



Community Engagement Summary

Draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget

Executive Summary

The City of Victor Harbor released its draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget for consultation on Monday, 12 May 2025 for a 22 day period closing at 5pm on Monday, 2 June 2025.

The objectives of the consultation were to:

- inform the community about the Council's draft Annual Business Plan and Budget, and the opportunity to provide feedback on it;
- encourage community participation and feedback; and
- raise awareness of council services, programs and initiatives.

Not only is this consultation an important way for Council to ensure the community is a part of its future planning, but it is also a requirement of the *Local Government Act 1999*.

The consultation methodology involved:

- Online and hard copy surveys
- Public meeting at the City of Victor Harbor Civic Centre on Thursday, 29 May 2025
- Invitation for written submissions.

During the consultation period there were:

- 21 survey responses;
- 20 attendees at the public meeting;
- 7 written submissions received.



The key themes that emerged through the consultation are outlined below:

- **The Precinct:** Respondents raised concerns around the Council's contribution to this project and the associated increasing debt levels. There were also a number of queries about how the project serves the broader community and the benefit it will bring, providing an opportunity for Council to undertake a further communications campaign to increase exposure of these messages.
- **Council Rates:** there were reoccurring concerns around the impact the rate rise will have on household budgets particularly given the cost of living pressures.
- **Focus on Essential Services:** consistent with themes from the community satisfaction surveys there was a strong call within the responses for Council to prioritise essential services and infrastructure such as roads, footpaths and stormwater infrastructure particularly to ensure that Council is prepared for future growth.

In addition to the above themes, there were a number of requests for various roads to be sealed including Day Road, Colebatch Road, Nottle Road, Spring Road and Martha Close.

The public consultation provided valuable insights and feedback from the community for Council Members to consider as they work to finalise the 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget.



Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the community consultation undertaken in relation to the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget. It outlines a summary of the consultation activities that were undertaken, and the feedback gathered.

Background

The City of Victor Harbor provides more than 100 services to keep our community vibrant, clean and safe. We also deliver a number of projects that aim to contribute to and enhance the liveability of our Council area.

The resources allocated to the delivery of these services and projects are considered each year by Council through its annual budgeting process which involves the development of an Annual Business Plan that describes the services and projects Council will undertake during the financial year and how budget will be allocated to support this.

Everything Council does links to the vision set out within our Community (Strategic) Plan which essentially is to ensure Victor Harbor remains a place of choice to live, work, invest and visit. As such the Annual Business Plan and Budget is a key document within the Council's strategic planning framework, outlining what the Council will deliver in a year to contribute to achieving its vision set out in the Community Plan and linking strongly with the Asset Management Plans and Long Term Financial Plan.

Community involvement in local decision making is important and the consultation in relation to the preparation of the Annual Business Plan and Budget aims to help Council understand its community's expectations and views when working to set financial targets and allocating resources to the vast variety of services and projects provided for the community.

Preparation of the 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget has drawn on a range of engagement activities that express community sentiment including community surveys, liveability census findings, previous consultations and consultation directly relating to the 2025/26 budget.

Draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget

The draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget presented to the community for consultation purposes proposed a net capital expenditure of \$11.9 million and a \$42.5 million operating budget with a deficit of \$4.1 million. The deficit is largely attributed to costs for the Regional Community, Sport and Recreation Precinct project and corporate systems replacement. These projects will be funded through borrowings to minimise the impact on Council rates and spread the cost across a number of generations, leaving the adjusted deficit to be just over \$1 million.

The draft budget sets out an average rates payable increase of 5% across all properties. The 5% rate rise is based off December 2024 CPI (2.5%) plus a sustainability index (1.5%) and an allowance to bring The Precinct to fruition (1.0%). For residential properties this represents an average rates payable increase of \$130 (or around \$2.50 per week).

In addition to providing the community with the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan, a [consultation summary information pack](#) was prepared to support the consultation and provide an overview of the proposed budget along with outlining key initiatives and projects, along with further information around Council rates.

Consultation Methodology

Consultation involved public exhibition of the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget. The community and interested stakeholders were invited to provide Council with their feedback on the draft plan from Monday, 12 May 2025 until Monday, 2 June 2025.

The Council collected feedback via a number of different methods including:

- Survey – **21 survey responses** received
- Written submissions – **7 written submissions** received
- Public meeting held on Thursday, 29 May 2025 – **20 attendees** at the public meeting.

The opportunity for residents and ratepayers to provide feedback on the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget was promoted widely via a range of platforms. These are summarised below to demonstrate the significant reach of the consultation information:

Tool	Commentary
Your Say Victor Harbor website (www.yoursay.victor.sa.gov.au/2025-26-abp)	• 286 visits to the webpage • 72 downloads of the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan • 15 downloads of the consultation kit
Your Say Victor Harbor Direct Email	• 666 emails sent • 52.6% open rate
Other Direct Email	• Community groups and clubs mailing list • 89 emails sent • 56.2% open rate
Public Notice	Placed on Council's website and in the Fleurieu Sun on 8 May 2025
Advertising	Advertisements focussing on the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget were placed: • 20 May 2025– The Times • 22 May 2025 – Fleurieu Sun • 27 May 2025 – The Times • 29 May 2025 – Fleurieu Sun
E-newsletters	Victor Viewpoint (13 May 2025) • 2,450 emails sent • 61.6% open rate City Activation (23 May 2025) • 2,175 emails sent • 41.8% open rate
Social Media	Posts to Council's official Facebook page: • 14 May 2025 – Have Your Say (Reach – 489) • 29 May 2025 – Reminder (Reach – 246)

Tool	Commentary
Foyer Display	A display in the Civic Centre foyer for the duration of the consultation
Council Newsletter	A preliminary notice in the April 2025 newsletter that consultation on the draft budget will be occurring soon and to keep an eye on Your Say Victor Harbor for more details.
Media	Articles relating to the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget consultation appeared in local newspapers on: • 13 May 2025 – The Times • 22 May 2025 – Fleurieu Sun • 29 May 2025 – Fleurieu Sun The consultation was promoted during the Mayor's monthly radio interview on: • 21 May – Happy FM



The City of Victor Harbor elected members who are responsible for the upcoming budget.

Rate rise feedback

MICHAEL SIMMONS

It is that time of the year when local councils release their draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget for community consultation.

Victor Harbor's consultation starts from Monday, May 12 and will run until 5pm, Monday, June 2.

The draft budget presented for public consultation includes an average increase in rates of 5 per cent which consists of general rate - 4 per cent (2.5 per cent CPI + 1.5 per cent for fi-

nancial sustainability) and Index for the Sport and Recreation Precinct of 1 per cent.

The average residential rate rise will be \$130 for the 25/26 financial year.

The draft operating budget provides an operating deficit of \$4,132,000.

The deficit position is due to the contribution for the Sport and Recreation Precinct, Corporate System Optimisation Phase, increased depreciation, reduced grant funding as well as a lower rate base because rate rises in previous years were not sufficient to cover expenses.

The draft capital budget provides for net capital expenditure of \$11,913,300.

Proposed valuations as at March 29, 2025 are \$8,163,838,840 (10 per cent increase from 2024/25).

A public meeting will be held on Thursday, May 29 at 5.30pm in the Council Chambers at the Civic Centre (1 Bay Road, Victor Harbor).

Further details about the consultation will be available from May 12 at www.yoursay.victor.sa.gov.au or in hard copy at the Civic Centre and through Fleurieu Sun and The Times.

Get involved in Council's budgeting process

The City of Victor Harbor is seeking community feedback on its draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget.

The draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan describes how Council will allocate its budget and what services, programs and projects it intends to undertake in the coming financial year.

The draft Plan proposes an average rates payable increase of 5% (made up of 2.5% for CPI, a 1.5% sustainability index and 1% for the Regional Community, Sport and Recreation Precinct project).

The proposed budget forecasts a capital works program worth \$11.9 million (net), and a \$42.5 million operating budget with a forecast deficit of \$4.2 million. The deficit is largely attributed to two major strategic projects.

These are the Regional Community, Sport and Recreation Precinct (\$2.5 million) and corporate systems replacement (\$585,000), which will be funded through borrowings in recognition of their intergenerational benefits. Excluding these projects the adjusted deficit is just over \$1 million.

Visit www.yoursayvictor.sa.gov.au to view the draft plan or collect information from the Civic Centre (1 Bay Road, Victor Harbor).

Then make sure to have your say before 5pm on Monday, 2 June 2025:

- **Online** – make a submission at www.yoursayvictor.sa.gov.au
- **In writing** – and return by post to PO Box 11, Victor Harbor SA 5211; email to localgov@victor.sa.gov.au; or hand deliver to the Civic Centre.
- **At our Public Meeting** – at 5.30pm on Thursday, 29 May 2025 in the Council Chambers at the Civic Centre.

Scan the QR code to find out more and have your say

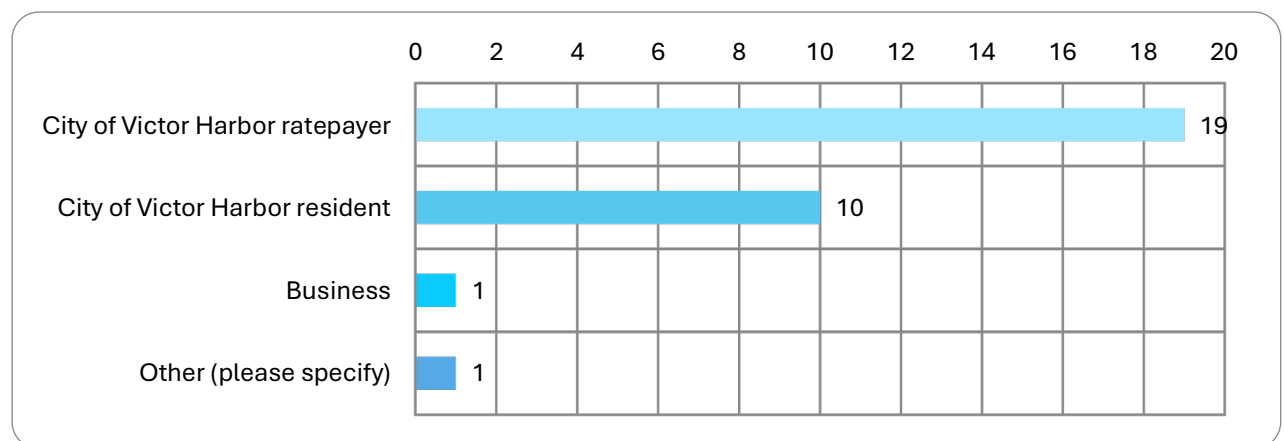
Submissions and Feedback

Survey Responses

During the consultation period, the Council received 21 survey responses. The following is an overview of the survey responses.

Who completed the survey

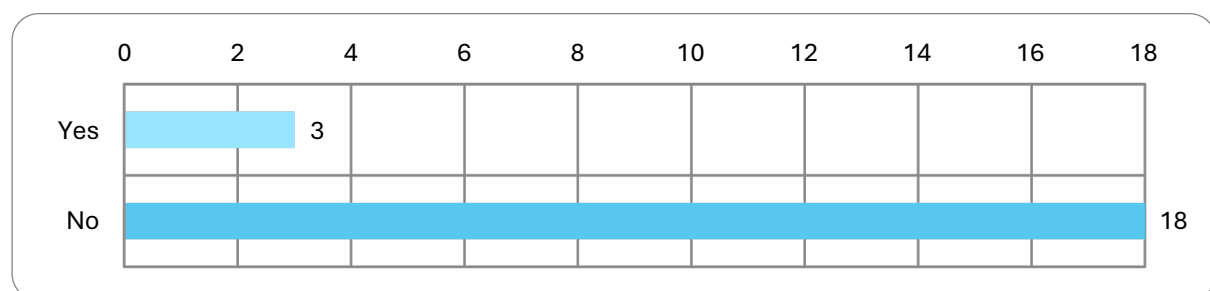
The majority of respondents identified as a City of Victor Harbor ratepayer (19) or resident (10). Please note that respondents could choose multiple options (i.e. identify as both a resident and ratepayer).



Support of the draft Annual Business Plan and Budget

Respondents were asked to identify their support of the draft Annual Business Plan and Budget and specify reasons of support, or otherwise.

Of the 21 respondents, two (2) supported the draft Annual Business Plan and Budget as presented and 17 did not support the draft for a range of reasons. One respondent ticked that they both support and don't support the draft Annual Business Plan and Budget, and other didn't answer this question.



The key reasons for respondents not supporting the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget primarily relate to the rate increase (and its impact on household budgets), concerns around increasing Council's debt, opposition to the Precinct project and concern that more funding has not been allocated to core services like roads, footpaths and stormwater.

The following table outlines respondent comments explaining the reasons for their level of support of the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget. A response from Administration has only been provided where required, all comments are provided for Council Member's consideration.

Explain why you support or don't support the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget?	
Respondent Comments	Administration response (if required)
<i>Council needs to start spending budget in a better manner, to stop waste, minimise rate increases and focus on core needs.</i> <i>There is hundreds of new homes being build, significantly increasing the amount of rate payers, however rates continue to increase leading to Victor Harbor being one of the most expensive rates in the state.</i> <i>Focus needs to be given on core needs and not nice to haves, IE Nice to haves that should have funding immediately stopped to reduce rate rises include:</i> - Detailed design for the Arts and Culture Centre, \$815,000 - Encounter Community Centre contribution, \$60,000 - Community Garden and Nursery, \$153,700 <i>All money spent on items such as Arts Center, etc should be scrutinised to see if it makes business sense, IE profitable or at least cost neutral.</i> <i>High cost investments from council should instead focus on items that would directly bring money into the council and benefit the community at a higher level than the cost to the community to fund them (Question should be asked, just like the SA premier once said - why fund a cultural arts center unless it was going to specifically bring in significant tourism from Interstate/international at a great cost to the community).</i> <i>Everyone is struggling, including farmers - instead of spending on the nice to haves, the budget should focus on how to reduce rates, invest in projects that will bring significant financial returns (that could fund nice to haves in the future).</i> <i>Farmers should have rate reductions in times of need such as we find ourselves. Council should consider selling off assets that cost the community more than they bring in and allow them to be run by private operators to reduce the burden on the rate payers - in fact the council should be run like a profitable business, especially considering how much more income in rates will become evident in the coming years from the mass developments - it is comparable to a massive profit increase, yet we are still in debt due to years of waste instead of smart investment.</i>	<i>Council undertakes investigations to support its investments in key projects.</i> <i>In recognition of the effects dry conditions have had on our local farmers the Council provided a Farm Business Support Program that enabled eligible farmers to receive up to \$2,500. Further to this the Council has had resourced dedicated to assist farmers access funding already available from other levels of government.</i> <i>Primary production properties currently receive a 10% reduction in the differential rate.</i> <i>Council provides services to the community that are not delivered by private operators as they are not profitable businesses, like the library.</i>

Explain why you support or don't support the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget?

