WADMORE PRECINCT OPTIONS PAPER

Prepared for community consultation on the future of the Wadmore Precinct

COORONG
DISTRICT COUNCIL

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The Coorong District Council is seeking community feedback on the future of the Wadmore House Precinct in Meningie.

Wadmore House and its surrounding land are community assets that have remained largely vacant since 2019. Following the removal of a restrictive covenant by the State Government and completion of a public Expressions of Interest (EOI) process, Council now has the opportunity to consider a range of options for the future of the precinct.

Council has not made a final decision regarding the future of the site.

This Options Paper has been prepared to:

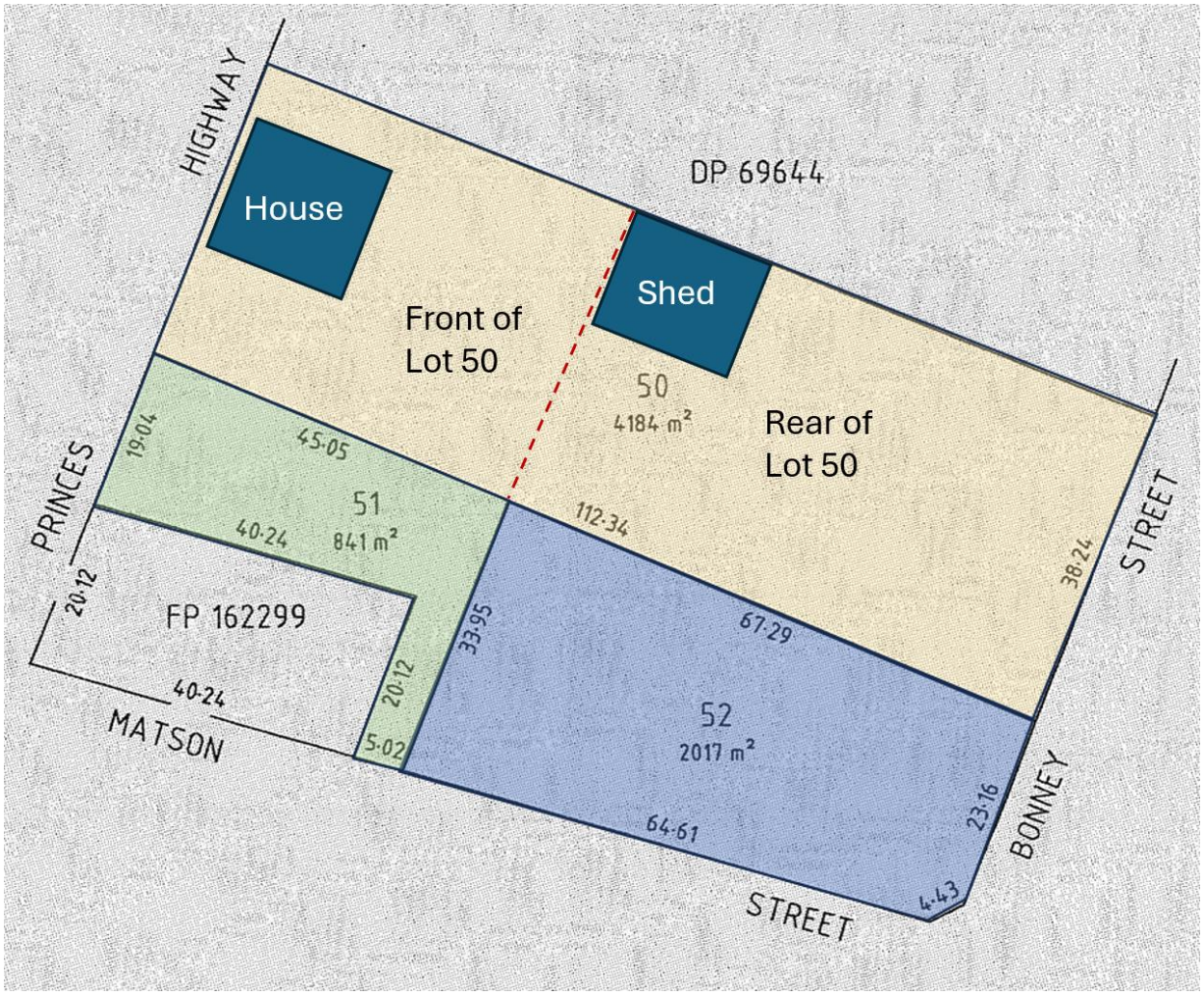
- Provide transparency regarding the options available to Council.
- Present the opportunities, costs, risks and potential benefits associated with each option.
- Explain how the options align with Council policies and strategic objectives.
- Assist community members to understand the implications of each option.
- Enable informed community feedback before Council determines a preferred direction.

