

Agenda

Council Meeting
Wednesday 26 April 2023 at 7pm
Gisborne Administration Centre
40 Robertson Street, Gisborne

Table of contents

1	Acknowledgement of Country	4
2	Recording of live streaming of this Council meeting	4
3	Present	4
4	Apologies	4
5	Conflicts of interest	4
6	Petitions	4
	Nil	
7	Deputations and presentations to Council	4
8	Adoption of minutes	4
9	Mayor's report	5
	9.1 Mayor's Report - March 2023 to April 2023.....	5
10	Record of meetings of Councillors and Council staff	8
	10.1 Record of Meetings of Councillors and Council Staff - March 2023 to April 2023.....	8
11	Director Planning and Environment reports	17
	Nil	
12	Chief Executive Officer reports	17
	Nil	
13	Director Corporate reports	18
	COR.1 Riddells Creek CFA Fire Station.....	18
	COR.2 Draft Budget 2023/24.....	29
	COR.3 Draft Council Plan 2021-2031 (Year Three Actions 2023-2024).....	37
	COR.4 Contracts Awarded as at April 2023.....	40
	COR.5 Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation.....	43
	COR.6 Notice of Intention to lease: 3-5 Noel Street Lancefield.....	46
14	Director Community reports	54
	COM.1 Small Project Grants - April 2023.....	54
	COM.2 Customer Service Charter.....	58

COM.3 Customer Service Centre review	73
COM.4 2023-24 Community Funding Scheme Guidelines and Community Grants Policy	79
COM.5 Draft Affordable Housing Policy	114
15 Director Assets and Operations reports	161
AO.1 Capital Works Monitoring.....	161
AO.2 Response to Petition in relation to a bitumen upgrade to Adamson Street, Malmsbury.....	167
AO.3 Consideration of a request for inclusion of road onto the public road register - Pattinsons Lane, Goldie.....	170
16 Notices of motion and rescission	180
No. 57/2022-23: Notice of Motion - Municipal Association of Australia State Council motions.....	180
17 Urgent business	181
18 Confidential reports	182
18.1 Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct	182

1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, and present.

Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

2 RECORDING OF LIVE STREAMING OF THIS COUNCIL MEETING

This meeting is being recorded and streamed live on the internet, in accordance with Council's 'Live Streaming and Publishing Recordings of Meetings' policy, which can be viewed on Council's website.

3 PRESENT**4 APOLOGIES****5 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST****6 PETITIONS**

Nil

7 DEPUTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL**8 ADOPTION OF MINUTES****Recommendation**

That Council confirms the minutes of the Scheduled Council Meeting of Macedon Ranges Shire Council held on 22 March 2023 and the minutes of the Submitters Delegated Committee meeting held on 15 March 2023, as circulated.

9 MAYOR'S REPORT**9.1 MAYOR'S REPORT - MARCH 2023 TO APRIL 2023****Summary**

This report provides an update from the Mayor on recent Council activities and initiatives of a shire wide nature.

Recommendation

That Council receives and notes the Mayor's report.

Mayor's report

April has been a month of celebration for the Macedon Ranges, with many events across the Shire as noted in this report. The award-winning Autumn Festival has been well received. I would like to note the cultural heritage events that were held on Country to open the festival. Events included Welcome to Country Smoking Ceremonies and were full of wonderful information about our beautiful environment and First Nations knowledge. Two events were held in Woodend with Dja Dja Wurrung Elder, Rodney Carter and Jason Kerr; one event was held at Bald Hill in Kyneton on Taungurung land with a guided walking tour to the summit with Andrea Sonneman from Bald Hill Friends Group; and two events were held on Wurrundjeri Woi Wurrung land including a guided tour of Wil-im-mee Mooring (Mount William Stone Axe Quarry in Lancefield) by Uncle Bill Nicholson. We are very grateful to our Traditional Owner groups for these special events. It was a great opportunity to experience the cultural significance of these locations in the Macedon Ranges. With multiple events and itineraries from the Autumn Pie and Tart Trail to the Autumn Leaf Colour Trail, the Macedon Ranges were on full display. With the festival coming to an end on Saturday 29 April, I would like to thank all those involved from local businesses, visitors, council staff and our wonderful community.

On April 25 we commemorated ANZAC day and paid our respects to all those who served and died in wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations. Together with the community, Councillors attended various ceremonies and services in the Shire. Thanks to our local RSLs and community groups for making this possible.

At the end of March Council hosted a special event for Cultural Diversity Week 2023 – Celebrating a Multicultural Macedon Ranges. We were joined by representatives from Regional Victorians of Colour and the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project, with participants from our community sharing some valuable stories and cultural insights. The Macedon Ranges is home to people from 59 other countries with 37 languages other than English spoken at home. It was a great opportunity to reflect and recognise the ways in which we can continue to build inclusive and respectful communities, a place where everyone can contribute and belong. Thanks to our Community Team for organising this fantastic event.

After many months of preparation, we are presenting the 2023/2024 Draft Budget and Draft Council Plan 2021-2031 (Year Three Actions) for community consultation. Community input is a critical part of the process, and we encourage residents and community groups to participate. We appreciate the preliminary submissions throughout September 2022 and the work of Council staff. It takes a considerable amount of time to bring together these important strategic documents.

Over the last month, Councillors were pleased to be invited to the following events/meetings:

- Woodend Men's Shed Annual Open Day on 25 March
- Woodend BUPA Open Day on 25 March
- Puppy Pride 2023 event in Kyneton on 26 March
- Opening of the Woodend Community Food Bank on 27 March
- Macedon Ranges Local Safety Committee meetings in Gisborne on 27 March and 24 April
- Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee meeting in Gisborne on 28 March
- Informal visit by Mary-Anne Thomas MP, State Member of Macedon to the Lost Watering Hole Brewery in Lancefield on 29 March
- Palm Sunday Walk for Justice and Freedom for Refugees event in Melbourne on 2 April
- CFA District 2 National Emergency Medal Ceremony in Kangaroo Flat on 2 April
- Workspace Australia Board meeting in Bendigo on 13 April

- **Telstra Macedon Ranges Community Choice Awards**

Nominations have closed. Almost eighty businesses were nominated across five categories and thirteen townships. With a broad range of types of businesses, from home-based and micro to larger businesses, this is a great result for the inaugural year. All nominated businesses are now eligible for voting between 1 April and 2 June.

- **Cool-er Changes Update**

Thursday 30 March and 20 April were both successful evenings made all the richer with a broad and diverse group of community members and Council representatives. Much discussion was had on all things sustainable: homes, buildings and development, food, life post-fossil fuels and farming and low impact living solutions to the Climate Emergency. Thanks to all for your contributions and I look forward to watching this progress.

- **Online Directory**

A new dedicated online directory of local bands and musicians has been launched, making it easier for event organisers to search for local talent to complement their events. Supported by Council, the directory is accessible from the Macedon Ranges Community Halls website, alongside information about the various community halls and facilities for hire around the shire.

- **Neighbours Connect Card**

In partnership with local neighbourhood houses, and through an Emergency Recovery Victoria grant, Council has developed a card to get the conversation going with your neighbours. Research shows that stronger ties in the community help individuals and communities bounce-back faster after emergencies. With the Neighbours Connect Card, you can get ready to deal with any emergency by getting to know the people around you. Cards are available for collection from your local neighbourhood house or at the Council offices.

- **Listening Posts**

Councillors have been out and about at listening posts across the Shire. So far there have been well-attended listening posts in Riddells Creek on 18 February and Lancefield on

22 April (by the East Ward Councillors) and Malmsbury on 19 March (by the West Ward Councillors). South Ward Councillors will be attending the Macedon Farmers Market on 29 April. Be sure to head along and have a chat with your local Councillors.

Further dates and locations will be advertised throughout the year.

Current consultations

- Draft Community Local Law 2023
- Shire-wide Footpath Plan Review

I encourage residents to have their say in these important community consultations.

Mayor Death
Macedon Ranges Shire Council

10 RECORD OF MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS AND COUNCIL STAFF**10.1 RECORD OF MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS AND COUNCIL STAFF - MARCH 2023 TO APRIL 2023****Summary**

Rule 66 of Council's Governance Rules requires a written record of matters discussed at specified meetings of Councillors and Council staff to be reported to the next practicable scheduled Council Meeting and recorded in the minutes of that meeting. This report provides a summary of meetings of Councillors and Council staff held since the last Council Meeting.

Recommendation

That Council receives and notes the record of meetings of Councillors and Council staff, as outlined in this report.

Record of meetings

Type of meeting	Councillor Briefing
Date and time	21 March 2023 9:00am
Venue	Gisborne Administration Centre
Present - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Jennifer Anderson (Deputy Mayor) • Cr Dominic Bonanno • Cr Rob Guthrie • Cr Anne Moore • Cr Geoff Neil • Cr Janet Pearce • Cr Mark Ridgeway • Cr Bill West
Apologies - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Annette Death (Mayor)
Present - officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bernie O'Sullivan, Chief Executive Officer • Rebecca Stockfeld, Director Planning and Environment • Adele Drago-Stevens, Director Corporate • Maria Weiss, Director Community • Shane Walden, Director Assets and Operations • Rob Ball, Manager Strategic Planning and Environment • Travis Harling, Manager Finance and Reporting • Evert Grobbelaar, Manager Statutory Planning

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christo Crafford, Coordinator Statutory Planning • Sean Morley, Coordinator Accounting • Patricia Clive, Coordinator Governance • Leanne Khan, Coordinator Strategic Planning • Nicole Wadden, Senior Statutory Planning Officer • Damien Hodgkins, Senior Statutory Planning Officer • Lucy Olson, Senior Officer Governance (Council Business) • Isobel Maginn, Senior Strategic Planner
Apologies officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dannielle Orr, Heritage Planner
Presenters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maree Lang (Greater Wester Water) • David Bergin (8th Street Planning)
Items discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor & CEO Only Session • Budget 2023/24 – Community Consultation Outcomes • Draft Social & Affordable Housing • Presentation from Maree Lang, Managing Director, Greater Western Water • Heritage Strategy – Project Plan & Next Steps • Planning Matters -PLN/2022/300 – 289 Edgecombe Road, Kyneton • 22 March Council Meeting Agenda Review • Other Business • Gisborne Futures Workshop #2
Conflicts of interest declared by Councillors and record of them leaving the meeting when the matter about which they declared the conflict of interest was discussed	<p>Cr Geoff Neil declared a general conflict with the Dog Obedience Club in the budget workshop. Did they leave the meeting? Yes 9:46am – 9:53am</p>
Conflicts of interest declared by officers	<p>NL Did they leave the meeting? N/A</p>

Type of meeting	Councillor Briefing
Date and time	28 March 2023 8:30am
Venue	Gisborne Administration Centre
Present - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Jennifer Anderson (Deputy Mayor)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Dominic Bonanno • Cr Rob Guthrie • Cr Geoff Neil • Cr Janet Pearce • Cr Mark Ridgeway • Cr Bill West
Apologies - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Annette Death (Mayor) • Cr Anne Moore
Present - officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bernie O'Sullivan, Chief Executive Officer • Rebecca Stockfeld, Director Planning and Environment • Adele Drago-Stevens, Director Corporate • Maria Weiss, Director Community • Shane Walden, Director Assets and Operations • Travis Harling, Manager Finance and Reporting • Evert Grobbelaar, Manager Statutory Planning • Eng Lim, Manager Engineering and Resource Recovery • Amy Holmes, Manager Community Strengthening • Rob Ball, Manager Strategic Planning and Environment • Sean Morley, Coordinator Accounting • Patricia Clive, Coordinator Governance • Christo Crafford, Coordinator Statutory Planning • Benup Neupane, Coordinator Engineering Services • Wendy Le Brocq, Coordinator Customer Service • Hayley Drummond, Coordinator Property and Valuations • Awais Sadiq, Coordinator Statutory Planning • Lucy Olson, Senior Officer Governance (Council Business)
Apologies officers	NIL
Presenters	NIL
Items discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly Councillor Only Session -Request to meet Councillors Lions Club Romsey & Lancefield • Councillor & CEO Only Session

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget 2023/24 Workshop 5 Budget 2023/24 – Councillor Only Session Bluestone Guidelines Customer Service Charter Property Update Planning Matters -PLN/2022/277 – Grady’s Lane, Kerrie Planning Delegated Committee Agenda Review for 12 April Other Business
Conflicts of interest declared by Councillors and record of them leaving the meeting when the matter about which they declared the conflict of interest was discussed	<p>Cr Guthrie declared a material conflict 89 Ross Watt Road in the Planning Matters. He previously advised the Chief Executive Officer in writing of the conflict of interest as he lives opposite the site. Did they leave the meeting? Yes 2:42pm – 2:47pm</p> <p>Cr West declared a material conflict with the solar farm discussed in Planning Matters as the application is on his land. Did they leave the meeting? Yes 2:48pm – 2:55pm</p> <p>Cr Ridgeway declared a general conflict with 85 Harpers Lane in the agenda review as he knows some of the objectors. Did they leave the meeting? Yes 3:38pm – 3:51pm</p>
Conflicts of interest declared by officers	<p>NIL Did they leave the meeting? N/A</p>

Type of meeting	Councillor Briefing
Date and time	04 April 2023 9:00am
Venue	Gisborne Administration Centre
Present - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cr Jennifer Anderson (Deputy Mayor) Cr Dominic Bonanno Cr Rob Guthrie Cr Geoff Neil Cr Janet Pearce Cr Mark Ridgeway Cr Bill West
Apologies - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cr Annette Death (Mayor)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Anne Moore
Present - officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bernie O'Sullivan, Chief Executive Officer • Rebecca Stockfeld, Director Planning and Environment • Adele Drago-Stevens, Director Corporate • Maria Weiss, Director Community • Shane Walden, Director Assets and Operations • Travis Harling, Manager Finance and Reporting • Evert Grobbelaar, Manager Statutory Planning • Eng Lim, Manager Engineering and Resource Recovery • Amy Holmes, Manager Community Strengthening • Rob Ball, Manager Strategic Planning and Environment • Bill Pemberton, Coordinator Resource Recovery • Julius Peiker, Coordinator Community Development • Awais Sadiq, Coordinator Statutory Planning • Cherry Stojanovic, Senior Governance Officer • Fiona Lang, Governance Officer
Apologies officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patricia Clive, Coordinator Governance • Lucy Olson, Senior Officer Governance (Council Business)
Presenters	NIL
Items discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor & CEO Only Session • Budget 2023/24 Workshop 6 • Budget 2023/24 – Councillor Only Session • Budget Discussions • Single Use Plastics Policy • Repair and Management Options – Heritage Wall Mulgutherie Estate, Gisborne • Community Funding Scheme & Community Grants Policy • Romsey Structure Plan • Planning Matters - PLN/2022/376 – 1 Thom Street, New Gisborne • Other Business

Conflicts of interest declared by Councillors and record of them leaving the meeting when the matter about which they declared the conflict of interest was discussed	Cr Neil declared a general conflict in relation to the Dog Obedience Club in Budget 2023/24 Workshop 5. Did they leave the meeting? Yes 10:16am – 10:21am
Conflicts of interest declared by officers	NIL Did they leave the meeting? N/A

Type of meeting	Councillor Briefing
Date and time	11 April 2023 9:00am
Venue	Gisborne Administration Centre
Present - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Annette Death (Mayor) • Cr Jennifer Anderson (Deputy Mayor) • Cr Dominic Bonanno • Cr Rob Guthrie • Cr Anne Moore • Cr Geoff Neil • Cr Janet Pearce • Cr Mark Ridgeway (Zoom) • Cr Bill West
Apologies - Councillors	NIL
Present - officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bernie O'Sullivan, Chief Executive Officer • Rebecca Stockfeld, Director Planning and Environment • Adele Drago-Stevens, Director Corporate • Maria Weiss, Director Community • Shane Walden, Director Assets and Operations • Eng Lim, Manager Engineering and Resource Recovery • Simon Finlay, Manager Open Space and Recreation • Travis Harling, Manager Finance and Reporting • Stephen Pykett, Manager Economic Development and Visitor Economy • Dean Frank, Coordinator Recreation • Lucy Olson, Senior Officer Governance (Council Business)

Apologies officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patricia Clive, Coordinator Governance
Presenters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ged McLaughlin (Lancefield/Romsey Lions Club) Joe Vella (Lancefield/Romsey Lions Club) Angela Haywood (Lancefield/Romsey Lions Club) Jenny Jones (Lancefield/Romsey Lions Club) Chris Rowlands (NBN)
Items discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillor & CEO Only Session Ross Watt Reserve Master Plan for consultation Presentation by Lancefield/Romsey Lions Club Inc – Romsey Skate Park & Housing in Lancefield & Sunday Market in Romsey External Presentation by Chris Rowlands – Community Engagement Manager North West Victoria (Based in Bendigo - NBN – planned service upgrades & enhancements in the Macedon Ranges Budget 2023/24 Workshop 7 Planning Matters Planning Delegated Committee Agenda Review for 12 April 27 April Council Meeting Agenda Review Other Business
Conflicts of interest declared by Councillors and record of them leaving the meeting when the matter about which they declared the conflict of interest was discussed	<p>NIL</p> <p>Did they leave the meeting? N/A</p>
Conflicts of interest declared by officers	<p>NIL</p> <p>Did they leave the meeting? N/A</p>

Type of meeting	Councillor Briefing
Date and time	18 April 2023 9:00am
Venue	Gisborne Administration Centre
Present - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cr Annette Death (Mayor) Cr Jennifer Anderson (Deputy Mayor) Cr Rob Guthrie Cr Geoff Neil Cr Janet Pearce

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Mark Ridgeway (Zoom) • Cr Bill West
Apologies - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Anne Moore • Cr Dominic Bonanno
Present - officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bernie O'Sullivan, Chief Executive Officer • Rebecca Stockfeld, Director Planning and Environment • Adele Drago-Stevens, Director Corporate • Maria Weiss, Director Community • Shane Walden, Director Assets and Operations • Simon Finlay, Manager Open Space and Recreation (Zoom) • Travis Harling, Manager Finance and Reporting • Eng Lim, Manager Engineering and Resource Recovery • Colin Marshall, Manager Facilities and Operations • Lauren Wall, Manager Communications and Engagement • Evert Grobbelaar, Manager Statutory Planning • Leanne Khan, Coordinator Strategic Planning • Patricia Clive, Coordinator Governance • Julius Peiker, Coordinator Community Development • Awais Sadiq, Coordinator Statutory Planning • Paul Bennett, Senior Project Officer • Lucy Olson, Senior Officer Governance (Council Business) • Harry Rehal, Traffic and Road Safety Engineer • Maria Loriente, Community Partnerships Officer
Apologies officers	NIL
Presenters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dan Xia (Spacious Group) • Denise Franisco (Capire) • Eliza Knox (Capire) • Heidi Duncan (Tract)
Items discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor & CEO Only Session -Request to Meet Councillors – Town Planning People, 90 Weatherly Road, Bolinda (onsite) • Budget 2023/24 Workshop

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct Administrator Update • Budget 2023/24 Councillor Session • Presentation by Spacious Group – Land South of Riddells Creek • Kyneton Movement Network Study – Issues & Opportunities • Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct – Stage 2 • Position on Australia Day • Planning Matters -PLN/2021/600-1460 Romsey Road, Romsey VCAT decision -PLN/2022/384-3 Somerville Lane Riddells Creek -Benetas Gisborne • Monthly Capex Monitoring Report • Planning Delegated Committee Agenda Review • Council Meeting Agenda Review • Other Business
<p>Conflicts of interest declared by Councillors and record of them leaving the meeting when the matter about which they declared the conflict of interest was discussed</p>	<p>NIL Did they leave the meeting? N/A</p>
<p>Conflicts of interest declared by officers</p>	<p>NIL Did they leave the meeting? N/A</p>

11 DIRECTOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT REPORTS

Nil

12 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORTS

Nil

13 DIRECTOR CORPORATE REPORTS

COR.1	RIDDELLS CREEK CFA FIRE STATION
Officer:	Hayley Drummond, Coordinator Property and Valuations
Council Plan relationship:	2. Healthy environment, healthy people
Attachments:	Nil

Summary

The proposal from the Country Fire Authority (CFA) to lease part of the Riddells Creek Recreation Reserve to relocate their existing fire station was released for community consultation following a decision of Council at its September meeting. The consultation process has now been completed, and the results and outcome of this process are now presented for consideration by Council.

Recommendation**That Council:**

- 1. Notes the results of the community consultation, including submissions received, regarding the CFA's proposal to relocate the Riddells Creek fire station to the Riddells Creek Recreation Reserve; and**
- 2. Writes to the CFA requesting they continue to work with Council, the State Government, and the Riddells Creek community to find a suitable solution to relocating the Riddells Creek Fire Station.**

Background

Council was approached by the Country Fire Authority (CFA) for support in finding a new location for the CFA fire station in Riddells Creek as the current location is no longer suitable. The CFA had undertaken an extended process to try to determine their preferred site to relocate, to allow them to expand their operational capability. The current site, located at 67 Main Road, Riddells Creek, has limitations such as insufficient frontage to enable new operational requirements for firefighting appliances, lack of space for firefighting vehicles and inadequate facilities for brigade members. Over the past year, several sites have been considered but only one, located in the south-west corner of the recreation reserve has been deemed suitable to meet the CFA's operational requirements. The proposed site is known as 26-32 Sutherlands Road, forming part of the Riddells Creek Recreation Reserve. It is on Crown Land and zoned as a 'Public Park and Recreation Zone'.

A report was presented to the Council in September 2022 outlining the process the CFA used to identify a suitable location for their fire station relocation that would meet their operational requirements. Based on this report, the Council resolved to undertake a community consultation process to ensure a transparent process and to gauge community sentiment towards the proposal.

The outcomes of this consultation and actions arising from it are summarised in this report.

DiscussionCommunity Consultation Process

The community consultation process comprised three parts: -

- (1) Meeting with key stakeholders in one-on-one meetings. This occurred with the Riddells Creek Scout Group and the Riddells Creek Recreation Reserve Advisory Committee comprising the Cricket Club, Tennis Club, Senior Football Club and Dog Obedience Club (not present were the Junior Football Club and the Basketball Club).
- (2) Publishing an online survey in the “Have your Say” section of Council’s website. This was open for submissions from the 24 November to the 23 December 2022. There were 75 responses to the survey.
- (3) Two “drop-in” sessions, held at the Riddells Creek Neighbourhood House on 29 November from 4 – 6pm and Saturday 3 December from 10am – 12 noon at the Riddells Creek Leisure Centre respectively.

Council’s website also provided the background to the proposal, an indication of the proposed design of the fire station, the CFA’s reasons for moving and criteria for selecting the site and a list of the alternative sites considered on public land. Additionally, flyers were placed at the Leisure Centre and information was displayed at the Neighbourhood House promoting the survey, the drop-in sessions and seeking community feedback. Information was also published in the “Riddell Roundup”.

Following the key stakeholder meetings, written submissions were also received from:

- Scouts Victoria
- Riddells Creek Senior Football Club.

Summary of survey results

Council received 75 responses to the survey on its website. Participants were asked 10 questions; not all respondents answered all questions.

Overall, of the responses received, around 40% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, 10% were neutral, and 50% strongly disagreed or disagreed.

It’s worth noting that of those that ‘strongly disagreed’ or ‘disagreed’, many of the responses suggested that the CFA should not relocate and should either renovate or otherwise extend at their existing location – options which are not possible under advice provided by the CFA, as outlined in the consultation material provided.

Most respondents (67) lived in Riddells Creek, with only 3 outside the Macedon Ranges Shire, and

- 57% (43 responses) were regular users of the Riddells Creek Recreation Reserve.
- 40% (30 responses) were a member of the sporting club or community group that uses the Riddells Creek Rec Reserve
- 15% (11 responses) were volunteers of the Riddells Creek Fire Brigade
- 27% (20 responses) were none of the above

(Respondents were able to select more than one option.)

The key themes in open text fields to explain respondents’ support or objections are summarised below.

Reasons for not supporting the proposal:

Five key areas of concern were highlighted

- Increasing traffic congestion in the town
- Loss of recreation space for Riddells Creek

- Loss of space for the Scouts
- Risks to younger people using the recreation space
- Lack of parking at the new site

Traffic congestion and concern about the loss of recreation space were two areas with significant commentary, summarised below:

(1) Traffic Congestion

The intersections at Sutherlands Road and Station Street are already very busy. Traffic flows around the town are currently endangering pedestrians. Extra traffic is expected further development and may exacerbate the situation, with the CFA potentially forced to use narrow suburban streets. The proposed location does not provide easy access to the Main Road and may result in reduced safety for the community.

(2) Loss of Recreation Space

Given the growth happening in the township, the loss of recreational land was viewed as unacceptable, as once lost it cannot be easily restored, and recreational land should be kept for recreation. Many children use the reserve, and this creates a healthy community, and may clash with an emergency services use.

The proposal doesn't leave room for the expansion of the Tennis Club under the existing master plan, and limits new recreational initiatives.

The Recreation Reserve is intended for sporting and recreational use and not for any other purpose, and the proposal will negatively impact the Dog Club, the Scouts and the Tennis Club in terms of movement, relocation or future expansion, including unclarified impacts on the Leisure Centre's proposed expansion and basketball court, or if there are impacts on timing of new courts for basketball and netball. The plan does not reflect the current Masterplan for the Recreation Reserve.

Additional comments included:

- Concern about the impact on the Scout Hall and potential relocation required.
- Concern about future growth in the town – including potential for an emergency services hub with the SES and an ambulance – noting the proposed location does not allow for future expansion.
- That the new station will be ugly and noisy. Not enough parking provided on the plan. The testing and other sirens will stress the dogs during Dog Obedience Training (which may occur at the same time).
- That the CFA are better staying where they are and renovating the existing fire station, including one comment suggesting the addition of a second storey.
- The Fire Station should be on the Main Road to access in and out easily.
- There is room at the back of the existing site to expand. Better to relocate the Police Station than disrupt all the sporting groups and lose recreational space.

Reasons for supporting the proposal:

Supporters of the proposal mainly aligned with the key elements of the proposal, including the operational needs of the CFA as a critical community emergency service, and the location being preferable to some alternatives. These included:

- Easy access for trucks, space for storing equipment
- Supporting the CFA, and trusting their need and desire for this location

- The location being accessible and not impinging on existing facilities
- The current fire station being outdated and an OHS hazard for volunteers
- The proposed site being safer for children going to school
- Meeting modern day needs for the CFA and still in a centralised location
- Needing to provide the CFA with a new station to support the growth of the town
- A good location that’s not near any neighbours
- Given the total size of the recreation area, a small loss of unused land is for the community’s overall good

Respondents were asked to rank a list of items from most to least important, to help guide focus on the primary concerns of the community.

In order of importance, the results were:

Order	Item	% of respondents listed as most important*
1	Ensuring our CFA Brigade members can access the fire station in the required time to respond to emergencies	33%
2	Maintaining the current level of open space in Riddells Creek for recreation use and not locating the CFA at the Recreation Reserve	31%
3	Ensuring a modern, well equipped, emergency fire response capability for Riddells Creek	22%
4	Avoiding traffic management issued for Sutherland Road and roads nearby	10%
5	Enabling community and recreational groups to operate without disruptions or impacts	1%
6	Ensuring the township is not negatively impacted by emergency response noise	1%

**Note, not all respondents answering this item, and rounding, results in total value not being equal to 100%*

Further comments included:

- Alternative sites – expand into Riddells Creek Police Station or provide access next to the Church so it has two access points – Main Road and Sutherlands Road.
- There is need to provide both recreation facilities and a new CFA fire station– Riddells Creek is an expanding town, one should not be at cost of the other.
- A redesign of the building to make it more attractive than the provided ‘mock-ups’.
- Supporting the CFA.
- Preferring the current location – that the safest and most sensible site is the present site.
- More consultation being needed; the process feeling rushed.
- The location will be a danger to the community with regards to response times and traffic issues.

In response to question regarding amendments to the proposal, respondents suggested the following:

- Extending, renovating or building a new station on the current site
- Moving it elsewhere in Riddells Creek
- Moving the proposed site to the Amess Road corner
- Providing a full plan showing how the surrounding user groups are impacted following the change
- Detailing the impact on access for the Scout Hall
- Moving to the corner of Racecourse Road, away from other user groups.

Further to this, the following were suggested as alternative sites:

- A site within the Amess Road development
- The existing Police Station site
- The nearby Church site to give CFA rear access
- Site 3 – Department of Education land - as identified during consultation
- Site 4 – Wyberjong Park - as identified during consultation
- Rivergum Road – on the corner of Kilmore Road
- Expanding the current site to obtain land from the school (Department of Education) or the police (Department of Justice_ and build a new station on the expanded site.
- Riddell South development.

In response to a question in the survey asking for further comments and feedback, a few key queries were raised that indicate further clarity is required for the community:

- Understanding the impact on the Scouts and Scout Hall
- Further explanation regarding why renovating (or a second storey) is not a suitable solution for the CFA
- Further community consultation being required, due to the timing of 'drop-ins' and the timing of consultation in November towards the end of the year.
- Traffic studies and information on proposed traffic management needing to contribute to consideration should the proposal go ahead, including the Amess Rd implications
- The long-term impacts for recreational space, including future growth in Riddells Creek.

Feedback from Community Meetings

Council officers met with the Riddells Creek Recreational Advisory Committee (RCRAC) on 22 November 2022. Representatives from the CFA, MRSC, Riddells Creek Cricket Club, Riddells Creek Tennis Club, Riddells Creek Senior Football Club, Riddells Creek Obedience Dog Club and RCAC were in attendance, together with Councillor Geoff Neil as an observer.

As key stakeholders, these participants were invited to attend the meeting to provide feedback. At the meeting, Council officers and the CFA talked through the proposal and explained the intention to proceed to community consultation.

The general consensus of the group during the meeting was that they did not support the proposal in its current form. Whilst they are supportive of the CFA they do not think the

Recreation Reserve is an appropriate location. Suggestions from some present outlined that they would need to see further information on the potential benefits for recreation user groups to consider it further.

