded to as soon as possible within the statutory 30 days of Council receiving the properly completed Freedom of Information form, together with the application and search fees.

In the 12 months ended 30 June 2006, no certificates pursuant to Section 65 of the Local Government (Freedom of Information) Act (since repealed), were issued.

Elected members allowances

Elected members receive allowances in accordance with the Local Government Act and Regulations 1999.

Council determined the following annual allowances for the 2005/2006 year.

Presiding Member	\$8,000
Deputy Presiding Member	\$3,750
Chairs of Standing Committees	\$3,750
Other Councillors	\$3,000

Council has resolved to provide reimbursement for expenses incurred in travelling within the Council area on Council business at a rate determined by Commonwealth legislation. The Council has also resolved to reimburse councillors for a range of additional expenses, for example, approved travel outside the Council area, attendance at conferences, and the provision of phone/facsimile machines for council business.

Tendering and Supply

In July 2000, Council adopted a competitive tendering, contracting and sale of land and other assets policy. Through this policy the Council is committed to ensuring a fair, transparent and accountable process for the provision of services, purchasing of goods and services and in the disposal of land and other assets.

The Council aims to ensure that its methods of service provision, including the carrying out of works, purchasing goods and the sale of land and other assets are cost effective and meet the needs of the community and legislative requirements and represent best value for money, while taking into account the need to support the local economy.

Generally, Council will purchase goods through adoption of the following approaches:

- Direct purchase from a particular supplier.
- Obtaining quotations to select a supplier.
- Requesting tenders from a selected range of suppliers.
- Calling open tenders.
- Contract for service where rate is pre-determined by Council.

In identifying the circumstances in which to apply these options, Council will consider a number of issues, for example:

- The number of known suppliers of the goods or services.
- The existence of local suppliers of the goods or services and the impact on the local economy if the goods or services were purchased from outside the council area.
- The total estimated value of the purchase.
- Organisational capacity and attitude to elected Council/staff roles and responsibilities in purchasing.
- Delegation limits taking into consideration accountability, responsibility, operational efficiency and urgency of supply.
- Previous experience with suppliers.
- Compliance with statutory obligations.

The following list contains some of the functions for which Council utilises contractors to carry out services:

- Cartage of road building material
- Waste management
- Food premises inspections
- Road line marking
- Engineering services
- Information services



Granite rocks in native vegetation at Kangaroo Flat

Competition Principles

Council does not conduct any significant business activity.

All by-laws have been reviewed and found not to have an effect on competition.

No complaints have been received by Council about the application of competitive neutrality.

Amendment of Council Records

A member of the public may gain access to Council documents to make amendments concerning their personal affairs by making a request under the Freedom of Information Act. A member of the public may then request a correction to any information about themselves that is incomplete, incorrect, misleading or out of date.

To gain access to these Council records, a member of the public must complete a Freedom of Information request form as indicated above, outlining the records that he/she wishes to inspect.

Senior Executive Officers

The Chief Executive Officer and two Managers are not paid overtime but receive, as a part of their total salary package, the benefit of the private use of a fully maintained motor vehicle subject to fuel costs being paid by the officer when on leave.

The same two Managers also receive a telephone allowance of \$50 per quarter for metered calls. The Chief Executive Officer receives telephone rental and private calls up to \$200 per annum.

Development Applications

Residents are notified of some Development Applications requiring the approval of Council. A number of applications are exempted from public notification by the Planning Act. When an application is publicly notified, residents have the opportunity both to write to Council expressing their view of the application and to subsequently personally address the Development Assessment Panel before a decision is made. From 1 July 2001 all development applications previously requiring the approval of Council are now referred to the Coorong District Development Assessment Panel. This panel which comprises elected members and staff sits independently of council and hears representations and receives written submissions on publicly notified development applications prior to making decisions.

Retirement Villages

While the community caters for retired persons in a range of appropriate and different ways there are no Retirement Villages established within the District.

