



Community Engagement Feedback Report

**Draft Annual Community Plan 2026/27 and
Long Term Financial Plan 2026–2036**

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1.0 Background

Every year Council develops and adopts an Annual Community Plan (ACP), also known as the Annual Business Plan, which sets out Council's key programs, priority actions and budgets for the financial year.

Council also maintains and updates annually its Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP), which sets out the 10 year financial plan for the Council for the purposes of:

- Guiding decision making about revenue generation, expenditure and investment
- Ensuring financial sustainability
- Aligning financial resources with strategic plans and community expectation
- Support transparency and accountability in council operations

This year, the ACP and LTFP were developed in response to a challenging economic environment, which has placed an increased strain on budgets across the community. Council is proposed a period of financial restraint and consolidation in 2026/27. This approach focused on:

- Keeping increased rates as low as possible
- Reducing expenditure and borrowing
- Strengthening long-term financial sustainability.

The proposed budget balanced these constraints by maintaining essential service delivery, while prioritising financial discipline and targeted investment to support future growth and organisational resilience.

Council remains committed to protecting ratepayers during these uncertain times and will continue to seek opportunities to reduce costs, lower debt and maintain downward pressure on rates.

2.0 Engagement Snapshot

During the consultation period from Thursday 21 May to Sunday 14 June 2026, **a total of 23 responses** were received across both the My Say platform and via email/hard copy.



16 My Say
Survey
Responses
(1 duplicate)

7 written
submissions

Approximately 60
attendees across
the four Public
Meetings

2.1 Engagement communications

Audience	Channel	Results
Residents/ Ratepayers	Council website - Latest news article on home page of corporate website	Throughout consultation period
	Social media (Instagram and Facebook) – at the start and midway through consultation	Facebook - Views: over 13k - Link clicks: 33 - Interactions: 54
	21 May	Instagram - Views: over 300 - Reach: over 250 - Interactions: 4
	1 June	
	12 June	
	Video of Public Meetings (on My Say and Vimeo)	Goolwa – 19 Views Strathalbyn – 11 Views
	Council office displays - entryways	Throughout consultation period
	Community noticeboards across region	Throughout consultation period
	My Say e-newsletter subscribers	22 May, 29 May, 5 June - Sent to 2.3k subscribers 44-46% open rate
	Corflutes (large waterproof signage on site)	N/A
Adjoining Property Owners / Business Owners	E-signature	10 working days during consultation
	Direct email to invite people who have made a written submission to attend Council meeting	25 June 2026
	Notification on My Local Services App	Throughout consultation period
Government and key agencies	Direct email or posted letter	N/A

Section 41 Committees / Advisory Committees/ Audit and Risk Committee	Audit and Risk Committee	12 May 2026 (Short form ACP and LTFP) 4 June 2026 (Long form ACP and LTFP)
Community groups, resident and ratepayer associations	Direct email	22 May 2026
Media	Fleurieu Sun, The Southern Argus	Community Forum date announcement – 7 May Consultation announcement 21 May Media release 21 May 2026
Internal staff	Connect Intranet Announcement	Throughout consultation period
Council Members	Briefing to Council Members via Council Report, CM Portal, email, Council Information Session	Endorsed for consultation 18 May Council Information Session following consultation 22 June Special Council Meeting 29 June

3.0 Consultation Response Overview

3.1 Consultation statistics

Activity	2026	2025	2024	2023
Submissions	23	54	319	75
My Say page visits	651	997		
Document downloads	552	613		
Video presentation views	30	24		

Attendees: approximately 60

- Goolwa – 3
- Port Elliot – 14
- Strathalbyn – 15

- Mount Compass – 28

Attendance in previous years:

- 2025 - 103
- 2024 – 119
- 2023 – 213

3.2 Evaluation

Most Raised Themes / Common Comments

1. Rates and affordability
 - Keep increases low as possible
 - Tie rates to CPI or LGPI
 - High concern for fixed-income households
2. Cost reduction
 - Cut unnecessary spending
 - Reduce staffing levels or improve productivity
 - Embed cost-saving requirements in frameworks
3. Transparency and accountability
 - Strong request for:
 - Clear reporting of costs, outcomes, and KPIs
 - Better communication of where rates go
 - Full disclosure on major programs and liabilities
4. Asset Management
 - Increase asset reviews
 - Sell surplus assets
 - Improve maintenance and lifecycle management
5. Infrastructure quality and service delivery
 - Better quality assurance and quality control and project oversight
 - Concerns about repeated road failures
 - Requests for improved maintenance efficiency
6. Community equity and consultation
 - Smaller towns feeling overlooked
 - Need broader, more accessible consultation (not just digital)
 - Earlier community involvement in project planning

7. Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA) recommendations

- Repeated calls to:
 - Implement cost-saving recommendations
 - Align decision-making with ESCOSA guidance

Positive Feedback

- Strong commendation for being financially responsible and spending restraint
- Supportive of the LTFP and its direction
- Support for:
 - Debt reduction and lower borrowing
 - Reduced capital works program
 - Continuous Improvement Plan
 - Service reviews and rationalisation
 - Removal/reduction of sustainability factor
 - Rating review
- Appreciation for:
 - Work of CEO, CFO and staff
 - Transparency improvements and structured planning
 - Opportunity for community consultation
- Positive sentiment toward:
 - Asset renewal focus
 - Stronger financial discipline
 - Property Portfolio & Strategic Land Program (with caveats on transparency)
- Support for:
 - Road maintenance
 -
- Some support for:
 - Modest rate increases to stabilise finances
 - Lower rate trajectory and downward pressure
 - Tourism
 - Hard rubbish
 - Housing and Accommodation Strategy

- Middleton flooding/stormwater funding
- Horseshoe Bay coastal adaptation

Negative Feedback

Financial and rates and affordability concerns

- Rates considered too high and unsustainable, especially for:
 - Fixed income residents
 - Coastal and high-valuation properties
- Strong resistance to future increases above CPI
- Perception Council has already exceeded CPI impacts
- Calls to:
 - Cap rates or tie to inflation
 - Lower rates even if deficit continues longer

Spending and efficiency issues

- Perceived wasteful spending and inefficiency, including:
 - Rework of infrastructure projects (e.g. Nangkita Road)
 - Poor quality civil works and project management
- Concerns about:
 - Staffing levels and productivity
 - Quality assurance and quality control / failures

Economic Development and Tourism

- Strong opposition:
 - Viewed as non-core business
 - Seen as low value to residents
 - Calls to cut, postpone, or shift funding to State or private sector
 - Economic Development activities

Governance and transparency

- Dissatisfaction with:
 - Lack of transparency on major costs
 - Fleurieu Regional Waste Authority transparency in budget
 - Carry-forward project costs
- Concern Elected Members lack restraint and accountability

- Confusion or missing information in ACP

Equity and service delivery

- Perception:
 - Smaller communities (e.g. Mount Compass) are overlooked
 - Rates not aligned with service levels
- Complaints about:
 - Lack of infrastructure (stormwater, lighting, road maintenance)
 - Cost of kerbside bin replacement
 - Lack of support for elderly services

4.0 Self-nomination to participate

It is important to acknowledge that involvement in the public consultation process is voluntary, with participants self-nominating to contribute. As a result, the feedback gathered should not be regarded as statistically representative of all perspectives.

5.0 Consultation images



Strathalbyn Community Forum



Port Elliot Community Forum



Mount Compass Community Forum