Of particular concern was the concentration of activity already occurring in the Southwest corner of the Recreation Reserve, noting that the relocation of the CFA to this corner intensifies this issue. The group pointed to the direct impact on dog training activity, as the Dog Obedience Club currently uses the space for dog training on the weekends and noted that the current Masterplan for the site shows the land for additional multi-purpose tennis/netball/basketball courts and these users are also concerned about losing this space.

It was also noted that Riddells Creek is currently accommodating users from other towns in the Macedon Ranges at their existing facilities (e.g. Tennis, Netball), with concerns for the future growth of adequate facilities across the Shire.

Suggestions of financial benefit to the Recreation Reserve user groups through lease fees from the CFA were clarified with participants following the meeting, highlighting that in accordance with Council’s Leasing and Licensing Policy, there would be no fee charged to the CFA and so no ongoing monetary benefit.

Consequently, a submission was received from Mr Rod Kinter, who was the Senior Football Club representative. In summary, The Senior Football Club do not support the proposal. They prefer that the CFA premises remain where they are and relocate the Police station and house. This would negate the need to access recreational land and potential expenses in relocating user groups.

Council officers separately met with the Riddells Creek Scout Group on 25 November, together with representatives the CFA and Councillor Neil as an observer.

Following the meeting, the Scouts provided a written submission in which they advise that the Group is generally in support of the proposal, subject to several conditions/concerns. These comprise concerns regarding the use of fire-fighting chemicals, seeking access to the open ground to the east of the scout hall and improved carparking at the hall, adequate sewerage, and drainage. The Scouts indicated they were eager to meet to further discuss these issues, and that if not resolved, the Scouts would be less likely to support the proposal in its current form.

Summary of community consultation

While the results of the community consultation are fairly evenly split between those who support the move and those that do not support it, the strength of feeling for those in opposition was strong, and key user groups were mostly not in support of the proposal in its current form.

It’s noted that while the community supports the CFA, there are major concerns about the loss of open space and the proposed location.

In summary, the following concerns are noted, with advice from officers.

Issue identified	Summary
Traffic congestion concerns	The Riddells Creek Movement and Network Study has commenced and will be completed by the end of 2023. This should address the traffic concerns raised regarding the intersections at Main Road and Station Street and Sutherlands Road. Council could consider waiting until this study is completed before committing the site to the CFA. Alternatively, the Study could factor in the construction of the proposed fire station and potential

Issue identified	Summary
	traffic management techniques for fire trucks through the intersections.
Upgrade of existing site	Several respondents suggested that the CFA remain at the current site and design the station by taking additional space from either the School or the Police Station. Additionally, a suggestion was made to go through the Church land at the rear so provide access onto Sutherlands Road –for two access points. The CFA has indicated that these solutions are not possible based on operational need, the land area and current narrow frontage is inadequate to support the proposed station and cater for projected growth in the Riddells Creek community. The type and nature of firefighting appliances requires adequate land width and overall size to facilitate a drive through operation. The CFA also indicated that conversations with the Departments of Education and Justice would not result in additional parcels becoming available.
Relocation of current users	<p>The RCRAC was concerned the proposal impacted on the recreation space and future expansion plans. The current Masterplan was developed in 2009. This plan had the site proposed for the fire station proposed to be a dog training area and carpark for users of the Scout Hall, Dog Club and Skate Park.</p> <p>Given that the Masterplan is due for review, there is potential for a new Masterplan to be developed that could incorporate the fire station in the design and provide for new configuration for user groups including the Scouts, Dog Obedience Club and possibly the Skate Park.</p>
Relocation of skate park	<p>There is currently a Skate Park Strategy being completed, with a general direction being provided by 30 June 2023. As part of this process, the current location of the Skate Park at Riddells Creek is under review. This work may consider relocating it to a more suitable location in the recreation reserve as there is anecdotal evidence that the current skatepark is underutilised and is not consistent with more modern standards in terms of location and design. This could be incorporated in the Master Plan Review.</p> <p>Council officers also note the submissions made by the Scouts in relation to their request to have the sewerage connected and improved drainage provided. Regardless of the outcome of the CFA fire station proposal it is recommended that these items be considered as part of the capital works for the Reserve in the future.</p>
Exposure to fire-fighting chemicals	A formal response has been provided by the CFA in relation to the concerns raised by Scouts about chemicals and PFAS. The CFA advise that they use foam that has no PFAS and the CFA manages all chemicals onsite

Issue identified	Summary
	according to industry, health and safety and environment guidelines.
Financial impacts	<p>Officers note that locating the site on Crown Land removes upfront purchase costs for a site – which is a significant avoidance of expenditure for the CFA. Additionally, in accordance with Council’s Leasing and Licencing Policy, the CFA is not charged a rental fee.</p> <p>To avoid additional cost to Council to accommodate these changes, Council have proposed to that the CFA that they fund some costs likely to be associated with the proposed relocation of the fire station. This includes the cost of the Masterplan Review and costs to resolve key immediate issues, including access to existing car parks or ‘drive throughs’, potentially constructing a new carpark for the Scout Hall, drainage, or other infrastructure matters impacting user groups. The CFA has responded indicating they can meet some, but not all, of these proposed costs.</p>
Loss of open space	The current proposal reduces the recognised open space in Riddells Creek by around 3,500 square metres. Future proposed developments in Riddells Creek will have requirements for open space to be allocated to accommodate the relevant population growth. Council’s Open Space strategy is currently under review, and historically, planning and managing facilities on Riddells Creek Reserve to deal with demand and plan for the implementation of the Master Plan have featured in Council’s strategies.
On-site infrastructure	Officers have noted that there may be underground infrastructure, such as electrical and other assets, that may require relocation should the proposal go ahead.

Options

Officers considered two potential options to progress:

- (1) **Proceed with conditions**, supporting the proposal subject to the CFA providing support for the following:
 - (a) Financial support for the review of the Masterplan for the Riddells Creek Recreation Reserve including:
 - The new fire station site
 - Solutions for carparking and access (particularly for the Scouts)
 - Relocations of key user groups, including the Dog Obedience Club

Estimated cost to be met by the CFA. (Noting time to complete may be substantial including community engagement per Council’s Policies).
 - (b) Construction of new sealed access and carpark for the Scout Hall. Estimated cost to be confirmed pending completed design (to be met by the CFA).

- (c) Participation and liaison with Council's traffic engineers to input into the traffic management studies and design of the intersections at Sutherland Road and Station Street and Main Road to manage and provide priority access to fire trucks. This would be part of the Riddells Creek Movement Network Study that is due for completion at the end of 2023.
- (d) Application and approval of a planning permit – design of the fire station to be assessed and approved by Council's Planning Department.
- (e) 'Incidental' costs associated with accommodating agreed changes to other user groups' access, (e.g. underground infrastructure, fencing for the Dog Obedience Club training area).

Further, while the proposed conditions in Option 1 address many of the concerns raised in the community feedback, they do not avoid the loss of open space for the community.

Addressing community concerns on the loss of open space would be a further consideration for Council, together with the further consultation required on many of these conditions to be met

These conditions were put to the CFA, who were able to meet some of the conditions, including meeting some costs for impacted groups, participating in traffic studies and following and participating in normal planning processes, but not all conditions were able to be met of those proposed.

- (2) **Do not support the current proposal** and advise the CFA that Council will seek to continue working with them following the community consultation to seek alternative solutions.

This may include asking the CFA to go back and reconsider other sites including those privately owned, negotiate further on proposed conditions from Council, or re-group to consider what private properties are becoming available in suitably nearby locations (e.g. Amess Rd).

There is some risk in delaying the outcome for the fire station's relocation, including the potential ongoing limitation of operational ability for emergency response in Riddells Creek. There is also potential for the community to view this option as not supporting the CFA or essential emergency services for Riddells Creek.

Additionally, as the land is owned by the State Government, there is a risk that the State Government, if seeking to expedite an outcome, could potentially remove Council as Committee of Management for that portion of the Reserve and lease the parcel of land to the CFA without Council support.

In their response to officer's proposals, the CFA indicated it had initial discussions with Victoria Police (Maintenance and Operations and Projects and Program Manager), in relation to the land adjacent to the existing station, however, were advised that the existing Police station and associated accommodation is required as an ongoing operational base with no plans to relocate.

The CFA also indicated that their interaction with the Department of Education had been in relation to land declared as surplus to requirements, which is not the case at Riddells Creek's DET property adjoining the current CFA fire station.

As a result of the community consultation and feedback, and the CFA's responses to Council's proposed conditions, Officers recommend Option 2 that at this time, that Council

does not support the proposal in its current form, but rather, seeks to continue working with the CFA and relevant State Government agencies to find a suitable solution.

Consultation and engagement

Council has completed the community consultation process as detailed in this report. This process was consistent with Council's Community Engagement Policy.

Officers have continued to work with the members of the Riddells Creek Recreation Reserve Advisory Committee. Those community groups who were met with during this process will be provided with further advice following the outcome of the Council decision.

Collaboration

Council officers have been working with the CFA to provide input that informs the CFA's identification and assessment of potential sites for the relocation of the Riddells Creek fire station over the past twelve months. Further meetings have occurred to obtain additional information as an outcome of the community consultation process.

Advice has also been sought from DEECA on the requirements regarding leasing the land for a purpose not explicitly allowed under current zoning. Discussions with CFA officers have led to consideration of additional sites and an understanding of key objections from Council on others. CFA officers have confirmed that they are willing to undertake the planning permit process required for a fire station that will be assessed by Council's planning department.

Innovation and continuous improvement

Council officers have undertaken research and work over the past weeks and months to provide input into the CFA's assessments for the relocation of this facility. Internal and external advice has been sought on the planning, community, and safety implications, including the consideration of possible alternative locations prior to pursuing the current proposal.

Relevant law

Council is required to undertake a consultation process under Section 115 of the *Local Government Act 2020* prior to leasing or selling Council land and consider the community feedback prior to proceeding with the sale or the lease.

The consultation process was completed in accordance with our Community Engagement Policy and comprised information sessions, online survey and meetings with the Recreation Reserve user groups.

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment has been conducted in relation to the subject matter of this report. As a result, consideration was given to the community consultation and the engagement including timing and methods to ensure the information was accessible to all residents. This included three different types of communication, with two venues and information sessions. Initially meetings were held with the users of the Riddells Creek Reserve that represented the sporting clubs that used the venue. Additionally, information was provided as the Riddells Creek Neighbourhood including an information board that was accessible for everyone to read. Hard copies of the survey were also available for older residents and those that did not have internet access.

The timing of the information sessions was also considered with one session at the Neighbourhood House and a second session held on a Saturday morning at the Basketball Stadium at the Recreation Reserve. The online survey was also available for all Shire

residents to complete within a 28 day period, with equal access and promotion regardless of gender.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

Nil

Relevant Council plans and policies

Riddells Creek Recreation Reserve Outline Development Plan 2009

Financial viability

Nil

Sustainability implications

Nil

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

COR.2	DRAFT BUDGET 2023/24
Officer:	Travis Harling, Manager Finance and Reporting
Council Plan relationship:	4. Delivering strong and reliable government
Attachments:	Draft Budget 2023/24 (under separate cover)

Summary

The Local Government Better Practice Guide Planning Model Budget 2023-24, issued by the Victorian Government, states the purpose of the Council budget as a short-term plan that specifies the resources required to fund a Council's services over the next 12 months and subsequent three financial years.

The Model Budget 2023-24 also outlines what must be contained in Council's budget, covering strategic and operational information, indicators, and measures to monitor performance, major initiatives, funding of services and initiatives, details of income, expenditure, assets, liabilities, equity, cash and capital works.

The draft Budget 2023/24 has been prepared consistent with these requirements and the requirement of Section 94 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, and forms part of the Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework developed as Part 4 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

This report is presented to seek endorsement of the draft Budget 2023/24, for the purposes of public display.

Recommendation

That Council:

- 1. Endorses the draft Budget 2023/24, prepared in accordance with Section 94 of the Local Government Act 2020, to be made available for public comment from 27 April until 19 May 2023;**
- 2. Notes the fees, charges, borrowing and capital works discussed as part of this report and as outlined in the draft Budget 2023/24;**
- 3. Notes the rates and charges discussed as part of this report and as outlined in Appendix 1;**
- 4. Undertakes community engagement and consultation on the draft Budget 2023/24 in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 and Council's Community Engagement Policy;**
- 5. Schedules a Submitters Delegated Committee meeting to be held online at 7pm on Tuesday 30 May 2023, to provide an opportunity for verbal presentations to be heard in support of submissions on the draft Budget 2023/24; and**
- 6. Notes that a report and recommendations will be presented to the Scheduled Council Meeting on Wednesday 28 June, to enable Council to consider submissions and adopt the Budget 2023/24.**

1.

Background

The *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) requires that the Budget give effect to the Council Plan. The draft Budget 2023/24 must include the following:

- financial statements in the form, and containing the information, required by the regulations; a general description of the services and initiatives to be funded in the budget;
- major initiatives identified by the Council as priorities in the Council Plan, to be undertaken during each financial year;
- for services to be funded in the budget, the prescribed indicators and measures of service performance that are required to be reported against by this Act;
- the total amount that the Council intends to raise by rates and charges;
- a statement as to whether the rates will be raised by the application of a uniform rate or a differential rate;
- a description of any fixed component of the rates, if applicable;
- if the Council proposes to declare a uniform rate, the matters specified in section 160 of the *Local Government Act 1989*;
- if the Council proposes to declare a differential rate for any land, the matters specified in section 161(2) of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

Discussion

The Draft Budget for 2023/24 includes a continuation of quality works and services. Councillor input was sought through a series of workshops with officers regarding the capital works, new initiatives, and new positions proposed in the draft Budget.

Some of the key inclusions in the draft Budget 2023/24 are to:

- Finalise construction of Stage 1 of the Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct
- Commence the design and documentation in preparation of Stage 2 construction for the Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct project
- Finalise the Kyneton Movement Network Study
- Develop the Netball facilities at the Kyneton Showgrounds Reserve
- Deliver a sportsground lighting upgrade at the Riddells Creek Recreation Reserve
- Deliver new LED lighting infrastructure at tennis courts one and two at the New Gisborne Tennis Club
- Finalise the review and implement *Local Law Number 10*
- Provide funding to support Senior Citizens Clubs facilities
- Develop a new Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan
- Install new significant roadside vegetation signs across the Shire
- Continue to fund the Autumn Festival
- Provide funding to promote festivals and events across the Shire.
- Commence preparation in November 2023 for Councillor elections the following year

The average rate increase for 2023/24 will be within the 3.5% rate cap. The rate cap is based on the average rate increase for the average property, and rate movements for individual properties are not capped.

The 2023/24 rates included in the Draft Budget are based on the 2023 General Valuation (draft figures). As a result, the rate per property specified in Appendix 1 may need to be adjusted when figures are finalised. This will be done as part of the adoption of the final Budget 2023/24, which will be presented to Council on 28 June 2023.

Council's kerbside collection charges are calculated to recover the full cost of the collection and disposal of refuse, recycling and FOGO waste in the shire. The proposed 2023/24 kerbside collection charge per property is \$540.50 for properties with a four-bin service; this is an increase of 8.5% compared with 2022/23. The increase is due largely to inflationary factors impacting the cost of contracts for collection and haulage of waste material.

The gate fees at transfer stations for general and inert waste have also increased from \$65 per m³ to \$75 per m³. This increase in fees reflects users paying for the service to deliver a cost-neutral service for Council and ratepayers. The increase across the different trailer sizes will vary, so fees have been recalculated for consistency in line with the \$75 per m³ charge.

The Draft Budget 2023/24 continues the practice of free Green Waste disposal at transfer stations within the Shire. This includes continuing to subsidise the cost of this service for the Community by around \$8.50 for each rateable assessment receiving a four-bin service, included in the kerbside collection charge.

The option to introduce a Green Waste charge of \$5 per trailer load at Transfer Stations, in a user-pays model, is being considered by Council. This fee would offset the cost to Council to process the material, and if adopted, would reduce the kerbside charge by approximately \$8.50 per rateable assessment receiving the four-bin service.

Council is specifically seeking community input on this proposal, and the Consultation and Engagement process will include the ability for public comment on the current approach of free Green Waste disposal at Transfer Stations, or the potential inclusion of a \$5 charge.

Consultation and engagement

Pursuant to Section 96 of *the Local Government Act 2020*, Council's Budget 2023/24 is being developed in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy, including the provision of public notices, providing information about the budget and community engagement process on our website, through other communication channels, and notifying the public of the methods of engagement. Council will be seeking written feedback from the community through formal submissions, verbal contributions through the Submitters Delegated Committee, survey responses, and will also provide the opportunity for other methods of feedback in accordance with our Community Engagement Policy.

Collaboration

The draft Budget 2023/24 has been prepared by officers and Councillors at a number of Councillor Briefings. An opportunity was also provided to the Community in November and December 2021 to allow input in the 2023/24 Budget process.

Innovation and continuous improvement

The draft Budget 2023/24 is an important part of Council's integrated strategic planning, as outlined to Council on 16 December 2020. The Budget forms one of the key elements to Council's overall Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework.

Relevant law

Section 94 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires councils in Victoria to prepare a budget for each financial year. *The Local Government (Performance Reporting and Accountability) Act 2014* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* specify the requirement for a budget to include major initiatives, and the Regulations prescribe the relevant information disclosure requirements.

Individual programs, projects and initiatives will undertake Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs) in accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020* as part of their implementation during 2023-24, if not already completed.

Gender is a fundamental consideration for the Budget, as it:

- provides for Council operations that include services, assets, facilities, programs and activities.
- incorporates the major initiatives identified by the Council as priorities in the Council Plan, to be undertaken during the next financial year.

Completion of these GIAs highlights the importance of continued reflection on available data, and consultation processes.

For the implementation of the Draft Budget, Council has undertaken a GIA on the consultation and engagement processes proposed in line with our Community Engagement Policy. A range of consultation approaches and methods, including written, verbal and online are proposed, to ensure that all community members have equal access to engage with and contribute to the development of the Draft Budget 2023/24. Two consultation periods are being undertaken during the preparation of this draft budget to increase the time available for contributions from the community. The Submitters Delegated Committee meeting is also held online.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

Nil

Relevant Council plans and policies

The preparation of the budget supports Council's priority of strong and reliable government. The Budget 2023/24 includes funding for the services outlined in the Council Plan.

Financial viability

The draft Budget 2023/24 includes all currently known financial and resourcing requirements for Council in 2023/24.

Sustainability implications

Council funding of services continues at similar levels to previous years.

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect conflict of interest in this matter.

It should be noted that a number of Council officers are ratepayers of Macedon Ranges Shire Council.

Appendix 1:

For the purpose of transparency to the Community, the following information is provided.

DECLARATION OF RATES AND CHARGES

That for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 and in accordance with Sections 158, 158A, 159, 162, 167, 169 and 172 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, Council hereby declares:

1. That the amount intended to be raised by rates, the municipal charge and various waste charges will be \$ 61,577,000, note this does not include interest on rates and charges and supplementary rates and charges.
2. That the valuation system to be used for rating purposes will be the Capital Improved Value.
3. That five Differential Rates on the Capital Improved Value of rateable land will be applied as follows –
 1. General Rate of 0.0017982 cents in the dollar.
 2. Agricultural Land Rate of 0.0014386 cents in the dollar.
 3. Commercial/Industrial Rate of 0.0021578 cents in the dollar.
 4. Recreational Land Rate of 0.0008991 cents in the dollar.
 5. Not for Profit Housing Rate of 0.0008991 cents in the dollar.
4. That rates will be separately levied in respect of each portion of rateable land for which the Council has a separate valuation and each rate will be determined by multiplying the Capital Improved Value of each portion of land by the applicable cents in the dollar according to the use of the land or if the land is unused according to the zoning of the land under the planning scheme.
5. That a municipal charge of \$212.00 will be levied on each portion of rateable and – unless that land is exempt.
6. That an annual service charge will be levied for the collection and disposal of garbage and for the collection and sorting of recyclable materials in respect of premises to which the service is available - whether or not the owner or occupier of any such premises avails himself or herself of the service. The service charges will be:
 - \$540.50 for properties that have 4 bins. Ratepayers who are entitled to and have been granted a pension concession will be able to obtain a rebate of \$77.50 on this charge; and

If the owner or occupier requires and is able to be supplied with additional bin(s) or a larger refuse bin, the additional/larger bin(s) will be charged annually as follows in addition to the service charges:

1. Additional (140L) refuse bin \$ 263.50 per bin.
 2. Additional recycle bin \$ 122.00 per bin.
 3. Additional glass recycling bin \$67 per bin.
 4. Additional food organics garden organics (FOGO) bin \$88.00 per bin.
 5. Larger (240L) refuse bin (replacing a 140L bin) \$185.00 per bin.
7. That it be noted that the Victorian Environment Protection Amendment (Landfill Levies) Act 2011, which came into effect on 1 July 2011, requires the Council to collect the Environment Protection Authority Landfill Levy (EPA Levy). The EPA Levy for the year 2023/24 is estimated to be \$45.50 per refuse bin.

However, it is important to mention that the EPA Levy for the upcoming year will not be confirmed with the Council until after the budget is adopted, and there may be a variance in this Levy

This is the amount that will be shown separately on each Rate Notice – in those instances where the Ratepayer has a refuse bin. Local councils throughout Victoria are required to collect the EPA Levy on behalf of the Victorian State Government and because it does not form part of Council's revenue, it is shown separately on Council's Rate Notice.

8. That a rebate will be provided to areas of high environmental significance that are registered by the Trust for Nature. The rebate will be calculated on the proportion of the land, which is subject to the covenant, applied to the Site Value of the land.
9. That the rates and charges will be levied by sending rate notices to the persons who are liable to pay them.
10. That the rates and charges will be payable by four equal instalments on the date fixed by the Minister for Local Government, that is:
 - 30 September 2022
 - 30 November 2022
 - 28 February 2023
 - 31 May 2023

noting that under the *Local Government Act 1989*, Council may allow a person to pay a rate or charge in a lump sum.

11. That penalty interest may be payable on rates and charges that have not been paid by the due date and the penalty interest will be calculated at the rate fixed under Section 2 of the *Penalty Interest Act 1983*.

DIFFERENTIAL RATES

That for the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 Council considers that Differential Rates will contribute to the equitable and efficient carrying out of its functions and therefore declares:

1. In accordance with Section 161 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, Council specifies the following objectives and characteristics in relation to the General Rate:
 1. The types and classes of land to which the rate applies is all rateable land other than agricultural land, recreational land, commercial/industrial land and land used by Not for Profit Organisations to provide low-income residential housing;
 2. The Differential Rate is considered fair and equitable having regarded:
 - (a) The amount of revenue required to be raised is in accordance with the Council Plan and Budget; and
 - (b) The range of infrastructure, physical services, health services and community services available to the owners and occupiers of residential and vacant land.

2. In accordance with Section 161 of the *Local Government Act 1989* Council specifies the following objectives and characteristics in relation to the Agricultural Land Rate:
1. The types and classes of land to which the rate applies is agricultural land which means any rateable land defined as farm land under Section 2 of the *Valuation of Land Act 1960* on the condition that the owner or occupier of the land is a person carrying on the activities defined by the *Valuation of Land Act 1960*, who is regarded as a Primary Producer by the Australian Taxation Office.
 2. The Differential Rate is considered fair and equitable having regarded:
 - (a) The amount of revenue required to be raised is in accordance with the Council Plan and Budget;
 - (b) The range of infrastructure, physical services, health services and community services available to the owners and occupiers of agricultural land;
 - (c) The restrictions upon the use and development of agricultural land in the Planning Scheme; and
 - (d) The need to encourage the retention of viable agricultural land for agricultural purposes.

The Agricultural Land rate will be 20% less than the General rate.

3. In accordance with Section 161 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, Council specifies the following objectives and characteristics in relation to the Commercial/Industrial Rate:
1. The types and classes of land to which the rate will apply is all rateable land which is not agricultural land and which is used predominantly for carrying on one or more of the following activities for the purpose of generating income – commercial, industrial, business, wholesale trade, retail trade, manufacturing, professional or administrative; and
 2. The Differential Rate is considered fair and equitable having regarded:
 - (a) The amount of revenue required to be raised in accordance with the Council Plan and Budget; and
 - (b) The range of infrastructure, physical services (including car parking, street lighting and street cleaning) and facilities available to the owners and occupiers of land described in paragraph 1.

The Commercial/Industrial rate will be 20% more than the General rate.

4. In accordance with Section 161 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, Council specifies the following objectives and characteristics in relation to the Not for Profit Housing Rate:
1. The types and classes of land to which the rate will apply are properties containing low-income residential housing owned and/or managed by a volunteer, charitable or not-for-profit organisation for which the organisation is responsible for the payment of rates and for which a State Government pension concession is not claimed.
 2. The Differential Rate is considered as fair and equitable having regarded:

- (a) The amount of revenue required to be raised is in accordance with the Council Plan and Budget; and
- (b) The public service that volunteer, charitable or not-for-profit organisations are delivering to the community by providing low-income residential housing.

The Not for Profit Housing Rate is 50% of the General Rate.

5. In accordance with Section 2 of the *Cultural and Recreational Lands Act 1963*, Council declares all rateable Cultural and Recreational Land (Recreational Land Rate) at 50% of the General Rate.

COR.3	DRAFT COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2031 (YEAR THREE ACTIONS 2023-2024)
Officer:	Travis Harling, Manager Finance and Reporting
Council Plan relationship:	4. Delivering strong and reliable government
Attachments:	Draft Council Plan 2021-2031 Actions - (Year 3) (under separate cover)

Summary

The Council Plan forms part of the Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework, as outlined in the *Local Government Act 2020* (LGA). This plan must provide the strategic direction of Council, its objectives, the strategies to achieve these objectives and strategic indicators for monitoring the achievements.

The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement of the draft Council Plan 2021-2031 (Year Three Actions 2023-2024) for public display in preparation for adoption at Council's June Scheduled Meeting.

Recommendation

That Council:

- 1. Endorses the draft Council Plan 2021-2031 (Year Three Actions 2023-2024) to be made available for public comment from 27 April until 19 May 2023;**
- 2. Undertakes community engagement and consultation in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 and Council's Community Engagement Policy;**
- 3. Schedules a Submitters Delegated Committee meeting to be held online at 7pm on Tuesday 30 May 2023, to provide an opportunity for any person who wishes to make a verbal presentation in support of their submission on the draft Council Plan 2021-2031 (Year Three Actions 2023-2024) to be heard; and**
- 4. Notes that a report and recommendations will be presented to the Scheduled Council Meeting on Wednesday 28 June 2023, to enable Council to consider submissions and adopt the Council Plan 2021-2031 (Year Three Actions 2023-2024).**

Background

The development of the Council Plan 2021-2031 (the Plan) commenced in 2020, following the election of the new Council, and is a requirement of Section 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The Plan was developed using deliberative engagement and provides:

- The strategic direction of Council
- Strategic objectives for achieving that direction
- Strategies for achieving the objectives (for at least four years)
- Strategic indicators for monitoring achievement
- Description of initiatives and priorities for services, infrastructure and amenity

Adopted by Council at its Scheduled Meeting of October 2022, the Plan outlines Council strategies and actions to be implemented across four priority areas as follows:

Connecting communities –

We will maintain our built environment – including roads, paths, buildings, open space and other assets – in a fiscally, environmentally and socially sustainable way. This includes effective land-use planning, which has a direct impact on the liveability of our shire.

Healthy environment, healthy people –

We will protect our natural environment through proactive environmental planning, advocacy and policy to address climate change, support biodiversity and enhance water catchment quality. The Macedon Ranges Shire declared a Climate emergency in 2021. We will take action to reduce waste in order to protect public health and the environment.

Business and tourism –

We will foster economic vitality in a way that promotes positive individual and community health outcomes, including business diversity, housing, transport and employment options. Investment attracted to the shire will be consistent with Council's vision.

Deliver strong and reliable government –

We will demonstrate the qualities of good governance, including a clear vision and culture, transparency, respect, consistency, accountability and responsiveness.

Discussion

The Draft Council Plan 2021-2031 (Year Three Actions 2023-2024) covers the financial year commencing 1 July 2023 through to 30 June 2024.

Officers have developed the draft Year Three Plan on the basis that the original vision, strategic objectives and strategic priorities continue to be relevant and appropriate. Officers have reviewed the actions for the 2023/24 year to ensure they represent and demonstrate a substantive action that supports a priority area.

Officers have identified new draft actions across the plan's four strategic objectives for implementation over the 2023/24 financial year, for which the progress on delivering each of the draft actions will be reported to Council on a quarterly basis.

It is proposed that the draft Council Plan 2021-2031 (Year Three Actions 2023-2024) be provided for public consultation before it is submitted to Council for adoption.

Consultation and engagement

Pursuant to Section 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the Draft Council Plan 2021-31 (Year Three Actions 2023-224) is being prepared consistent with Council's Community Engagement Policy.

Collaboration

The Draft Council Plan (Year Three Actions 2023-2024) has been prepared alongside the Draft Budget 2023/24 by officers and Councillors over several Councillor Briefings and workshops. This updated draft plan had been developed from the Council Plan 2021-2031 framework, which was prepared via deliberative engagement methods as outlined in Council's Community Engagement Policy.

Innovation and continuous improvement

The Draft Council Plan 2021-2031 (Year Three Actions 2023-2024) is an important part of Council's integrated strategic planning, as outlined to Council on 16 December 2020. The Plan forms one of the key elements to Council's overall Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework.

Relevant law

This report has been prepared in accordance the *Local Government Act 2020* and is compliant with these requirements.

Individual programs, projects and initiatives will undertake Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs) in accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020* as part of their implementation during 2023-24, if not already completed.

Gender is a fundamental consideration for the Council Plan, as it:

- provides for Council operations that include services, assets, facilities, programs and activities.
- incorporates the annual components of major initiatives identified by the Council as priorities in the Council Plan 2021-31, to be undertaken during the next financial year.

Completion of these GIAs highlights the importance of continued reflection on available data, and consultation processes.