Strategic Management Plans

The Strategic Plan for the period 2003-2008 was revised during the 2004/2005 financial year. The Strategic Plan was developed in 1999 as a result of investigation and consultation with elected members, citizens and Council staff.

The Development Plan is a document prepared in conjunction with Planning SA under the Development Act 1993 and seeks to provide principles of development control in support of and consistent with the Strategic Plan. A new Development Plan incorporating the whole district was developed during 2000 and 2001 and the consolidated plan came into operation in October 2001; further ministerial amendments to plans on a State wide basis came into effect in December 2001 and February 2002 and August 2003.

In order to achieve outcomes in the key areas listed in the Strategic Plan, Council would ordinarily prepare an annual business plan. A business plan was not prepared for 2004/05, however, progress towards achieving outcomes listed in the Strategic Plan and directions for the 2004/2005 year are found within the departmental reports contained within this Annual Report.

Service for the Community

Full Council makes decisions on policy and strategy issues relating to services that are provided for members of the public.

These services currently include:

Roads/Footpath/Kerbing	Aged Care
Traffic control Devices	Parking Control & Management
Cycle Tracks	Dog/Cat Management
Public Cemeteries	Environmental Health
Car parks	Litter Bins
Storm-water Drainage	Public Toilets
School Crossings	Bus Shelters
Parking Bays/Street Closures	Playground Equipment
Street Lighting	Boat Ramps
Street Sweeping	Home Assistance Scheme
Street Tree Planting	Planning Controls
Garbage Collection	Tourism/Arts Development
War Memorials	Crime Prevention Strategies
Public Seating	Recreation/Sport Facilities
Parks & Reserves	Community Libraries
Community Halls & Centres	Litter control
Foreshore Facilities	
Immunisation Programs	

Public Participation

Members of the public have a number of methods of putting forward their views on particular issues before Council.

Deputations

With the permission of the Committee Chairperson or the Chairman, a member of the public can address a Committee or the Council personally or on behalf of a group of residents.

Petitions

Written petitions can be addressed to the Council on any issue within the Council's jurisdiction.

Written requests

A member of the public can write to the Council on any Council policy, activity or service.

Elected members

Members of the public can contact their elected members of Council to discuss any issue relevant to Council.

Community Consultation

The Coorong District council consults with local residents on particular issues that affect their neighbourhood (Note – below are examples only)

- (a) Alcohol free zones
- (b) Waste Management issues
- (c) Land use zone issues
- (d) Community Land exclusions
- (e) Management Plans for Community Land
- (f) Major road changes proposed

Consultation is conducted in accordance with the Public Consultation Policy.

Matters For Which Council Can Order That The Public Be Excluded

Under Section 90 (3) of the Local Government Act 1999 Council or a Committee may order that the Public be excluded for a particular agenda item.

In accordance with its Code of Practice for access to Council Meetings and Council Documents, the following information is provided on the use of this provision.

Confidentiality provisions of 90 (3) and 91(7) were utilised 32 times during the period ended 30 June 2005.

Out of the 32:

- Number of occasions that resulted in a decision or decisions being made 23 times (9 occasions did not result in a motion).

- Number of occasions that information declared confidential has subsequently been made publicly available; 21 times.
- Number of occasions that information declared confidential and has still not been made publicly available, 3 as matters have not been settled

The following is an indication of any particular issues that contributed to the use of confidentiality provisions;

- Commercial issues, 28 times
- Personal affairs of any person; 1 time.
- Legal or professional advice, 2 times.
- Review of confidential items, 1 time

Documents Available for Public Inspection

The following documents are available for inspection by the public. Some documents are available on the Council website www.coorong.sa.gov.au. A copy of any document may be obtained, a charge will apply.

