Media Release

26 August 2026

Andrew Aitken Appointed Interim CEO

Barunga West Council has appointed experienced local government executive Andrew Aitken as Interim Chief Executive Officer, commencing Monday 31 August 2026.

Mr Aitken brings extensive local government experience to the role, having served as Chief Executive Officer of Adelaide Hills Council for 10 years. More recently, he has undertaken Interim CEO roles with Clare and Gilbert Valleys Council, City of Mount Gambier and Mid Murray Council.

During his recent Interim and Acting CEO roles, Mr Aitken has quickly established strong working relationships with Council staff, Elected Members, communities and key stakeholders, while developing an understanding of each organisation's strategic, financial and operational priorities.

He has also supported executive teams to deliver these priorities, overseen recruitment and selection processes and assisted Councils through the transition to permanent CEOs.

Barunga West Council Mayor Leonie Kerley said Mr Aitken's experience made him well suited to guide Council through its current transition.

"Andrew brings a wealth of local government experience, particularly in regional South Australia," Mayor Kerley said.

"His experience in guiding Councils through periods of transition will be valuable as we continue to focus on Council's priorities and prepare for the recruitment of a permanent Chief Executive Officer."

Mr Aitken said he was looking forward to working with Council, staff and the community.

"I'm pleased to have the opportunity to join Barunga West Council and look forward to getting to know the organisation, its people and the community," Mr Aitken said.

"A key role of local government is to understand and respond to the needs of its communities, while advocating effectively to all levels of government. Strong communication, engagement and relationships are central to this work, and I look forward to contributing during my time with Council."

Mr Aitken's appointment follows the resignation of former CEO Mark McDonald, which took effect on Wednesday 12 August 2026.

Media Release

Barunga West Council

Acting Manager of Corporate Services Stewart McLaren was appointed Acting CEO while Council considered the appointment of an Interim CEO and will return to his role as Acting Manager of Corporate Services when Mr Aitken commences.

Council will continue to provide updates as it progresses discussions regarding the recruitment of a permanent Chief Executive Officer.

Media: Lori Ireland | 08 8635 2107 | lori@barungawest.sa.gov.au