For the implementation of the Draft Council Plan, Council has undertaken a GIA on the consultation and engagement processes proposed in line with our Community Engagement Policy. A range of consultation approaches and methods, including written, verbal and online are proposed, to ensure that all community members have equal access to engage with and contribute to the development of the Draft Council Plan 2021-31 (Year Three Actions 2023-24). Two consultation periods are being undertaken during the preparation of this year's Council Plan and Budget to increase the time available for contributions from the community. The Submitters Delegated Committee meeting is also held online.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

Nil

Relevant Council plans and policies

The preparation of the draft Council Plan 2021-2031 (Year Three Actions 2023-2024) supports Council's priority of strong and reliable government. This plan will align with funding provide in the draft Budget 2023/24.

Financial viability

These documents support Council's long-term financial resourcing requirements.

Sustainability implications**Officer declaration of conflicts of interest**

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

COR.4	CONTRACTS AWARDED AS AT APRIL 2023
Officer:	Corinne Farley, Coordinator Contracts
Council Plan relationship:	4. Delivering strong and reliable government
Attachments:	Nil

Summary

This report provides details of contracts proposed to be awarded under a delegation from Council, from the date of the last report. Although this report recommends noting the power delegated to Council officers, Council has the power to:

- a) direct that the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) award the contract under the direct delegation from Council; or
- b) specifically delegate the power to the CEO.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. **Grants delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer to award the following contracts:**
 - (a) **C2023-20 Supply Panel Bushland Services**
 - (b) **C2023-36 Supply Panel Sportsground and Open Space Maintenance.**
2. **Notes that the following contracts will be awarded by Council officers under delegated authority:**
 - (a) **C2023-33 Footbridge Replacement Main Road Riddells Creek**
 - (b) **C2023-34 Kyneton Saleyard Modifications**
 - (c) **C2023-35 Major Bridge and Culvert Maintenance.**

Background information

Council's delegated authority to its officers to award a contract is controlled by the financial value of the contract. The various financial limits of the authority are specified in Appendix 6 of the Procurement Policy.

Opportunity to review delegated authority

This report provides Council with a brief summary of proposed contracts, which are being advertised and also indicates whether or not delegated authority to award the contract exists.

C2023-20 Supply Panel Bushland Services

This contract is a schedule of rates contract for the appointment of a number of suppliers to a panel for the provision of Bushland Services. The scope of works includes conservation works, pest plant and animal eradication, minor construction, tree services, planned burning,

biomass works such as mowing, brush cutting and hand weeding and flora and fauna surveying.

The potential five-year contract exceeds the \$1 million financial delegation of the CEO.

C2023-36 Supply Panel Sports Ground and Open Space Maintenance

The contract is to appoint a number of suppliers to a panel to quote various works related to sports ground and open space maintenance across the shire. This contract replaces the existing contract which expires on 31 May 2023. This is a three (3) year agreement with an option to extend for a further two (2) years.

The potential five-year contract exceeds the \$1 million financial delegation of the CEO.

C2023-33 Footbridge Replacement Main Road Riddells Creek

This contract is for the replacement of an existing footbridge for safety reasons. The footbridge is located on the service road next to 82 Main Road Riddells Creek.

The CEO has delegated authority to award this contract.

C2023-34 Kyneton Saleyard Modifications

Kyneton Saleyards requires works to modify the saleyard site to meet Australian standards and to address WorkSafe requirements detailed in an improvement notice received. The design and construction contract is divided into two stages. Stage 1 is for the delivery of a comprehensive report, design and cost plan and Stage 2 is for the delivery of works outlined in the report.

The CEO has delegated authority to award this contract.

C2023-35 Major Bridge and Culvert Maintenance

This contract is for the engagement of a suitably qualified supplier to carry out maintenance works to bridges and culverts. The works were identified through level 1 and 2 bridge inspections conducted across the Shire.

The CEO has delegated authority to award this contract.

Consultation and engagement

The nature of this report does not require any consultation or community engagement.

Collaboration

The nature of this report does not require collaboration with other councils, governments or statutory bodies.

Innovation and continuous improvement

Council reviews its Procurement Policy regularly, in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*. These reviews consider options for innovation and are part of continuous improvement processes.

Relevant Law

The *Local Government Act 2020* provides for Council to delegate powers to staff, including the power to award contracts.

In accordance with the Gender Equality Act 2020, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required in relation to the subject matter of this report.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

There are no regional, state or national plans and policies that are relevant to the subject matter of this report.

Relevant Council plans and policies

The awarding of contracts is undertaken in accordance with the provisions of Council's Procurement Policy.

Financial viability

Funds for all contracts to be awarded, as listed above, have been provided in the operational and capital works budget and future annual budgets.

Sustainability implications

Council's Procurement Policy requires staff to procure goods, services and works from suppliers who actively employ sustainable practices in their operations.

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

COR.5	INSTRUMENT OF APPOINTMENT AND AUTHORISATION
Officer:	Patricia Clive, Coordinator Governance
Council Plan relationship:	4. Delivering strong and reliable government
Attachments:	Attachment 1 – Instruments of Appointment ↓

Summary

This report seeks Council's approval to appoint authorised officers under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act) by an Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation. Under the Act only Council, by a resolution, can appoint authorised officers who must be employees of Council. In addition, Council is required to revoke any appointments for authorised officers who are no longer employees of Council.

An Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation is required for staff who have recently commenced with Council.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. **Resolves that in the exercise of the powers conferred by section 147(4) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987:**
 - (a) **Council Officer named in the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation provided at Attachment 1 be appointed and authorised:**
 - (b) **the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation come into force upon signing and remain in force until Council determines to vary or revoke these; and**
 - (c) **the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation at Attachment 1 be signed.**

Background

The appointment of Authorised Officers allows certain Council staff to act on behalf of the Council in the administration and enforcement of various Acts, regulations or local laws in accordance with the powers granted to them. Under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* staff represent the Council in enforcing the provisions of that Act.

Discussion

The following officer is required to be authorised officers under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* as they have recently commenced employment with Council:

- Dale Rogers, Statutory Planning Officer

Consultation and engagement

Not applicable

Collaboration

Not applicable

Innovation and continuous improvement

Not applicable

Relevant law

This report has been prepared in accordance with Local Government Acts 2020 and the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

The implications of this report have been assessed and are not considered likely to breach or infringe upon the human rights detailed in the Victorian *Government's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required in relation to the subject matter of this report.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

Not applicable

Relevant Council plans and policies

This recommendation allows Council to maintain the Council Plan 2021-2031 requirement to deliver strong and reliable Government.

Financial viability

Not applicable

Sustainability implications

Not applicable

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.



Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (*Planning and Environment Act 1987*)

In this instrument "officer" means -

Dale Rogers – Statutory Planning Officer

By this instrument of appointment and authorisation Macedon Ranges Shire Council -

1. under s 147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* - appoints the officer to be an authorised officer for the purposes of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the regulations made under that Act; and
2. under s 313 of the *Local Government Act 2020* authorises the officer either generally or in a particular case to institute proceedings for offences against the Acts and regulations described in this instrument.

It is declared that this instrument -

- comes into force immediately upon its execution;
- remains in force until varied or revoked.

This instrument is authorised by a resolution of the Macedon Ranges Shire Council on 26 April 2023.

Signed:

Mayor / Councillor

Date:

Signed:

Chief Executive Officer

Date:

COR.6	NOTICE OF INTENTION TO LEASE: 3-5 NOEL STREET LANCEFIELD
Officer:	Hayley Drummond, Coordinator Property and Valuations
Council Plan relationship:	1. Connecting communities
Attachments:	Late Submission - Notice of Intention to Lease 3-5 Noel Street Lancefield ↓

Summary

In November 2020, Homes Victoria announced funding of \$5.3 billion for the “Big Housing Build” – an initiative specifically designed to provide 12,000 new homes across Victoria, with Macedon Ranges among those to receive a significant investment.

Following the Victorian Government's funding announcement, Council reviewed the existing housing stock that it holds across the Shire at sites in Gisborne, Romsey and Lancefield. This review identified that the Lancefield site was most suited to redevelopment. Council also owns the adjoining site at 5 Noel Street, and consequently, a proposal was submitted to Homes Victoria to provide seniors housing across both sites.

As Council is not a registered housing provider, the application was lodged by Wintringham Housing, which currently manages all the housing units on behalf of Council. In late 2022, Homes Victoria advised Wintringham that it had been successful in obtaining funding to allow the redevelopment of the units in Lancefield.

This report seeks to inform Council about the proposal and recommends that Council enters into a lease with Wintringham Housing Limited under the terms and conditions outlined below.

Recommendation

That Council

- 1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to enter into a lease with Wintringham Housing Limited for the property 3 – 5 Noel Street, Lancefield on the following key terms:**
 - (a) The lease term is proposed to be for twenty years;**
 - (b) The rental is proposed to be \$1.00 per annum (if requested) for the whole of the lease;**
 - (c) All improvements will be owned by Wintringham and Wintringham will be responsible for their maintenance and repair.**
 - (d) Wintringham will be responsible for all outgoings and services**
- 2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to sign any associated documentation in relation to the proposed lease.**
- 3. Endorses the officer responses to submissions as contained in this report.**
- 4. Responds to all submitters in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy.**

Background

As a condition of the Big Housing Build funding, Wintringham is required to enter into a lease for the land on which the new seniors housing units are to be constructed. To enable Wintringham to comply with this condition, Council proposes to cancel the Lancefield Management Contract that Wintringham currently has with Council and to grant Wintringham a lease for the Lancefield Site on the following terms and conditions as publicly advised:

Tenant:	Wintringham Housing Limited (ACN 129 707 937)
Site:	3–5 Noel Street, Lancefield, and identified as Volume 9142 Folios 881 and 882.
Permitted use:	The demolition of the existing 5 units and construction of a total of 12 social housing units over both 3 and 5 Noel Street in accordance with plans approved by Council (Works) and the provision of social housing for seniors in accordance with the funding agreement entered into by the Tenant and the Director of Housing.
Term:	The term will commence on 1 May 2023 and end on the date which is 20 years after the date on which an occupancy permit for the Works is issued. There is no option for a further term.
Rent:	\$1 per annum (if requested) for the whole of the lease
Outgoings and service charges:	Wintringham will be responsible for all outgoings and services.
Ownership and maintenance and repair of improvements:	<p>The Tenant is solely responsible for the cost of carrying out the Works. During the term, all building, fixtures, fitout, plant and equipment on the Land (Improvements) will be owned, maintained and repaired by the Tenant.</p> <p>At the end of the Term, Council will elect whether the Tenant is required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to leave the Improvements on the Land; or • remove the Improvements and restore the Land. <p>If Council elects that the Improvements are to be left on the Land, ownership of the Improvements will revert to Council without any payment or compensation.</p>
Social housing tenants:	Wintringham will be required to enter into individual residential rental agreements with the residents of the seniors housing.

Discussion

Key Lease Terms

The lease is considered a ‘ground lease’, where Council leases only the land to the tenant and the tenant is responsible for the buildings and building maintenance during the term of the lease. Additionally, Wintringham will be responsible for the management of the tenants and all legislative compliance.

A 20-year term is proposed for the following reasons:

- Due to the amount of capital required to construct the units a minimum of 20 years provides enough time to recoup the capital costs in the build.

- A term longer than 20 years may prevent Council from pursuing a different housing strategy responding to changing needs in the community. This includes different partners, potentially new locations or different commercial arrangements.
- Should the built assets be handed back to Council at the end of the lease term, it is preferable that they are reviewed and assessed when they are 20-year old buildings rather than 30 or 40 years old.

Existing Lancefield Management Contract

Council currently has a contract with Wintringham Housing for the management of the Lancefield units. Council proposes to cancel this contract and instead grant a lease for the Lancefield site on the terms outlined in accordance with this report.

Legal Description of 3 – 5 Noel Street, Lancefield

The property is in two titles. Three (3) Noel Street Lancefield is described in Certificate of Title Volume 9142 Folio 882 comprising Lot 1 on Plan of Subdivision 120933. The land is rectangular in shape with a frontage of 33.80 metres and a depth of 50.29 metres, comprising a site area of approximately 1700 square metres. Three (3) Noel Street currently comprises five units that are to be demolished and redeveloped as part of this proposal.

Five (5) Noel Street is described in Certificate of Title Volume 9142 Folio 881, Crown allotment 6 on TP 289796A. This vacant allotment is rectangular in shape with frontage of 40.23 metres and a total size of 2023 square metres.

The site area for both 3 and 5 Noel Street, Lancefield totals 3723 square metres. The land is within General Residential zone under the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme.

Planning permit

Should Council determine to proceed with the lease, then the next step in the process will be a planning permit that will be lodged by Wintringham Housing.

Under the Big Housing Build, planning approval is given by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, rather than Council. However, there is a prescribed community consultation process required that includes a mailout to all adjoining residents surrounding the development. There will also be a community information session held in Lancefield and a website developed by Wintringham with details and plans for the proposal.

Outcome of Community Consultation

Community consultation was undertaken under Section 115 of the *Local Government Act 2020* for the Notice of Intention to Lease the site known as 3 and 5 Noel Street, Lancefield to Wintringham Housing Limited for a 20-year term for development and continued use for social housing.

Eight (8) submissions were received prior to the end of the 28-day public consultation period, which ended at 5pm on 28 February 2023. The submissions were provided as an attachment to the agenda of the Submitters Delegated Committee and one speaker was heard at the Committee Meeting. One further submission was accepted as a late submission following the consultation period closing, and is attached to this report. A summary of the nine (9) submissions received, and an officer response, is provided below:

No.	Summary of Submission	Officer Response
001	Support for proposal to develop social housing. Request for information in regard to what happens at the end of the twenty-year term to the tenants and do they have security of tenure at the end of the term.	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Tenants will have individual tenancy agreements with Wintringham in accordance with the <i>Residential Tenancies Act (1997)</i> that provides them with the same rights and responsibilities as any other residential tenant. To end a lease landlords must provide a valid reason such as the sale, change of use, or demolition. The completion of the 20-year lease between Council and Wintringham will itself not trigger a valid reason to end the lease with the tenants.</p> <p>More broadly, Council has a history of providing and supporting social housing for seniors and it is the intention that the units may continue to be used for this purpose beyond the 20-year period.</p>
002	Support for proposal for affordable housing.	Noted.
003	Disagree with housing in Noel Street due to crime and lack of public transport. Will disadvantage low-income households currently residing in area.	<p>The submission is concerned that this will be social housing for people with mental and physical disabilities including drug addicts. There has been an issue with crime related to the facility at Karinya in Lancefield and the submitter is concerned that this will occur here. However, this proposal is for seniors' accommodation for people over 55 that are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and is in accordance with the current housing used for this purpose.</p> <p>Lancefield does not have a train line, however there are bus services that run daily to Gisborne, Sunbury, Romsey and Kyneton.</p>
004	Acknowledges and supports the need for social housing, but concerns regarding the lack of infrastructure in Lancefield (including public transport). Suggests smaller accommodation options to be considered by Council.	<p>As per the previous submission, public transport is available via bus services. There are also medical facilities, a supermarket and post office in Lancefield.</p> <p>Due to the tight rental market, there is very limited supply of affordable rentals. Demand for affordable housing is high, and growing across Victoria, including smaller regional towns such as Lancefield.</p>

No.	Summary of Submission	Officer Response
005	<p>Acknowledges the importance of providing social housing but expresses concern that the proposed area lacks resources such as reliable public transport, high schools, medical services, and shopping facilities. Suggest that isolating low-income families and individuals in such an environment would be detrimental to their wellbeing and urge the council to consider job opportunities and access to public services when selecting locations for social housing.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Council supports locating housing in communities where individuals requiring support wish to live and where need exists. This includes the Lancefield site.</p> <p>As the existing and future use for this site will be a facility for seniors and elderly residents, proximity to schools and extensive job opportunities has a lesser priority.</p>
006	<p>Supportive of partnership with Wintringham Housing Limited to address the housing crisis for disadvantaged, but the lack of a plan to address the current occupants' relocation and future housing needs is concerning, and arrangements should be made to provide financial assistance to residents and ensure permanent residency for those in the new units after the lease term ends.</p>	<p>Council, Wintringham Housing and the Lions Club of Lancefield Romsey have all assisted the current tenants of the units with their relocation to social housing units at Gisborne and Romsey. They were assisted with the move by tenancy support workers and have not incurred any financial costs in the move.</p> <p>Of the five units, two were vacant. The three tenants that have been relocated will have the option to move back to the new units once constructed at Lancefield if they would prefer – at no additional cost.</p> <p>The future use of the site at the end of the lease will be assessed at that time, noting that the completion of the 20-year lease between Council and Wintringham will itself not trigger a valid reason to end the lease with the tenants, as they will be under a separate agreement.</p>
007	<p>Support for leasing appropriate land for increasing social housing in our Shire. Request for amendments to be made:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase term to 50 years 2. Register s173 on title for social and affordable housing over the site 3. Advocate to Federal Government to maintain the funding for homelessness services and not cut funding from these programs. 	<p>Council has considered increasing the lease term to more than 20 years however for the reasons outlined above has determined not to do so at this time.</p> <p>Council wishes to maintain the ability to review the use of the land after the 20-year lease term and determine best use in line with overall social housing needs in the Shire. A s173 Agreement on the land is not supported as the lease will provide a suitable permitted use for twenty years as social housing for seniors.</p> <p>Council sees advocacy as a key role in its Affordable Housing policy. The policy states that Council will advocate to the federal and state governments for increased ongoing and equitable investment in suitable and well-maintained social and affordable housing.</p>

No.	Summary of Submission	Officer Response
008	Support for proposal from Lancefield Romsey Lions Club Inc.	The Lancefield Romsey Lions Club endorse the Macedon Ranges Shire and Wintringham in their efforts to build new units on this land for the elderly citizens of Lancefield. The Lions Club have had a long association with these units and are a key stakeholder in this project.
009	<p>Is there a fiscal report on Wintringham Housing since taking over Housing in the Shire about 8 years ago.</p> <p>What are the requirements of affordable housing not only in Lancefield but the whole Shire?</p> <p>The site in question Noel Street has many infrastructure problems (footpath, drainage) has this been considered?</p> <p>What is Council’s strategy for housing for people with disabilities?</p>	<p>Wintringham Housing Ltd and its parent entity are not-for-profit organisations that are audited annually. Annual reports and the most recent financial statements are located on Wintringham’s website.</p> <p>Council has an Affordable Housing Interim Policy 2021-2023 that sets out the approach that Council will take from 2021 to 2023 as the Victorian Government rolls out the Big Housing Build and prepares its 10-year affordable housing strategy. This is available to view on Council’s website.</p> <p>The redevelopment of the site for new units will address any infrastructure issues such as drainage and footpaths as part of the planning permit requirements.</p> <p>Council currently has an interim affordable housing policy that guides Council engaging with issues regarding affordable housing. Council is currently working with Homes Vic to identify opportunities to build social and affordable housing across our region advocating for those that are in most need, including people with disabilities. Our Inclusive Communities Officer is actively advocating to housing organisations that provide housing support for people with disabilities highlighting the need for investment in this region.</p>

Consultation and engagement

Council’s intention to enter into a lease was placed on public display and submissions were invited from the public until 28 February 2023.

Information regarding the “Big Housing Build” and Council’s intention to lease the site was also made available on Council’s website.

A public notice was placed in local newspapers on Tuesday 31 March 2023 and all surrounding residents were provided notice.

A Submitters Delegated Committee was held on Wednesday 15 March 2023, with one speaker presenting to the Committee.

Collaboration

Council has continued to work with Homes Victoria as part of the Big Housing Build, along with Wintringham Housing and the Lions Senior Citizens Villages of Lancefield Romsey Inc who play a key role in the ongoing management of this site.

Innovation and continuous improvement

Not applicable in relation to this report.

Relevant law

Council is required to undertake a consultation process under Section 115 of the *Local Government Act 2020* for the leasing of Council land. If the lease is greater than 10 years, a community engagement process must be undertaken prior to any decision about leasing the land. The consultation process comprised a public notice in the local paper, a letter drop to adjoining owners and a 'Have your say' section with information about the proposal on Council's website.

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment has been conducted in relation to the subject matter of this report. Consideration was given to the community consultation and the engagement including timing and methods to include people from all genders and ages.

The proposal to construct the units at Lancefield is aimed at providing accommodation for people over 55 that are currently homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The Gender impact assessment identified that older single women aged 55 and over are the fastest growing group to experience homelessness in Australia. Additionally, in accordance with Council's Interim Affordable Housing Policy, Council recognises it has a role to play in advocating for women to have access to safe and affordable housing.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

Homes Victoria 'Big Housing Build'

Loddon Mallee Housing Action Plan

The National Housing and Homelessness Agreement 2018 (NHHA)

Relevant Council plans and policies

MRSC Affordable Housing Interim Policy (2021-2023)

MRSC Council Plan 2021-31

Macedon Ranges Shire Council Community Engagement Policy

Financial viability

Not applicable in relation to this report.

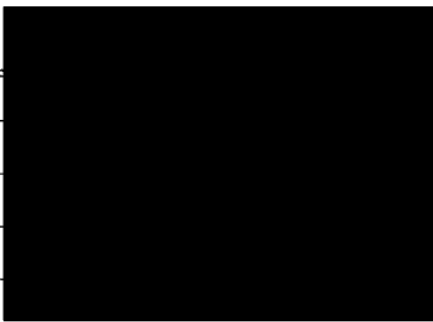
Sustainability implications

Not applicable in relation to this report.

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

MACEDON RANGES SHIRE COUNCIL
PO Box 151 KYNETON 3444
Attention C.E.O.



Re Lease 3-5 Noel St Lancefield

Dear Sir

1. Is there a financial Report on Warringtonham Housing since taking over Housing in this Site about 8 yrs ago?

2. What are the requirements of AFFORDABLE Housing not only in Lancefield but the whole Site?

3. The site in question Noel St has many TERRAINING (foot PATHS drainage problems) is this been considered?

4. What is council's STRATEGY for Housing for people in the disability world I don't see anything happening

I suggest that council put together a committee with outside people to look at the big picture on what direction is needed.



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14 DIRECTOR COMMUNITY REPORTS

COM.1	SMALL PROJECT GRANTS - APRIL 2023
Officer:	Melissa Telford, Community Project Officer
Council Plan relationship:	1. Connecting communities
Attachments:	Nil

Summary

The Small Project Grants program supports projects and initiatives that:

- support local needs;
- are unlikely to be funded by other Council funding programs; and
- align with Council Plan priorities.

Council's Small Project Grants budget for 2022/23 is \$30,000 and not-for-profit groups can apply for a maximum of \$1,500 per application.

Applications are assessed against set criteria outlined in the Small Project Grants guidelines. Funding recommendations are presented monthly at a Scheduled Council meeting for review and/or approval.

One application has been received, seeking a total of \$1,500 in funding. The application has been evaluated against the eligibility criteria and is deemed to be eligible.

Recommendation

That Council approves the awarding of a \$1,500 Small Project Grant to U3A Kyneton, for their Walking Football project.

Background

The Small Projects Grants program has been operating since 2018. Unlike other funding schemes, the program is open for applications year round, except during the caretaker period leading up to a Council election.

Eligibility criteria

The Small Project Grants program provides incorporated, community-based not-for-profit groups operating or established within the shire the opportunity to submit one application per year for funding. The program is also available to non-government and government schools for projects that are outside of the accepted responsibilities of the school and the Victorian Government.

The Small Project Grants guidelines, available on Council's website, outline the eligibility requirements of applicants and the assessment methodology. The document also provides guidance on the projects or activities that will/will not be funded through the program.

Assessment Process

Applications are initially reviewed to determine eligibility. Eligible applications are assessed and scored against the program criteria, based on the responses provided in the online application form. However, eligibility does not guarantee funding.

Where applications are deemed ineligible, they are not assessed and scored.

The assessment criteria and scoring matrix are outlined in the guidelines, to assist applicants with the preparation of their applications. Eligible applications are assessed according to six criteria as detailed below:

Score	Criteria	Details
Pass/Fail	Demonstrating eligibility	Compliance with Section 6 of the guidelines
20%	Describing your project	A brief description of the project aim
10%	Unlikely to be funded by other funding programs	The project timing/scale/amount of funding sought is not compatible with other funding programs
30%	Demonstrating community need and benefit	Why the group needs to do the project? How the community will benefit from the project/activity?
20%	Supporting Council Plan priorities	Promotes or contributes to the achievement of one or more Council Plan priorities
20%	Demonstrating good project planning	The project group practices good governance, considers risks, complies with regulations or similar and has an appropriate budget

Application summaries and funding recommendations are presented to Council at a Scheduled Meeting for consideration.

Discussion

One application has been received, seeking a total of \$1,500 in funding. The application has been evaluated against eligibility criteria and meets program requirements.

Applicant	Project description	Amount requested	Recommendation
U3A Kyneton	To support the development of a Walking Football program for older residents in the Macedon Ranges Shire. This will support U3A Kyneton to promote and pilot the program at Buffalo Stadium in Woodend, with the aim of building enough members to achieve ongoing sustainability. The group has the support of Football Australia, who will provide coaches and equipment and have identified interest from a local soccer club to be involved also.	\$1,500	\$1,500

Consultation and engagement

Information regarding the Small Project Grants program is publicly accessible on Council's website. Officers consult with applicants regarding their applications and seek internal advice as necessary. In particular, Council's Sport and Recreation team was consulted with in regards to the U3A Kyneton project, providing advice to both the applicant and Council officers to support the application. U3A Kyneton has also consulted with Council staff from the Village Connect and Healthy Ageing programs for this project.

Collaboration

Council has not undertaken collaboration with other councils, governments and/or statutory bodies in relation to these applications.

Innovation and continuous improvement

Council is committed to innovation and continuous improvement in relation to the Small Project Grants. Officers regularly review the promotion of the program and seek out new ways to encourage new and diverse community groups to access this small grants program.

Relevant law

A Gender Impact Assessment was conducted in relation to the subject matter of this report to ensure Council meets obligations under the *Gender Equity Act 2020*. It was determined that the application could be defined as gender neutral. The applicant is aware of the need to consider gender equity and the project is intended to support a range of community members and groups that do not include or exclude on the basis of gender or ability. Overall, the program targets older people's engagement in physical activity, which is critical for all genders. However, no specific steps have been identified by the applicant to explore potential barriers to participation based on gender or targeted promotion to address gender inequity.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

Not applicable.

Relevant Council plans and policies

The Small Project Grants program supports Council's priorities of connecting communities, promoting healthy environments and healthy people and delivering strong and reliable government.

Financial viability

Council's Small Project Grants budget for 2022/23 is \$30,000. Grants of up to \$1,500 are available for eligible projects. Nine Small Project Grants have been allocated to-date in 2022/23, with a total of \$16,500 remaining in the budget, prior to the review of the application contained within this report.

Should this Small Project Grant be endorsed as per the officer's recommendation, \$15,000 will remain available for allocation to other eligible projects until 30 June 2023.

Sustainability implications

There are no social, economic or environmental sustainability implications to be considered in relation to this report.

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

COM.2	CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER
Officer:	Wendy Le Brocq, Coordinator Customer Service
Council Plan relationship:	4. Delivering strong and reliable government
Attachments:	Customer Service Charter ↓

Summary

The Customer Service Charter (the Charter) was last reviewed and adopted by Council in 2019, and was due for review in November 2022. The Charter guides Council officers' interaction with the community, and is an expression of Council's commitment to providing a high standard of service and ensuring consistency and sustainability in service delivery.

At the Scheduled Council Meeting on 14 December 2022, Council resolved to endorse the Draft Customer Service Charter for community consultation. Consultation was undertaken for a four week period in February 2023.

Feedback was received from the consultation and has been reviewed.

Recommendation

That Council adopts the Customer Service Charter and revokes all previous versions of the Customer Service Charter effective from 27 April 2023.

Background

Council has a range of policy documents that relate to its operations and how it responds to issues. Such documents assist officers to deal with issues in a consistent manner and provide certainty to people and groups who deal with us.

The Charter is one such document, and establishes the fundamental service standards that the community can expect when dealing with Council. It also clearly states our expectations of the customer.

The purpose of the Charter is to explain how we provide and maintain a high standard of customer service and to define:

- timeframes for responding to phone calls, emails, social media enquiries, requests for service and complaints
- what can be reasonably expected from Council staff and what Council reasonably expects of customers
- how Council will manage requests for service consistently
- that we will record and analyse customer service data to identify trends and opportunities where we can improve our services
- how we will respond to requests which are the responsibility of other agencies
- that we will protect customer privacy when they contact Council

Discussion

The Customer Service Charter was distributed internally for feedback from staff and Councillors, to guide the drafting of the document. Feedback was also received from community consultation, with feedback sought from 1 to 28 February 2023.

Proposed changes to the existing Charter include:

- acknowledging contact from a customer to Council within three working days (bringing the Charter into alignment with Council's adopted Complaints Policy);
- updating and expanding the definitions table to provide greater clarity regarding the meaning of compliment, complaint, customer, enquiry, staff, feedback, request for service, services, acknowledgement, resolution and unreasonable customer conduct;
- an additional commitment and re-ordering of Council's commitments from most to least important for the customer;
- noting that responses will be prioritised depending upon the urgency of the matter;
- flexibility in relation to the outgoing contact method – where possible, the customer is asked their preferred contact method, otherwise it's at the officer's discretion to select the method which best suits the nature of the request;
- complex matters that may not be fully resolved within 28 days be communicated at least once per month;
- support of third party app, Snap Send Solve; and
- strengthening expectations of customer behaviour and conduct to ensure Council provides a safe, welcoming, professional and appropriate environment for staff and customers alike; to promote positive interactions and outcomes.

Three submissions were received from the consultation that provided the following feedback:

- Previous inconsistent service experienced from staff across Council
- Record keeping in relation to customer dealings has not been adequate
- Comments around terminology / definitions across document
- Questions around reporting and evaluation
- Questions around internal processes
- Making customer service more accessible
- Encouraging better consistency with existing Complaints Policy

In reviewing all feedback and proposed changes, the Charter will guide Council staff in achieving the standards of customer service we aspire to, through interaction with customers.

Consultation and engagement

As part of the community consultation process, Council:

- published a notice on Council's website – 'Have your Say'
- displayed posters in reception areas with a QR code link
- recorded an 'on hold' message

- published a notice in the Midland Express and Star Weekly newspapers
- promoted on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn social media channels

Council also consulted extensively across the organisation, including staff and councillors.

Collaboration

The nature of this review did not require collaboration with other councils, governments or statutory bodies.