Policies and codes

- Code of conduct for council employees
- Code of conduct for council members
- Code of practice for access to council meetings council committees and council documents.
- Collection of long term outstanding rates policy
- Competitive tendering, contracting, purchasing, sale of land and other assets policy
- Community committees of council policy
- Control of State and Federal election signs policy
- Customer service policy
- Delegations- annual review
- Elected members' allowances and support policy
- Function expenditure guidelines
- Infrastructure and Assets Policy
- Interim farm building policy
- Internal control policy
- Internal review of council decisions policy
- Local government land, lease, licence and authorisation provisions
- Public consultation policy
- Provision of donations in respect of payment of rates for community organisations and groups policy
- Provision of loans and grants to community groups policy
- Rating policy
- Revegetation of council road reserves policy
- Risk management policy
- Unmade roads policy
- Vandalism & graffiti prevention and management policy
- Volunteer management policy
- Website use policy

Registers - required under the Local Government Act 1999

- Members register of interest
- Members register of allowances and benefits
- Officers register of interest
- Officers register of remuneration and benefits
- Register of public roads
- Register of fees & charges levied by Council
- Council By-laws
- Community land

- Campaign donations return for candidates at the May 2003 periodic election

Rating Policy 2005/06

Introduction

This document sets out the policy of The Coorong District Council for setting and collecting rates from its community. The policy covers:

- method used to value land
- adoption of valuations
- business impact statement
- Council's revenue raising powers
- differential general rates
- service charges
- water catchment /Natural Resource Management levy (the Council's collection role)
- pensioner concessions
- other concessions
- payment of rates
- late payment of rates
- remission and postponement of rates
- rebate of rates
- sale of land for non-payment of rates
- disclaimer

Contact details for further information

Trevor Symonds Finance Administrator or Di Miell, Rates Officer by phoning your nearest Council office, as detailed below or fax (08) 8757 2222 or email council@coorong.sa.gov.au

The Coorong District Council Meningie Office
49 Princes Highway (Telephone 8575 1008)
Meningie, 5264

The Coorong District Council Tailem Bend Office
95 Railway Terrace (Telephone 8572 3611)
Tailem Bend, 5260

The Coorong District Council Tintinara Office
37 Becker Terrace (Telephone 8757 2100)
Tintinara 5266

Strategic Focus

In setting its rates for the 2005/2006 financial year the Council has considered the following:

- its current strategic plan, *The Coorong District Council Strategic Plan* was last revised in April 2004. The strategic plan was developed in 1999 following an extensive community consultation program;

- the current economic climate and relevant factors such as inflation and interest rates;
- the specific issues faced by our community, which are:
 - the need to update and maintain capital equipment to enable servicing of the road network and other essential infrastructure;
 - the maintenance and improvement of community assets to enable the District to be promoted as an attractive place in which to live work, invest and visit;
 - the sustainable management of waste and the promotion of recycling programs;
 - the development of expanded aged care support services;
 - the fostering and promoting of recreational activities for all ages.
- the budget for the 2005/2006 financial year;
- the impact of rates on the community, including:
 - householders, businesses and primary producers;
 - the broad principle that the rate in the dollar should be the same for all properties except where there is clearly a different level of services available to ratepayers or some other circumstance which warrants variation from the broad principle;
 - minimising the level of general rate required by levying fees and charges for goods and services on a user pays basis, where that is possible, to recover the full cost of operating or providing the service or goods, with provision for concessions to those members of the community unable to meet the full cost.

For the 2005/2006 financial year the Council has increased rates by 4.4 % with the rate in the dollar being reduced significantly because of an increase in valuations to set a budget that will provide the Council with sufficient additional revenue to meet cost increases. The Strategic Management Plan provides the Strategic direction of Council over a five year period while the budget provides detail for the 2005/2006 year and a forecast for the following two years as a part of that plan and the rates are set at a level to meet that budget.

Council raises revenue for governance and administration, which deliver goods and services to the community. These goods and services are generally not provided by the private sector and may include road infrastructure, waste management, social services, libraries, regulatory services, health services and street lighting to mention a few. The Council recognises there may be situations where ratepayers provide or maintain infrastructure that might otherwise be provided or maintained by the Council. In these circumstances, the Council will consider if any possible rate rebates or other concessions apply in order to provide financial assistance to these ratepayers.