Respondent Comments	Administration response (if required)
Support is only just a Yes as I understand the need to support the growing community. Rates are almost double those in metropolitan Adelaide. Given the increase in housing in the area ie new developments the Council needs to have a vision for the future & consider how to fund new infrastructure & services required for the growing population, this can't be done simple through rate increases as they are too high now.	Council's Asset Management Plans and Long Term Financial Plan set out projects and expenditure over the next 10 years. Further to this the Council's Urban Growth Management Strategy sets out how Council will manage growth in a way that protects most valued elements such as lifestyle, environment and sense of community. Supplementary to rates, grant funding is used to help reduce the cost of new infrastructure for the community.
Do we really need to spend 42.5 million \$ on a sporting complex that puts us further in debt especially since the majority of rate payers are against it. The interest rate repayments alone will cripple this community. What are you not telling us. Why not just build a show court next the current facility. Have you already sold the VH Recreation Centre to the Education Dept without consulting with the community. Gymnastic aren't moving - why should they when they only pay a peppercorn rent on their current lease. They shouldn't have to pay anything towards their sport as their original premises was taken from them. Yes, I have been a local for over 50 years here and my mother a councillor for over 20 years. I do know a lot of the history involved in this area. Does this project increase the CEO's salary. What kickbacks have the council been promised to go ahead with this development. Why are my council rates going to subsidise basketballs registration fees. How much is the SA Basketball contributing to this project - I have heard not a cent. Then why build it if they cannot even afford it. Considering the only housing being built in Victor Harbor at the moment are for over 55's, don't think they will be using the basketball courts. Another white elephant that the council will do and not succeed in re: Victa Cinema, Art Space you had to remove the RSL from there after they spent over \$500,000 on upgrading the premises. Made them move to VH Football Club where they have been shafted for an example to name a few off the top of my head. Councils can be sacked for not listening to their constituent's, it happened back in the 1980's. I do not support the 2025/2026 annual business plan and budget. Increasing rates by double the CPI is out of touch and grossly inappropriate considering the current cost of living crisis.	The Council is currently negotiating a Public Private Partnership for the delivery of the Regional Community, Sport and Recreation Precinct. The current proposal would see Council contribute \$11.7 million to the \$40+ million Precinct. Interest payments have been modelled into the Council's Long Term Financial Plan, demonstrating the contribution is affordable within Council's agreed financial targets. The VH Recreation Centre has not been sold to the Education Department. The delivery of this project does not impact the CEO's salary. Council rates are not subsidising registration fees for basketball, they are contributing to the delivery of a community facility. For Council's consideration.

Explain why you support or don't support the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget?

Respondent Comments	Administration response (if required)
<i>I do not support a rate increase and I do not support "The Precinct" development. What does this precinct offer that isn't offered by Encounter Bay and Victor Harbor Football, Netball and Cricket Clubs, and the rec centre for basketball, karate and gymnastics?</i> <i>I am please to see investment in our youth but is this development worth going so much further into debt?</i> <i>Why do we want new retail, health and hospitality precincts when we have a Main Street and a shopping plaza full of empty shops?</i> <i>Why aren't council focusing on the basics? We have pathetically tiny rubbish bins that are collected fortnightly. We have crumbling streets with non existent storm water drainage (unless you live somewhere tourists will see).</i>	<i>Key drivers for the Precinct include:</i> <i>• Indoor sport facilities within the City of Victor Harbor and surrounding region are at (or beyond) capacity, and further facilities are required to cater for growing needs. The inadequacy of facilities is limiting current participation in active wellbeing.</i> <i>• Community meeting spaces are in demand.</i> <i>• Opportunity to create a much-needed community hub that provides a place for people of all ages to connect through sport, recreation and social activities.</i> <i>• Working to attract more families to the region.</i> <i>• Infrastructure that supports the Greater Adelaide Regional Plan.</i> <i>The Asset Management plans include a 10-year capital works program to deliver new stormwater in line with the priorities identified in the Urban Stormwater Management Plan.</i> <i>The 2025/26 draft capital budget includes \$648,000 for stormwater projects and \$3,070,200 for road projects across the Council area.</i>
<i>the rates are already expensive without being raised by 5%. I wouldn't mind so much if the extra were being spent on creating more footpaths and planting trees, but the extra charge for the sporting complex is frankly outrageous. I've been paying extra in the Barossa for years for a complex I've never set foot in (110km return journey!) and resent being required to support yet another white elephant.</i>	<i>The draft capital budget includes over \$1M for footpaths and shared paths. The operating budget includes an allowance of \$24,900 for street tree planning.</i>

Explain why you support or don't support the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget?

Respondent Comments	Administration response (if required)
1. <i>Sporting Club Courts</i> - I do not support the use of ratepayer funds for resurfacing sporting club courts at Victor Harbor or Encounter Bay if those courts remain locked and inaccessible to the general public. These facilities are currently only available to paying club members, which excludes many ratepayers from benefiting from their upkeep. If public funding is provided, access must be made available to all residents, not just club members. Ratepayers should not be required to pay additional fees to access facilities they have already helped fund. 2. <i>Community Garden and Nursery Proposal</i> - I question the need for a new Community Garden and Nursery, given the existing nursery provided by the Encounter Centre—an organisation that already receives council support. The draft plan proposes \$60,000 for Community Centre operations and an additional \$156,000 for this new initiative. Why not consolidate efforts by supporting the Encounter Centre further—perhaps offering them \$100,000—and redirect the remaining \$116,000 to other priorities, such as expanding the footpath program? This proposed facility appears to cater to a small section of the community. With a population of 16,000–17,000 residents, how many have actually requested a separate garden and nursery? If demand is limited to a small group, then the cost is disproportionate to the benefit. Council should focus on needs, not wants. Every new initiative must consider longterm maintenance, operational costs, water and energy use, and volunteer or staff support. This is not a one-off expense—it is a recurring financial commitment. 3. <i>Prioritise Completing Existing Projects</i> - Council should prioritise completing existing projects, such as the Ocean Street streetscape and surrounding precinct improvements, before committing to new developments. For example, the proposed \$815,000 for a detailed design of the Arts and Cultural Centre is a significant investment. It would be more strategic to finalise the surrounding streetscape improvements first to support and complement this future facility. 4. <i>Cemetery Development</i> - Finally, what is the current status of cemetery development? Has land been secured to ensure long-term provision for the community? This is a critical piece of infrastructure that must be addressed with long-term foresight—planning for 150+ years of community need.	1. For Council's consideration 2. The community garden has been on Council's project list since July 2023. The community garden project has not progressed due to a suitable site not being determined. Council's Biodiversity and Natural Asset Management Plan (2023 to 2028) identified an action for Council to consider support for the establishment of a community-led native nursery as a way for Council to manage biodiversity and natural assets. Following consideration of a proposal from Biodiversity Victor Harbor, Council resolved in August 2024 for the establishment of a community native nursery as an expansion to the existing Community Garden project. 3. For Council's consideration 4. The Cemetery review undertaken in 2023 included options for a new cemetery. The report identified there is some unused land within the existing Victor Harbor Cemetery that could be developed and utilised for burials at minimal cost that would provide a further 10 years or more of grave site inventory at the cemetery. The Asset Management Plans include allowances in future years for strategic land purchases if appropriate land becomes available.
Eliminate the Regional Community, Sport and Recreation Precinct (\$2.5 million). It is not needed and will be a millstone around this council's neck for years.	For Council's consideration
Ratepayers have been hit with rate increases for the past three years well in excess of CPI. Again this year is going to be no different. A headline rate increase of 5% magnifies when property values are taken into account. To read that 2 in every 5 properties are going to have a rateable value increase of more than 10%, and nearly every household is having a 5%+ increase, Council needs to be fair about this. Enough is enough, we are all finding things tough and as householders we have to cut our budgets to meet costs - its about time that Council does the same. Yet at the end of the process you can see that Council will say it has consulted with the community on a template document that is slightly modified each year, and not checked for errors (refer to asset renewal funding ratio as 127.6% does not sit within Councils target range of 90-110%).	For Council's consideration There was an administrative mistake in this section, it was corrected during the consultation period.