Innovation and continuous improvement

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires that councils give effect to innovation and continuous improvement in all that they do.

In preparing this Charter document, officers undertook a desktop review of other council's Customer Service Charter documents, and additionally researched relevant information and resources. This includes documents prepared by the Ombudsman to guide complaints handling.

Relevant law

Consideration has been given to relevant state and commonwealth legislation, as is listed within the Charter (**Attachment 1**).

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment was not undertaken in relation to the subject matter of this report given that it does not favour or exclude any gender. The Charter discusses how officers will engage with all customers in a fair and consistent way.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

Not applicable.

Relevant Council plans and policies

The updated Customer Service Charter aligns with Council's strategic objective to deliver strong and reliable government, including through the provision of good governance, with a clear vision and culture, transparency, respect, consistency, accountability and responsiveness.

Financial viability

There are no financial or resourcing implications to be considered in relation to this report.

Sustainability implications

There are no social, economic or environmental sustainability implications to be considered in relation to this report.

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

Customer Service Charter



Date of Adoption	April 2023 (pending Council approval)		
Adoption Method	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council	<input type="checkbox"/> CEO	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify</i>)
CEO Signature			Date
Responsible Officer and Unit	Coordinator Customer Service		
Nominated Review Period	<input type="checkbox"/> Annually	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Every 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify</i>)
Last Endorsement Date	27 November 2019		
Next Endorsement Date	April 2026 (pending Council approval)		

Acknowledgement of Country

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	1
Introduction	3
Purpose	3
Scope	3
Definitions	3
Commitment	4
Our service standards	5
If you have feedback, we encourage you to inform us	6
How to contact us	7
Other ways you can contact us	7
Contacting Councillors	8
What you can expect from us	8
What we expect of you	8
What we will not tolerate	8
Making a complaint	9
Requests which are the responsibility of other agencies	9
Reporting	9
Privacy	9
References	10
Related policies	10
Related legislation	10
Other references	11

Introduction

Macedon Ranges Shire Council (Council) is committed to providing a high standard of customer service. We welcome your compliments, complaints and feedback regarding any Council service, program or policy/plan/strategy, because we understand that customer service is improved through customer feedback and review.

Purpose

The purpose of the Customer Service Charter (the Charter) is to explain how we provide and maintain a high standard of customer service and to define:

- timeframes for responding to phone calls, emails, social media enquiries, requests for service and complaints
- what you can reasonably expect from Council officers and what we reasonably expect of you
- how we will manage requests for service consistently
- how we will record and analyse customer contact data to identify trends and opportunities where we can improve our services
- how we will respond to requests which are the responsibility of other agencies
- how we will protect your privacy when you contact Council.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, including volunteers and third party contractors carrying out services on Council's behalf.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Acknowledgement	Contact made with a customer by staff, to confirm that their enquiry, request for service, feedback, compliment or complaint has been received, and (where relevant) indicate when a resolution can be expected.
Compliment	An expression of satisfaction with the quality of action taken or service provided by Council.
Complaint	For the purpose of this charter, in accordance with the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> , a complaint is defined as: "...the communication, whether orally or in writing, to the Council by a person of their dissatisfaction with— (a) the quality of an action taken, decision made or service provided by a member of Council staff or a contractor engaged by the Council; or

	<p>(b) the delay by a member of Council staff or a contractor engaged by the Council in taking an action, making a decision or providing a service; or</p> <p>(c) a policy or decision made by a Council or a member of Council staff or a contractor.”</p>
Customer	Person(s) of any age, including children and young people, who access or utilise our services, including someone who receives services from Council or communicates with Council in relation to Council services, policies or decisions.
Enquiry	An act of asking for information regarding Council’s operations, programs and services.
Feedback	<p>Comments, both positive and negative, about services provided by Council without necessarily requiring a corrective action, change of services or formal review of a decision.</p> <p>Feedback can also be an idea, suggestion or opinion on how Council could improve its services.</p> <p>For the purpose of performance reporting and data analysis, negative feedback about Council will be recorded as a complaint.</p>
Resolution	Where staff provide a customer with an answer in relation to an enquiry, request for service or complaint.
Request for service	Contact with Council to seek assistance, to request access to a service, or to inform/make a report about something for which the Council has responsibility.
Services	Actions that provide assistance to Council’s customers such as rubbish removal, kindergarten, footpath maintenance, planning, permits and animal management.
Staff	All employees, contractors and volunteers employed or engaged by Council. Does not include Councillors.
Unreasonable customer conduct	Behaviour which, because of its nature or frequency, raises substantial health, safety, resource or equity issues for Council, other service users and/or the customer themselves. This includes behaviour which may be considered frivolous or vexatious in nature.

Commitment

We are committed to:

- providing prompt, friendly, courteous and efficient customer service
- improving our customer service by benchmarking and identifying new technologies to improve accessibility, efficacy, transactional ease and overall customer experience
- using systems which are customer friendly and efficient

- actively seeking your feedback on our services to make sure they meet your needs
- addressing barriers that impact diverse and vulnerable people from accessing services
- creating environments where all people, including children and young people are heard, valued and protected from harm and abuse
- enabling access to information and supporting customers to seek information.

Our service standards

The following standards are used to measure the quality of customer service:

Incoming contact method	Acknowledgement	Response	Resolution	Outgoing contact method
In person	Served within 5 minutes Where relevant staff member is unavailable, an acknowledgement will be provided within 3 working days	Response with details on how the enquiry or request is progressing is provided within 10 working days	Resolution communicated within 28 working days For complex matters where action to be taken will exceed 28 working days, updates will be provided at least once per month Staff will advise as soon as practical if these timeframes cannot be met	Where possible and appropriate, the customer will be asked what their preferred contact method is for responses If no preference is stated, staff will determine the most appropriate contact method for response, based on the nature of the enquiry and the contact details provided by the customer
Phone call	Call answered within 30 seconds Where relevant staff member is unavailable, an acknowledgement will be provided within 3 working days			
Mail	Acknowledgement from relevant staff member provided or sent within 3 working days of receipt			
Email	Automatic acknowledgement on receipt when email sent to mrsc@mrsc.vic.gov.au or Acknowledgement from relevant staff			

	member provided within 3 working days			
Website form	Acknowledgement from relevant staff member provided within 3 working days			
Social media	<p>Council’s social media accounts are monitored during office hours, Monday to Friday. General enquiries are answered within 2 working days. More complex enquiries may take up to 10 working days for an answer to be provided.</p> <p>For privacy reasons, if an enquiry requires the disclosure of personal information, customers are encouraged to contact Council via the methods outlined above. For urgent enquiries or requests for service, customers are encouraged to call Council on 03 5422 0333.</p>			
Third party app or other online service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Council supports the reporting of issues via the third party app Snap Send Solve. Such reports will be acknowledged to within 3 working days and a resolution communicated within 28 working days. For complex matters where action to be taken will exceed 28 working days, updates will be provided at least once per month ● Council’s Governance Rules detail the requirements and processes to be followed in relation to electronic and online petitions. 			
Requests and enquiries subject to statutory requirements	<p>A number of requests and / or enquiries to Council are subject to statutory requirements and timelines, as determined by relevant legislation. The above service standards do not apply to such requests and enquiries, which include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planning permit applications ● Freedom of Information requests ● Public interest disclosures ● Infringement appeals 			

While some enquiries and requests will be prioritised according to urgency, all effort will be made to meet these service standards.

If you have feedback, we encourage you to inform us

- when you have received a high standard of customer service
- if you believe we fell short in our service in any aspect, so we have opportunities to improve.

How to contact us

In person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kyneton Administration Centre 129 Mollison Street, Kyneton ● Gisborne Administration Centre 40 Robertson Street, Gisborne ● Romsey Community Hub 96–100 Main Road, Romsey ● Woodend Service Centre Corner High and Forest Streets, Woodend <p>Opening hours are posted at all customer service centres and online at mrsc.vic.gov.au/contact</p>
Telephone (24 hours)	03 5422 0333 or 1300 656 577
Fax	03 5422 3623
Mail	PO Box 151, Kyneton Vic 3444
Email	mrsc@mrsc.vic.gov.au
Website	mrsc.vic.gov.au
National Relay Service	<p>TTY users phone 133 677 then ask for 03 5422 0333</p> <p>Speak and Listen (speech-to-speech relay) users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 03 5422 0333</p> <p>Internet relay users connect to the NRS (relayservice.com.au) and then ask for 03 5422 0333</p>
Translating and Interpreting Service	Call TIS National on 131 450 or visit tisonational.gov.au

We are committed to ensuring accessibility to everyone contacting Council. Tell us if you have specific communication needs or barriers, and we can assist you by:

- talking with you if you have trouble reading or writing
- communicating with another person who is authorised to act on your behalf if you cannot make contact yourself

Other ways you can contact us

We invite you to:

- contact relevant staff directly, to discuss specific Council services and projects
- submit a question to be read and answered at a Council Meeting

- attend consultative and community forums involving Council
- participate in processes that will assist us to measure, evaluate and improve our customer service, e.g. surveys.

Contacting Councillors

You are welcome to get in touch with your local Councillors, and can find their contact details listed on Council's website at mrsc.vic.gov.au/councillors.

Councillors may be able to assist you with how to lodge a request for service, or refer you to the appropriate Council channel for your enquiry, feedback, complaint or compliment.

What you can expect from us

When you contact Council, you will receive a high standard of customer service:

- we will carefully listen to what you have to say to ensure we can determine the most appropriate way to address your request
- we will act with integrity and treat you with respect
- we will provide you with clear, accurate and timely information
- we will treat your personal information confidentially
- we will behave in a way that aligns with our values of honesty, accountability, innovation, respect and working together
- we will welcome your feedback on our services, our processes and our people.

What we expect of you

You can help us provide a high standard of customer service by:

- being honest and acting with integrity
- being courteous and respectful to our staff
- providing complete and accurate information about your request
- working with us to solve problems
- following Council's Complaints Policy when dissatisfied with our service
- making any accusations of misconduct in line with our Public Interest Disclosure Policy and Procedure.

What we will not tolerate

- Shouting, threatening, undermining, harassing, bullying or intimidating behaviours
- Violence (physical and verbal) or aggression
- Abusive, inappropriate or discriminatory language or words of a derogatory or disparaging nature
- Use of inappropriate language in any form, including emails

Failure to meet these expectations will impact and/or compromise the level of service we are able to provide. It may trigger an internal investigation, and consideration of appropriate action to protect our staff, Councillors, customers and the public.

Council has a duty of care to provide a safe working environment for our staff, customers and the public. As such, unreasonable conduct will not be tolerated.

In some cases, it may be deemed necessary to:

- cease the interaction, including ending phone calls or conversations
- ask you to leave a community forum/ feedback/information session/meeting
- escalate the matter to an appropriate staff member, or other regulatory body
- report inappropriate behaviour
- issue warnings to customers
- restrict contact options for customers
- suspend customers from accessing service centres or Council service facilities
- declare an individual as vexatious
- limit access to staff, including email addresses and phone extensions
- report the matter to Victoria Police.

Making a complaint

If you feel that the service we have provided to you has not met the terms of this Customer Service Charter, you may lodge a complaint. Complaints can be submitted via Council's website, email, mail, in person, over the phone, or by contacting a Councillor. For more information, please refer to our Complaints Policy, which outlines the procedures for the quick and effective actioning of complaints.

Requests which are the responsibility of other agencies

If we receive requests that are the responsibility of another agency, we will advise you of the agency and their contact details.

Reporting

We measure our customer service performance regularly. This demonstrates our commitment to reporting on our customer service standards. Data is collated and reported to our Executive Leadership Team monthly, as well as to Council Meetings quarterly.

Privacy

Council is committed to protecting your personal information in accordance with our Privacy Policy.

References

Related policies

- > Bullying Prevention Policy (internal)
- > Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct
- > Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- > Complaints Policy
- > Councillor Code of Conduct
- > Employee Code of Conduct (internal)
- > Early Years Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy (internal)
- > Governance Rules
- > Occupational Health and Safety Policy (internal)
- > Occupational Violence and Aggression Policy (internal)
- > Privacy Policy
- > Public Interest Disclosures Policy
- > Public Transparency Policy
- > Sexual Harassment Policy (internal)
- > Social Media Policy (internal)
- > Working Alone or In Isolation Policy (internal)

Related legislation

- > *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)*
- > *Disability Act 2006 (Vic)*
- > *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (C'wealth)*
- > *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic),*
- > *Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic)*
- > *Local Government Act 1989 (Vic)*
- > *Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)*
- > *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)*
- > *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007 2017 (Vic)*
- > *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)*
- > *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012 (Vic)*
- > *Public Records Act 1973 (Vic)*
- > *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (C'wealth)*

Other references

- > Victorian Ombudsman - Councils and complaints - a good practice guide 2nd edition
- > Child Safe Standards 2022

COM.3	CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE REVIEW
Officer:	Amy Holmes, Manager Community Strengthening
Council Plan relationship:	4. Delivering strong and reliable government
Attachments:	Customer service data collection - Woodend, Romsey, Gisborne Kyneton - May to November 2022 ↓

Summary

At Councillor Briefings held on 6 September 2022 and 7 March 2023, an update was provided on Customer Service Centre opening hours across all sites. The Woodend Service Centre underwent a six month trial, from May to November 2022, with Gisborne, Kyneton and Romsey collecting data from August to November 2022, to provide a comparison. The trial has now ended, with the collated data shown in **Attachment 1**.

Recommendation

That Council endorses the Customer Service Centre Review to be released for community consultation.

Background

Macedon Ranges Shire Council has four customer service centres across the shire, located in Gisborne, Kyneton, Romsey and Woodend.

The Gisborne Administration Centre is in the south ward. Customers are able to enquire about all areas of Council, however, it is a centre where face-face interaction is high in relation to planning enquiries, as well as building, local laws, drainage, road and footpath enquiries.

Romsey Hub customer service is located in the east ward and services a large area of the shire. In person interaction is low compared to the larger administration centres. Council's customer service centre shares the facility with the library and the neighbourhood house. Meeting rooms at the Hub are booked by various community groups, with the toy library and playgroup being regular users.

The Kyneton Administration Centre is in the west ward. Due to its township location, it attracts a high volume of foot traffic and face-face interactions with varying enquiries.

A second west ward customer service site is located at the Woodend Community Centre. In person interaction is low compared to the larger administration centres. It is situated 15km from the Kyneton Administration Centre and 18km from the Gisborne Administration Centre. Council shares the facility with the Woodend library branch, as well as other groups who hire meeting rooms at the community centre for various activities.

A data collection trial at Woodend Customer Service Centre was undertaken for a six month period from May to November 2022. The trial was undertaken to monitor visitation and collect data including the times, days and types of interaction as well as an understanding of the demographic attending. Of note, the trial was conducted over a period where two rate instalments were due and payable by 31 May and 30 September 2022.

To provide a comparison, data was also collected at Council's three other service centres from August to November 2022 (approx. 15 weeks).

All centres experienced a high volume of foot traffic during peak periods. The larger service centres saw an increase in in-person interactions and transactions over the course of the data collection period, however, the statistics show that there are significant contrasts in attendance and activities performed across the sites which warranted further investigation on the viability of Council's customer service centres, in particular, the Woodend Customer Service Centre.

Discussion

Kyneton and Gisborne Customer Service Centres are open Monday to Friday, from 8.30am to 5pm.

- These centres attracted a higher volume of foot traffic, with an average daily attendance of 22.2 customers in Gisborne and 21.3 in Kyneton.
- Rates, debtor, animal, planning, FOGO caddy liners and various other payments were the common transactions at both centres.
- Gisborne data showed a higher demographic in the 15 – 64 years of age bracket, whereas Kyneton showed a higher proportion of visitors in the 65 years+ demographic.
- Planning enquiries at Gisborne attracted a high volume of traffic, along with building, operations (roads, drainage, footpaths) and local laws enquiries.
- The data showed that a high percentage of customers were aware of being able to perform telephone and online payments.

Romsey Customer Service Centre is open Monday to Friday, from 9.30am to 5pm.

- A lower volume of foot traffic was recorded, compared to Kyneton and Gisborne, with an average daily attendance of seven customers.
- Rates, debtor, animal and FOGO caddy liner payments were the common transactions.
- The demographic of 15 – 64 years of age totalled 337 compared to 190 in the 65 years+ range.
- The data showed that a high percentage of customers were aware of being able to perform telephone and online payments.

Woodend Customer Service Centre is open Monday and Thursday, from 9.30am to 5pm, and Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, from 12.30pm to 5pm.

- Although Woodend was operating on reduced hours, the data showed a lower volume of foot traffic, with an average daily attendance 7.7 customers.
- Rates, debtor, animal and FOGO caddy liner payments were the common transactions, with the demographic higher in the 15 – 64 year age range.
- A high percentage of customers were aware of being able to perform telephone and online payments.
- In addition to Customer Service Centre visits, data was also collected on the number of Council related enquiries received by the library during periods when the Council customer service desk was not open.

The six month data collection trial at Woodend customer service centre from May to November 2022 identified that the centre is unable to continue operating at the level it currently is. The results from the trial confirmed that the centre is not frequented regularly

for Council services outside peak periods and it is recommended that a community consultation be undertaken with a potential option being the closure of the centre.

Factors that need to be considered are:

- Staffing and rostering at Woodend is increasingly difficult due to requirements that two staff are rostered to provide a safe workplace and cover lunch breaks.
- The financial cost of staff to operate the centre in response to the low volume of attending community members. The total staffing cost for 2022-23 at Woodend is \$108,899 not including oncosts.
- Concern for the learning and development of staff in an environment with little exposure to external/internal activities. The ability to move staff to a larger site will benefit officers and allow them to attend training courses and interact with colleagues to encourage and promote learning.
- With the closure of the Woodend Commonwealth Bank branch in September 2022, there is now no financial institution in Woodend, which affects the management of cashier drawers. The impact poses a risk to officers transporting cash to other centres to exchange denominations.
- The cessation of aged care service delivery effective 1 July 2023 will reduce the number of debtor payments made at all centres, including Woodend, further reducing in person interactions.

In continuing to provide a service to the community, the following is recommended to be implemented in April 2023:

- A courtesy telephone at Woodend Customer Service Centre's reception area will be reinstated to allow customers to contact Council on the days that the centre is closed which will provide direct contact with Customer Service Officers; and
- FOGO caddy liner bags and caddies will be available for purchase from the Woodend and Kyneton Visitor Information Centres.

Consultation and engagement

During the data collection across all sites, Council enquired with customers if they were aware of being able to make a payment by the online or the telephone payment method. Responses received indicated that customers were aware of these options to make payments.

This report seeks Council's endorsement to conduct community consultation on the proposed closure of the Woodend Customer Service Centre, which will include a dedicated section on Council's Have your say web page.

Collaboration

Internal collaboration has been undertaken, with the community consultation to be completed in May 2023.

Innovation and continuous improvement

Council strives for continuous improvement and this will be achieved with the proposal for officers to be relocated to larger sites, as outlined in the discussion.

Relevant law

None applicable.

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required in relation to the subject matter of this report.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

None applicable.

Relevant Council plans and policies

None applicable.

Financial viability

The closure of Woodend Customer Service Centre would reduce casual staffing costs. There will be no loss of employment with permanent staff reallocated to nearby alternative centres.

Sustainability implications

None applicable.

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

Attachment 1 - Customer Service data collection – Woodend, Romsey, Gisborne, Kyneton - May to November 2022

Woodend Customer Service Trial - 16 May to 16 November 2022 – (26 weeks)											
MRSC Customers Total	MRSC average per week	MRSC average per day (3.5 days)	Library/MRSC Customers** Total - Tue, Wed, Fri (AM)	Library/MRSC Customers** average per week	Library/MRSC Customers** average per day @ 3 mornings	MRSC visitations AM average per week	MRSC visitations PM average per week	Regular payment	Common enquiry	Demographic	Aware of online / telephone payments
697	26.8	7.7	202	7.8	2.6	4.3	22.1	Rates - 134	Rates - 25	15 - 64 = 470	Yes - 242
								Debtors - 98	APP - 4	>65 = 217	No - 55
								*FOGO - 134	Other - 76		
								Animals - 40	Ops - 50		
								Other - 25			

*FOGO caddy liner bags can only be purchased from service centres or transfer stations **Council related enquiries to library staff when Council customer service desk was closed

Gisborne Customer Service Data Collection – 1 August to 16 November 2022 – approx 15 weeks									
MRSC Customers Total	MRSC average customers per week	MRSC average Customers per day	MRSC visitations AM average per week	MRSC visitations PM average per week	Regular payment	Common enquiry	Demographic	Aware of online / telephone payments	
1668	111.2	22.2	40.4	48.9	Rates - 335	Rates - 110	15 - 64 = 1033	Yes - 587	
					Debtors - 111	Ops - 145	>65 = 635	No - 82	
					*FOGO - 207	Local Laws - 101			
					Animals - 110	Building - 25			
					Planning - 37	Planning - 238			
					Other - 76	Other - 173			

*FOGO caddy liner bags can only be purchased from service centres or transfer stations

Kyneton Customer Service Data Collection – 1 August to 16 November 2022 – approx 15 weeks									
MRSC Customers Total	MRSC average customers per week	MRSC average Customers per day	MRSC visitations AM average per week	MRSC visitations PM average per week	Regular payment	Common enquiry	Demographic	Aware of online / telephone payments	
1596	106.4	21.3	44.9	42.2	Rates - 476	Rates - 117	15 - 64 = 769	Yes - 637	
					Debtors - 128	Ops - 135	>65 = 827	No - 80	
					*FOGO - 86	Local Laws - 71			
					Animals - 69	Planning - 11			
					Other - 44	Other - 459			

*FOGO caddy liner bags can only be purchased from service centres or transfer stations

Romsey Customer Service Data Collection – 1 August to 16 November 2022 – approx 15 weeks								
MRSC Customers Total	MRSC average customers per week	MRSC average Customers per day	MRSC visitations AM average per week	MRSC visitations PM average per week	Regular payment	Common enquiry	Demographic	Aware of online / telephone payments
527	35.1	7	13.5	15	Rates - 140	Rates - 48	15 - 64 = 337	Yes - 226
					Debtors - 48	Ops - 50	>65 = 190	No - 23
					*FOGO - 75	Local Laws - 19		
					Animals - 38	Other - 86		
					Other - 23			

*FOGO caddy liner bags can only be purchased from service centres or transfer stations

COM.4	2023-24 COMMUNITY FUNDING SCHEME GUIDELINES AND COMMUNITY GRANTS POLICY
Officer:	Julius Peiker, Coordinator Community Development
Council Plan relationship:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connecting communities 2. Healthy environment, healthy people 4. Delivering strong and reliable government
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2023-24 Community Funding Scheme Guidelines ↓ 2. Community Grants Policy 2023 ↓ 3. Terms of Reference for Assessment Panels - Macedon Ranges Shire Council Grants Programs ↓

Summary

This report seeks Council approval for three documents connected with Council's Community Funding Scheme (CFS) and other grant programs; the 2023-24 Community Funding Scheme Guidelines (**Attachment 1**); Community Grants Policy (**Attachment 2**); and Draft Terms of Reference for Grant Assessment Panels (**Attachment 3**).

Recommendation

That Council:

1. **Adopts the 2023-24 Community Funding Scheme Guidelines;**
2. **Adopts the Draft Community Grants Policy; and**
3. **Adopts the Terms of Reference for Grants Assessment Panels.**

Background

Draft 2023-24 Community Funding Scheme Guidelines

At the Scheduled Council Meeting of 27 April 2022, officers reported that they would undertake a review of the CFS Guidelines, to ensure that the CFS is consistent with best practice and is meeting the needs of the Macedon Ranges community. The review resulted in a re-draft of the CFS Guidelines (**Attachment 1**).

Draft Community Grants Policy and Terms of Reference for Grants Assessment Panels

At the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting of 17 August 2022, officers provided a report outlining Council's responses to the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) report on Fraud Control Over Local Government Grants (May 2022). The VAGO report specifically recommended that all Victorian councils develop their own overarching grant policy. In response to this VAGO recommendation, a Community Grants Policy was developed (**Attachment 2**).

The Community Grants Policy requires Council to approve a Terms of Reference for all Council Grants Assessment Panels (**Attachment 3**).

Discussion

Draft 2023-24 Community Funding Scheme Guidelines

The review (involving consultation with external and internal stakeholders) of the CFS resulted in a need to simplify the program into three distinct grant categories, with clearly identified outcomes consistent with assessment criteria. The attached draft 2023-24 CFS Guidelines reflect this. In summary, the three distinct categories are:

- Community, Cultural, and Environmental Project Grants – funding limit \$10,000
This category includes the former Streams 1 and 3 for community and cultural development projects and supporting local environmental priorities. Due to the funding limit and assessment criteria being fundamentally the same, these categories are combined into one. The purpose of this grant category is to fund one-off community-based projects that can clearly demonstrate need and deliver a significant community and/or environmental benefits.
- Organisational Support Grants – funding limit \$5,000
Formerly referred to as Stream 2, this stream supports local community groups to operate effectively. The purpose will remain the same, however due to the relatively simple nature of these requests and the smaller amount of funding per grant available, less detail will be required in the application. Additionally, assessment criteria is weighted towards evidence of need, alignment to Council priorities, and community benefit.
- Small Community Infrastructure Grants – funding limit \$12,000
Formerly referred to as Stream 4 - Enhancing community places and infrastructure. These projects (incorporating universal design principles) aim to improve community outcomes from community places like public buildings, open space, reserves or streetscapes. Improved access, increasing usability, tailoring places to community needs, updating features to support community outcomes, and improved in public places. This stream is not designed to fund maintenance that is cyclical or captured in Council maintenance schedules.

Council officers have programmed three community information sessions to support potential applicants. Officers will be available during the application period to answer application questions.

Draft Community Grants Policy and Terms of Reference for Grants Assessment Panels

As a result of the VAGO report *Fraud Control Over Local Government Grants*, Council is required to develop an overarching grants policy that details:

- when and why Council uses grants to achieve its strategy
- how Council will administer grant programs across their life cycle
- the risk-based approach Council uses to determine if it will evaluate each grant program
- staff and Councillor roles in managing grants
- relevant Council policies and procedures, including policies and procedures for declaring conflicts of interest.

The attached Community Grants Policy has been prepared, including all the recommendations articulated in the VAGO Report. As part of the policy development process, officers administering other grant programs within the organisation were consulted, and feedback incorporated.

Once approved by Council, the CFS and the Events and Festivals Grant Program (both opening in May) will be delivered in accordance with the policy. The Small Projects Grant

Program will be delivered in accordance with the policy from the beginning of the new financial year. All other Council grants programs and financial support to community groups will transition to policy compliance within 12 months of adoption.

In accordance with the proposed Community Grants Policy, Council should approve grants program guidelines annually, prior to the grants program opening, along with assessment panel terms of reference. The attached terms of reference is generic and can be applied to all Council grants programs.

Consultation and engagement

Officers consulted with applicants and internal stakeholders to ascertain what improvements to the CFS were required to better meet the needs of the Macedon Ranges Community. The three major themes coming from the review highlighted issues around the CFS guidelines, application forms and the assessment criteria.

Collaboration

Collaboration was not required in relation to this report.

Innovation and continuous improvement

The process of conducting the review and preparing the documents to be approved involved benchmarking with other Local Government areas. This process facilitated best practice outcomes for Council's Community Grants Policy and the CFS Guidelines.

Relevant law

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment has been conducted in relation to the subject matter of this report.

In the interest of delivering more inclusive and accessible funded community projects for the Macedon Ranges, the following measures will be required under Council's grants programs:

- all funding applications covered by this policy will request information about which diverse groups in the community would benefit from the project, how these groups would be supported to participate in funded programs, and the estimated reach across men, women and gender diverse groups;
- addressing gender equity and inclusion will strengthen an application and will be reflected in the scoring matrix;
- the composition of all assessment panels will include mixed gender representation; and
- information sessions promoting all grants programs will be held at different times of the day so as not to disadvantage those with caring responsibilities and/or work commitments.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

There are no regional, state, or national plans or policies applicable to the subject matter of this report.

Relevant Council plans and policies

Council's Community Fund Scheme directly aligns with Council Plan strategic objectives Connecting communities and Healthy environment, healthy people. Under the guidelines, Council will prioritise awarding grants to community groups whose applications demonstrate

consistency with these objectives and their subsequent actions. Applications that address Council's health and wellbeing priorities articulated in the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 – 2025 will also be prioritised.

The Draft Community Grants Policy and Terms of Reference for Grants Assessments Panels are a clear demonstration of the Council Plan strategic objective of delivering strong and reliable government.

Financial viability

The CFS has an annual budget of \$160,000. The assessment process will consider all applications and make recommendations to Council to fund community projects to a total of that value. The program will be administered within approved budget parameters.

Sustainability implications

Social and environmental outcomes are both enhanced with the delivery of the CFS.

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

Macedon Ranges Shire Council

2023-24 Community Funding Scheme Guidelines

Contents

Overview..... 3

 1. Program aims and objectives 3

 2. Timeline..... 3

 3. How much is available? 4

Eligibility..... 4

 4. Who can apply?..... 4

 5. Eligibility requirements..... 4

 6. What will not be funded under the Community Funding Scheme? 4

Funding categories and assessment criteria 6

 7. Category 1: Community, Cultural and Environmental Projects Grants 6

 8. Category 2: Organisational Support Grants 7

 9. Category 3: Small Community Infrastructure Grants 8

Applications 10

 10. Legal requirements 10

 a. Incorporation status 10

 b. Child safe standards 11

 c. Public liability insurance 11

 11. Budget 11

 a. GST 12

 b. In-kind support 12

 12. Assessment 13

 a. How are applications assessed? 13

 b. What will strengthen my application? 14

Conditions of funding 15

 13. Funding agreement..... 15

 14. Project variations/extensions 15

 15. Reporting/acquittals 15

 16. Incomplete projects and unspent funds..... 16

 17. Permits, insurance and authorisations 16

 18. Auditing of funded projects..... 16

 19. Privacy..... 16

Contact officers 17

Acknowledgment of Country

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

Overview

1. Program aims and objectives

The Community Funding Scheme grants public money to not-for-profit community groups for projects and initiatives that benefit residents of the Macedon Ranges.