Rates are a system of taxation on the community for local government to deliver the goods and services expected by the community. All ratepayers receive benefits from paying rates. In considering the impact of rates on the various sectors of the community, the Council has determined its rates so that they apply in a consistent manner and are comparable with the level of services provided in the urban and rural areas.

The strategic management plans and the Council's budget are available for inspection at the contact locations listed on Page 1.

The Council conducts public consultation on a broad range of issues relating to specific programs and the future directions for the area. These opportunities are always advertised in local papers. Ratepayers and other interested parties are welcome to attend. The Council also encourages feedback at anytime and such comments may be sent to:

The Chief Executive Officer
The Coorong District Council
PO Box 28
Meningie 5264

Annual Adoption of the Rating Policy

Section 171 of the Local Government Act 1999 requires a Council to prepare and adopt each year, in conjunction with setting the rates, a rates policy. The policy must be available at the principal office of the Council and a summary version must be distributed with the rates notice. This policy is available for inspection at contact locations listed on Page 1 or by visiting the council web page on www.coorong.sa.gov.au.

Method Used To Value Land

The Council may adopt one of three valuation methodologies to value the properties in its area. They are:

- *Capital Value* – the value of the land and all of the improvements on the land.
- *Site Value* – the value of the land and any improvements which permanently affect the amenity of use of the land, such as drainage works, but excluding the value of buildings and other improvements.
- *Annual Value* – a valuation of the rental potential of the property.

The Council has decided to continue to use capital value as the basis for valuing land within the council area.

The Council considered that this method of valuing land provides the fairest method of distributing the rate burden across all ratepayers because property value is a relatively good indicator of wealth and capital value, which closely approximates the market value of a property and provides the best indicator of overall property value.

Adoption of Valuations

The Council has adopted the valuations made by the Valuer-General as provided to the Council on 14 July 2005. If a ratepayer is dissatisfied with the valuation made by the Valuer-General then the ratepayer may object to the Valuer-General in writing within 60 days of receiving the notice of the valuation, explaining the basis for the objection, provided they have not: (a) previously received a notice of this valuation under the Local Government Act 1999, in which case the objection period is 60 days from the receipt of the first notice; or (b) previously had an objection to the valuation considered by the Valuer-General. The address of the Office of the Valuer-General is:

Office of the Valuer-General
GPO Box 1354
ADELAIDE SA 5001
email: objections@saugov.sa.gov.au

and the telephone number is 1300 653 345. Please note that the Council has no role in this process. It is also important to note that the lodgement of an objection does not change the due date for the payment of rates.

Notional Values

Certain properties may be eligible for a notional value under the Valuation of Land Act 1971 where the property is the principal place of residence of a ratepayer. This can relate to certain primary production land or where there is State heritage recognition. A notional value is generally less than the capital value and this will result in reduced rates, unless the minimum rate already applies. Application for a notional value must be made to the Office of the Valuer-General.

Business Impact Statement

The Council has considered the impact of rates on all businesses in the Council area, including primary production. Council maintains contact with the business community both directly and through the Murraylands Regional Development Board.

Council has also considered;

- Those elements of the Council's strategic management plans relating to business development:
- The Regional Development Plan.
- The equity of the distribution of the rate burden – apart from the decision to provide a differential rate between urban and non-urban land, as outlined under the heading "Differential General Rates", the Council considers that all ratepayers receive broadly comparable services and are generally similarly impacted upon by prevailing economic conditions. A differential rate is applied as between urban and non urban land due to the different levels of service provided to urban users when compared to the non urban.
- Council's policy on facilitating local economic development:
 - Preference for local suppliers where price, quality and service provision are comparable to suppliers outside the Council area;
 - Support for and contribution to tourism marketing.