Explain why you support or don't support the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget?

Respondent Comments	Administration response (if required)
<i>Excessive spending on non-core council functions</i>	<i>For Council's consideration</i>
<i>A 5% increase is far too high ! You get most of your revenue from investors and holiday home owners but the way you are increasing all costs and cutting all services you are forcing many of these people to sell their homes - its getting beyond a joke. For example - the money spend on the upgrade of the main street - while the street looks lovely - it has not bought anymore money into the street and the shops that are currently there are not worth going to.</i>	<i>For Council's consideration</i>
<i>The 5% rise in rates is not agreed to - a waste of money for the Detailed design for the Arts and Culture Centre, \$815,000 - this is preposterous. Also the 1% for the Regional Community, Sport and Recreation Precinct project which most of the community DO NOT want. This is not right for our community. Stop funding arts and culture when so much more needs to be done in our community supporting vulnerable and elderly residents. They don't need arts and culture they need more support. This budget serves only those on council and is not for the wider community. Our roads are dreadful - there are forgotten pockets of Victor Harbor that are not looked after. Our parks are a joke - they are dustbowls and not looked after. Create for the community and visitors so that they want to come back.</i>	<i>For Council's consideration</i> <i>Road resealing work is undertaken taken based on the condition rating of all assets however takes into account the hierarchy of the road. A large percentage in recent years has been spent on collector and arterial roads. The 2025/26 resealing plan includes a spray sealing program for some residential streets. We encourage residents to advise administration of specific concerns so that they can be considered for maintenance or capital work. The 2025/26 draft capital budget includes \$3,070,200 for road projects across the Council area.</i> <i>The budget includes an allowance for a service level review for the Open Space and Environment team that will seek community feedback on the maintenance levels of the parks and gardens for Council's consideration.</i>
<i>There is little or no mention about the infrastructure supporting all the new developments appearing at various locations around the city. Secondly, it is about time we saw a more frequent bus service to Adelaide. Two a day is insufficient to support a proposed influx of new residents.</i>	<i>Infrastructure to support growth is planned for within a number of strategic documents including the Asset Management Plans and Long Term Financial Plan (10 year forecast), and the Victor Harbor Urban Growth Management Strategy which will shortly be released for the third round of consultation.</i> <i>Public transport sits under the remit of the SA Government. The Council is regularly advocating for improved public transport in the region. The SA Government is currently developing a public transport strategy and undertaking a regional public transport review – the Council will be making a submission into this.</i>

Explain why you support or don't support the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget?

Respondent Comments	Administration response (if required)
The ESC findings on page 43 & 94 of the annual plan explains how Victor Harbor needs to stop relying on raising rate revenue. Every year ratepayers have seen a rate rise that is above the cost of living to fund its programs and projects while most ratepayers have to budget on their fixed incomes. The 2025 Plan shows little of what council is doing to increase their own productivity with the exception being the investment in ICT. There is no other mention of investment in productivity improvement to reduce costs in expenditure or show greater efficiencies. The ratepayer continues to carry the financial burden with limited detail provided on the return to that investment. The ESC in fact believes the risk makes council's financial performance lean more towards "potentially unsustainable". Yes we appear to be going backwards. Start telling your ratepayers what you are doing to try to target a zero rate increase rather than more of the same. The 2025 Plan itself clearly describes the council has having little ambition to improve on what they do because greater than or equal to is apparently good enough!!! For example it appears council is satisfied with a 43% community satisfaction with councils performance. Even less for roads and footpaths and traffic management. If council is serious about serving its community surely the target must much better not equal to!! And for this under performance I have to pay another rate increase.	Page 38 of the draft Annual Business Plan outlines cost savings and efficiencies identified through the budget deliberations. In addition to this the draft budget provides for an allocation for Council to continue a program of service level reviews. This along with investment in the optimisation phase of the corporate systems project will provide evidenced based recommendations to enhance operations and achieve efficiencies. The draft 2025/26 budget includes \$5.8M of income not derived from rates including user pay fees and external grant funding.
We do not consent to a rates payable increase of 5%.	For Council's consideration
Nothing in there about red bin being picked up weekly, no hard rubbish.	For Council's consideration
As a retired pensioner 74 yrs of age still paying a mortgage, I see many projects for the benefit of younger people. As the council is allowing hundreds of retirement home many of these funding will not effect us, and the last thing I need is having to pay more rates I'm as sure there are many more elderly struggling to just survive.	For Council's consideration
The cost of living is already high enough, increasing it for unnecessary work is ridiculous. The sporting clubs upgrades (netball courts) should not be up to residents to fund but for the clubs to pull their fingers out and pay for it themselves. They do all this fundraising and increase prices but we never see how that money is spent. Also these aren't life necessities in these improvements, just pure privileges that are not going to save lives or drastically improve them even.	The courts are Council assets. The resurfacing projects are subject to 50% grant funding that could include a contribution from the sporting clubs.
We are asking for Day Road and Colebatch Road to be sealed. The traffic in these roads have increased and with all the gravel it raises a lot of dust. Not good for any bodies health and the dust entering peoples homes makes it a nasty breathing problem. Please resurface with tar. Thank you	An allocation for design for sealing of Day Road is included in the Asset Management Plans in 2030/31. An allocation for design for sealing of Colebatch Road is included in the Asset Management Plans in 2032/33.
We want money allocated to the sealing of Day Road Victor Harbor / Lower Inman Valley	An allocation for design for sealing of Day Road is included in the Asset Management Plans in 2030/31.

Explain why you support or don't support the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget?

Respondent Comments	Administration response (if required)
<i>In response to Question 4 it only requires a yes or no answer. To be fair some of the draft issues are acceptable but not all.</i> <i>I have been a resident at Victor Harbor for almost 20 years. Year after year we receive council rates as one would expect, but what concerns me is that they are rising far and beyond what pensioners can afford. Council announce a 5 or 6 percent average increase but increase terms over the past this ends up representing approx. 8 or more percent in real terms. Considering pensioners received approx. \$1-50 a fortnight increase in the last pension adjustment how can we accept these rises far and above what we need to retain a living standard. I know this is a Federal issue unlike local Govt re our rates.</i> <i>I now read where the Mayor is proposing putting in a bid for the Master Games in 2026. Heaven forbid, Council and rate payers are already facing increases in rates due to the Sports precinct. The whole of the Fleurieu is growing at a fast rate. Infrastructure is lacking now one wonders what it will be like in a few years as the population grows. New housing developments are going to cause enormous problems for this City. Look at the traffic on Torrens Street / Crozier Road intersection and pedestrian crossing which causes large build ups of traffic now.</i> <i>Ocean Street is a hive of Op shops, with businesses closing down. How Victor Harbor could ever encourage cruise ships to visit is beyond imagination.</i> <i>In summary there needs to be more emphasis on infrastructure urgently, including a better transport system. More consideration to making Ocean Street somewhere which attracts locals and tourists alike.</i> <i>Traffic Management – major re-think on traffic congestion brought about by pedestrian crossing and roundabouts.</i> <i>Finally have some compassion for residents on fixed term incomes. Council rates are just one issue, however a major issue.</i>	<i>For Council's consideration</i>



Other general comments provided about the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget

The following outline additional commentary provided by survey respondents. An administration response is provided only where required, all comments are provided for Council Member consideration.