The **objective** of the program is to support projects and activities that align with the priorities of the 2021-2031 Council Plan, specifically:

- Connecting communities; and
- Healthy environment, healthy people

The **aim** of the Community Funding Scheme is to support initiatives which:

- address local needs
- strengthen community relationships/partnerships
- encourage participation in civic life
- demonstrate a commitment to gender equity, accessibility, diversity, fairness and community wellbeing

It should be noted that Council offers other grants via a range of funding schemes. Before applying for the Community Funding Scheme, check if your project better fits these programs. Visit mrc.vic.gov.au/About-Council/Find-A-Grant

2. Timeline

Information sessions	April/May 2023
Applications open	1 May 2023 at 9am
Applications close	5 June 2023 at 5pm
Applications assessed by panel	June 2023
Recommendations to Council	26 July 2023
Grant recipients advised	27 July 2023
Project delivery	1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024
Grants acquitted	30 June 2024

3. How much is available?

The Community Funding Scheme grants budget for 2023/24 is a total of \$160,000. There are three categories of grants that groups can apply for, these include:

Funding categories – Community Funding Scheme	Maximum funding/project
Community, Cultural and Environmental Projects Grants	Up to \$10,000
Organisational Support Grants	Up to \$5,000
Small Community Infrastructure Grants	Up to \$12,000

Eligibility

4. Who can apply?

Incorporated and community-based not-for-profit groups operating or being established in the Macedon Ranges are eligible to apply for the Community Funding Scheme. Up to a maximum of two grants may be allocated per organisation per funding round.

5. Eligibility requirements

As part of the application process, applicants must discuss their application with a relevant Council officer, prior to submitting it. Please refer to section 13 of these guidelines. Applicants are strongly encouraged to read these guidelines thoroughly before contacting a Council officer.

Enquiries can be made at any time, and we encourage applicants to start conversations with Council officers as early as possible.

Schools/churches are eligible if they can show a demonstrated need, as well as broad community benefit and participation in a project. Projects that are entirely school or congregation focussed will not be funded.

The following are ineligible to apply to the Community Funding Scheme:

- Individuals
- Political organisations
- For profit/commercial organisations
- Government agencies/organisations
- Groups that are in debt to Council
- Groups that have not completed the acquittal and reporting requirements of previous Council grants

6. What will not be funded under the Community Funding Scheme?

Projects or activities which:

- have already commenced, are recurrent or have been completed

- are commercial, religious, political, discriminatory, sexist, racist or disrespectful
- are considered fundraising/asking for donations¹
- intend to raise funds beyond what is needed to deliver the project and aim to boost general operating profits
- are the funding responsibility of state or federal government
- promote or involve gambling-related activities
- do not support responsible drinking
- involve capital works on private property
- are defined as facility maintenance on community and Council-owned buildings²
- fund capital expenditure (the purchase of land, buildings, vehicles)
- award monetary prizes
- are recreational excursions (camps, holidays, tours)
- duplicate services already operating or planned for in a targeted community
- have been previously funded by Council
- are not well supported by evidence of need and where alternative solutions have not been adequately considered
- do not have broad support amongst the community
- have not been adequately master planned or equivalent (for larger construction projects)
- do not have appropriate heritage sign-off, including Aboriginal cultural management (where required)
- are eligible for Council's Events and Festivals grants.

Core business/operational costs such as:

- salaries for ongoing positions
- rent, insurance, utility costs, debts
- conducting an annual general meeting

¹ An application for donations/fundraising activities is regarded as a request for sponsorship and therefore ineligible for a Community Funding Scheme grant.

² Please refer to the terms of your maintenance schedule in your lease/licence agreement.

Funding categories and assessment criteria

7. Category 1: Community, Cultural and Environmental Projects Grants

These projects will contribute to the enhancement or development of local community strength, wellbeing and culture, or address local environmental priorities, critical social challenges or encourage all people to participate in community life or expressions of culture. Council has the following existing strategies available on Council's website, which applicants are encouraged to read when developing their idea.

Examples of projects in this category include:

- Community initiatives/activities that:
 - respond to social equity issues (improving accessibility and safety, supporting diversity and fairness)
 - projects that respond to community health and wellbeing priorities
 - activities/initiatives that support positive ageing
 - activities/initiatives that support young people
 - activities/initiatives that support families with young children.
- Cultural activities (that are not eligible for the Events and Festivals grants) that:
 - explore and share local Indigenous culture and history, in partnership with local Traditional Owners and local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples
 - deliver Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation outcomes
 - deliver artistic workshops for local practitioners
 - explore community histories (such as heritage trails, recorded histories, exhibitions)
 - celebrate our diversity
 - activate public places through arts/cultural performance.
- Environmental projects that:
 - reduce waste to landfill, such as community composting, food redistribution schemes, repurposing of waste products, projects that reduce use of plastic
 - support new edible or indigenous gardens or enhancements to existing community or public gardens
 - support activities/initiatives/workshops (not events) that raise awareness about sustainable living, sustainable land and waterways management, waste reduction and biodiversity, including citizen science projects and projects that increase access to nature
 - protect and enhance biodiversity through ecological restoration of public land (weed control, revegetation, masterplans and environmental management plans)
 - support sustainable transport initiatives (e.g. car or bike share schemes)
 - facilitate reduced greenhouse gas emissions across different sectors of the community or assist them to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Assessment criteria

Weighting	Criteria	What we are looking for
20%	Evidence of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research (as proof of evidence) • Letters of support
20%	Alignment to Council priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated relationship to Council priorities
30%	Community benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people participating in project • Number of people benefiting from project • Impact of the community benefit • Inclusive outcomes
30%	Ability to deliver project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate sound budget • \$\$ contribution from group • Volunteer hours contribution from group • Demonstrate good project planning • Demonstrate good risk management • Demonstrate organisational capacity³

8. Category 2: Organisational Support Grants

These projects will directly support the operations of local not-for-profit organisations and community groups and fund enhancements to how committees and groups coordinate their local work and activities.

Examples of projects in this category include:

- Governance enhancement projects that:
 - create a strategic plan
 - prepare a feasibility study
 - develop a policy and procedure manual
- Training and development initiatives that:
 - provide skills training for members and/or volunteers
 - enable groups to conduct information days and/or community forums
 - fund the costs of food handling and responsible handling of alcohol courses for group members
 - fund the costs of purchasing educational material for volunteers

³ Organisational capacity is demonstrated by minutes and financial statement from most recent AGM

- fund member attendance at leadership courses
- Purchasing small equipment to assist volunteers such as:
 - digital cameras, projectors, portable computers
 - barbeques, kitchen appliances, furniture for public spaces
 - public address systems
 - first aid and sporting coaches kits
 - safety and injury prevention items for sporting clubs (e.g. goal post padding, high visibility vests)
 - updated or replacement of sporting or other essential equipment
 - upgrades to storage
- Developing promotional material for community groups such as:
 - portable signage, flags and banners
 - brochures, booklets and website development
 - branding and logo design.

Assessment criteria

Weighting	Criteria	What we are looking for
30%	Evidence of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Statement of need ● Letters of support
20%	Alignment to Council priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrated relationship to Council priorities
30%	Community benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of people participating in project ● Number of people benefiting from project ● Impact of the community benefit
20%	Ability to deliver project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrate sound budget ● Demonstrate good project planning ● Demonstrate good risk management

9. Category 3: Small Community Infrastructure Grants

These projects (which must incorporate universal design principles) aim to improve the community outcomes we get from community places like public buildings, open space, reserves or streetscapes. Improved access, increasing useability, tailoring places to community needs and updating features are a way of achieving community outcomes in public places. More information about universal design can be found [here](#). Please speak with the relevant Council officer to ensure you have incorporated universal design principles in your project.

This category of funding is designed to enhance public places that serve an important role in encouraging community participation. This category funds projects at a variety of locations to reflect a mixture of public ownership and management models. Projects that propose changes to community places score higher if they benefit Council owned and local community managed facilities or spaces. Improvement projects may focus on one or more of the various stages of improving a place; the planning, design, construction or renovation phases.

This grant category is not designed to fund maintenance that is cyclical or otherwise.

Council has the following existing strategies available on its website, which applicants are encouraged to read when developing their application:

- [Open Space Strategy 2013](#)
- [Walking and Cycling Strategy 2014](#)
- [Sports and Active Recreation Strategy 2018 - 2028](#)

Examples of projects in this category include those that:

- upgrade shared community spaces such as meeting places and public halls that benefit a broad audience of users
- improve accessibility to community facilities and encourage greater inclusiveness for users
- improve open space areas, village greens/commons, or public streetscapes to benefit a broad audience of users
- create public art that enhances community spaces
- establish or upgrade interpretive signage and visitor infrastructure
- support the creation of masterplans for mechanic institutes, community halls, parks, commons, recreational facilities to ensure a planned approach to facility improvements
- support the completion of feasibility studies or business cases to create an evidence base to support future infrastructure proposals
- improve the environmental performance of community facilities through works that reduce demand for energy and water use (e.g. solar panels, insulation, LED lighting, double glazing, water tanks, environmental audits).

Assessment criteria

Weighting	Criteria	What we are looking for
25%	Evidence of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photographs • Professional reports • Letters of support • Master plans
20%	Alignment to Council priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated relationship to Council priorities

25%	Community benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people participating in project • Number of people benefiting from project • Inclusive outcomes • Incorporate universal design principles
30%	Ability to deliver project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate sound budget • \$\$ contribution from group • Volunteer hours contribution from group • Demonstrate good project planning • Demonstrate good risk management • Demonstrate organisational capacity • All permissions in place

Community building improvements

For projects that involve upgrades/minor capital works on Council buildings or spaces, please contact the Coordinator Facility Projects on 5421 9633.

Seeking approvals/permissions/permits

It is your responsibility to obtain any permits/approvals/permissions that may be required.

Copies to Council must be provided. You must also factor in application and permit costs, and the time required into your applications. You can discuss these requirements with the Coordinator Facility Projects.

Council acknowledges that not all permits/approvals will be obtained until after your funding is confirmed. It is expected that your application outlines which approvals you will be seeking and in the event you are successful, your plan for their obtainment.

When proposing construction work projects, it is advantageous to submit working drawings of any construction works you are proposing with your application. These can be formalised into specifications and designs/plans after you have obtained the grant funds.

It is mandatory for infrastructure projects to be managed by a Council project manager. This cost will need to be factored into the project funding being applied for to deliver a project at a rate of 10% of the total project cost.

Applications

10. Legal requirements

a. Incorporation status

Applicants must be registered as an incorporated body or arrange for a legally constituted not-for-profit organisation to manage (auspice) the funds.

⁴ Organisational capacity is demonstrated by minutes and financial statement from most recent AGM

Council does not auspice applicants.

For more information on auspice arrangements visit the [Not-for-profit Law Information Hub](#).

b. Child safe standards

Macedon Ranges Shire Council is committed to a zero tolerance approach to child abuse, through actively promoting child safety and ensuring compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards. Victorian organisations that provide services to children are required, under the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005, to ensure that they implement compulsory child safe standards to protect children from harm.

As a Child Safe organisation, Council requires that all grant applicants demonstrate their compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and read/understand Council's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct, available from [Council's website](#). Within the application form, applicants will be required to identify whether their project involves direct or incidental contact with children and young people and complete either a Child Safe Statement of Commitment or submit their Child Safe Policy and a Child Safe Direct Contact Checklist. These questions are contained within the eligibility section of the application form and must be completed by all applicants.

Please note: If your organisation is being auspiced for the purpose of this grant, the auspicing organisation will also need to meet the Child Safe Standards.

More details on the Child Safe Standards can be found on the [Commission for Children and Young People website](#).

c. Public liability insurance

Public liability insurance covers incidents that occur during an activity being conducted by a group. All groups must be covered by public liability insurance and be able to provide a valid certificate of currency if they are involved in activities in public open space, using Council facilities or sporting events. Other activities may also require public liability insurance.

It is the responsibility of the applicant or recipient to arrange appropriate insurance, including collecting appropriate insurance from a contractor or tradesperson. Applicants are encouraged to discuss their insurance requirements with their insurance company or a professional advisor.

Groups without public liability insurance can contact [Local Community Insurance](#) which offers an affordable public liability scheme for not-for-profit community groups.

11. Budget

The budget you submit needs to include all income and expenditure related to the activity/project (including permit fees) for which you are requesting funding. It is the costing of your project plan. The application form on SmartyGrants provides applicants with guidance on the information and level of detail required in your budget. We strongly encourage you to take note of any hints provided, as these will support you to improve your project budget score.

a. GST

For groups who are registered for GST - all pricing in your budget must exclude GST. (GST will be added to the amount requested).

For groups who are not registered for GST - all pricing in your budget must include GST. (Grants will be made exclusive of GST).

For information about GST and ABNs contact the Australian Taxation Office.

b. In-kind support

This covers contributions by volunteers and suppliers in terms of time, goods or professional services donated to the project and should be clearly identified in your project budget. The value of in-kind support should be reflected in both your income and expenditure.

Estimating the work required will help you determine the level of community contribution required and helps to demonstrate the true value of your project.

It is good practice to also supply a breakdown of estimated in-kind support to show how the figure in your budget total was reached. i.e.:

- General committee/community member contribution (e.g. planning, coordination, etc.) @ \$40 per hour.
- Specialist/expert contribution (e.g. tradesperson, professional service) @\$80/hr.

See a sample budget below:

Income

Grant from Council (this application)	\$ 5000
Cash contribution from group	\$ 1000
In-kind contribution from group (total)	\$ 1000
Contributions from other sources (please specify): Department of Health and Human Services grant	\$ 2000
Other (please specify) Bendigo Bank	\$ 1000
Total income (please calculate)	\$ 10,000

Expenditure

Facilitator costs	\$ 2000
Delivering consultation	\$ 1000
In-kind contribution from group	\$1000
Venue hire	\$ 500
Workshop materials	\$ 500
Permit approvals	\$ 1500
Costs of registered contractor	\$ 1000
Catering	\$ 500
Marketing and promotional activities	\$ 1000
Printing of promotional materials	\$ 350
Administrative overheads	\$ 650
Total expenditure (please calculate)	\$ 10,000

Make sure your total income and total expenditure are the same figure

List all expenditure items on separate lines

12. Assessment

a. How are applications assessed?

Eligible applications are assessed by an evaluation panel of officers from across the organisation. The assessment is based on responses provided in the application form within each of the sections of the application using the **scoring matrix** for each category.

pg. 13

Responses are scored and the weighting is then applied to create an overall score. Eligibility does not guarantee funding.

Funding recommendations are presented to Council for consideration at a Scheduled Council Meeting. Scheduled Council Meetings are open to the public and streamed live online.

Council decisions are final, applicants who wish to discuss the outcome of their application are encouraged to contact the Community Development team for advice as soon as possible on 5422 0216 or via grants@mrsc.vic.gov.au.

b. What will strengthen my application?

- Applications that address Council’s wellbeing and environmental priorities will score more highly than those that do not. Please refer to page 12 of the [Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025](#) and page 3 of the [Environment Strategy](#). Your application should clearly state how your project or initiative will support/contribute to this priority.
- Applications that consider gender equity and accessibility for diverse community groups will score more highly than those that do not. Applications that advance reconciliation and/or celebrate First Nations Peoples will also be highly regarded.

Table 1: Summary of Council priority areas.

Priority area	Council priorities
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • climate emergency • sustainable transport • waterway health • biolinks and habitat links • waste minimisation • community engagement and partnerships
Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting mental health • social connection and inclusion • encouraging gender equity and respectful relationships free from violence • promoting healthy eating and active living • preventing harm from tobacco, alcohol and other drugs • tackling climate change and its impact on health, • supporting the community to respond to and recover from emergencies • preventing harm from gambling • supporting a dementia friendly community • increasing access to affordable housing
Reconciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives that advance reconciliation and/or celebrate First Nations Peoples will also be highly regarded.

- Your application will be strengthened and will score higher if you can refer to specific actions from at least one of these strategic documents.
 - [Council Plan 2021-2031](#)
 - [Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025](#)
 - [Environment Strategy](#)
 - [Disability Action Plan 2021-2025](#)
 - [Arts and Culture Strategy 2018-2028](#)
 - [Macedon Ranges Heritage Strategy 2014-2018](#)
 - [Youth Strategy 2018-2028](#)
 - [Municipal Early Years Plan 2021-2025: CREATE](#)
 - [Positive Ageing Plan 2020-2025](#)
 - [Reconciliation Action Plan 2021-2023](#)
 - [2019 Healthy Heart of Victoria Active Living Census](#)

Conditions of funding

13. Funding agreement

Successful applicants will abide by the terms and conditions of a funding agreement. Your funding agreement may have additional requirements that must be met in order for funding to be released. Failure to comply with the terms and conditions as set out by Council may result in future ineligibility for all Council grants.

Activities/projects must be completed by 30 June 2024.

Funds must be spent on the activity/project described in the application.

14. Project variations/extensions

Any variation, including extensions to an activity/project, must be applied through SmartyGrants and be approved by Council. If you are encountering unexpected challenges in your project delivery, please contact the Community Development team for advice as soon as possible on 5422 0216 or via grants@mrsc.vic.gov.au.

15. Reporting/acquittals

Successful applicants are required to submit an acquittal report by 30 June 2024. This report relating to funding from Council must include:

- confirmation that objectives for the project were achieved;
- a financial statement, detailing expenditure signed and authorised by the treasurer; and
- two photographs which may be used for promotional purposes.

Groups who do not submit an acquittal will not be eligible to apply for further funding from Council until the activity/project has been acquitted.

16. Incomplete projects and unspent funds

If a project is unable to be completed, the grant recipient must contact the Community Development team for advice as soon as possible on 5422 0216 or via grants@mrsc.vic.gov.au. Any unspent funds are to be returned to Council.

17. Permits, insurance and authorisations

The applicant is responsible for any regulatory and statutory requirements associated with the project, such as planning and building permits and public liability insurance.

18. Auditing of funded projects

Council reserves the right to undertake a spot financial and programmatic audit of a funded project. This may include a detailed examination of all financial records pertaining to the project.

19. Privacy

The collection and handling of personal information is in accordance with [Council's Privacy Policy](#), which is displayed on Council's website and available for inspection at, or collection from, Council's customer service centres.

Contact officers

Contact	Title	Phone
Arts and Culture		
Simon Clarke	Coordinator Arts and Culture	03 5422 0319
Terry Moore	Cultural Development Officer <i>Community Halls liaison</i>	03 5422 0383
Community Development		
Julius Peiker	Coordinator Community Development	03 5422 0286
Melissa Telford	Community Projects Officer	03 5422 0216
Maria Loriente	Community Partnerships Officer	0472 902 287
Economic Development and Visitor Economy		
Alexis Owen	Business Liaison Officer	03 5421 9654
Environment		
Krista Patterson-Majoor	Coordinator Environment	03 5421 9503
Facility Projects		
Stuart Gunnell	Acting Coordinator Facility Projects	03 5421 9633 or 0417 168 142
Sport and Recreation		
Steve Williams	Recreation Development Officer	03 5421 1469

If you are unable to reach one of the above contacts in relation to your application, please call Customer Service on 03 5422 0333.

Policy



Community Grants Policy

Date of Adoption	TBC April 2023		
Adoption Method	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council	<input type="checkbox"/> CEO	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify</i>)
CEO Signature			Date
Responsible Officer and Unit	Manager Community Strengthening Manager Economic Development and Visitor Economy		
Nominated Review Period	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annually	<input type="checkbox"/> Every 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify</i>)
Last Endorsement Date	NA		
Next Endorsement Date	TBC April 2024		

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

DOCUMENT HISTORY	Version	Date	Author
Initial Draft			
Second Draft			
Final Draft			
Approval			

Contents

Policy statement	3
Purpose	3
Scope	3
Objective	4
Implementation	4
Gender Impact Assessment	8
Definitions	9
References	10
Related policies	11
Related legislation	11

DRAFT

Community Grants Policy

Policy statement

Council is committed to supporting the local community through grant programs that:

- connect communities by supporting access, inclusion, equity, fairness, engagement, and participation;
- promote healthy people and a healthy environment; and
- foster economic vitality (including tourism, agribusiness, and local employment options).

When granting public funds, Council will act with integrity, accountability, impartiality, transparency and in the public interest.

Purpose

This Policy provides a framework for Council to grant public funds consistently and transparently through its externally facing grant programs.

Scope

The distribution of funding through grants programs is in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*.

This policy applies to:

- The following external facing grant programs:
 - Community Funding Scheme
 - Events and Festivals Grant Program
 - Small Project Grants Program
- All Council departments involved in the promotion, assessment and management of grant programs where Council is providing a contribution directly to an organisation or an auspice.

As new external facing Council grant programs become available, they will be listed in this policy and be subject to the policy.

This policy does not apply to:

- funding received by Council from state or federal government agencies or non-government organisations, resulting from grant applications made by Council officers
- any sponsorship arrangements Council may enter with businesses.

Objective

In accordance with the Council Plan 2021-2031, this policy supports Council in demonstrating the qualities of good governance, including a clear vision and culture, transparency, respect, consistency, accountability and responsiveness.

Implementation

Fraud and corruption controls

Council will facilitate transparency and accountability of grant programs while mitigating against fraudulent or corrupt use of funds.

All grant programs will be managed within Council's online administration system to ensure records are maintained and fully auditable.

To ensure a separation of decision making and allow an avenue for independent oversight, an individual or entity with the power to approve grants will not form part of an assessment panel (i.e. Councillors).

All members of assessment panels must:

- complete relevant fraud, corruption and conflict of interest training and a Grant Program Induction prior to participating in panels;
- complete a conflict of interest form for every application that they are assessing; and
- adhere to Council's conflict of interest policies and requirements.

Grant management and operations

All grant programs must have guidelines (including an eligibility criteria), assessment criteria and terms of reference (including assessment panel composition). These must be approved by a resolution of Council.

All changes to grant guidelines, including recommendations to cease offering a grant program, must be approved by a resolution of Council.

Each grants program must utilise the assessment criteria documented in the respective grant guidelines when evaluating applications.

Grant programs will be widely promoted across the municipality using a variety of promotional avenues, to ensure everyone who is eligible to apply for a grant has an opportunity to do so.

Using a continuous improvement framework, all aspects of each grant program will be reviewed annually by the respective manager, taking into account feedback from Council, community and staff administering the grant program. Any recommended changes resulting from this process must be approved by a resolution of Council.

Grant applications must be submitted by the due date / time via Council's online grants administration system.

Eligibility

Any grants provided to organisations and businesses must require

- Proof of incorporation;
- ABN/GST status; and
- Public liability insurance.

Applicants without a formal organisational structure (e.g. not incorporated) can apply under the auspice of an incorporated organisation

Grant applications will be automatically ineligible if they do not adhere to program guidelines or are not in alignment with Council policies and strategies, including, but not limited to:

Policy/strategic plans	Eligibility guidance
Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy	Projects/applicants that involve children but are unable to satisfactorily demonstrate their compliance with Child Safe legislation.
Financial policies (procurement, fraud control etc.)	Projects/applicants that do not meet documentation requirements, have a debt to Council or outstanding acquittal from previous grant funding.

Current officers or Councillors are ineligible to apply for any Council grant programs.

Assessment process

Grant applications will be assessed and scored on their individual merit, in consideration of eligibility and according to the respective grant guidelines. Every grant category will have a detailed scoring matrix to inform the assessment panel and provide guidance for applicants.

During the assessment process, consideration will also be given to equitability of distribution.

All grant applications will be assessed by an assessment panel comprising Council officers from across the organisation.

After consideration of applications and grant program objectives, Council may propose an alternative form of assistance to meet the stated objectives of any application. This may include direct support to a project, activity or event, as recommended by the Director or Chief Executive Officer.

Approval process

Unless otherwise approved by Council, the following process applies:

- Program established and endorsed by a resolution of Council annually.
- Applications assessed by nominated assessment panel.
- Recommendations endorsed by a resolution of Council.

Contracting and payments

All payments will be managed in accordance with Council's standard timelines, practices, and policies.

Following grant approval, recipients must be offered a funding agreement endorsed by the relevant manager within 14 days from the date recommendations were approved by Council.

Grant payment cannot be made until a signed funding agreement is received from the recipient, and all funding conditions have been met.

Project reporting and acquittals

All grant funded programs must submit a financial and programmatic acquittal within eight weeks of completing the project or the designated due date of the funding agreement, to ensure monies are spent in accordance with the signed funding agreement.

Council reserves the right to recover funding or to take other appropriate action, in the event of non-compliance with the funding agreement.

Failure to comply with grant requirements, including failure to:

- meet the terms of the funding agreement;
- seek a variation prior to altering an approved project;
- acquit outstanding grants; and/or
- return unspent funds;

may render organisations ineligible for any further funding through Council programs until these matters are resolved.

Council reserves the right to undertake a spot financial and programmatic audit of a funded project.

Variations and extensions

Any variations to the project, as articulated in the funding agreement (with reference to the amount of funding), can only be made with written authorisation from the relevant officer with the delegated authority, as per Council's Delegation Framework, Policy and Procedures. All variations must be recorded in Council's online grants administration system.

Variations to the project will only be approved if the requested variation is consistent with the objectives in the original funded project.

Extensions to a funding agreement (with reference to the amount of funding) of up to 12 months may only be made with written authorisation from the relevant officer with the delegated authority as per Council's Delegation Framework, Policy and Procedures. All extensions must be recorded in Council's online grants administration system.

Extensions to a funding agreement will only be approved if the grant recipient experienced unforeseen circumstances that fundamentally delayed the project.

Appeals

Council's decision regarding successful / unsuccessful grants is final and an appeal will not be considered.

Any disputes or complaints regarding grants programs or processes will be responded to in accordance with Council's Complaints Policy.

Record keeping

All application outcomes will be recorded in Council's online grants administration system.

Following confirmation of the Council decision, all organisations will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application within 14 days.

Within 30 days of Council's decision, an announcement of successful grant recipients will be published on Council's website.

Personal information about individuals collected during the grant process will be treated in accordance with Council's Privacy Policy.

Gender impact assessment

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a gender impact assessment has been conducted in relation to the subject matter of this policy.

In the interest of delivering more inclusive and accessible funded community projects for the Macedon Ranges, the following measures will be required under Council's grants programs:

- All funding applications covered by this policy will request information about which diverse groups in the community would benefit from the project, how these groups would be supported to participate in funded programs, and the estimated reach across men, women and gender diverse groups.

- Addressing gender equity and inclusion will strengthen an application and will be reflected in the scoring matrix.
- The composition of all assessment panels will include mixed gender representation.
- Information sessions promoting all grants programs will be held at different times of the day so as not to disadvantage those with caring responsibilities and/or work commitments.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Audit	An official examination and confirmation of accounts and records. Council can be audited and Council can also audit grant recipients. For Council's audit of grant recipients, the recipient organisation will be required to readily make available all income/expenditure records, correspondence, meeting notes, promotional material, and any other document relating to the funded program/activity.
Auspice	An agreement where one organisation (the 'principal organisation') agrees to apply for funding on behalf of a second organisation that is not incorporated (the 'auspiced organisation'). If the funding application is successful, the principal organisation then receives, holds and administers the funding to the auspiced organisation, so that the auspiced organisation can complete the funded project or activities.
Acquittal	An acquittal report ensures that grant recipients have administered grant funds responsibly and in line with the terms and conditions of the funding agreement. An acquittal report usually consists of a written report that summarises how the project fared against the initial objectives of the grants. It also provides a financial statement detailing how the funds were spent.

Funding agreement	A written agreement between Council and the grant recipient clearly articulating the purpose of the funding, the dollar amount and the grant conditions. It also defines the rights and responsibilities of the agreement. Once signed, organisations are under a legal obligation to comply with the stated terms and conditions.
Grant	A sum of money (cash or in-kind) given to organisations or individuals for a specified purpose directed at achieving goals and objectives consistent with specific policy.
Incorporation	Being incorporated means that the group has a legal identity of its own, separate and distinct from the individuals who formed or make up the group.
Public liability insurance	<p>Public liability insurance will protect a community organisation against its legal liability to pay:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● compensation to third parties (for example, members of the public) for bodily injury; ● property damage that may occur as a result of the community organisation's activities; ● the legal costs that a community organisation may have if it needs to defend bodily injury and property damage claims made against it.

References

- > [Community Funding Scheme Guidelines](#)
- > [Small Project Grants Guidelines](#)
- > [Festivals and Events Guidelines](#)

Related policies

- > [Council Plan 2021-2031](#)
- > [Health and Wellbeing Plan](#)
- > [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)
- > [Fraud and Corruption Control Policy](#)
- > [Privacy Policy](#)
- > [Delegation Framework, Policy and Procedures](#)
- > [Complaints Policy](#)

Related legislation

- > *Local Government Act 2020*
- > *Gender Equity Act 2020*

Terms of Reference for Assessment Panels

Macedon Ranges Shire Council Grants Programs

Macedon Ranges Shire Council is committed to supporting organisations, groups and businesses to achieve their goals, particularly when they align with goals outlined in the Council Plan 2021-2031. To ensure decisions are transparent and accountable, Council targets its support and resources to external organisations via a number of grants programs:

- Community Funding Scheme
- Festivals and Events Grants Program

All applications for formal grants undergo an assessment process, with a panel making recommendations to Council. Council will make the final decision.

Purpose of assessment panels:

- To review, assess and provide objective, independent recommendations to Council in relation to funding for grants.
- To ensure that guidelines and assessment criteria endorsed by Council have been applied consistently and equitably for all applications.

Principles

- Council is committed to ensuring equity and transparency in decision making processes.
- Conflict of interest and pecuniary interests are declared prior to assessing applications, or immediately upon becoming aware of a conflict (whichever occurs sooner).
- Panels will be representative of the diversity within the community in relation to gender, cultural background, abilities and age to ensure diversity of views and perspectives.
- Privacy and confidentiality of Council and applicant information will be maintained at all times.

Responsibilities of panel members

- Demonstrate Council values of working together, honesty, accountability, innovation and respect.
- Adhere to the principles outlined in the Terms of Reference (TOR) and full declaration of any conflict of interest.
- Provide objective advice to Council and undertake assessment using Council's approved assessment criteria.
- Complete assessments within the designated time frames.
- Attend assessment meetings either virtually or in person.
- Conduct programmatic audits of a funded program, when deemed necessary by the responsible Director.