- Support for and contribution to the Murraylands Regional Development Board.
- Current local, state and national economic conditions and expected changes during the next financial year. The general economic climate is stable and appears likely to continue to be stable over the next twelve months. Reasonable prospects exist for a continuation of a low rate of inflation and low interest rates.
- Changes in the valuation of business and primary production properties from the previous financial year. In keeping with state wide trends, valuations of properties generally with access to water have increased more sharply than in other areas which have experienced only a small increase in valuation in most cases.
- Specific Council projects for the coming year that will solely or principally benefit businesses and primary producers – Council has undertaken a business needs analysis and established a profile of businesses across the district and is working with the Murraylands Regional Development Board to address the needs of businesses.
- Specific infrastructure maintenance issues that will solely or principally benefit businesses and primary producers will be:
 - upgrading the pavement structure and sealing major roads both rural and urban. This is partly as a result of the need for roads to carry heavier vehicles to service industry;
 - formal parking areas in towns and settlements.

Council's Revenue Raising Powers

All land within a Council area, except for land specifically exempt (e.g. Crown land held for a public purpose, Council occupied land and other land prescribed in the Local Government Act 1999 – refer Section 147 of the Act), is rateable. The Local Government Act provides for a Council to raise revenue for the broad purposes of the Council through a general rate, which applies to all rateable properties, or through differential general rates, which apply to classes of properties. In addition, Council can raise separate rates, for specific areas of the Council or service rates or charges for specific services. The Council also raises revenue through fees and charges, which are set giving consideration to the cost of the service provided and any equity issues. The list of applicable fees and charges is available at the contact locations listed on Page 1.

Differential General Rates

The Council has decided to impose differential general rates on the following properties:

- all rateable urban land (townships of: Tailem Bend, Meningie, Tintinara, Coonalpyn and the East Wellington township zone)
- all other rateable land.

At its meeting of 14 July, 2005 the Council decided to raise rate revenue of \$ 3876,600 in a total revenue budget of \$ 10,876,200.

As a result of this decision the Council has set a rate of 0.372 cents in the dollar for all rateable urban land and a rate of 0.322 cents in the dollar for all other rateable land. The differential rate for all rateable urban land is expected to recover \$1,110,000 and the differential rate for all other land is expected to recover \$2,766,600 towards the total rate revenue.

The Council provides a greater level of services to the urban areas; therefore, it has decided to set a higher rate in the dollar for rateable urban land in order to recover the additional costs associated with providing those services.

Fixed Charge

A fixed charge of \$250 applies to all rateable properties.

Single Farm Enterprise

Section 152(2)(d) of the Local Government Act 1999 provides that where a Council declares a general rate which is based in whole or in part, on a fixed charge:

*“If two or more pieces of rateable land within the area of the Council constitute a **single farm enterprise** only one fixed charge may be imposed against the whole of the land”.*

A single farm enterprise must be comprised of two or more pieces of rateable land which are **farm land** and are occupied by the same person or persons. To enable properties to be identified as single farm enterprises it will be necessary for ratepayers to complete an application form to provide details to Council to enable Council to identify the land concerned.

An application form can be obtained from any of the 3 Council Offices.

Service Charges

Septic Tank Effluent Disposal

The Council provides a septic tank effluent disposal system to residential and commercial properties in Meningie, Tailem Bend, Tintinara and East Wellington. From the 2004/05 year council has changed the CED charge to include an additional charge for the pumping out of septic tanks on a three year cycle. The full cost of operating and maintaining this service for this financial year is budgeted to be \$325,000 of which \$ 261,400 is for normal operations while the balance is for capital replacement. The capital replacement component is funded from reserves. The Council will recover the cost of operating and maintenance through a range of service charges. These charges are, occupied land \$125 per unit (which includes \$30 to cover the pump out of septic tanks) and vacant land \$25. Where the service is provided to non-rateable land, a service charge is levied against the land.