Other general comments about the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget

Respondent Commentary	Administration Response (if required)
<i>I have 3 questions to be answered –</i> <i>1. I would like to receive an explanation of how future infrastructure is going to be funded with the rapid population increase that will result from the new housing developments - I need to know the Council's vision for this.</i> <i>2. I would also like to receive an update on the Encounter Bikeway development, I have enquired at the Council several times only to be told that they don't know. The Bikeway would be the jewel in the Crown for tourism & an improved bikeway would improve safety. The Bikeway needs to happen.</i> <i>3. What are the details of the Olivers Parade bikeway realignment please ?</i>	<i>1. Council's Asset Management Plans and Long Term Financial Plan sets out expenditure and projects for the next 10 years to assist Council manage growth. Further to this the Council has almost complete the review of its Urban Growth Management Plan which outlines a blueprint for managing growth to 2050.</i> <i>2. The progression of actions to improve and enhance the Encounter Bikeway have been on hold as the City of Victor Harbor works with our neighbours, Alexandrina Council around a number of issues relating to the alignment of the bikeway at the council boundary.</i> <i>The Encounter Bikeway connection from Investigator Carpark to the Council boundary was subject to Alexandrina Council matching the funding to support the design from the Council boundary to the Chiton Rocks car park. Alexandrina Council did not provide budget in 2024/25 for this project. Subsequently the City of Victor Harbor has secured \$20,000 in grant funding through the State Bicycle Fund to enable design works to commence, this project will be a Work in Progress (WIP) into 2025/26.</i> <i>3. The allowance in the draft 2025/26 budget for Olivers Parade bikeway realignment was to provide an off-road shared path through the Olivers Parade Foreshore Reserve between Olivers Parade and Yandra Terrace. There has been no detailed design undertaken to date.</i>

Other general comments about the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget

Respondent Commentary	Administration Response (if required)
<i>I believe either the scale or the timing (pr both) of the build of the sporting precinct needs to be revisited. Could this not wait until we've had a few consecutive and consistent rate cuts by the RBA?</i>	<i>For Council's consideration</i>
<i>What are you doing about the beautiful natural resource that is Granite Island, other than the tram. We have a wasted building over there that is being left to rust and deteriorate and is an eyesore. Why do we let developers erect pre cast concrete eyesores like Bunnings on the entrance to town and make the place look like a seaside Mount Barker? What will you do to make sure developers build sustainable housing instead of turning farmland into black roofed, brick veneer subdivisions? Why are we building more gated retirement communities instead of having a vibrant town where people of all ages live together? Why don't you impose an unoccupied property tax and a short term accommodation levy to stop our desirable houses becoming affordable only to wealthy investors from Adelaide?</i>	<i>Granite Island is under the care and control of the State Government. Council regularly advocates to the Department of Environment and Water about Granite Island's future.</i> <i>The work being undertaken on the Urban Growth Management Strategy and Future-Ready Strategy aim to address these concerns.</i>
<i>Hoping the refurbishment of Whalers road will include footpaths.</i>	<i>The design for the Whalers Road reconstruction was completed in 2021 and includes a 1.5m wide concrete footpath on the western side of the road from Franklin Parade to Clive Avenue where it is proposed to cross to the eastern side of the road up to White Crescent where the scope of work ends.</i> <i>The design will need to be reviewed prior to construction to account for any changes since 2021.</i>
<i>Think Bigger and Long-Term - Victor Harbor needs a major attraction to boost its appeal and economic sustainability. While our natural environment is a strength, it is not enough on its own to maintain or grow visitor numbers. A large-scale attraction—such as a theme park or a comparable unique drawcard—could bring year-round benefits for locals and tourists alike. Council should begin thinking not just 5–10 years ahead, but 40+ years into the future. What will make Victor Harbor stand out on a national or even international stage? A marina development at The Bluff, for instance, would have been a bold step toward that goal. Let's be visionary: Victor Harbor can and should be more than just ocean, nature, and art.</i>	<i>Council's Urban Growth Management Strategy looks 25 years into the future to 2050 and sets out a range of actions to ensure a strong and sustainable economy.</i>
<i>Our council rates are becoming too high to afford with not much in return for what we pay. I feel we do not get good value for money at all. The high wages and costs to run council are just ridiculous and need to be looked at. There are so many people in our community that are homeless and need assistance - money should be spent helping those people not lining the pockets of council members.</i>	<i>For Council's consideration</i>
<i>Sounds reasonable.</i>	

Other general comments about the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget

Respondent Commentary	Administration Response (if required)
<i>There needs to be a rate cap introduced so councils don't continue to milk ratepayers for their unrealistic and low return investments in infrastructure.</i>	<i>Council's rating policy has a provision in place that caps increases at 15% (compared to the previous year) for residential properties (where the property is a principal place of residence). See the Rating Policy for further detail and eligibility information.</i>
<i>Please trim all areas of the proposed budget proportionally so that rates do not increase.</i>	<i>For Council's consideration</i>
<i>I would like to see public transport for the residents here, that is regular to Adelaide and Flinders and Noarlunga hospitals, where I seem to spend with others my age a lot of time. I can't even get to the existing bus stops from my residents.</i>	<i>Public transport sits under the remit of the SA Government. The Council is regularly advocating for improved public transport in the region. The SA Government is currently developing a public transport strategy and undertaking a regional public transport review – the Council will be making a submission into this.</i>
DONT DO IT. YOU WANT PEOPLE TO LIVE HERE SO STOP DRIVING THEM AWAY	<i>For Council's consideration</i>

Written Submissions

During the consultation period the Council received seven (7) written submissions in relation to the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget.

Written Submissions from organisations, groups and proponents

Business Victor Harbor

Executive Summary

Business Victor Harbor welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the City of Victor Harbor's Draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget. As the region's leading chamber of commerce, BVH represents a broad cross-section of local businesses, from micro/home businesses and sole traders to significant employers. Our submission reflects both the immediate concerns of the business sector and the broader economic settings required to ensure Victor Harbor thrives as a resilient, prosperous, and liveable community.

We acknowledge the increasing financial pressures facing local government. While we appreciate the responsibilities placed on Council, BVH encourages a balanced approach that safeguards both economic vitality and business sustainability—especially in light of growing regulatory burdens, urban growth, climate uncertainty, and sector-specific challenges.

1. Economic Headwinds and Regulatory Pressures on Business

Businesses across Victor Harbor are operating in an increasingly difficult climate. Persistent inflation, rising input costs, supply chain disruptions, workforce shortages, and tightening consumer confidence are being compounded by the growing weight of compliance, regulatory change, and administrative red tape. These challenges are not unique to Victor Harbor, but they are deeply felt by our members.

Local businesses are also grappling with freight and transport constraints. Efficient and affordable access to freight and transport corridors is critical for our region's competitiveness, particularly in agriculture, logistics, tourism, and wholesale distribution. Inadequate road infrastructure, limited transport services, and disjointed freight logistics amplify operational costs and hinder business expansion.

