

Media Release



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Boosting Boating in Regional SA

In a bid to significantly improve boating facilities across regional South Australia, Barunga West Council has proposed a motion for the next Local Government Association (LGA) meeting for increased state funding.

If the proposed motion was passed by the LGA, Barunga West Council would consider following the lead of NSW by introducing free parking at its boat ramp facilities.

Barunga West Council CEO Maree Wauchope said boat owners already contributed to the maintenance of boating facilities through a levy paid during the State Government boat registration process, as well as parking fees when using the facilities.

Despite a levy imposed under Section 90AA of the Harbors and Navigation Act 1993 for the development and upkeep of boating facilities, many regional councils haven't been recipients of these funds. This has resulted in a lack of adequate maintenance and improvement of facilities, adversely affecting the safety and convenience of boaties across the regions.

"The current process of funding allocation often bypasses local needs, focusing on projects deemed 'statewide priorities', leaving many regional facilities in disrepair and not meeting the community's expectations," Ms Wauchope said.

"The inadequacy of current funding mechanisms has led to a decline in the condition of smaller regional boat ramps and a growing dissatisfaction among the boating community.

"Boat owners, who contribute to the maintenance and upgrades of these facilities through levies and additional parking fees, want a fairer distribution of funds that reflects their investment."

Barunga West Council's proposal calls for immediate action from the State Government to allocate funds through the Facilities Fund (Marine) to regional councils. This would enable councils to carry out necessary maintenance and improvements on boat ramps, ensuring safer and more accessible boating experiences for everyone.

This initiative has been submitted via the South Australian Regional Organisation of Councils (SAROC) to be considered for inclusion at an LGA general meeting set for 24 May 2024.

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Proposed by Barunga West as a matter of “strategic importance to local government”, the submission seeks to address the longstanding issue of underfunded boating infrastructure, which significantly impacts local communities and recreational boaties.

“This funding would enable councils to independently manage the maintenance and improvement of boat ramps, ensuring facilities meet the needs and expectations of boat owners,” Ms Wauchope said.

“By ensuring that local councils have the resources needed for regular upkeep and improvements, the proposal aims to enhance safety, accessibility, and overall satisfaction for boaties across the region.

“Importantly, it seeks to address the financial burden placed on local councils and their ratepayers by advocating for a more sustainable and community-focused approach to funding boating infrastructure.”

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