Water Supply

The Council provides water supply systems to residential and commercial properties in the small townships of East Wellington, Narrung and Peake. The full cost of operating these systems is raised from a range of service Charges as follows:

- East Wellington water supply; a Service Charge comprised of \$ 165 plus 90cents per kilolitre for usage in excess of 125 kilolitres per annum;
- Peake water supply; a Service Charge comprised of \$120 plus 90 cents per Kilolitre in excess of 125 kilolitres per annum; and
- Narrung water supply; a Service Charge of \$430 for residential connection and a charge of \$165 for non-connected service.

Due to drought conditions in the catchment areas of the Murray Darling basin, council has imposed restrictions on the use of water where that water is taken from the River Murray system. Council is continuing to consult with SA Water regarding the supply at East Wellington.

Water Catchment Levy

Parts of the Council are in the River Murray Catchment Water Management Board and the South East Catchment Water Management Board area. The Council is required under the Water Resources Act to fund, along with other Councils of the catchment area, the operations of the Catchment Water Management Boards.

By law, a separate rate is levied at the same rate for all properties within a particular catchment area, with the exception of ratepayers that are subject to other Water Resources Act levies. The amount of the levy payable by each ratepayer in the South East Catchment area is shown separately on the rate notice and this year is \$13.90.

Council acts as a collection agent on behalf of the Catchment Water Management Boards.

It does not retain any or part of the revenue raised by the levy for its own use, nor does the Council determine how the revenue is spent.

Pensioner Concessions

Rate Concessions

The State Government, in providing equity across SA in this area funds a range of concessions on Council rates. The concessions are administered by various State Agencies who determine eligibility and pay the concession directly to Council on behalf of the ratepayer. Concessions are available only on the principal place of residence.

Ratepayers who believe they are entitled to a concession should not withhold payment of rates pending assessment of an application by the State Government as penalties apply to overdue rates. A refund will be paid to an eligible person if Council is advised that a concession applies and the rates have already been paid.

State Seniors Card Ratepayer (self funded retiree)

This concession is administered by Revenue SA. If you are a self-funded retiree and currently hold a State Seniors Card you may be eligible for a concession toward Council Rates. In the case of couples, both must qualify, or if only one holds a State Senior's Card, the other must not be in paid employment for more than 20 hours per week. If you have not received a concession on your rates notice or would like further information please contact the Revenue SA Call Centre on 1300 366 150.

Pensioner Concession

An eligible pensioner must hold a Pension Card, State Concession Card or a Repatriation Health Card marked TPI Gold, EDA Gold or War Widow and may be entitled to a concession on Council rates (and water and effluent charges where applicable). Application forms, which include information on the concessions, are available from the Council, SA

Water Corporation and its District Offices or the Department of Human Services. This concession is administered by SA Water on behalf of the Department of Human Services and further information can be obtained by telephoning SA Water on 1300 650 950.

Other Concessions

The Department of Family and Youth Services administers Council rate concessions available to range of eligible persons receiving State and Commonwealth allowances. This includes, but is not limited to, ratepayers who are in receipt of: Austudy, Newstart, Parenting Payment, Partner Allowance, Sickness Allowance, Special Benefit, Widow Allowance, Youth Allowance, Abstudy, CDEP or a New Enterprise Initiative Scheme. It may also apply to ratepayers in receipt of a pension as a war widow under legislation of the United Kingdom or New Zealand and the holders of a State Concession Card issued by Family and Youth Services. All enquires should be directed to you nearest branch office of Family and Youth Services (refer to the White Pages telephone directory for location and telephone details).

Payment Of Rates

The Council has decided that the payment of rates will be by four quarterly instalments, due on the 15 September, 2005, 6 December, 2005, 6 March, 2006 & 6 June, 2006. The Council is offering a discount of 1.5% for the payment of all rates (in full) by 1 September, 2005. A notice will be sent to each ratepayer 30 days prior to each quarterly instalment being due.