Council should be cognisant of the growing pressure on regional freight corridors and road infrastructure. Local transport operators have consistently highlighted the absence of a comprehensive and relevant regional transport plan tailored to Victor Harbor's current and future needs. Improved planning in this area is critical to supporting local industries and ensuring future economic development is viable. If Victor Harbor is to position itself as the heart of the Fleurieu, it must be underpinned by strong arterial freight networks and modern road infrastructure to support growth and regional connectivity.

Importantly, these pressures are structural—not cyclical. Regulatory complexity and government compliance requirements are unlikely to diminish. Local government must be a steady and enabling partner—supporting growth, reducing red tape where possible, and avoiding unnecessary cost burdens that threaten business viability.

BVH urges Council to reflect deeply on how its services, infrastructure, and policy settings can enable—not hinder—the business community's ability to remain agile, competitive, and viable in this context.

2. Balancing the Needs of Business and the Broader Community

BVH recognises that Council must serve the broader interests of residents, ratepayers, and community groups. However, businesses are not separate from this community—they employ

local residents, train our youth, sponsor events, and serve as the economic engine that funds many public services.

The business community's success is a community success. A thriving community requires a strong and growing business sector—it is a symbiotic relationship.

BVH urges Council to ensure that when planning infrastructure, setting rates, or delivering services, it does so with a clear view of how these decisions affect local businesses. Business operators do not have access to CPI indexation or guaranteed income streams. Even modest increases to fixed costs can tip the balance from viability to closure for small enterprises.

Every time a business closes its doors, the community loses jobs, diversity, vibrancy, and tax revenue. This year's budget must be framed not just through a civic lens, but an economic one.

Rate increases must be approached with utmost caution and transparency. Businesses are already under significant financial strain. BVH asks that Council demonstrate how ratepayer value will be preserved, what cost-containment measures have been implemented internally, and what outcomes are expected from proposed expenditures.

3. Climate Impacts, Drought and Regional Resilience

As we enter a period of increased climate volatility, regional economies like Victor Harbor's are particularly exposed. Drought conditions affect more than the primary producers—they influence the entire paddock-to-plate supply chain, from agriculture to transport, hospitality, retail, and tourism.

Council has a critical role to play in future-proofing our region. This includes long-term planning for water security, sustainable land use, and supporting diversification of our regional economy. The 2025/26 Budget should reflect a more explicit focus on climate resilience, both in capital investment and policy priorities. For example, consideration should be given to:

- *Ongoing investment in stormwater infrastructure and water reuse*
- *Advocacy for regional disaster planning and food supply chains*
- *Transparent planning for climate risk mitigation across all departments*

These efforts are not just environmental; they are fundamentally economic.

We acknowledge the budget references Council's commitment to climate resilience, such as planned investments in water-sensitive urban design, stormwater upgrades, and coastal management strategies. However, the scale and specificity of these measures require clearer articulation. We encourage Council to itemise climate-related capital works, outline measurable outcomes for resilience projects, and ensure that planning across departments considers long-term climate impacts. The alignment of these efforts with broader regional disaster preparedness and food security initiatives will be key to protecting our local economy.

4. Urban Growth, Infrastructure, and Housing Balance

Victor Harbor is at a turning point. Several large developments are proposed or underway that will significantly increase the local population. While growth brings opportunity, it also brings pressure.

Key concerns raised by BVH members include:

- *Over-concentration of lifestyle and retirement housing, which may strain health and aged care infrastructure, while under-servicing working families.*
- *Inadequate provision of housing stock suitable for essential workers, trades, professionals and young families.*
- *Insufficient zoning and land release for industrial and commercial use, particularly within reach of the CBD.*

A sustainable urban growth strategy must go beyond housing volume. It must address:

- *Demographic balance*
- *Jobs-housing proximity*
- *Transport and utility capacity*
- *Long-term economic diversity*
- *The spatial footprint of development across the region*
- *Density optimisation in existing housing zones*

BVH encourages Council to explore increasing housing density in appropriate existing areas, rather than relying on ever-expanding greenfield developments that place additional stress on infrastructure, transport, and services. This approach could lead to cost savings in infrastructure provision and ongoing service delivery.

We also raise the question of whether there is a risk of long-term housing oversupply in the local government area. Generational shifts may see the current older population transition out of the area or into aged care, which could leave excess housing stock unless balanced with targeted policies to attract and retain younger working families and professionals.

Council's planning instruments must also avoid unintended decentralisation of our commercial core. Zoning decisions that draw businesses away from the CBD risk diluting its economic gravity, undermining local foot traffic, and increasing infrastructure duplication costs. BVH urges Council to explicitly align its urban growth strategy with economic development principles.

If Council and its stakeholders wish to position Victor Harbor as the heart of the Fleurieu, this must be supported by well-planned infrastructure development and economic frameworks that cater to residents, visitors, and businesses alike. This includes strong arterial freight networks and robust regional connectivity to underpin our growing role in the region.

5. Community Sports Precinct Proposal (Armstrong Road)

BVH supports, in principle, the development of a well-planned community sports and recreation precinct, as it aligns with our strategic vision of Victor Harbor as the heart of the Fleurieu.

We strongly advocate for the precinct to be operated through a Private-Public Partnership (PPP), rather than by Council itself. BVH maintains that operating such a facility falls outside Council's remit and is best delivered through private enterprise. Council's role should be to facilitate and support, not manage, major community infrastructure.

We also emphasise the importance of incorporating a high-quality, accessible day-care facility within the precinct. Demand for childcare services is critical, and this inclusion would support local families, working professionals, and broader workforce participation.

In place of a Tavern, we support the inclusion of a food and beverage facility, ideally operated by a local business. This contributes to local employment, promotes regional produce, and enhances the user experience of the precinct.

We note the proposed 99-year lease with a 50-year extension option. While we understand the intent to provide long-term certainty, such an extensive lease period warrants broader discussion. BVH encourages Council to explore alternative lease models that balance investment certainty with future flexibility and community needs.

With the right governance model and operational structure in place, BVH supports the advancement of this precinct and welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with Council. We would be pleased to participate in future workshops or stakeholder sessions to represent the voice of local business.

6. Financial Sustainability and Internal

Efficiencies BVH acknowledges the pressures faced by Council in maintaining service levels while managing cost increases. However, it is essential that ratepayers—particularly businesses—see clear evidence that Council is identifying internal efficiencies before resorting to higher rates or new levies.

ESCOSA has previously recommended that the City of Victor Harbor improve its reporting on cost containment measures and efficiency savings. We support this advice.

A commitment to productivity, procurement reform, shared services, and systems upgrades can all assist in managing financial pressures without unduly burdening ratepayers. Zero-based budgeting is commendable, but outcomes need to be reported in tangible, public-facing terms.

Council's procurement approach must also reflect a stronger weighting for local economic benefit and visibility. Too often, capital works and service contracts are awarded without sufficient consideration of the long-term advantages of supporting local suppliers and businesses. Local procurement supports local employment, stimulates economic activity, and strengthens community engagement. BVH encourages Council to revise its procurement framework to favour regional suppliers where feasible and appropriate.

Conclusion

The coming 12–24 months will present a complex mix of economic uncertainty, climate disruption, and growth management challenges.

The 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget should reflect not only what Council intends to fund, but how it will strengthen the region's economic resilience in the face of these overlapping pressures.

Business Victor Harbor remains a willing partner in this process. We are available to assist with consultation, data sharing, and advocacy efforts that support a thriving regional economy for all.