Community feedback received during this consultation process will be considered by Council before any final decision is made.

2. BACKGROUND

The Wadmore House Precinct is located at 78A Princes Highway, Meningie and comprises three freehold allotments:

- Lot 50 (including Wadmore House)
- Lot 51 ("L-Shaped Block")
- Lot 52 (Rear Block)



The site is located within the Town Activity Centre Zone and occupies a prominent position within Meningie. The precinct has long been regarded as a site of community significance and over recent years Council has undertaken a range of engagement activities to understand community aspirations for its future use.

In December 2025, Council resolved to seek Expressions of Interest from community organisations, commercial operators and private individuals interested in purchasing, leasing or activating the site. Four submissions were received and assessed.

The EOI process identified several potential pathways for the future of the precinct, ranging from full sale through to community-led activation and Council-led redevelopment.

3. POLICY AND DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

Council's consideration of the future of the Wadmore House Precinct is guided by several legislative and policy requirements.

- **Community Engagement Policy**
  Council's Community Engagement Policy classifies the lease, redevelopment or disposal of significant Council-owned land as a Level 3 engagement activity, requiring extensive community consultation before a decision is made.
  This Options Paper has been prepared as part of that commitment.

- **Disposal of Council Land and Other Assets Policy**
  Council's Disposal of Council Land and Other Assets Policy require consideration of:

  - Community benefit
  - Strategic alignment
  - Current market value
  - Future use opportunities
  - Long-term financial sustainability
  - Asset maintenance costs
  - Risk exposure
  - Community engagement outcomes

  The Policy also recognises that "value for money" extends beyond financial return and may include social, community and strategic benefits.

- **Prudential Management Policy**
  Any significant redevelopment, capital expenditure or long-term financial commitment must be assessed against prudential management principles including:

  - Financial sustainability
  - Affordability
  - Risk management
  - Organisational capacity
  - Long-term impacts on Council services and operations.

Copies of these policies can be found on Council's website
https://www.coorong.sa.gov.au/your-council/policies

4. PROPERTY VALUATION SUMMARY

Independent valuation advice obtained during the EOI process identified the following indicative values:

Property Component	Indicative Value
Lot 50 Whole	$500,000
Lot 51 (L-Shaped Block)	$125,000
Lot 52 (Rear Block)	$200,000
Lot 50 Front Portion including Wadmore House	$300,000
Lot 50 Rear Portion	$250,000
Estimated Subdivision Costs	$40,000

Figures are indicative only and subject to updated valuation advice should Council proceed with any disposal process.

5. CONSULTATION OBJECTIVES

Council is seeking community feedback to better understand:

- The preferred future option for the property.
- The level of support for retaining under Council ownership.
- Community willingness to support Council investment in renovations.
- The desired balance between financial return and community benefit.
- Alternative suggestions or opportunities for the site.

6. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Council is seeking feedback from the community on the following options. Your feedback will help to guide Councils' decision on the future of the Wadmore precinct.

OPTION 1

Direct sale to an identified purchaser following the EOI process.

Description

Sale of all allotments (lots 50, 51 and 52) within the Wadmore House Precinct at market value to a private purchaser. Renovation, future management and ongoing operation of the site would become the responsibility of the purchaser. Community access and use may continue at the discretion of the new owner.

Potential Benefits

- Provides a significant capital return of an estimated $825,000 to Council
- Removes ongoing maintenance and asset management obligations.
- Renovation, repairs and ongoing investment become the responsibility of the purchaser.
- Provides certainty regarding the future ownership and management of the site.
- Provides opportunities for potential community use.

Potential Risks and Considerations

- Council permanently relinquishes ownership and control of the precinct.
- Future community access cannot be guaranteed.
- Long-term outcomes become dependent upon the purchaser's priorities and financial capacity.
- Potential loss of a community-owned asset.

Policy Considerations

- Aligns with the Disposal of Council Land and Other Assets Policy through disposal of a surplus asset.
- Supports financial sustainability objectives through a capital return and removal of ongoing maintenance costs.
- Provides limited ability for Council to influence future community outcomes.