Subject matter experts

To ensure that diverse perspectives are acknowledged, technical advice may be sought from subject matter experts. All applications will be assessed at the eligibility stage to determine if subject matter

expert input is needed. These applications will then be sent to an identified subject matter expert to review. A Subject Matter Expert-Technical Assessment Form will be used to capture this information, which will then be fed into the assessment panel meetings. Subject matter experts will have a responsibility to adhere to the principles outlined in the TOR in providing their advice to the assessment panel.

Appointment to assessment panel

Council makes appointments to assessment panels based on merit, skills and expertise in relevant grants and subject matter.

Assessment panels are made up of Council officers. Currently the Community Funding Scheme and the Festivals and Events and Festivals Grants Program use assessment panels to make recommendations to Council.

Assessment panels will be made up of a minimum of four Council officers.

More detailed information about individual grants and sponsorship programs, including their program assessment criteria are available from the Council website.

Approval of panel members is based on subject matter expertise and is approved by the relevant manager.

Assessment panel members are appointed on an annual basis per program.

Council reserves the right to increase the pool of panel members and invite appropriate specialists to join a panel where required to ensure diverse representation and adequate skill sets are maintained.

Support to assessment panels

- All assessment panel members are briefed on the context of individual grants programs, their role and the process of recommendation to Council.
- Assessments are undertaken using SmartyGrants and advice and support is provided to panel members on how to use the system.
- All assessment meetings are minuted by Council, to ensure rationale for decisions are clearly noted and to ensure accountability.
- All assessment panel recommendations and decisions will be recorded in SmartyGrants.

COM.5	DRAFT AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICY
Officer:	Naomi Scrivener, Manager Community Wellbeing
Council Plan relationship:	2. Healthy environment, healthy people 4. Delivering strong and reliable government
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft Affordable Housing Policy ↓ 2. Background paper - Affordable Housing Policy and Legislation ↓ 3. Background paper - Macedon Ranges Shire Affordable Housing Profile ↓ 4. Background paper - Overview of Affordable Housing ↓

Summary

Across Australia, there is a significant shortage of affordable dwellings, and this is an important issue in the Macedon Ranges. Given this, Council is undertaking the development of an Affordable Housing Policy. Officers seek endorsement for the draft policy to be released for community consultation.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. **Endorses the draft Affordable Housing Policy to be released for community consultation; and**
2. **Notes that a final Affordable Housing Policy will be presented to Council for consideration at the scheduled meeting in June 2023.**

Background

Affordable housing

The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (PE Act) defines affordable housing as ‘...housing, including social housing that is appropriate for the housing needs of any of the following:

- *very low-income households*
- *low-income households*
- *moderate-income households.*’

In 2022, the annual income ranges for regional Victoria were

	Very low-income	Low-income	Moderate-income
Single	Up to \$19,090	\$19,091 to \$30,500	\$30,551 to \$45,820
Couple (no dependent)	Up to \$28,640	\$28,641 to \$45,820	\$45,821-\$68,730

Family (Single/couple with dependent children)	Up to \$40,090	\$40,091 to \$64,150	\$64,151 to \$96,220
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Table 1 –Annual income ranges defined under the PE Act.

Types of affordable housing

Affordable housing refers to both non-private housing (rental) and private market housing (ownership and rental) and includes the following:

- Affordable housing for rental or ownership
Private market housing may be affordable where the rent or mortgage repayments are no more than 30 per cent of the household’s income.
- Social housing
Social housing is short- and long-term rental housing that is generally owned and run by government or not-for-profit agencies. Social housing includes:
 - Public housing
Public housing is rental housing, which is owned, controlled and managed by the Victorian Government’s Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH). Public housing tenants must be on very low- to low-household incomes. Rents are usually limited to 25 per cent of household income.
 - Community housing
Community housing is rental housing owned, managed and controlled by registered community housing agencies. The housing is generally targeted towards very low- to moderate-incomes or special need households. Rents are generally limited to 30 per cent of household income.

Council’s current Affordable Housing Interim Policy

Council at its Scheduled Meeting endorsed the Affordable Housing Interim Policy in December 2021. This interim policy was to form the basis of an Affordable Housing Policy, to be drafted and endorsed by July 2023. The purpose of an interim policy was to give Council time to consider the actions of the Victorian Government’s 10-year social and affordable housing strategy, to align with future Council policy. The strategy was due in late 2021; however this has not yet been released, with no firm indication of when the release date may be.

The objective of the interim policy was also to put affordable and social housing on Council’s agenda and to convey Council’s intent to engage with the Victorian Government (Homes Victoria) and our community on this important issue. It allowed work to be initiated with Homes Victoria to advocate for investment in affordable housing in the Macedon Ranges. It was announced by the Victorian Government in November 2020 that Victoria’s Big Housing Build (to be delivered by Homes Victoria) would invest \$5.3 billion to increase the supply of social and affordable housing across the state, with \$30 million identified as the minimum investment in the Macedon Ranges Shire.

Discussion

Recently, the interim policy was reviewed against new data and information released since its development, as well as the recent consultation in relation to the lease of seniors housing units at Noel Street, Lancefield to Wintringham for a 20 year period. Given this, the interim policy has been drafted into an Affordable Housing Policy.

Background documents giving an overview of the current Macedon Ranges affordable housing profile have been updated, which demonstrate what is affordable housing and the need for social and affordable housing in our region. These documents are as follows:-

- Affordable housing policy and legislation
- Overview of affordable housing
- Macedon Ranges affordable housing profile

Given the lack of updated state-wide policy direction, and very little change since the interim policy was established – the review determined that the content of the interim policy at a high level was still valid. As such, the proposed Affordable Housing Policy for consideration retains the substantive provisions from the interim policy.

Consultation and engagement

If the recommendation is carried, the draft Affordable Housing Policy will be placed on public exhibition for 28 days (four weeks).

Collaboration

Collaboration has not been required in relation to this report.

Innovation and continuous improvement

Not applicable in relation to this report.

Relevant law

- The *Local Government Act 2020* provides the legal framework under which Victorian councils operate. The Act controls the sale and leasing of council-owned land, procurement of goods and services by a council, the administration of public open space, and governance and probity requirements for councils.
- The *Housing Act 1983* has the broad objective of ensuring every person in Victoria has adequate and appropriate housing at a price within their means. The Housing Act, together with the Office of the Housing Registrar, provides the framework for the establishment, compliance and recognition of registered housing agencies.
- The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* provides a framework for the administration of the use and development of land, and includes objectives relevant to affordable housing supply.
- In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment has been conducted in relation to the subject matter of this report.

Housing instability and homelessness is becoming critically worse for women, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (who are overrepresented in the social housing population), older single women, women with a disability and women with experiences of domestic or intimate partner violence. Domestic and family violence is one of the main drivers of homelessness, made worse by the pandemic.

Taking a gender approach to housing and homelessness raises a range of economic and social inequities, which accumulate over the life course to exacerbate levels of housing crisis for older women. Older single women aged 55 and over are the fastest growing group to experience homelessness in Australia.

This is noted particularly when women are typically living on lower fixed income, have not had the opportunity to buy a home, or have lost their home in a property settlement. Some

of these women have had significant breaks from paid employment or have worked below capacity in part-time or casual roles to accommodate unpaid care work to children or parents (or both), or as a result of disability limiting their engagement in the workforce.

Ageing and single status are compounding factors which place non-home owning women at higher risk of homelessness or inappropriate housing. This group of older women also includes women who have experienced domestic violence. Given Australia's ageing population, the continued problem with gendered wage gaps, a lack of workplace accommodations for women with disabilities, the undervaluing of work done in women-dominated sectors and a failure to shift the dial on the unequal gender distribution of unpaid care work, the level of homelessness among single older women is projected to continually increase.

The draft policy has been developed with the findings of this assessment, where Council recognises it has a role to play in advocating for women to have access to safe and affordable housing.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

- The National Housing and Homelessness Agreement 2018 (NHHA) recognises the commonwealth and state governments' mutual interest in improving housing outcomes across the housing spectrum, including outcomes for Australians who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Under the NHHA, around \$1.6 billion is provided to states and territories each year to improve Australians' access to secure and affordable housing, targeting social housing investment and provision of homelessness support services.
- Homes for Victorians (2017) is the Victorian Government's current housing strategy. The Victorian Government is developing a ten-year Social and Affordable Housing Strategy, which was due for release in late 2021 but has not yet been released.
- The Victorian Government has provided funding for the development of a Loddon Mallee Housing Action Plan, which addresses issues relating to the provision of additional housing across the Loddon Mallee Region, and identifies strategies. This plan will guide work at Council in affordable housing.

Relevant Council plans and policies

- Council Plan 2021-2031
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025
- Affordable Housing Interim Policy
- Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme - includes objectives and provisions relating to affordable housing

Financial viability

The endorsement of the Affordable Housing Policy can be achieved within the adopted 2022/23 Council Budget.

Sustainability implications

Not applicable in relation to this report.

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

Policy



Affordable Housing Policy

Date of Adoption	TBC 2023		
Adoption Method	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council	<input type="checkbox"/> CEO	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify</i>)
CEO Signature		Date	
Responsible Officer and Unit	Manager Community Wellbeing		
Nominated Review Period	<input type="checkbox"/> Annually	<input type="checkbox"/> Every 4 years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other – 2 years
Last Endorsement Date	December 2021		
Next Endorsement Date	TBC 2025		

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

DOCUMENT HISTORY	Version	Date	Author
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Approval			

Contents

Purpose	3
Objective	3
Role of Council	3
Policy	4
Background for Policy	6
Definitions	9
Related Legislation	11

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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a Council position to guide and facilitate the provision of affordable housing on public and private land through appropriate and effective advocacy, facilitation and decision-making. This policy will guide and inform all Council decisions and actions relating to affordable housing in the Macedon Ranges.

Objective

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Recognise that housing is a human right for every person and ensure our most vulnerable people and communities have access to safe, secure and affordable housing.
- Increase the supply of affordable housing in the Macedon Ranges Shire to support a diverse and inclusive community.
- Promote the value of social and affordable housing to the Macedon Ranges community.
- Encourage affordable housing outcomes that are appropriate and accessible for very low, low and moderate income households.
- Support policy and statutory change to increase and improve the quality and supply of affordable housing in the Macedon Ranges.

Role of Council

Council's policy directions focus on three key roles in relation to affordable housing:

- Advocate – representing the local community and advocating for increased funding for social and affordable housing.
- Decision maker – Council can use regulatory powers to influence, leverage and negotiate affordable housing outcomes.
- Facilitator and investor – building relationships and brokering partnerships between registered housing agencies, developers, government agencies and other key stakeholders.

Policy

Council, as an advocate, will:

- build community understanding of the benefits that flow to individuals, families and communities from social and affordable housing;
- advocate for all demographics that require affordable housing and foster partnerships with the registered housing agencies that work with specific cohorts;
- advocate for the local government sector to be effectively engaged by federal and state government in the development of new initiatives for affordable housing;
- advocate to the federal and state governments for increased ongoing and equitable investment in suitable and well-maintained social and affordable housing;
- work with neighbouring councils to address the provision of affordable housing within the Loddon Mallee region;
- advocate to the federal and state governments for the inclusion of social and affordable housing on suitable government-owned land and within significant government-led infrastructure and urban renewal projects.

Council, as a decision maker, will:

- ensure that structure plans consider diverse housing options to reflect demographic change, including smaller dwellings for older people in well-serviced locations;
- share information about the needs of priority housing cohorts, including people with disability, across Council endorsed strategies and plans;
- where legislation exists, consider matters prescribed by the Victorian Government for affordable housing provision, including need, location, type, and longevity;
- where legislation exists, ensure that affordable housing developments are:
 - indistinguishable from surrounding dwellings;
 - designed to respect the townships' character;

- designed to maximise environmentally sustainable design (ESD) principles;
- designed to minimise energy costs to the resident;
- designed to minimise future maintenance costs to the owner;
- established to minimise the future costs of communal services and body corporate fees;
- convenient to public transport;
- convenient to services, employment, schools, and shops;
- designed to contain dwellings suitable for a range of tenants of all ages and abilities, and from individuals to families;
- designed to incorporate the principles of universal design.

Council, as a facilitator and investor, will:

- seek out and engage with registered housing agencies, landowners, developers, service providers and other key stakeholders to build relationships, broker partnerships, and encourage funding applications that increase local affordable housing supply and improve support for households living in social and affordable housing;
- share information, data analysis and best practice with the Victorian Government, developers and registered housing agencies to strengthen the shared understanding of housing needs in the Macedon Ranges;
- ensure, where Council land is sold or leased to a registered housing agency, they will be required to demonstrate:
 - an ongoing commitment to provide affordable housing within the Macedon Ranges;
 - an understanding of the specific needs and expectations of households in the municipality;
 - a proven record of providing and managing housing for very low-, low- and moderate- income households;
 - demonstrated ability to secure on going funding; and

- demonstrated good governance;
- collaborate with the Loddon Mallee councils to implement the Loddon Mallee Housing Action Plan in the Macedon Ranges;
- actively participate in inter-council forums and work with peak bodies, such as the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), to collectively contribute towards addressing common affordable housing related matters across the region/metropolitan area or across the state as they arise;
- investigate planning policy controls to leverage affordable housing outcomes including:
 - requiring an affordable housing report as part of any rezoning proposal or significant application;
 - pursuing voluntarily negotiated agreements for the inclusion of affordable housing on appropriate development sites as part of planning scheme amendment rezoning and planning permit applications;
- apply the existing Asset Management Framework to seniors' housing that are Council owned or managed, to assess future investment and work with registered housing agencies and stakeholders to assess the need to renew or rebuild existing low-cost housing in the shire;
- partner with registered housing agencies to seek Victorian Government funding to renew and, where appropriate, expand Council-owned or managed housing stock
- work with the Victorian Government to identify, assess, plan and develop underused land owned by the Victorian Government or Council, where this land can be used to deliver additional affordable housing in shire.

Background for Policy

Macedon Ranges Shire Council recognises that housing is a human right for every person. Being able to access affordable and appropriate housing assists people to secure and maintain a job, keep families safe, raise happy and healthy children, enjoy a better standard of living and contribute to their community. Locating homes close to services, transport options, parks and open space, civic infrastructure and retail areas increases quality of life, and encourages and facilitates residents to age in place and help to reduce the environmental footprint.

There is a clear relationship between housing and wellbeing, and access to appropriate housing has a multitude of broader benefits, from better health and wellbeing outcomes to improved learning outcomes for children attending school. It also delivers significant economic benefits, including greater competitiveness through more efficient local labour markets.

Housing looks different for individuals, couples and families. As people move through life stages their needs change – health, relationships and employment can influence the type of housing people need, their living arrangements and what they can afford. Providing a diverse set of housing types and sizes helps to accommodate the many different household demographics and their individual housing needs.

People on very low- to moderate-incomes, including students, artists, childcare workers, nurses, teachers, police officers, hospitality and service workers, are critical to our shire's prosperity and diversity. However, in Macedon Ranges, housing costs have risen significantly relative to incomes, with affordable rental and homeownership options increasingly out of reach for current residents as well as for those seeking a new life in the community. Construction costs are rising, and there is a limited supply of new land. The share of 'market affordable' housing is declining and there is a need for policies and interventions to increase the supply of other types of affordable housing.

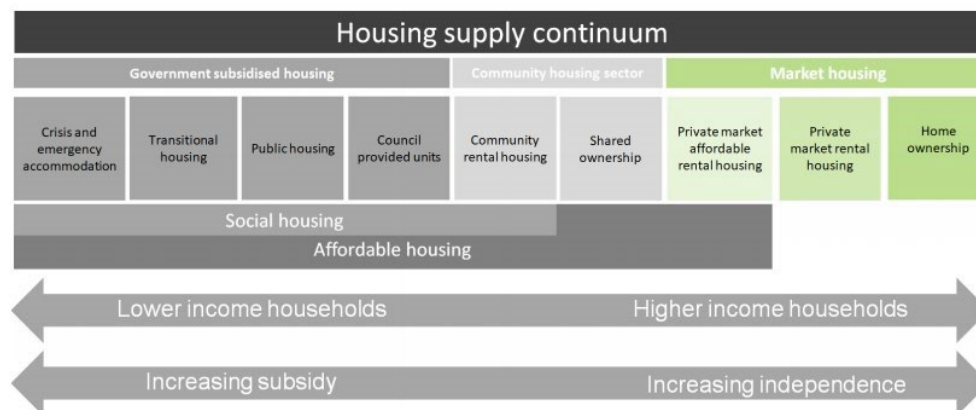
Within the Macedon Ranges, the primary segment of the community that require access to affordable housing options are those that fall within the low- and very-low-income households. This often compromises young people and first-time buyers, people in lone person or single parent households, key workers, persons with a disability or mental illness, Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islanders, people born in non-English or English as a second language-speaking families, older people, those experiencing homelessness and people outside of paid employment. Gendered experiences of economic insecurity, such as the gendered pay, wealth and superannuation gaps also make access to affordable housing particularly difficult for women.

What is affordable housing?

Affordable housing is defined in Section 3AA of the Victorian *Planning and Environment Act 1987* as housing, that is appropriate for the housing needs of any of the following –

- a) Very low-income households;
- b) Low income households;
- c) Moderate income households.

Within the Macedon Ranges Affordable Housing Policy, affordable housing is seen as existing along a continuum, where the level of assistance or subsidy required is highest at one end of the continuum, progressively decreasing to the other end.



This includes affordable homes for purchase (including higher density and more diverse housing); affordable private rental; and social housing. Our community requires a range of housing types to cater for the needs of all households.

Private market affordable rental housing; Private market rental housing; and Home ownership are in the 'Market Housing' category, furthest to the right of the spectrum. This is housing provided on the open market.

Social housing is a subset of affordable housing. This term typically refers to housing that is owned by government or a not-for-profit organisation (Housing Associations or Housing Providers which are collectively referred to as 'Registered Housing Agencies') and made available at affordable rents for eligible households.

Public housing owned by the Victorian Government is generally made available to the lowest income groups and households with the highest needs, who are homeless, escaping or have escaped family violence, with a disability or significant support needs or with special housing needs. Government also funds crisis and emergency housing.

Council-provided units are housing that is owned or managed by Council, and made available at affordable rents to eligible households.

Why is affordable housing important?

The long-term costs of underproviding public, social and affordable housing for those who cannot access safe, secure and affordable housing can include:

- poor health outcomes, leading to increased costs incurred by public health institutions and greater personal expenditure on health-related issues;
- greater incidence of criminal and anti-social behaviours leading to increased costs for law enforcement, courts and incarceration, as well as in the case of victims of domestic violence, the costs of crisis care, specialist homelessness services, and child-protection;
- reduced human capital and employment outcomes;
- lost productivity due to less efficient labour markets; and
- reduced community diversity, inclusion and equity.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Affordable housing	In line with the Planning and Environment Act 1987, “ <i>affordable housing is housing, including social housing, that is appropriate for the housing needs of any of the following: very low-income households; low income households; and moderate-income households</i> ”.
Social Housing	In line with the Housing Act 1983, social housing means public housing and housing owned, controlled or managed by a participating registered housing agency
Annual income ranges for very low-, low- and moderate-income households	Annual income ranges defining very low-, low- and moderate-income households are updated every 12 months and reflect the income ranges for affordable housing (but not social housing) for the very low-, low- and moderate-income ranges. Each range is related to the median household income in Regional Victoria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Very Low income is less than 50 percent of the median ● Low is 50–80 percent of the median



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate is 80–120 percent of the median • High is more than 120 percent of the median <p>The income ranges are adjusted annually in February, using the Housing Group of the Consumer Price Index for the December Quarter, published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in the Government Gazette.</p>
Registered housing agencies	As identified on The Registrar of Housing Agencies, under the Housing Act 1983, and fall under two categories – housing associations and housing providers. The Housing Act 1983 provides for housing agencies to be registered as either housing providers or housing associations.
Registered Housing Associations	As at March 2023, there are ten registered housing associations in Victoria. The Public Register contains the details of all housing agencies, including Housing Associations, currently registered under the Housing Act 1983. Housing associations are larger, more complex businesses with the skills, expertise and resources to manage, maintain and grow a viable social housing portfolio. They expand new housing through construction, purchase or acquisition, using a mix of government funds and private sector investment. They also manage housing properties owned by them or leased from other parties, such as Homes Victoria.
Registered Housing Providers	As at March 2023, there are currently 30 registered housing providers in Victoria. Housing providers range in size and primarily manage rental housing portfolios for other parties, such as Homes Victoria. Some housing providers own properties, however their growth is small scale compared with housing associations. Housing providers often specialise in particular client groups which may include disability housing, aged tenants and youth housing.

Related Legislation

- > *Local Government Act 2020*
- > *Housing Act 1983*
- > *Planning and Environment Act 1987*

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Affordable housing policy and legislation

Neither Australian nor Victorian government legislation sets out mandatory requirements for affordable housing. Instead, federal, state, and in some cases, local policy is used to influence investment and decision making around supply.

Federal policy

The **National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation** (NHFIC) is an independent corporate Australian Government entity, established to improve affordable housing outcomes. The NHFIC is responsible for providing low-cost, longer-tenure loans for community housing providers, financing for new housing infrastructure projects and issuing government-guaranteed social bonds for investors. The NHFIC also administers the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme for first home buyers and undertakes independent research into housing demand, supply, and affordability.

The **National Housing and Homelessness Agreement**¹ (NHHA) commenced in July 2018 and provides around \$1.6 billion each year to states and territories to improve access to secure and affordable housing across the housing spectrum. The NHHA provided funding of \$129 million for homelessness services in 2020/21. States and territories match this funding.

To receive funding under the NHHA, state and territory governments must have publicly available housing and homelessness strategies and undertake data collection and reporting.

The housing strategies must address the NHHA housing priority policy areas relevant to the state or territory. The housing priority policy areas include:

- affordable housing
- social housing
- encouraging growth and supporting the viability of the community housing sector
- tenancy reform
- homeownership
- planning and zoning reform initiatives.

The NHHA identifies priority homelessness cohorts as:

- women and children affected by family and domestic violence
- children and young people
- Indigenous Australians

¹ [National Housing and Homelessness Agreement | Department of Social Services, Australian Government \(dss.gov.au\)](https://www.dss.gov.au) accessed March 2023.



- people experiencing repeat homelessness
- people exiting from care or institutions into homelessness
- older people.

Affordable housing supply should reflect the differing needs of these priority cohorts.

The **Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) Bill** was introduced to parliament in February 2023. The HAFF Bill is intended to give effect to the Australian Government's commitment to establish a \$10 billion HAFF to fund the delivery of 30,000 social and affordable homes and allocate an additional \$330 million to acute housing needs over the HAFF's first five years. As at March 2023, the Bill has not been passed.²

Victorian Government policy

Victoria's Infrastructure Strategy 2021–2051

In August 2021, *Victoria's Infrastructure Strategy 2021–2051* was presented to the Victorian Parliament for tabling. This updated strategy builds on the work of the first cross-sectoral infrastructure strategy delivered in 2016.

Infrastructure Victoria, the infrastructure advisory group to the Victorian Government, included 'Develop regional Victoria' as one of four sections in the strategy³. Infrastructure Victoria recommend that the government expands social housing with good access into regional locations.

The strategy contains 94 recommendations for projects, policies and reforms, spanning many types of infrastructure. The strategy is divided into four themes focused on:

- confronting long-term challenges
- managing urban change
- harnessing infrastructure for productivity and growth
- developing regional Victoria.

The recommendations relevant to affordable housing include:

- **Recommendation 36:** Use value-capture mechanisms to deliver very low-income housing. Within the next two years, change and actively apply planning regulations to provide affordable rental housing for Victorians on very low incomes in places with good access to public transport and services, when they are re-zoned for more intensive residential use.

² https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation accessed March 2023

³ [Infrastructure Victoria, Victoria's infrastructure strategy 2021-2051, 2021](#)



- **Recommendation 68:** Set targets to grow social housing. In the next year, set a transparent state-wide social housing growth target to reach and maintain at least the national average of 4.5 social housing dwellings for every 100 households by 2031.
- **Recommendation 93:** Expand social housing in regional centres, in locations with good access. Focus social housing investments in regional centres, near transport and services, for better access to health, social and economic support.
- **Recommendation 94:** Make social housing suitable for changing local climates. Continue to deliver a long-term program of modifying social housing to be climate resilient by improving the energy efficiency and energy affordability of residences.

Homes for Victorians 2017

The Victorian Government has indicated that it is developing a 10-year social and affordable housing strategy that was to be released in late 2021. This has not yet been released, and there is no indication for when this will occur.

Homes for Victorians (2017) is the Victorian Government's response to the housing affordability crisis in Victoria and is the current housing strategy.

Victoria's Big Housing Build

Announced in November 2020, the Big Housing Build program is a \$5.3 billion investment in social and affordable housing, and will deliver over 12,000 new dwellings, including 9,300 new social housing dwellings and replacing 1,100 existing dwellings. The investment, delivered throughout metropolitan and regional Victoria, will boost total social housing supply by 10 per cent.

The Big Housing Build will invest 25 per cent (\$1.25 billion) of the total \$5.3 billion program across regional Victoria.

Building social and affordable housing in regional Victoria responds to the increasing population in Victoria's growth areas and creates more rental housing to support employment growth in regional towns and cities.

The Big Housing Build provides a minimum investment commitment to regional local government areas (LGAs) that have a significant regional town or city, or have high population growth. Eighteen LGAs have been identified for the minimum investment guarantee, with \$765 million committed across these areas. Macedon Ranges Shire has been earmarked to receive a minimum investment of \$30 million.

Councils that identify opportunities – such as on underused council land – are encouraged to work with community housing providers to develop partnership proposals. Community housing providers are key delivery partners in this package and can work with councils to develop projects and seek funding for these through Big Housing Build funding streams.

Amendments VC187 and VC190 (gazetted December 2020) introduced changes to the Victorian Planning Provisions and all planning schemes to streamline the rapid delivery of social and affordable housing.



Amendment VC187 (clause 53.20)

This amendment introduces a new provision where the planning permit application process for housing by or on behalf of the Director of Housing is streamlined.

The Minister for Energy, Environment, and Climate Change is the responsible authority for assessing the development of 10 or more dwellings and apartments. Proposals for less than 10 dwellings will be assessed by the local council.

Amendment VC190 (clause 52.20)

This amendment introduces a new provision for projects delivered through the Big Housing Build program. The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change is the responsible authority for assessing all proposals made under this new provision.

The Big Housing Build at a glance

Victoria's largest-ever investment in social and affordable housing.

<p>Investing \$5.3 billion in more homes for more Victorians</p>	<p>2,900 new affordable and market homes for first home buyers and renters</p>	<p>More than 9,300 new social housing dwellings</p>
<p>2,000 more Victorians with mental health issues will have a home</p>	<p>A gender equity plan to get more women into construction</p>	<p>All new homes will meet 7 star NatHERS efficiency standards</p>
<p>10% increase in social housing dwellings</p>	<p>25% of investment will be in rural and regional Victoria</p>	<p>12,000+ new homes across Victoria</p>
<p>10% of work on large projects to be done by apprentices, cadets and trainees</p>	<p>10% of all net new social dwellings will support Aboriginal housing needs</p>	<p>Homes Victoria established to make the Big Housing Build a reality</p>



Social and Affordable Housing Compact⁴

In 2020 the Victorian Government called for the development of a Social and Affordable Housing Compact (Compact) with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV). The Compact is intended to establish a partnership with the state government to address the broad range of housing issues faced by councils and engage the broad range of state government agencies that influence social and affordable housing. As at March 2023, the Compact has not been completed.

Regional plans

The Victorian Government provided funding for the development of a **Loddon-Mallee Housing Action Plan** (the action plan) that addresses issues relating to the provision of additional housing across the Loddon-Mallee Region, and identifies strategies to address the critical housing needs of the region. The action plan was completed in late 2022 and will be considered by the 10 councils in the region in due course. As at March 2023 the action plan has not been adopted by Council.

Macedon Ranges Shire Council policy

Macedon Ranges Shire Council endorsed an **Affordable Housing Interim Policy** in December 2021. Beyond this, the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme includes local policy that encourages the provision of responsive and affordable housing, and a diversity of lot sizes and styles to meet the requirements of all age groups, household types, lifestyles and preference within the shire's towns. It promotes a range of housing options to improve housing affordability in the larger towns, with a particular focus on Kyneton.

Legislation

Several Acts are relevant to affordable housing in Victoria. The most relevant are the:

- *Local Government Act 2020* (LG Act)
- *Housing Act 1983* (Housing Act)
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (PE Act)

Local Government Act 2020

The LG Act provides the legal framework in which Victorian councils operate. It controls the sale and leasing of council-owned land, procurement of goods and services by a council, the administration of public open space, and governance and probity requirements for councils.

Housing Act 1983

The Housing Act has the broad objective of ensuring every person in Victoria has adequate and appropriate housing. The Housing Act, together with the Office of the Housing Registrar, provides the framework for the establishment, compliance, and recognition of registered housing agencies.

⁴ <https://www.mav.asn.au/news-resources/campaigns/social-and-affordable-housing> accessed March 2023



Planning and Environment Act 1987

The PE Act provides a framework for the administration of the use and development of land. It has an objective (Section 4):

1(fa) to facilitate the provision of affordable housing in Victoria.

The PE Act establishes a regulatory planning framework for planning the use, development, and protection of land in Victoria in the present and long-term interests of all Victorians.

Section 4 (1) of the PE Act sets out a series of objectives for planning in Victoria, the following of which are particularly relevant in the context of this interim policy statement:

- To provide for the fair, orderly, economic, and sustainable use, and development of land
- To secure a pleasant, efficient, and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians and visitors to Victoria
- To protect public utilities and other assets and enable the orderly provision and coordination of public utilities and other facilities for the benefit of the community
- To balance the present and future interests of all Victorians.

Section 4 (2) of the PE Act sets out the objectives for the planning framework in Victoria. These objectives establish a system of planning schemes as a way of setting out policies and controls for regulating the use, development, and protection of land. The following objectives are specifically relevant in the context of this policy statement:

- To ensure that the effects on the environment are considered and provide for explicit consideration of social and economic effects when decisions are made about the use and development of land
- Encourages the achievement of planning objectives through positive actions by responsible authorities and planning authorities.