Victor Harbor Mens Shed

I am writing to you on behalf of the Victor Harbor Men's Shed membership who have expressed concern that the upgrading of the Martha Close Road will not be considered until the later part of this decade.

The Victor Harbor Men's Shed currently has a financial membership in excess of 120 for 2025 and has the involvement of over 90 attendees each week- all but 2 arriving by motor vehicle. Some of these members use Martha Close multiple times each opening day. Our activities also include occasional visits from various local community groups and Men's Sheds from across S.A. Our estimate of vehicle movement coming and going each week for Men's Shed members alone to be in excess of 200.

In addition, the Shed is used by 3 other community groups each week and 4 community groups on the fourth week of each month with an estimate of in excess of 70 vehicle movements on average each week.

Martha Close is also used by a substantial number of bush walkers and dog walkers each day, some of whom drive to the Men's Shed car park before beginning their activities.

Currently Martha Close is badly potholed and seems to require maintenance attention at least twice a year. Although we regularly remind shed members about driving slowly down the road, the constant movement of vehicles during the summer months creates a considerable dust problem for houses immediately adjacent the intersection of Martha Close and Canterbury Road.



Given the vehicle movement numbers presented above, the Victor Harbor Men's Shed would like to request the City Council review the current Roads Improvement / Upgrading Budget to bring forward into the next budget cycle the upgrading and sealing of Martha Close.

Written Submissions from residents

Resident 1

5% rates increase is too much, it is above the inflation rate and to be honest, looking at the lack of work the council does at my end of Tabernacle Rd I already feel like I am not getting value out of the rates I pay.

Resident 2

Strongly oppose the 5% rate increase. Council needs to spend its budget more wisely. Now is not the time for a \$40m recreation centre especially if council's budget is so tight.

Rates are already too high.

Resident 3

Even excluding the Precinct and Corporate systems upgrade there is still a deficit of "just over \$1 million dollars" despite another massive 5% rate increase and the huge number of new dwelling that continue to come online further boosting rate revenue. In other words council is not living within its means even for the basics.

Given this problem, why is there no meaningful cost reduction plan and actions in the budget? Employment costs continue to be unjustifiably high. Council can not continue to go to the rate payer well to support their excesses, lack of productivity and waste. You are just kicking the bad financial management can down the road once again.

I think Council needs to highlight these problems to the community in an open and honest way.

Resident 4

REQUEST TO BITUMINISE NOTTLE ROAD, LOWER INMAN VALLEY

I am writing to lodge a formal request for the urgent sealing of the unsealed portion of Nottle Road, Lower Inman Valley, which falls under the care and control of the City of Victor Harbor.

It is of significant concern that Council has recently approved the development of a large semi-industrial "agricultural" shed, access to which can only be reached from Nottle Road, which has already resulted in a substantial increase in heavy vehicle movements along Nottle Road.

These vehicles—often comprising semi-trailers, farming equipment, and commercial trucks—are utilising a dirt road that is not constructed to accommodate such high-frequency and high-load traffic.

Furthermore, Council's current maintenance regime—consisting of a single annual patrol grade—is manifestly inadequate in addressing the ongoing deterioration and fails to meet the reasonable

expectations of residents. This limited intervention cannot be construed as meeting Council's duty of care or as a sufficient response to the serious nuisance now present since the approval of the shed.

This traffic will dramatically accelerate the degradation of the road surface, increasing the emission of dust, noise, and particulate matter well beyond tolerable or reasonable limits. The result will be a daily and persistent nuisance that will unreasonably interfere with the use and enjoyment of residential premises along the road.

We seek Council's support and commitment in confirming the timing of the unsealed section of Nottle Road to be sealed budgeted and allocated for programming to minimise the anticipated nuisance.

BACKGROUND

The Victor Harbor Council has approved the construction of an "agricultural" shed at the Hilltop Dairy, which is serviced by a private road running off of Nottle Road.

This shed is designed as an intensive dairy, which the developer has stated will house up to 600 milking cows on a permanent basis. That is to say that the cows will not be allowed to roam the paddocks where their excreta is currently distributed over a large area.

On their original application to council, the developer requested construction of an agricultural shed, knowing full well that its intended use was for an intensive dairy operation.

Agricultural sheds are used for equipment, hay or other storage. As such, they do not emit odours or sewage or wastewater. Significantly the developer has had to apply for an odour assessment, and will also need to construct sewage ponds to retain the increased and localised sewage, including water used for washing down the dairy and surrounds.

There has already been significant backlash against the construction of this shed from concerned locals, on the basis that it was applied for as an agricultural shed rather than an intensive dairy operation, that it will cause significantly increased dust, noise, odour and fly problems, and it destroys the local visual amenity.

ISSUES

Nottle Road has been the only access road for the local residents, vehicles servicing the Hilltop dairy, and the popular Hipcamp for some years. It is already heavily used on a daily basis, predominantly by the dairy. The current traffic situation primarily results in dust, which, due to the nature of the gravel being used, is very fine. It travels a long way, and settles in gutters, inside closed sheds, and also is evident on windows. Left alone in the gutters, the dust hardens into a crust which is very difficult to remove, and hastens corrosion and subsequent failure of the gutters. Most residents in the area rely on rainwater collected from houses and sheds for their drinking water.

The Mulhern family, which own and run the dairy, have stated to us that they intend to shed up to 600 milking cows inside the dairy. This constitutes a significant change in land use from a dairy to an intensive dairy. By definition, a dairy enterprise is deemed significant once the number of milking cows meets or exceeds 500 animals. Cunningly, the owners have told the Council and EPA that they will only keep 496 milking cows.

Since the milking cattle will not be allowed to roam the paddocks, there will be an increased need for all dietary inputs to be supplied via road transport. This requirement extends beyond just the grass which one normally associates with stock. There is also a need for hay, silage and dietary supplements which in themselves are significant. All of these inputs need to be brought in via Nottle Rd. Then there are the flow-on supplies such as fuels, vets, trades etc. The milk tanker visits once or twice daily, 365 days a year. Since Nottle Rd is a no through road, all traffic which comes in

must leave by the same route, effectively doubling the perceived traffic volume. There are a variety of trucks including semi-trailers, b-doubles, rigids etc. Many of the drivers use noisy exhaust brakes even when unloaded, which is excessive and unnecessary.

The non-milking cattle also require feeding. Currently, some of these are isolated on Mulhern property, but others are agisted on local nearby properties. Feeding of these typically requires a heavy tractor and feed trailer combination to travel on Nottle road several times a day. Tractor tyres result in faster deterioration of the road surface than “normal” tyres due to the heavy lugs and weight of the combined mass.

The non-family workers are housed offsite from the dairy. There are several workers, mostly from overseas, each with their own cars, provided by the dairy at a cost. There are several shift changes per day, typically two per milking (two milkings per day), so the workers themselves account for multiple trips up and down Nottle Rd.

The Mulhern family own at least three vehicles, and all three are used daily. Not only do they find cause to make trips related to the dairy, but they of course also travel for private use. Despite the “Less Speed, Less Dust” signs erected by the council, the family treat Nottle Rd as their own private driveway. Their son, in particular, not only is inconsiderate, but seems to delight in travelling at speed, especially around the bends in the road, and accelerating hard coming out of them. We have witnessed several near misses with other traffic.