OPTION 2

Partial Sale for Commercial Expansion

Description

Sale of a portion (lot 52 and rear part of lot 50) of the precinct at market value to facilitate expansion of an adjoining commercial operation. Council would retain Wadmore House and other remaining landholdings including lot 51. Subdivision costs would be borne by Council.

Potential Benefits

- Generates capital return of an estimated $410,000 while retaining part of the precinct.
- Supports local economic development and investment.
- Reduces the size and ongoing maintenance liability of the precinct.
- May provide funding opportunities for future works or renovation and repairs activities.

Potential Risks and Considerations

- Council incurs subdivision and associated project costs.
- Future development opportunities for the retained land (front part of lot 50 and lot 51) may become more limited.
- Does not independently provide a solution for building renovations.
- Funding required for building renovations and site remediation.
- Potential for subdivision costs to exceed initial estimates.

Policy Considerations

- Supports economic development objectives.
- Provides a positive financial outcome while retaining a community asset.
- Requires assessment against Council's long-term asset management objectives.

OPTION 3

Community Lease

Description

Lease Wadmore House (front part of lot 50 and lot 51) to a not-for-profit community organisation at a peppercorn rent for social, cultural and community purposes, while Council retains ownership of the asset.

The community group will be responsible for funding renovations, repairs and ongoing maintenance.

Potential Benefits

- Maintains the site in community ownership.
- Provides opportunities for community activation and programming.
- Supports social connection, wellbeing and community development outcomes.
- Preserves the precinct for public and community use.

Potential Risks and Considerations

- Council retains responsibility for ownership of the asset.
- Significant renovation and repairs and maintenance funding will be required.
- Potential future requests to Council for financial or operational support.
- Long-term viability may depend upon the capacity of the tenant organisation.

Policy Considerations

- Strong alignment with community development and community engagement objectives.
- Retains a strategically important community asset.
- May require ongoing Council investment and financial support.

OPTION 4

Council-Led Redevelopment with Partial Land Sale

Council's Preferred Option

Description

Partial sale of surplus land within the precinct (lot 52 and rear part of lot 50), with proceeds proposed to be reinvested into the renovation and repairs of Wadmore House (front part of lot 50 and lot 51).

Funding for renovation and repairs to be sought through external grant funding, with Council retaining ownership of the precinct for future community use.

Following the redevelopment of the Wadmore House area, Council engages with Meningie Progress Association as a preferred partner for future use and activation.

Potential Benefits

- Retains Wadmore House in community ownership.
- Renovations undertaken to preserve a community asset.
- Generates revenue through the sale of surplus land.
- Creates opportunities to leverage external grant funding.
- Enables future community use and activation under Council ownership.
- Balances financial sustainability with community outcomes.
- Provides opportunities for community activation and programming.
- Supports social connection, wellbeing and community development outcomes.
- Preserves the precinct for public and community use.

Potential Risks and Considerations

- Reliant on successful grant funding applications.
- More complex and longer-term project delivery.
- Subject to future construction cost escalation.
- Council retains responsibility for future asset management and maintenance.
- Council may incur additional costs
- Potential ongoing maintenance costs to Council

Policy Considerations

- Strong alignment with the Community Engagement Policy.
- Strong alignment with the Disposal of Council Land and Other Assets Policy.
- Consistent with prudent asset management principles.
- Balances financial sustainability with community benefit outcomes

OPTION 5

Open Sale of Entire Precinct

Description

Sale of the entire Wadmore House Precinct (lots 50,51 & 52) on the open market, with no ongoing Council ownership or involvement in the site.

Potential Benefits

- Provides the greatest immediate financial return to Council.
- Removes all future maintenance and asset management obligations.
- Simplifies the future management of the site.
- Allows capital funds to be redirected to other Council priorities and projects.

Potential Risks and Considerations

- Permanent loss of a Council-owned community asset.
- Loss of Council influence over future use and development outcomes.
- Potential community concern regarding disposal of the site.
- Reduced opportunity for future community activation.

Policy Considerations

- Strong alignment with financial sustainability objectives.
- Removes future asset liabilities.
- Provides limited community benefit outcomes when compared with options retaining ownership or community access.