Rates may be paid:

- By post to the Coorong District Council at PO Box 1021, Tintinara 5266;
- In person, at the Council offices at Meningie, Tailem Bend and Tintinara during the hours of 8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.
- Electronic payments available via the 'web', log onto www.coorong.sa.gov.au and follow the prompts or over the counter using CREDIT cards.

Late Payment of Rates

The Local Government Act provides that Councils impose an initial penalty of 2% on any payment for rates, whether by instalment or otherwise, that is received late. A payment that continues to be late is then charged a prescribed interest rate on the expiration of each month that that it continues to be late. For the 2005/2006 financial year this prescribed rate is 0.791% per month.

When the Council receives a payment in respect of overdue rates the Council applies the money as follows:

- first – to satisfy any costs awarded in connection with court proceedings;
- second – to satisfy any interest costs;
- third – in payment of any fines imposed;
- fourth – in payment of rates, in chronological order (starting with the oldest rate account).

Postal delays which result in the payment being received after the due date will incur a fine. Council does not usually waive the fine because of such delays.

Remission and Postponement of Rates

Where the payment of rates will cause a ratepayer demonstrable hardship, the Council is prepared to make extended payment provision or defer the payment of rates. This will only occur upon application and persons likely to be affected are asked to contact Mr Trevor Symonds, Finance Administrator or Di Miell, Rates Officer on 8757 2100 to discuss the matter. Such inquiries are treated confidentially by the Council.

Rebate of Rates

The Local Government Act requires Councils to rebate the rates payable on some land. Specific provisions are made for land used for health services, community services, religious purposes, public cemeteries, the Royal Zoological Society and educational institutions. Discretionary rebates may be applied by the Council under Section 166 of the Act. For the 2005-2006 year council has introduced the following discretionary rebates, which will be granted on Council's own initiative pursuant to Section 159 (3) of the Local Government Act:

- In accordance with Section 166 (1)(j) of the Local Government Act Council grant a discretionary rebate of rates of 100% in respect to the health clinics owned by or leased to Hospitals in the District and located at Meningie, Tailem Bend, Tintinara & Coonalpyn.
- in accordance with Section 166(1)(e), a rebate of 100% of differential general rates, the fixed charge and the water catchment levy for land used by agricultural and horticultural societies;
- in accordance with Section 166(1)(j), a rebate of 75 % of differential general rates and the water catchment levy and 100% of the fixed charge for community organisations who hold a liquor or gaming licence; and
- in accordance with Section 166(1)(j), a rebate of 100% of differential general rates, the fixed charge and the water catchment levy for community organisations without a liquor or gaming licence.

The reason for Council granting discretionary rebates is to assist those organisations maintain their facilities which are predominately on Council property.

Rate Capping

For the year ending 30 June 2006 and in accordance with Section 166 (1) (l) (ii) of the Local Government Act, Council has decided to make generally available a rebate on the differential general rates paid, so that the maximum rate paid on any one assessment in 2005/2006 is no greater than 20% more than that applicable in 2004/2005, subject to the increase not being due to capital improvements on the property or a change in ownership with the new value reflecting the purchase price. Council has adopted this position for the current financial year due to the rapid and uneven increases in valuations experienced during the period since the valuation was last adopted.

Sale Of Land For Non-Payment Of Rates

The Local Government Act provides that a Council may sell any property where the rates have been in arrears for three years or more. The Council is required to notify the owner of the land of its intention to sell the land if payment of the outstanding amount is not received

within one month, and provide the owner with details of the outstanding amounts. Except in extraordinary circumstances, the Council will enforce the sale of land for arrears of rates and a copy of the Council's policy is available from any office of the Council by phoning the Rates Office on 8757 2100 or by writing to the Finance Office, Coorong District Council, PO Box 1021, Tintinara 5266.

Disclaimer

A rate cannot be challenged on the basis of non-compliance with this Policy and rates must be paid in accordance with the required payment provisions.