At the end of Nottle Rd, a Hipcamp is owned and operated by a local. This camp is based around basic amenities, and attracts many campers on most weekends, plus holiday periods. It is a popular attraction for tourists to the area. There are 13 campsites, although more campers can be accommodated if necessary. Again, each camper needs to enter and exit via Nottle Rd, usually several times over the course of their stay to visit local tourist hotspots, or to get supplies. Typically, the campers are unfamiliar with unpaved roads, and many are unsure of speed limits, or maybe even travel too slowly while seeking entry to the camp. Many of them are overseas or interstate travellers, and have difficulty with the camp location.

Nottle Rd is undulating and twisty. There are few, if any, road advisory signs erected. The likelihood of an accident is high due to the combination of the unsealed road surface, trucks (often B-doubles), unfamiliar road users, and reckless and speeding drivers.

Finally, the current regime used by the Council is to re-sheet the road once a year. This is unsatisfactory for a number of reasons, including the material used for the road surface, which I believe is quarried locally, and infamous for the dust it generates. Due to the volume and type of traffic using Nottle Rd, the re-sheet is typically good for about a month, after which corrugations and potholes reappear. By re-sheeting the road, all that is achieved is to push back the loose gravel and dust which has been thrown off the road by passing traffic. This process will continue forever, unless the Council seals the road with bitumen. Since the dairy is by far the heaviest and most damaging user, it would not be unreasonable for them to contribute toward the cost.

SUMMARY

Since the Council has approved construction of this “agricultural” shed, we believe that the Council has a duty of care to minimise the likely increased volume of dust and noise which will result as a direct consequence of the approval. Bituminising Nottle Road, at least from Hancock Road to the private road to the dairy will overcome the serious dust problem, eliminate the need for annual re-sheeting, and reduce the likelihood of a road traffic accident due to the mixture of heavy transport and other road users.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and trust that Council will take all reasonable and lawful steps to address the nuisance and fulfil its obligations to affected residents. As residents we feel that the persistent nuisance that now unreasonably interferes with the use and enjoyment of residential premises along the road is here to stay with the operation of the dairy, the least the



Council can do is to plan to seal the road and consult with owners impacted by the approval of such a use immediately to avoid further unrest and reassure local residents that this has been considered appropriately.

Resident 5

Hi, we live at Spring Rd and there are often issues with the drainage and surface of our road. We have sealed our driveway, all the way out to the verge of the road but the road itself has many issues. It would be great to have this road sealed at some point. You often send graders/rollers etc to try and repair the road but sealing the road could sort these problems for many years instead of having to come back every few months. We get a lot of dust and the neighbor across the road often gets flooded by the water flowing across the road to his property.

Along with this, the intersection of Cartright rd and Glenvale rd has probably 20-30 potholes, its really bad, sealing that area and our road would be great! :)

Public Meeting

There were 20 community members in attendance at the public meeting for the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget. The public meeting was held on Thursday, 29 May 2025 at 5:30 pm at the City of Victor Harbor Civic Centre.

The following is an overview of the topics discussed and feedback provided during the meeting.

- **Regional Community, Sport and Recreation Precinct (The Precinct):** The Precinct was the main focus of the public meeting with attendees asking questions and making statements about a range of different project elements including:
 - the return on investment that Council gets from its contribution
 - the project need
 - how information about the lease agreement will be communicated to the community
 - the financial impact the project will have on the Council and its community.
- **Council Rates:** The next significant topic was the rate increase, particularly noting how Victor Harbor's rates compare to other others. There was concern from some attendees that the rate increase in too high, and that the value residents receive from their rates is not commensurate with what they pay. In responding to these concerns it was highlighted that council rates are a property tax that directly fund a range of services and infrastructure for the local community. While individual residents might not use all of the services, the services collectively help contribute to making Victor Harbor a good place to live and provide whole of community benefit.

There was also clarification sought around how Victor Harbor's growth will impact Council rates and how this has been factored into future budgets. It was noted that the Long Term Financial Plan provides a conservative forecast for growth over the coming 10 year period.

- **Community Consultation:** There were a number of references to previous community consultation processes and a feeling that feedback is ignored by Council. A specific example provided included the community land revocation consultation for Lot 202 Armstrong Road. There was an acknowledgment that while there is always room for



improvement in how the Council engages with its community, it was noted that Council decisions consider multiple factors, and community consultation is just one of these.

- **Corporate Systems Replacement Project:** Concerns were raised around the reporting on Council's corporate systems replacement project and how the Council is looking for productivity improvements. It was advised that public reports about the progress of the corporate systems project are to be provided in the Council agenda at regular intervals, with reports previously available for the community to review. Further to this, the project is still being implemented and the efficiencies to be achieved from this project will be realised as implementation is complete and Council moves into the optimisation phase. A number of efficiencies have already been found and in many cases resources have been redirected to identified areas of need, for example Council's open space team.
- **Fleurieu Aquatic Centre:** There were a few questions relating to the aquatic centre where community members sought information about Council's contribution to the centre and how the councils (Alexandrina and City of Victor Harbor) will work together to manage the maintenance of the facility. The councils are currently working with the operator to prepare for some maintenance works of the facility as it reaches its eighth year of operation.
- **Requests for project considerations within the budget:** With regard to requests for specific projects to be included in the budget, there was a request for consideration to be given to relocating the cricket nets/entrance road within the Victor Harbor Oval Complex. Previous advice was this was not able to occur until 2028/29. It was advised that is the Asset Management Plans include an allocation for reserve development each year with the funds earmarked for recycled water storage tanks at Victor Harbor Oval in 2025/26. This budget could potentially fund the relocation of the cricket nets or entrance road in future years.
- **Capital Works Program:** The question was asked if the Council has the capacity to deliver a \$14.6 million capital works program in 2025/26. There was an acknowledgement that some of these works will be delivered by contractors and some are contingent on grant funding.



Conclusion

In summary, the consultation process has provided Council with valuable feedback on the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan.

In considering the feedback received throughout the consultation, the following key themes and considerations should be highlighted:

- **The Precinct:** Respondents raised concerns around the Council's contribution to this project and the associated increasing debt levels. There were also a number of queries about how the project serves the broader community and the benefit it will bring, providing an opportunity for Council to undertake a further communications campaign to increase exposure of these messages.
- **Council Rates:** there were reoccurring concerns around the impact the rate rise will have on household budgets particularly given the cost of living pressures.
- **Focus on Essential Services:** consistent with themes from the community satisfaction surveys there was a strong call within the responses for Council to prioritise essential services and infrastructure such as roads, footpaths and stormwater infrastructure particularly to ensure that Council is prepared for future growth.

In addition to the themes above, there were a number of requests for roads to be sealed including:

- Day Road, Lower Inman Valley
- Colebatch Road, Lower Inman Valley
- Martha Close, Victor Harbor
- Nottle Road, Lower Inman Valley
- Spring Road, Lower Inman Valley

Council prioritises capital works projects – such as the sealing of roads – using a decision-making matrix that takes into consideration how many people are impacted, the hierarchy of the road (e.g. main freight route, collector road or dead-end) including type of traffic (% commercial) and volume of requests received over time, among other factors.

Historically, Council has focused on sealing roads within urban areas – for example, Wattlebury Road in Victor Harbor was the most recently sealed road completed in early 2018. In recent years, however, the focus has shifted toward maintaining and renewing existing infrastructure, rather than initiating new projects like sealing unsealed roads.

Generally, the community is trying to find a balance between growing as a town (and ensuring there is the appropriate services and facilities to cater for this growth) and wanting to keep Council rates as low as possible.

While there is a clear call for investments that assist to manage growth there is also caution around the implications these investments will have on Council's financial sustainability.

All feedback received through this consultation process will be presented to Council Members for their consideration via a workshop and as an attachment to a Council Report.