7 COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT

Assessment Criteria	Option 1 Private Sale of Entire Precinct	Option 2 Partial Sale for Commercial Expansion	Option 3 Community Lease	Option 4 Council-Led Redevelopment with Partial Land Sale (Preferred)	Option 5 Open Sale of Entire Precinct
Description	Sale of entire precinct to a private purchaser Lots 50,51 & 52	Sale of part of the precinct for commercial expansion (lot 52 and rear part of lot 50)	Lease Wadmore House to a not-for-profit community organisation (front part of lot 50 and lot 51).	Partial land sale with renovation and repairs funded through sale proceeds and grants (front part of lot 50 and lot 51).	Sale of entire precinct on open market Lots 50,51 & 52
Council Ownership Retained	No	Partial	Yes	Yes	No
Community Access and Use	Potential but not guaranteed	Limited	High	High	Unknown
Preservation of Wadmore House	Likely but at owner's discretion	Uncertain	High likelihood and subject to funding	High likelihood and subject to funding	Uncertain
Economic Development Opportunities	Moderate	High	Low	Low	Moderate
Immediate Financial Return to Council	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High
Ongoing Financial return to Council	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low

Potential Sale Revenue	Approx. $825,000	Approx. $410,000	Approx. $410,000	Approx. $410,000	Approx. $825,000
Potential Grant Funding	Low	Low	High	High	Nil
Capital Investment Required from Council	Low	Low to Moderate	Nil	High	Low
Ongoing Maintenance Costs for Council	None	Reduced	Low	High	None
Impact on Long Term Financial Plan	Positive	Positive	Negative unless externally funded	Negative unless externally funded	Positive
Financial Risk to Council	Low	Medium	High	High	Low
Project Delivery Complexity	Low	Medium	High	High	Low
Project Delivery Timeframe	Short to Medium	Medium	Long	Long	Short
Strategic Community Benefit	Moderate	Moderate	High	High	Low

Financial figures are indicative only and based on valuation advice available at the time of preparing this consultation document. Actual financial outcomes may vary based on future valuations, market conditions, grant funding outcomes, detailed design investigations and Council decisions.

Financial Implications Summary

A key consideration for Council is balancing financial sustainability with community benefit outcomes. The table below outlines the potential financial implications of each option.

Option	Indicative Revenue	Indicative Council Costs	Ongoing Financial Impact
Option 1 Private Sale of Entire Precinct	$825,000	Minimal transaction costs	Removes all future maintenance and renewal obligations
Option 2 Partial Sale for Commercial Expansion	$450,000	Subdivision costs and associated consultancy fees $40,000	Retains ongoing costs associated with Wadmore House
Option 3 Community Lease	$450,000 peppercorn rent	Subdivision costs and associated consultancy fees $40,000	Council retains asset, future cost may be incurred
Option 4 Council-Led Redevelopment with Partial Land Sale	$450,000	Subdivision costs and associated consultancy fees $40,000 Renovation, repairs and project delivery costs up to $1,000,000 (renovation and repairs funded through sale proceeds and matched with external grants)	Retains asset but may be offset through grants and future community use outcomes Ongoing operational, maintenance and asset management liability
Option 5 Open Sale of Entire Precinct	$825,000	Minimal transaction costs	Removes all future maintenance and renewal obligations

Risk, Cost and Community Impact Assessment

Option	Primary Risks	Community Impact	Overall Assessment
Option 1 Private Sale of Entire Precinct	Loss of long-term Council influence, community access not guaranteed	Moderate	Strong financial outcome but reduced future control
Option 2 Partial Sale for Commercial Expansion	Cost escalation associated with subdivision and services	Moderate	Positive balance between economic development and retention of land
Option 3 Community Lease	Ongoing funding requirements and asset maintenance burden	Very High	Balances community benefit with financial sustainability
Option 4 Council-Led Redevelopment with Partial Land Sale	Reliance on grant funding and construction cost escalation, asset maintenance burden	High	Strong community outcome but greatest financial burden on Council
Option 5 Open Sale of Entire Precinct	Loss of community asset and reduced ability to influence future outcomes	Moderate	Strong financial outcome but lowest community benefit

8. NEXT STEPS

Following completion of community consultation:

1. Community submissions will be reviewed and summarised.
2. A Community Engagement Outcomes Report will be prepared.
3. Council will consider community feedback alongside financial, strategic, governance and operational factors.
4. Council will determine its preferred future direction.
5. Additional investigations may be undertaken including:
    - Detailed concept planning;
    - Cost estimates;
    - Business case development;
    - Grant funding applications;
    - Prudential assessments where required.

This consultation is being undertaken in accordance with Council's **Community Engagement Policy**, **Disposal of Council Land and Other Assets Policy**, and **Prudential Management principles** to ensure transparent, informed and accountable decision-making