The **Planning Policy Framework** (PPF) contained within all Victorian planning schemes deals with affordable housing at clause 16 (Housing), which states:

Planning for housing should include providing land for affordable housing.

Clause 16.01-2 (Housing Affordability) provides further direction in relation to affordable housing, and includes delivering more affordable housing closer to jobs, transport, and services with a series of strategies to implement this objective.



Appendix: The Big Housing Build explained

Homes Victoria manages four streams of funding, which are described on their website⁵ as follows:

- \$532 million – constructing new homes on public land. Homes Victoria land across Melbourne is the ideal asset to convert to social and affordable housing. Work has commenced at six Homes Victoria sites, and they are now ready for regeneration. [NB: this funding is tagged for metropolitan projects]
- \$948 million – working with the private sector to spot-purchase homes, projects in progress or ready to build. To ensure Homes Victoria can add to the supply of social and affordable housing quickly, they will be working with developers and construction firms, to identify appropriate, existing housing developments it can acquire, provided they are up to a suitable standard and well located. This may also include working with the private sector to identify suitable developments that may be partially complete, or which may not otherwise progress.
- \$1.38 billion – funding for projects by the community housing sector. The community housing sector is uniquely placed to lend its expertise and experience to Victoria's Big Housing Build. The Social Housing Growth Fund will invite proposals from community housing providers for new social and affordable housing developments to add to the available supply and help provide more homes for more Victorians.
- \$2.14 billion – funding for new opportunities with private sector and community housing partners. As the Big Housing Build rolls out, Homes Victoria want to maximise opportunities for the best value and best outcomes for Victoria. Homes Victoria will explore building on Victorian Government land sites; as well as engaging with the market to identify new sites, new ideas, new opportunities and ways to build more homes. Homes Victoria will pursue opportunities to partner with industry, community housing providers, local government and institutional investors to identify new projects that deliver homes across the State.

The \$5.3 billion allocation for the Big Housing Build is split as follows. The Homes Victoria webpage also outlines additional spending:

- \$498 million – new construction, upgrades and maintenance to existing housing. We've committed a record amount of money to maintain, refurbish, repair, and build new public housing across Victoria. Work has already begun, and when we're finished, more than 23,000 social housing dwellings will be significantly improved.
- \$185 million – replacing old public housing with new dwellings. The Public Housing Renewal Program is underway with the task of replacing seven major public estates with completely new, modern, attractive and energy efficient dwellings. It will generate \$1.29 billion in construction and economic activity.

⁵ [Homes Victoria | Big Housing Build, homes.vic.gov.au/big-housing-build](https://www.homes.vic.gov.au/big-housing-build), Accessed March 2023



Macedon Ranges Shire affordable housing profile

The following data is drawn from the ABS 2021 Census of Population and Housing where available. Some housing data is not yet available and where this is the case 2016 data has been utilised.

Mortgage profile in the Macedon Ranges Shire

In 2021, 43 per cent of the Macedon Ranges Shire's households were purchasing their dwelling, compared to 31.5 per cent in regional Victoria. While the Macedon Ranges Shire had a higher proportion of households with a mortgage, this varied with proportions ranging from 30 per cent in Kyneton to 51.3 per cent in the Romsey district. The five areas with the highest percentages of housing purchase were:

- Romsey district (51.3 per cent) and Romsey (51.1 per cent)
- Riddells Creek (48.8 per cent)
- Gisborne (47.6 per cent) and Gisborne district (46.4 per cent).

Comparison of the monthly housing loan repayments of households in the Macedon Ranges Shire and regional Victoria shows that in 2016 there was a larger proportion of households paying high mortgage repayments (\$2,600 per month or more), and a smaller proportion of households with low mortgage repayments (less than \$1,200 per month). Overall, 20.8 per cent of households were paying high mortgage repayments (in 2021 this was 26.8 per cent), and 23.3 per cent were paying low repayments (18.3 per cent in 2021). This compared with 9 per cent (11 per cent in 2021) and 38.8 per cent respectively in regional Victoria.

The major differences between the household loan repayments of the Macedon Ranges Shire and regional Victoria were in 2016:

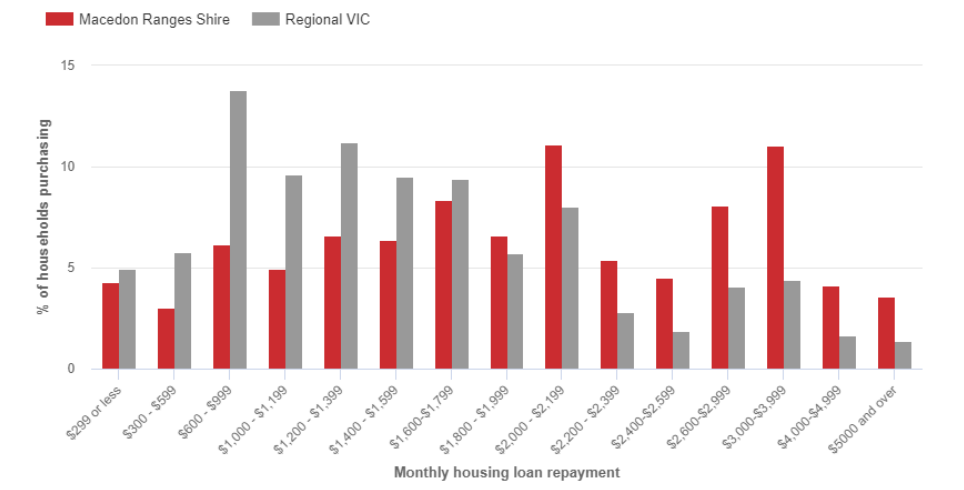
Household loan repayments	Macedon Ranges Shire	Regional Victoria
\$600–\$999	8.1 per cent	15.8 per cent
\$1,000–\$1,199	6.4 per cent	10.7 per cent
\$1,200–\$1,399	8.2 per cent	11.8 per cent
\$3,000–\$3,999	8.6 per cent	3.5 per cent

Table 1. Household loan repayments - Source: ABS 2016 Census

Data from the 2021 Census on weekly mortgage payments is shown in the chart below



Monthly housing loan repayments, 2021



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2021 (Enumerated data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id (informed decisions).

Mortgage repayments are directly related to house prices, length of occupancy and the level of equity of homeowners. When viewed with household income data, mortgage repayment data may also indicate the level of housing stress. In mortgage belt areas, it is expected that households will be paying a higher proportion of their income on their housing compared to well-established areas. First home buyer areas are also likely to have larger mortgages than areas where households move in with equity from elsewhere.

Mortgage payment levels are not directly comparable over time, because of inflation.

Mortgage stress in the Macedon Ranges Shire

In 2021, households where mortgage costs were greater than 30 per cent of income ranged from 6.7 per cent in Woodend to 13.2 per cent in Romsey district. Overall, mortgage costs exceed 30 per cent of income in 11.2 per cent of households both in Macedon Ranges and in regional Victoria. The locations with the highest percentage of households with mortgage costs of 30 per cent of income were:

- Romsey district (13.2 per cent) and Romsey (13.0 per cent)
- Macedon and Mount Macedon district (12.3 per cent)
- Riddells Creek district (12.1 per cent)
- Kyneton (11.9 per cent)



Rental profile in the Macedon Ranges Shire

Macedon Ranges Shire has fewer renters, compared to regional Victoria. In 2016, 11.8 per cent of Macedon Ranges Shire households were renting their dwelling from a private landlord or estate agent (2021: 11.6 per cent) compared to 19.1 per cent in regional Victoria (2021: 19.5 per cent). While Macedon Ranges Shire had a lower proportion of households who were renting privately, this varied across the shire. Proportions ranged from 8.8 per cent in Mount Macedon to 20.7 per cent in Kyneton and 6.7 per cent in Mount Macedon to 21.6 per cent in Kyneton in 2021. The five areas with the highest percentages were:

- Kyneton (20.7 per cent) and Kyneton district (14.8 per cent)
- Woodend (15.6 per cent)
- Lancefield (16.0 per cent)
- Gisborne (15.0 per cent).

In 2021, the five areas with the highest percentages were:

- Kyneton (21.6 per cent) and Kyneton district (14.4 per cent)
- Woodend (15.8 per cent)
- Gisborne (14.7 per cent)
- Riddells Creek (12.3 per cent).

The major differences between the housing rental payments of the Macedon Ranges Shire and regional Victoria were:

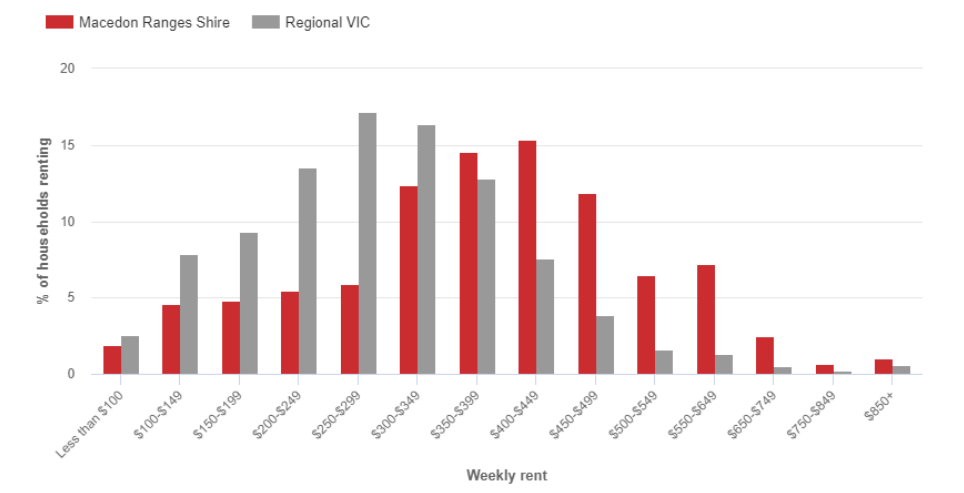
Weekly housing rental payments	Macedon Ranges Shire	Regional Victoria
\$150–\$199	4.7 per cent	14.6 per cent
\$200–\$249	8.8 per cent	18.5 per cent
\$250–\$299	12.3 per cent	19 per cent
\$350–\$399	16.5 per cent	6.7 per cent

Table 2. Rental payments - Source: ABS 2016 Census

Data from the 2021 Census on weekly rental payments is demonstrated in the chart below:



Weekly housing rental payments, 2021



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2021 (Enumerated data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id (informed decisions).

Profile of households experiencing rental stress

Households are commonly said to be in housing stress if they have moderate or lower incomes and spend 30 per cent of more of their income on housing (moderate stress) or 50 per cent or more of their income on housing (severe stress).

SGS Economics and Planning (SGS) has used a housing assistance demand (HAD) model to measure the number of renter households who are experiencing housing stress or would experience housing stress if they did not live in social and affordable housing in the Macedon Ranges Shire. A proportion of these households are likely to need social or affordable housing.

The SGS HAD model uses Census statistics to quantify the number of households in rental stress (paying more than 30 per cent of their income on rent), and who are classified as having very low-, low- or moderate-incomes based on the income bands defined under S3AB of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

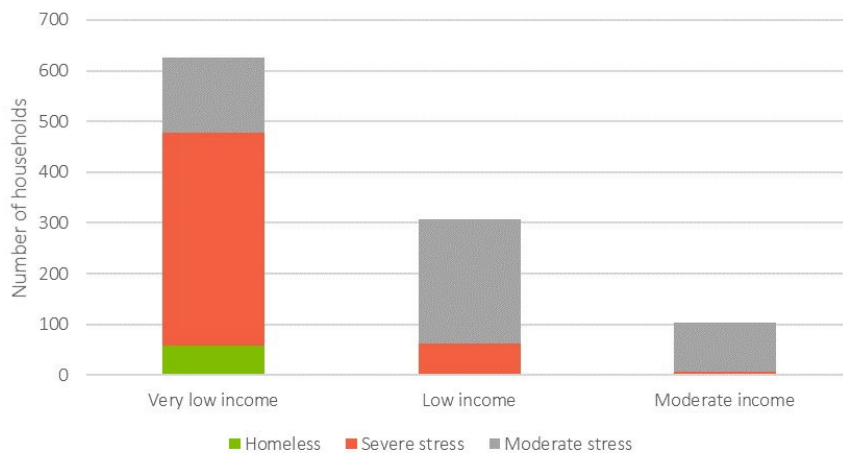
Households in rental stress are categorised by demographic and spatial variables. The number of households in need of assistance is then forecast, subject to factors such as population growth, demographic shifts, household incomes, and rental rates.

The data suggests that in the Macedon Ranges Shire in 2016 there were a total of 1,036 households in rental stress, with 487 households in moderate stress and 490 households in severe stress or homeless. This represents 5.9 per cent of all households in the Macedon Ranges Shire.

Figure 1 below shows the number of households at different income levels experiencing rental stress in 2016. The highest proportion fell into the very low-income band, with 429 of the 625 households in severe stress.



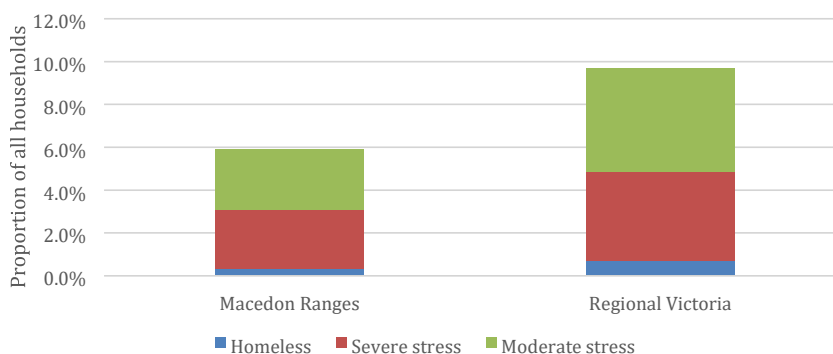
Figure 1: Households in rental stress or homeless in the Macedon Ranges Shire (2016)



Source: SGS 2021 using ABS 2016 Census

In 2016, the proportion of households in the Macedon Ranges Shire experiencing rental stress was lower than that in regional Victoria (defined as all local government areas {LGAs} outside of metropolitan Melbourne). The Macedon Ranges Shire had 5.9 per cent of all households in rental stress or homeless, compared to 9.7 per cent in regional Victoria. Rates of severe stress and moderate stress were also both higher in regional Victoria (4.2 per cent vs 2.8 per cent, and 4.8 per cent vs 2.8 per cent respectively).

Figure 2: Rental stress in the Macedon Ranges Shire compared to regional Victoria



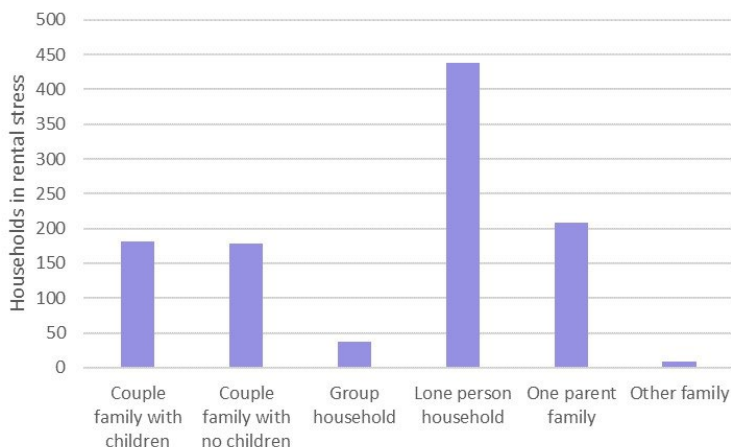
Source: SGS 2021 using 2016 ABS Census

Of households experiencing moderate and severe rental stress or homeless in 2016 in the Macedon Ranges Shire, lone person households were the dominant household type with 432 households in this category (see Figure 3). The second most dominant type was one parent families with 202



households in rental stress. There were also moderate numbers of couples with children (181 households) and couples without children (177 households) in rental stress. Relatively low numbers of group households (36) and other family (8) were in rental stress.

Figure 3: Household type of households in rental stress in the Macedon Range Shire (2016)



Source: SGS 2021 using ABS 2016 Census

Homeless persons

In 2021, it is estimated that there were 83 people in the Macedon Ranges Shire experiencing homelessness or overcrowding on Census night. The types of accommodation those people had on Census night were:

- 0% squats, tents or sleeping out
- 0% boarding houses
- 18.8% severely crowded dwellings
- 31.8% temporary with other households
- 49.4% supported accommodation.¹

In Macedon Ranges Shire, 296 people received specialist homelessness services in 2021-22. This included 211 females and 85 males (noting that these people may be either homeless or at risk of being homeless). This is a decrease from 2019-20, where a total of 449 individuals were receiving support (277 females and 100 males).

¹ Estimates prepared by Australian Bureau of Statistics based on the 2021 Census. Source: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/housing/estimating-homelessness-census/latest-release>



This cohort includes people sleeping rough, living in emergency or temporary accommodation – including people staying with friends and relatives – and people living in severely overcrowded dwellings.

The ABS statistical definition of homelessness is ‘... when a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives, they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate;
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable;
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations’.

Social Housing

There are 342 social housing dwellings in the Macedon Ranges, which is about 1.7 per cent of total dwellings.

While the Macedon Ranges Shire had a lower proportion of households who are renting from a government authority, this varied across the shire. Proportions ranged from zero per cent in Lancefield to 4.5 per cent in Kyneton. The five areas with the highest percentages were:

- Kyneton (4.5 per cent) and Kyneton district (2.5 per cent)
- Woodend (3.7 per cent) and Woodend district (2.0 per cent)
- Gisborne (1.3 per cent)

Households on the Victorian Housing Register²

In Victoria, social housing allocations are managed via a waiting list for which people eligible for assistance can register their interest.

The Victorian Government has developed the Victorian Housing Register, which is a housing list where eligible people can register and nominate location preferences for housing assistance. Applicants cannot nominate a particular registered housing agency but can indicate their preference for public housing or community housing assistance.

The register is updated regularly and reporting on the transfer list by local area is generated every three months. The report provides the number of people waiting to move and transfer to a social housing property.³

In the Victorian Housing Register, the Macedon Ranges Shire data falls within the Loddon (Bendigo) area of the north division.

² Adapted with permission: SGS Economics and Planning *Social and Affordable Housing Issues Paper prepared for Mount Alexander Shire*, 2019

³ <https://housing.vic.gov.au/victorian-housing-register>



As of June 2022 there were approximately 750 people on the Register within the Macedon Ranges. The proportion of household type awaiting is as follows:-

- Single households - 33.4 per cent
- Single Parent - 30.2 per cent
- Elderly Single - 25.6 per cent
- Group Households - 3.7 per cent
- Youth - 3.2 per cent
- Couple with Children - 1.9 per cent
- Elderly Couple - 1.4 per cent
- Couple no children - 0.6 per cent

Estimating demand for social and affordable housing

Analysis of the 2021 rental stress estimates was carried out, to understand how the need for housing assistance in the Macedon Ranges Shire aligns with the number of people in housing stress.

Not all households estimated to be in rental stress will need access to social or affordable housing. Previous research indicates several reasons why households might choose housing that placed them within the technical definition of housing stress⁴.

Households may voluntarily enter a situation where they pay more than 30 per cent of their income on housing to live in:

- a better house
- a better neighbourhood
- a location where other households expenses such as transport costs are lower.

This research also notes that it is normal for some households to experience temporary periods of housing stress. This can be due to temporary changes in circumstances such as the birth of a child, short term unemployment, or adjusting to the breakdown of a relationship. Consideration of these factors would suggest that measured housing stress, using the 30 per cent of income threshold, could overestimate the actual number of households that are likely to be experiencing housing stress in the longer term.

⁴ Rowley and Ong 2014, *Do current measures of housing affordability reflect wellbeing?* Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Research and Policy Bulletin No 166



More recent research has been conducted, suggesting that there is likely to be additional demand for affordable housing from households unable to form under current market conditions⁵.

These 'unformed' households might include:

- younger family members that would prefer to leave the parental home but cannot afford to;
- elderly family members that must live with other family members to have affordable accommodation;
- multiple families occupying a single dwelling.

These research findings show that the prevalence of housing stress does not neatly align with the need for housing assistance. Some of the factors identified above would inflate the need and others would deflate it. On the balance of evidence, a small discount has been applied by SGS to derive an estimate of the actual need according to household income.

No discount was applied to people in social housing or those experiencing homelessness, since all those households require housing assistance.

Based on these calculations, the estimate for social and affordable housing requirements in 2016 was approximately 1,190 dwellings. This equates to 6.7 per cent of all households in the Macedon Ranges Shire (if homeless people are included in the household count).

A case may be made that moderate-income households require 'affordable' dwellings rather than social housing. Excluding those who have moderate incomes, about 1,100 social housing dwellings were required to address social housing need in the shire. This includes the 277 households that were recorded as living in social housing in the Macedon Ranges Shire in the ABS 2016 Census.

⁵ Rowley, Leishman, Baker, Bentley and Lester 2017, *Modelling housing need in Australia to 2025*, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Final Report No 287



Household type	No of households	Minimum target	Need for housing assistance	Need as a per cent of all households
Homeless	59	100 per cent	59	0.3 per cent
Social housing households	277	100 per cent	277	1.6 per cent
Very low-income households	566	90 per cent	510	2.9 per cent
Low-income households	307	85 per cent	261	1.5 per cent
Moderate-income households	104	80 per cent	83	0.5 per cent
Total	1,313		1,190	6.7 per cent

Table 3: Need for social and affordable housing in the Macedon Ranges Shire (2016) - Source: SGS 2021 using ABS 2016 Census

Forecast social and affordable housing needs

SGS has forecast demand for social and affordable housing to 2036 in the shire under two scenarios: a base case, and a pessimistic scenario.

Base case

Under the base case, the incomes and rents of household are set to grow proportionally. Under this scenario, demand for social housing will increase mainly due to growth of population in the LGA.

In 2036, it is estimated that, under the base case, the minimum requirement to address the actual demand will be around 1,740 households or 6.8 per cent of all households. Excluding moderate income households, the need would be approximately 1,615 households.



Household type	No of households	Minimum target	Need for housing assistance	Need as a per cent of all households
Homeless	92	100 per cent	92	0.4 per cent
Social housing households	277	100 per cent	277	1.1 per cent
Very low-income households	964	90 per cent	867	3.4 per cent
Low-income households	446	85 per cent	379	1.5 per cent
Moderate-income households	154	80 per cent	123	0.5 per cent
Total	1,933		1,740	6.8 per cent

Table 4: Base case forecast need for social and affordable housing in the Macedon Ranges Shire in 2036 - Source: SGS 2021 using ABS 2016 Census

Pessimistic case

Under the pessimistic scenario, the cost of rent outpaces income growth for five years. With rents increasing at a greater pace than incomes, financial stress increases amongst households. Demand for social and affordable housing increases due to growth in population and increasing financial stress in the LGA.

In 2036, it is estimated that under the base case the minimum requirement to address the actual demand under the pessimistic case would be around 1,789 households or 7 per cent of all households. Excluding moderate income households, the need would be around 1,647 households.



Household type	No of households	Minimum target	Need for housing assistance	Need as a per cent of all households
Homeless	92	100 per cent	92	0.4 per cent
Social housing households	277	100 per cent	277	1.1 per cent
Very low-income households	972	90 per cent	875	3.4 per cent
Low-income households	474	85 per cent	403	1.6 per cent
Moderate-income households	178	80 per cent	142	0.6 per cent
Total	1,993		1,789	7.0 per cent

Table 5: Pessimistic case forecast need for social and affordable housing in the Macedon Ranges Shire in 2036 - Source: SGS 2021 using ABS 2016 Census



Projected change

2016

Household type	No of households	Minimum target	Need for housing assistance	Need as a per cent of all households
Homeless	59	100 per cent	59	0.3 per cent
Social housing households*	277	100 per cent	277	1.6 per cent
Very low-income households	566	90 per cent	510	2.9 per cent
Low-income households	307	85 per cent	261	1.5 per cent
Moderate-income households	104	80 per cent	83	0.5 per cent
Total	1,313		1,190	6.7 per cent

Table 6: Changes in need for affordable housing assistance in 2016–2036 - Source: SGS 2021 using ABS 2016 Census

*Without a confirmed increase in social housing dwellings, modelling allocates additional demand into very low-income households.

Fast facts

The ABS 2021 Census data provides the most comprehensive overview of housing need. The following data includes highlight indicators that have been sourced from more recent publications.

Rental profile December 2022

The December quarter 2022 rental report⁶ indicates that over the previous quarter the median rent in metropolitan Melbourne reduced increased \$10 to \$450 per week but in regional Victoria it remained the same at \$400. In the Macedon Ranges it increased by \$30 to \$500.

⁶ Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services Rental Report June Quarter 2021



Rent at a glance	Median Rent (per week)
Metropolitan Melbourne	\$450
Regional Victoria	\$400
Victoria	\$430
Macedon Ranges	\$500

Table 7. Rental profile - Source: Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services Rental Report June Quarter 2021

* Percentage change figures are calculated from relevant rent index

The rental vacancy rate has stayed relatively stable in regional Victoria (2020–21), though it is understood that rental vacancy rates are lower in the Macedon Ranges Shire than in regional Victoria.

The following table compares metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria vacancy rates.

Rental vacancy rate	June 2020	March 2021	June 2021
Regional Victoria	1.5 per cent	1.2 per cent	1.2 per cent
Metropolitan Melbourne	3.9 per cent	6.4 per cent	5.2 per cent

Table 8. Rental vacancy profile - Source: Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services Rental Report June Quarter 2021



Social housing stock baseline June 2020

Social housing demand, compared with the number of social housing dwellings, is higher in regional Victoria than in metropolitan Melbourne. This reflects, in part, the higher proportion of people experiencing disadvantage in regional areas⁷.

There are 342 social housing dwellings in the Macedon Ranges Shire⁸. The Campaspe Shire, with a comparable population to the Macedon Ranges Shire (37,675 and 46,100 respectively), has 802 social housing dwellings.

LGA	House	Medium density attached	Medium density detached	Low-rise flat	Movable unit	Other	Community owned	Total
Macedon Ranges Shire	124	59	6	0	14	1	138	342
Campaspe Shire	295	293	21	8	10	5	170	802
Central Goldfields Shire	114	116	3	0	11	1	30	275
City of Greater Bendigo	857	855	99	3	45	4	623	2,486
Loddon Shire	7	28	2	15	3	0	17	72

Table 9: Director of Housing-owned units (including leased and other director-managed units) and community-owned dwellings by LGA at July 2022 - Source: Victorian Government, Housing Assistance Additional Service Delivery Data 2019-2020 Updated June 2022

Growth and building approvals

The population of the Macedon Ranges Shire is projected, based on 2021 data, to increase by 24.16 per cent over the next 15 years (2021–36)⁹. To meet this growth, a further 6,981 dwellings are needed¹⁰.

⁷ Infrastructure Victoria Victorias-infrastructure-strategy-2021-2051-Vol 1

⁸ Victorian Government, Housing Assistance Additional Service Delivery Data 2019-2020 Updated 12 July 2021

⁹ [Home | Macedon Ranges Shire | Population forecast \(id.com.au\)](#), accessed August 2021

¹⁰ [Dwellings and development map | Macedon Ranges Shire | Population forecast \(id.com.au\)](#)



The value of all building approvals (private development) in the Macedon Ranges Shire was \$241 million in the 2020–21 financial year, with \$166.48 million for residential development (328 residential buildings)¹¹.

By comparison, the Victorian Government will invest a minimum \$35 million in the Macedon Ranges Shire for affordable housing development. The investment in affordable housing is relatively small compared to overall housing growth and projected demand.

Population profile

Detailed demographic information about the Macedon Ranges population is available on Council's website at mrc.vic.gov.au/See-Do/Our-Region/Population-Profile.

A brief summary of key statistics about the Macedon Ranges Shire population, from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 Census is provided below:¹²

People	Number	%
Male	25,353	49.3
Female	26,111	50.7

Indigenous status	Number	%
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	481	0.9
Non-Indigenous	48,565	94.4
Indigenous status not stated	2,412	4.7%

Seniors	Number	%
People aged 0-54	34,622	67.4
People aged over 55	16,832	32.6

¹¹ [Economic profile | Macedon Ranges | economy.id](#)

¹² <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA24130> accessed March 2023



Household composition	Number	%
Family households	14,147	78.3
Single (or lone) person households	3,610	20.0
Group households	302	1.7

In 2018, around 1 in 6 (18%) people in Australia – or about 4.4 million – had a disability. This is also known as 'disability prevalence'. Another 22% (or 5.5 million) of people in Australia had a long-term health condition but no disability, and the remaining 60% (or 14.8 million) had no disability or long-term health condition.¹³

¹³ <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/disability/disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-findings/latest-release> accessed March 2023.



Overview of affordable housing

The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (PE Act) defines affordable housing as:

‘...housing, including social housing that is appropriate for the housing needs of any of the following:

- very low-income households
- low-income households
- moderate-income households.’

The income ranges for households are defined under the PE Act and are indexed annually, using the Australian Bureau of Statistics housing category of the Consumer Price Index.

In 2022, the annual income ranges for regional Victoria were:

	Very low-income	Low-income	Moderate-income
Single	Up to \$19,090	\$19,091 to \$30,550	\$30,551 to \$45,820
Couple (no dependents)	Up to \$28,640	\$28,641 to \$45,820	\$45,821 to \$68,730
Family (Single/ couple with dependent children)	Up to \$40,090	\$40,091 to \$64,150	\$64,151 to \$96,220

Table 1. Annual income ranges defined under the PE Act

Types of affordable housing¹

Affordable housing refers to both non-private housing (rental) and private market housing (ownership and rental) for households that are on very low-, low-, or moderate-incomes and includes the following.

Affordable housing for rental or ownership

Private market housing may be affordable for very low-, low- or moderate-income households where the rent or mortgage repayments are no more than 30 per cent of the household’s income. Generally, this type of housing includes housing that falls outside of the ownership of state and community sectors.

