

Rates rise without fuss

By Claire Campbell

COORONG councillors barely discussed their draft 2015-16 annual business plan and budget when it was adopted last Tuesday.

The Standard understands some discussion and questions, particularly around rate projections, were asked in confidence at the private briefing session held before the public meeting.

Rates are expected to rise by an average of five per cent, with an estimated 0.7pc increase in property values and service fees and charges would increase to reduce the council's forecasted \$106,000 operating deficit.

Fees for kerbside waste collection increased from \$190 to \$240 this financial year, and the council has proposed to further increase it by \$50 next year.

"The amount charged was not recover-

ing the full cost of the service," the draft budget reported.

"Over the past years the service charges have fallen behind what the true cost of the service provision, consequently in the past excess costs have been funded out of other general revenue."

Maximising the benefit of the Taillem Bend Motorsport Park is a major focus of the draft plan and budget, with money allocated to develop riverfront and lakefront areas to boost community and visitor usage.

About \$5.34 million worth of capital works projects are planned for the region, including bank stabilisation and mooring facilities at Dickson Reserve, supplying underground water at Coonalbyn, maintaining unsealed roads throughout the region, sealing Tauragat Well Road at Coonalbyn, replacing the council's plant and machinery, a streetscape plan for

Tallem Bend and finishing West Terrace Reserve at Meningie.

A further \$780,000 has been budgeted for biodiversity projects in the region, including revegetation, protection of remnant vegetation and eradication of weeds and rabbits.

Arts and culture in the Coorong will also be a priority with significant funding allocated for an art and culture officer.

To fully fund the proposed capital works, the council will borrow an extra \$691,000, bringing the level of council's net financial liabilities to an expected \$7.36 million.

Community members are invited to make comment in writing on the draft 2015-16 annual business plan and budget before Friday, May 15.

Details: Submissions can be made online at www.coorong.sa.gov.au, emailed to council@coorong.sa.gov.au or posted to PO Box 399, Tallem Bend, SA 5260.

Services needed to curb violent 'epidemic'

By Dani Brown

A PARLIAMENTARY committee has learned about domestic and family violence problems in Murray Bridge and surrounds at an all-day hearing on Thursday.

As part of a State-wide tour, the Social Development and Communities hearing evidence from groups, services and case workers about the issues faced by victims and involved staff.

The committee's presiding member, Gerry Kandelaris said domestic violence was a difficult problem in rural areas due to isolation and conservatism.

"People know people, so there's a degree of reluctance to intervene and report, which makes it more difficult for women and children - but there are men who face it, too," Mr Kandelaris said.

"We don't know if there's been an increase in domestic violence or if people are more willing to report."

He said it was important to ensure the committee's eventual report would not be metro-centric as it discovered some prevalent issues in regional areas.

"There's an issue around the provision of emergency service, and dealing with perpetrators issues and how we're

going to prevent it," he said.

"There are no emergency-specific domestic abuse facilities in Murray Bridge ... if there's a crisis, the options here are to send them to Adelaide or put them in a motel."

Murray Bridge Regional Collaboration on Violence Against Women and Children deputy chair Fiona Meade made a written submission and told the committee Murray Bridge's most urgent need was a well-resourced, purpose-specific service.

"Domestic violence is a complex issue requiring specialist work," Ms Meade said.

"We don't have a crisis response, we have two domestic violence workers with Centacare and they're flat out - they barely have enough time to lift their head for prevention."

"We want a standalone service that provides crisis accommodation and support, medium to long-term counselling for women, a service specifically for



Listening: MPs Dana Wortley, Jing Lee, Gerry Kandelaris, Adrian Pederick, Net Cook and Kelly Vincent receive evidence submissions at a hearing about domestic violence in Murray Bridge on Thursday.

children, a housing support workers, and brokerage for intervention for men who abuse.

"There's no service specifically responding to children, there's no options for women in mid to long-term counselling, and there's nothing for men who use violence in relationships."

She said a lack of infrastructure and

transport alternatives, poverty, and victims being forced to return to their violent situations were detrimental to the elimination of domestic violence in the area.

Ms Meade said the group wanted the government to show leadership on the "national epidemic", and believed the State hearing and Federal actions

were good steps forward. Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick was pleased the committee was visiting rural areas before completing its report.

"I would hope that after the hearings and the months of deliberation, we will play a big part in stamping out domestic violence and controlling it," he said.

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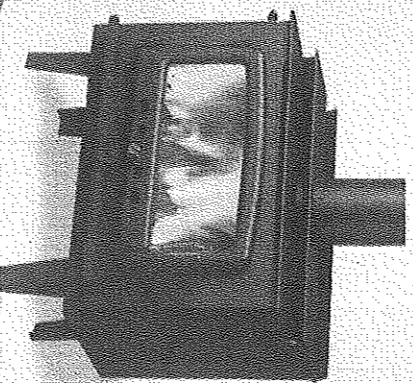
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Wednesday 29th	0754 1501 2108	1.10 1.73 1.18
Thursday 30th	0245 0902 1528 2143	1.74 0.86 2.06 0.85
Friday 1st May	0336 0936 1554 2211	1.97 0.69 2.30 0.62
Saturday 2nd	0409 1000 1616 2236	2.09 0.60 2.46 0.48
Sunday 3rd	0433 1019 1635 2258	2.14 0.57 2.56 0.40
Monday 4th	0454 1036 1653 2320	2.13 0.55 2.65 0.36

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