

## MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024

### **Waratah-Wynyard Council to consider a budget that delivers increased service levels, sustainability and affordability for the community**

Waratah-Wynyard Council will vote to adopt a recommended general rate increase of just 2.95%, which is well below the Council Cost Index of 3.74% and the current CPI, at the Council meeting on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June.

The Draft Annual Plan and Budget Estimates 2024-25 delivers what Mayor Mary Duniam calls a 'considered' budget that takes into account the cost-of-living pressures, rising costs to Council and the ongoing need to plan for future generations.

"In preparing this year's budget we have taken into consideration the necessity to deliver core council functions in a fiscally responsible way, whilst ensuring that community assets are well maintained, key projects are well planned and budgeted for, and that we remain committed to our strong environmental leadership" said Mayor Duniam.

"Throughout our deliberations, we have also been mindful of the reality of the current challenges facing our community. Cost of living pressures are a constant threat to the viability of our small businesses and present daily challenges for the families who reside in our communities. We believe as a Council we must be considerate of these pressures when making budget decisions."

Over the past five years, Council's average General Rate increase has been 2.48% compared with the Council Cost Index increasing by an average of 3.81% over the same period.

Council's 2025 budget aims to deliver an underlying surplus of \$0.841m. If achieved, this will be the ninth consecutive year in which Waratah-Wynyard Council has reached an underlying surplus position, despite the many and varied financial pressures throughout recent years. Council's Comprehensive Result for 2024/25 is expected to be \$4.975m.

The budget proposes capital expenditure of \$17.67m, headlined by commencement of construction of the Boat Harbour Beach Master Plan and preliminary work for a new childcare centre in Wynyard.

"Consideration of the future needs of our community is always front of mind for our Council. We are proud to begin planning for a much needed new, increased capacity childcare facility in Wynyard. We believe that access to childcare for our community is vital for economy to grow and prosper" said Mayor Duniam.

"To be entering the construction phase of the Boat Harbour Beach Master Plan is another very exciting milestone for our Council."

Construction is expected to commence on the new, state-of-the-art Surf Life Saving Club, Community Hub and Café by late 2024. The \$12m project will also deliver new public amenities, more green space with direct access to the beach, passive and active recreational facilities and improved parking and pedestrian safety.

#### **Waratah Wynyard Council**

21 Saunders Street (PO Box 168) Wynyard Tasmania 7325  
P: (03) 6443 8333 | F: (03) 6443 8383 | E: [council@warwyn.tas.gov.au](mailto:council@warwyn.tas.gov.au)

The Annual Plan and Budget also includes significant investment in roads, with \$2.8m in capital spend planned, with a focus on rural road maintenance and safety. The rural road re-sheeting program will cost \$1.19m, with increased funds also allocated for sealed rural roads shoulder improvements, increased roadside slashing, rural culvert maintenance and realignment of the Coopers Lane/Andersons Road intersection.

Council will also introduce a new Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) collection service from 1 July 2024 under a regional contract with Dulverton Waste Management. Council has been able to contain the annual nett cost of the new service to \$11 per property, which is aligned with the potential cost communicated during community consultation.

Council has also had to consider increased cost of overall waste service delivery, including an increase in the state-imposed Waste Levy from \$17 to \$28 per property and increases in contract costs for the delivery of waste and recycling collection.

“Overall Council’s waste charges will increase by 77 cents per week for properties in the urban collection areas and 65 cents per week for ratepayers in the rural collection areas. Ratepayers who do not receive a waste collection service will have an increase of 33 cents per week” said Waratah-Wynyard Council General Manager, Shane Crawford.

Council will continue free entry to the Waste Transfer Station for all residents.

Mr Crawford says the budget achieves the targets of Council’s Financial Management Strategy and demonstrates financial sustainability in the medium to long term.

“Waratah-Wynyard Council is not immune to the financial and social pressures that exist in the current environment, with increasing costs, high inflation and cost of living pressures, however a focus on long term financial planning, strategic plans and a discipline to work within these parameters, ensures this budget achieves a surplus position, increases service delivery whilst also supporting significant capital investment and positioning Council for further growth into the future.”

“Of note Council has recently had a municipal revaluation completed by the Valuer General which will be applied from 1 July 2024 and will impact on rates and charges for the 2024-25 financial year.”

“Overall property values are up significantly across the municipal area. Council does not collect more rates as a result of these changes, however, what does occur is a change in the distribution of the rate burden between properties. All properties are impacted differently as a result. Valuation changes will see a slight shift in the rating burden to residential properties, with commercial, industrial and primary production experiencing increases below the overall average” said Mr Crawford.

Mayor Duniam said “We consider this budget and annual plan to be one that consolidates our position of financial strength, whilst still delivering the services and facilities that our community expects us to provide.”

Council will maintain the early payment discount in 2024/25, providing ratepayers with a 3.5% discount if payment is received in full by 31 August 2024.

**Authorised for general media distribution by Shane Crawford, General Manager,  
Waratah-Wynyard Council on Wednesday June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024.**