Social housing

Social housing is short- and long-term rental housing that is owned and run by the government or not-for-profit agencies. It is for people on low incomes who need housing, especially those who have recently experienced homelessness, family violence or have other special needs.

Social housing includes public housing and community housing.

¹ [Community housing | Housing.vic.gov.au](#), accessed August 2021



Public housing

Public housing is rental housing that is owned, controlled and managed by the Victorian Government’s Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH). Public housing tenants are on the Victorian Housing Register and must be on very low- to low-household incomes.

Public housing rents are usually limited to 25 per cent of the tenants’ income. Tenure is not time limited, but tenants are subject to meeting rental conditions as set by DFFH.

Community housing

Community housing is rental housing owned, managed or controlled by registered housing agencies. The housing is generally targeted towards very low to moderate incomes or special need households. Registered housing agencies are expected to take up to 50 per cent of new tenants for government funded properties from the Victorian Housing Register.²

The main providers in the community housing sector are:

- **registered housing associations** that develop, own and manage rental housing properties
- **registered housing providers** that primarily manage rental housing that is owned by other organisations.

Most of this housing is longer-term accommodation for families and individuals who are not able to afford or access the private rental market.

Many providers of community housing incorporate local services and tenant support services that are available for the tenants’ uses. Rents are generally limited to 30 per cent of the household income.

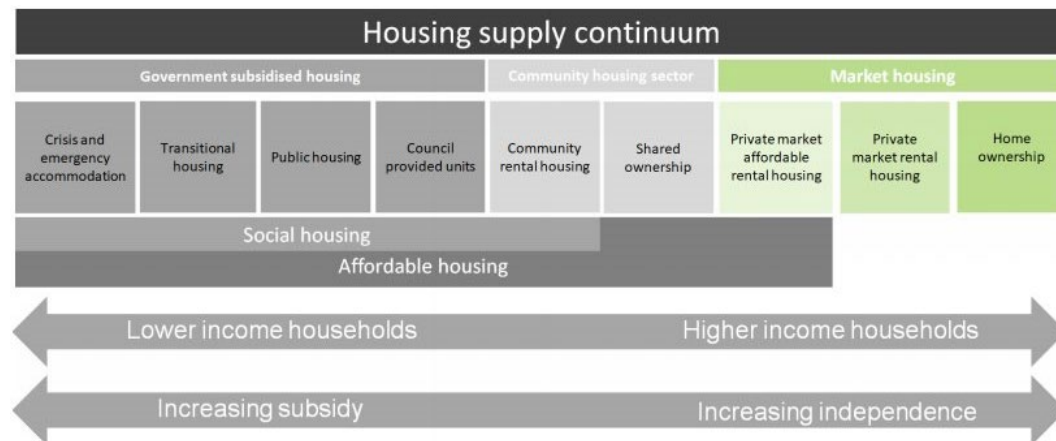


Figure 1. The housing supply continuum

² <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/community-housing> accessed March 2023



Registered housing agencies³

As at March 2023, there are 10 registered housing associations and 30 registered housing providers (see Table 5 at page 8). Registered housing agencies own or manage 20,000 tenancy units in Victoria and deliver one-quarter of Victoria's social housing.⁴

Registered housing associations are not-for-profit organisations that develop, own and manage rental housing for people on lower incomes. As they typically own property, they are able to borrow against these assets, which allows for investment in new developments and partnerships.

Almost 9,000 properties are owned or leased by housing associations in a range of locations throughout Victoria. The majority of this housing is long-term accommodation for families and individuals who are not able to afford or access the private rental market.

Housing association properties can include stand-alone dwellings, rooming houses, medium and high-density developments or special accommodation with on-site support.

Housing associations also provide transitional and crisis accommodation.

Registered housing providers do not own their properties. They primarily manage rental properties while providing other support services including:

- short-term crisis support housing
- housing information and referral services for people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness
- outreach programs and support for people with complex needs and long histories of homelessness
- support and advocacy for people living in public and community housing, to help them successfully establish and sustain their tenancies
- housing cooperatives:
 - common equity rental cooperatives
 - rental housing cooperatives.

³ [Community housing | DHHS Service Providers \(dffh.vic.gov.au\)](#) accessed March 2023

⁴ <https://www.vic.gov.au/who-the-housing-registrar-regulates> accessed March 2023



Registered housing agencies ⁵	
Housing associations are:	Housing providers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • larger, more complex businesses with the skills, expertise and resources to manage maintain and grow a viable social housing portfolio • organisations that expand new housing through construction, purchase or acquisition that is funded using a mix of government funds, borrowings and private sector investment • organisations that manage housing properties that they own or lease from other parties, such as the Director of Housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • range in size • primarily manage rental housing portfolios for other parties, such as the Director of Housing • some providers own properties, however, their growth is small in scale compared to that of housing associations • often specialise in client groups, for example, people with a disability, the aged or young people.

Table 2. Registered housing agencies

Regulation of the housing sector⁶

The *Housing Act 1983* establishes the regulatory framework under which the registered community housing sector operates. This includes:

- a clear process and set of criteria for agencies wishing to become registered
- a Registrar of Housing Agencies (which sits within the Department of Treasury and Finance)
- performance standards for regulated agencies that come with annual reporting requirements
- a complaints process for tenants (or prospective tenants)
- powers of investigation and intervention for the Registrar to deal with agencies in breach of the legislation or failing to meet performance standards.

Four key objectives drive the regulation of registered housing agencies:

- ensuring that all housing agencies are viable, well governed and properly managed
- protecting and ensuring accountable use of government assets managed by the affordable housing sector

⁵ [Registered Housing Agencies – CHIA Vic](#), accessed August 2021

⁶ Hornsby and Co. Affordable Housing Agreements: advice for local government and Community Housing Organisations - prepared for MAV and CHIA, March 2020



- building confidence in the public and private sector to invest in and grow affordable housing
- ensuring quality and continuous improvement in service delivery and outcomes for tenants.

The regulatory framework ensures registered agencies are held accountable to government and other investors, tenants and the community (Housing Registrar, 2016, Our Regulatory Framework), promotes best practice and gives government the tools to address poor performance by registered agencies.

Access to social housing

To be eligible for social housing, primary applicants generally must live in Victoria and:

- be an Australian citizen or permanent resident of Australia
- meet the income and asset eligibility limits for their household
- have an independent income
- not own a property in which they could live.

Generally, an applicant should meet the income and asset limits and residential requirements to be eligible for the register. However, where a person and their household is experiencing family violence and need access to ongoing housing in order to be safe, they are also eligible to be on the register.

The Victorian Housing Register is used to manage and allocate social housing. Priority access is given to those who are homeless, escaping family violence and other special needs. A register of interest is provided for people who do not meet the priority access criteria.

All people applying to the register who meet the eligibility criteria are placed on the register according to their housing need (assessed in accordance with the eligibility criteria). The register consists of two application types:

- Priority access – for people most in need of housing. The priority access categories are:
 - emergency management housing
 - priority transfers
 - homeless with support
 - supported housing
 - special housing needs
 - special housing needs aged 55 years and over.
- Register of interest – for eligible applicants to register their interest for social housing.



Victorian Housing Register categories

Table 3 outlines the categories of the register in more detail:

	Category	New applicants or transfer applicants
Priority Access	Emergency management housing – for people whose housing is no longer safe or habitable, due to an emergency, for example a house fire, bushfire, flood or storm.	New and transfer applicants
	Priority transfers – for people that require urgent relocation to another social housing property as their current property is unsafe; is to be sold; redeveloped or better used	Transfer applicants
	Homeless with support – for people who are homeless or experiencing family violence and need support to obtain and establish appropriate, long-term housing	New applicants
	Supported housing – for people who: live in unsuitable housing; have a disability or long-term health problem; require major structural modifications and/or personal support to live independently	New applicants
	Special housing needs – for people who are living in housing that has become unsuitable and who have no alternative housing options.	New and transfer applicants
	Special housing needs aged 55 years and over – for singles and couples who are aged 55 years and over, and who are not eligible for another priority category.	New applicants
	Register of interest – for people who do not have an urgent housing need but are interested in social housing to apply to the Register for consideration	New and transfer applicants

Table 3. Victorian Housing Register categories Income and asset eligibility limits

To be eligible to be on the register, the individual or household should typically earn less than the income and asset eligibility limits set out in the [social housing eligibility criteria](#). The income eligibility limits are the income limits gazetted by the Director of Housing and published on the department’s housing website (housing.vic.gov.au). Asset limits are different for priority access and register of interest applications, and for people requiring full or major disability modifications to the property.



Table 4 outlines the income and asset eligibility limits effective from October 2022:⁷

Household type	Priority Access limits	Register of Interest limits
Income	Per week	Per week
Single person	\$612	\$1,095
Couple, no dependants	\$1,059	\$1,675
Family (one or two parents) with up to two dependent children	\$1,097	\$2,259
Each additional dependant	\$38	\$366
Assets		
Asset limit	\$14,028	\$35,488
Higher limit for households who need major or full disability modifications	\$118,295	\$118,295

Table 4. Income and asset limits for Victorian Housing Register

⁷ <https://www.housing.vic.gov.au/social-housing-eligibility> accessed March 2023



List of registered housing agencies as at March 2023

	Category
Aboriginal Housing Victoria Limited	Baptcare Affordable Housing Ltd
Common Equity Housing Limited	BAYSA Ltd
Community Housing (Vic) Ltd	Building Communities (Vic) Limited
Housing Choices Australia Limited	Centacare Housing Services Ltd
HousingFirst Limited	EACH Housing Ltd
Loddon Mallee Housing Services Ltd	Eastcoast Housing
Rural Housing Network Limited	Eastern Suburbs Rental Housing Co-operative Limited
Unison Housing Limited	Inner East Social Housing Group Limited
Wintringham Housing Ltd	Launch Housing Ltd
Women's Housing Ltd	Mallee Accommodation & Support Program Ltd
	Mission Australia Housing (Victoria)
	National Affordable Housing Consortium - Vic Ltd
	Northcote Rental Housing Co-operative Ltd.
	Northern Geelong Rental Housing Co-operative Ltd
	Prahran/Malvern Community Housing Inc.
	Salvation Army Housing (Victoria)
	Servants Community Housing Limited
	South Port Community Housing Group Inc
	SouthEast Housing Cooperative Ltd
	St Kilda Community Housing Ltd
	Sunshine/St Albans Rental Housing Co-operative Ltd
	The Haven Foundation Ltd
	United Housing Co-operative Ltd
	Uniting Housing (Victoria) Limited
	VincentCare Community Housing
	WAYSS Limited
	West Turk Housing and Elderly Services Co-operative Ltd
	Williamstown Rental Housing Co-operative Ltd
	Women's Property Initiatives Ltd
	YWCA Housing

Table 5. List of registered housing agencies

15 DIRECTOR ASSETS AND OPERATIONS REPORTS

AO.1	CAPITAL WORKS MONITORING
Officer:	Jeetendra Dahal, Manager Assets and Project Management Office
Council Plan relationship:	4. Delivering strong and reliable government
Attachments:	Nil

Summary

This report provides transparency on cost escalations and adjustments on infrastructure projects and seeks further funding, cancellation or the scope reduction of the projects to manage the projects within the allocated annual capital works program budget.

Recommendation**That Council:**

1. **Adopts the following changes to the FY22/23 budget relating to the following infrastructure projects:**
 - (a) **Project 100324 – Gisborne Bowling Club Synthetic Rink – increase the budget for this project by \$81,362.60**
 - (b) **Project 100579 – Building Renewal – Woodend Playgroup – increase the budget for this project by \$5,950**
 - (c) **Project 100275 – Gardiner Reserve Carpark and Landscaping – increase the budget for this project by \$2,907**
 - (d) **Project 100100 – Woodend Neighbourhood House – The project has been completed. Return the saving of \$5,950 to the consolidated capital works budget**
 - (e) **Project 100576 – Building Renewal – Riddells Creek Montessori Kindergarten – The project has been completed. Return the saving of \$9,028 to the consolidated capital works budget**
 - (f) **Project 100970 – Macedon – MP Theatre Roof Design – The project has been completed. Return the saving of \$7,324 to the consolidated capital works budget**
 - (g) **Project 100136 – Woodend Bowling Club Social Room Design – The project has been completed. Return the saving of \$11,270 to the consolidated capital works budget**
 - (h) **Project – Mulbarton Rockwall, Gisborne – fund the design works providing a budget of \$30,000**
 - (i) **Project – Gisborne Aquatic Centre Electric Boiler – fund the design works providing a budget of \$80,000**
 - (j) **Project – Kyneton Sports and Aquatic Centre Gas Boilers– fund the installation works providing a budget of \$138,000**

- (k) **100713 – Drainage Fersfield Road, Gisborne – Cancel this project and returning \$18,417 back to the Developer Contribution Fund**
- (l) **Project - Kyneton Sports and Aquatic Centre Electric Boiler Design – Cancel this project returning \$80,000 to the consolidated capital works budget**

2. Notes the current reported Capital Works Program deficit of \$344,870.60

Background

During Financial Year 2021/2022, there were significant price rises across many building materials. The Master Builders Association reports that between March 2020 and March 2022, steel products increased by over 40% and timber products by over 20%. In addition, labour increased significantly.

The Council budget build process begins in October of the previous year. This means pricing is already outdated by nine months before the budget year starts. Some infrastructure projects will not be tendered until over twelve months after the initial estimates were set. Officers allow a reasonable cost escalation on project costs; however, the cost increases experienced were outside this estimate.

Some tenders are coming as high as 30% over budget. This is not sustainable, and there is no budget to cover these unexpected increased costs.

The other impact of the current construction-led recovery is a shortage of contractors. Council has experienced tenders with either one response or zero responses and/or non-compliant tender responses.

The combination of cost increases and contractor availability require Council critically review all project impacted by these factors.

Discussion

Each year, Council announces a commitment to expend a defined amount of money to deliver specific infrastructure projects through the budget. In real terms, our dollar purchases less than forecasted. This presents three potential actions to remain within budget:

- (1) value managing the project to deliver the expected outcome within the provided budget;
- (2) over-expending the budget; or
- (3) reducing the number of infrastructure projects delivered.

The second potential option is unacceptable within Council's legislative and moral responsibilities. The last is achievable by critically reviewing over-budget infrastructure projects and determining which must proceed and which must be cancelled.

The concept is that in critically reviewing which infrastructure projects are funded and which are not funded, the intent is to have the unfunded infrastructure projects cover the increase in costs for the project determined to continue.

In determining which project proceeds, even though over budget, the following items need to be considered:

- Associated grant funding with acquittal requirements
- Immediate asset reliability and functionality

Officers will attempt to 'value manage' the project to deliver the expected outcome within the provided budget – this will generally occur before going to tender or if a tender response is above budget. This will happen as part of normal council operations.

Any projects that are cancelled this year will be put forward to future budget processes for assessment of priority and potential inclusion in future budgets.

This month, officers identified the following over-budget infrastructure projects or projects requiring scope change:

Infrastructure Project	Progress with Construction	Original Budget	Reason for Progression or Non-progression	Change to the Budget - () is an additional cost to the budget
Financial Position following previous decisions			Bring forward (\$120,223) balance resulting from the resolution of the March 2023 Scheduled Council Meeting	(\$120,223)
100324 Gisborne Bowling Club Synthetic Rink	Yes	\$367,746	Due to cost escalations, tenders received exceeded the original budget. This project needs to progress to meet community expectation. As part of the cost escalation response, the Gisborne and District Bowling Club are implementing some items of scope at their additional cost.	(\$81,362.60)
100579 Building Renewal – Woodend Playgroup	Yes	\$67,500	Unforeseen variations occurred throughout construction with the allocated contingency being exhausted.	(\$5,950)
100100 Woodend Neighbourhood House	N/A	\$100,000	Project has been completed with surplus budget	\$5,950
100713 Drainage – Fersfield Road, Gisborne	No Design Only	\$18,417	Project cancelled, nil budget to return to Capital Works Program as this needs to be returned to the Developers Contribution Fund	\$0.00
Mulbarton Rockwall, Gisborne	Design Only	\$0	This is a new request for budget to undertake detailed investigation and design of the preferred option to restore the heritage-listed rock wall at	(\$30,000)

			Mulbarton Estate that is in a state of disrepair. This budget will be used to engage external consultants (including an arborist, structural engineer and a stone mason) to provide detailed recommendations with a proposed design to restore the wall and cost estimates to implement the preferred option. Heritage expertise on the project will be provided in-house by Council's Heritage Planner.	
100576 Building Renewal – Riddells Creek Montessori Kindergarten	N/A	\$50,310	Project has been completed with surplus budget	\$9,028
100970 Macedon – MP Theatre Roof Design	N/A	\$20,000	Project has been completed with surplus budget	\$7,324
100136 Woodend Bowling Club Social Room Design	N/A	\$20,000	Project has been completed with surplus budget	\$11,270
Kyneton Sports and Aquatic Centre (KSAC) - Gas Boilers	Yes	\$0	The existing KSAC boilers have reached end of life and present a considerable operational risk to Kyneton Sports and Aquatic Centre. Officers recommend to proceed with purchase and replacement of Gas boilers during the July 2023 maintenance closure period. The proposed budget will come from the surplus and unspent contingencies of the closed building projects	(\$138,000)
KSAC Electric Boiler Design	No	\$80,000	Due to the urgency of the gas boiler replacement above this work can be delayed.	\$80,000
GAC Electric Boiler	Yes	\$0	Now that the KSAC boiler designed is being	(\$80,000)

			deferred, the GAC one should proceed.	
100275 Gardiner Reserve Carpark and Landscaping	Yes	\$240,510	Unforeseen variations occurred throughout construction with the allocated contingency being exhausted.	(\$2,907)
Total				(\$344,870.60)

This recommendation currently results in a reported budget **deficit of \$344,870.60**. Officers are confident that the program can carry up to a \$200,000 deficit as a low risk at this point (noting the comment in the next paragraph). This is based on projects due for completion in this quarter with the likelihood of returning unspent contingencies to the consolidated program budget.

The Facilities and Operations Management Department have reviewed recently completed projects and identified approximately \$200,000 of unspent contingency which will offset the deficit reported. The May 2023 Scheduled Council Meeting report will declare and itemise this reconciliation.

Consultation and engagement

Within individual infrastructure projects, there will be identified stakeholders. Project Sponsors will liaise with stakeholders of projects that are the subject of this report.

This report is an initiative to ensure transparency in decision-making for infrastructure projects. By publically providing this report in the Scheduled Council Meeting agenda, the community can understand the decisions being made in a timely manner and without the need to await a quarterly, six monthly or annual report.

Collaboration

Council officers are sharing initiatives across many neighbouring Councils – all report similar challenges and impacts resulting from current economic conditions.

Innovation and continuous improvement

This is an innovative approach to the problem of unprecedented infrastructure project price increases. Council would typically address project budget issues via the mid-year budget review. An agile response is required in response to the current economic environment. Preparing a report such as this, for presentation to Scheduled Council Meetings throughout this financial year, provides resolutions with minimal lost time.

Relevant law

There is not a specific law relating to information provided within this report

In accordance with the Gender Equality Act 2020, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required in direct relation to the subject matter of this report. Officers have noted gender impact within each business case for infrastructure projects and referred to these regarding determining recommendations for infrastructure project tenders over budget.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

Not Applicable

Relevant Council plans and policies

The Council plan relevant to this report is delivering strong and reliable government. Transparently providing timely information for the community should provide confidence in how Council is adapting its infrastructure project delivery within budget.

Financial viability

The processes described in this report detail how Council is adapting its infrastructure project delivery to ensure it is within budget.

Sustainability implications

There are no direct sustainability impacts resulting from this report.

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

AO.2	RESPONSE TO PETITION IN RELATION TO A BITUMEN UPGRADE TO ADAMSON STREET, MALMSBURY
Officer:	Eng Lim, Manager Engineering and Resource Recovery
Council Plan relationship:	1. Connecting communities 4. Delivering strong and reliable government
Attachments:	Nil

Summary

This report responds to the petition received by Council to seal Adamson Street in Malmsbury between Mollison Street and Drake Street.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. **Does not proceed with the sealing of Adamson Street Malmsbury; and**
2. **Advises the first-named petitioner of this Council resolution.**

Background

Adamson Street in Malmsbury is an unsealed road between Mollison Street and Coghlan Lane.

The main part of Adamson Street is a Category 5 road based on Council's Road Management Plan. The first two sections are Category 5 north of Mollison Street i.e. from Mollison Street to Drake Street (134 metres long with a road width of 5.0 metres) and from Drake Street to Bennett Street (115 metres long with a road width of 4.0 metres). In contrast, the third section is a fire access track from Bennett Street to Coghlan Street (130 metres long with a road width of 3.5 m).

Summary

Council received a petition via email dated 6 December 2022 from Brendan Graham, a resident of Malmsbury, on behalf of 11 residents of Adamson Street, Malmsbury stating:

We, the residents of Adamson Street, Malmsbury request bitumen upgrade works in Adamson Street between Mollison and Drake Streets (as attended in Orr Street) to address the dust issues, potholes, and subsequent noise.

Constant grader workers are ineffective, lasting only days before potholes reappear. It is becoming not only intolerable but dangerous with Adamson Street traffic crossing to the wrong side of the road at the Mollison Street intersection to avoid the potholes affecting traffic turning from the highway into Adamson Street. In addition, motor vehicle damage has become an issue.

We the undersigned are prepared to negotiate a reasonable contribution towards this upgrade similar to the neighbouring Orr Street bitumen.

Residents are keen to attend on onsite meeting to discuss further action.

In the Scheduled Council Meeting dated 22 February 2023, the recommendation was that Council:

1. **Note the petition from the residents of Adamson Street, Malmesbury requesting bitumen upgrade works in Adamson Street between Mollison and Drake Streets;**
2. **Notes that the petition has been circulated to all Councillors confidentially as it contains personal information; and**
3. **Requests the Director Assets and Operations to prepare a report in response to this petition to be presented to Council by the April 2023 Council Meeting.**

Discussion

There are 22 properties currently abutting these three sections of Adamson Street, with 5 of these vacant lots. 16 of these properties front the Council maintained road, and 6 front the Fire Access Track. There are another three properties fronting Coghlan Street, accessing via the Fire Access Track section of Adamson Street.

Officers have undertaken traffic counts on Adamson Street between 21 to 28 March 2023 to measure the daily vehicle movement for one week. The observed average number of vehicle movements is 152 per day (on Adamson Street, north of the Adamson Street/Mollison Street intersection), consistent with this section of the road's current categorisation and maintenance status. Most of the traffic observed on Adamson Street is generated by the residents living along Adamson Street, with additional minor traffic from the intersecting streets (Bennett Street - west) and Drake Street – west). Most residents from Bennett Street (east) and Drake Street (east) use Orr Street to access Mollison Street.

Noting the traffic count data, Council officers do not recommend upgrading this road to a sealed road.

Council officers have inspected this road and undertaken maintenance in accordance with the Road Management Plan. Heavy rainfall in October 2022, caused damage to many roads and resulted in a prioritised response to maintenance issues. Council has caught up on the backlog and maintenance and inspection programs on occurring as planned.

Consultation and engagement

Council officers investigated this issue as result of the petition received. No further consultation was undertaken as the traffic volumes do not support any road upgrade.

Collaboration

Nil

Innovation and continuous improvement

Nil

Relevant law

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required relating to the subject matter of this report.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

Nil

Relevant Council plans and policies

The recommendation provided in this report is guided by Council's Road Management Plan 2021.

Financial viability

There is no impact to Council's financial viability as a result of this recommendation.

Sustainability implications

Nil

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

AO.3	CONSIDERATION OF A REQUEST FOR INCLUSION OF ROAD ONTO THE PUBLIC ROAD REGISTER - PATTINSONS LANE, GOLDIE
Officer:	Eng Lim, Manager Engineering and Resource Recovery
Council Plan relationship:	1. Connecting communities
Attachments:	Nil

Summary

Officers prepared this report in response to a request to include a fire access track named Pattinsons Lane, Goldie, in the Council's Register of Public Roads by four owners of the properties on the north end of Fagans Lane, Goldie.

In considering this fire access track for inclusion into the Register of Public Roads, officers assessed it under the Public Roads Procedure Policy (2018). The fire access track requires considerable repairs and upgrades to meet Council's minimum standards for a Category 6 unsealed local road.

Council officers recommend not adding the fire access track section of Pattinsons Lane to the Register of Public Roads.

Recommendation

That Council resolves not to include the fire access track section of Pattinsons Lane, Goldie, in the Register of Public Roads and advise the requestor of this decision.

Background

Pattinsons Lane consists of a 1.1km gravel track extending from West Goldie Road to the eastern corner of 80 Pattinsons Lane. It has a uniform carriageway of approximately 4m width located within a 20m wide reserve.

Pattinsons Lane is a Category 5 local access road of up to 800 metres managed by Council, which terminates at the access to 80 Pattinsons Lane. The remaining approximately 300 m section of the 'road' is a fire access track. Council received a request to add this section to the public road registry. This fire access section of Pattinsons Lane provides access to two dwellings and two farming lots.

See figures 1 to 5 for a locality plan and photos of Pattinson Lane.



Figure 1 – Locality Plan



Figure 2 – West part of Pattinsons Lane requested section



Figure 3 – East end of Pattinsons Lane requested section



Figure 4 – North side of Fagan Lane from the intersection of Pattinsons Lane and Fagans Lane



Figure 5 – South side of Fagan Lane from the intersection of Pattinsons Lane and Fagans Lane

Officers observed that the existing fire access track is not in good condition, with numerous potholes and drainage issues along its entire length. In addition, a major overland flow path tracks along this section of Fagan Lane, which requires significant drainage works to divert the overland flow path away from the carriageway. Refer to Figure 6 below.



Figure 6 – Typical Potholes and drainage issue

Given the designation of this section of Fagan Lane as a fire access track, it is constructed without table drains. Therefore, this track is subject to the ponding of surface runoff and scouring as it acts as a major overland flow path. Due to clay road surface materials, the access track may be difficult to navigate during heavy rainfall and after the rainfall event for several days. In addition, runoff generated from Fagan Lane and the larger upstream catchment is also draining to Patterson Lane. It was visible on the site that the residents had installed multiple cut-off drains along the track to divert surface water away from the road. Refer to Figures 7 and 8 below.



Figure 7 – Existing drainage system



Figure 8 – Culvert draining from Fagans Ln to Patterson Lane

Discussion

The Public Roads Procedure Policy (2018) sets out the criteria used to determine whether a non-registered road qualifies for consideration on the Register of Public Roads and the process for considering such a request.

Council officers provide the assessment below of Pattinsons Lane, Goldie, against the criteria for inclusion into the Register of Public Roads:

Criteria	Response	Comments
1. At least two or more properties and at least two or more permanent residents are abutting onto the road or requiring the road for access purposes	Yes	Pattinsons Lane provides access to two dwellings and two farming lots. These properties do not have direct access from this section of Pattinsons Lane and are required to access through to get into privately managed Fagans Lane.
2. Whether or not land abutting onto the road or requiring the road for access has been developed to its highest and best economic use	No	The land is utilised for mixed farming and grazing.

Criteria	Response	Comments
3. The type of properties abutting the road, including public open space, community facilities, sporting facilities, and car parking areas, are of significant community value	No	There is no public open space or areas of significant community value.
4. Whether the road connects into and forms a part of the wider network of public roads	No	The requested road intersects with privately maintained Fagans Lane and doesn't connect to the wider public road network.
5. The usage patterns of the road in relation to the nature and frequency of past, present and likely future use	No	No significant change or increase in traffic volumes in Pattinsons Lane is anticipated.
6. Whether the road is regularly required for <u>both</u> vehicular and pedestrian use;	No	It currently has two residential dwellings with five residents using Pattinsons Lane who regularly use it for vehicular access. However, it is unlikely to be regularly used by pedestrians.
7. Whether the Council or any of its predecessors or any other public authority has constructed the road at public expense;	No	Council has no records of the construction of the requested portion of Pattinsons Lane. Council maintains this road as a fire access track which requires yearly grading (minimum).
8. Whether the Council has cared for, managed or controlled the road regularly;	No	There are no records that Pattinsons Lane has been managed or maintained by Council regularly.
9. Whether the properties which enjoy a frontage to the road or require the road for access purposes have alternative access rights;	No	There is no alternative council-maintained public road access.
10. Whether there are designated car parking facilities and traffic control signs attached to any public use of the road;	No	There is no car parking facility.
11. Whether the road has ever been required to be set aside for public use as a condition of any planning approval;	No	There are no planning permits issued for the building or subdivision works.

Criteria	Response	Comments
12. Whether the road has ever been formally dedicated or proclaimed to be a public highway under the Local Government Act, 1989 or any predecessor legislation;	No	There is no record that Council have previously proclaimed Pattinsons Lane a public highway.
13. Whether the road has ever been constructed under a special charge scheme or a private street scheme;	No	There is no record of any special charge scheme initiated by the Council or resident for Pattinsons Lane.
14. Whether the road has been constructed by a developer or private owner or entity to Council's minimum standards;	No	This fire access track does not meet the Council's minimum standards. Being a fire access track, it will require significant upgrades including drainage improvements for its inclusion in the Register of Public Roads.
15. Whether the use is occurring "as of right", in particular evidence of previous permission;	Yes	There are building permits issued. However, there is no available record of Planning permits
16. Existing geometric standards and surface conditions are in accordance with Council's requirements;	No	The existing gravel surface has numerous potholes, surface scouring, and ponding. Therefore, Council is maintaining this section of the road as a Fire Access Track.
17. Whether the road contains assets owned and managed by public service authorities, gas, electricity, telecommunications, sewerage and water; and	No	A request through Before You Dig Australia (BYDA) showed no assets by any public service authorities, including gas, electricity, etc.
18. Whether the road has fencing, barriers, signage or associated safety devices.	No	There are no traffic signage or safety devices on the road. However, private farm fencing is along the road reserve/private property boundary.

Council maintains this section of Pattinson Lane as a Fire Access Track which is inspected prior to the fire season annually. This section of the track is not explicitly required to be maintained by any property owner under any planning permission.

The results above do not support consideration of Pattinsons Lane, Goldie, for inclusion in the Council's Public Road Register, having received a score of 2 out of 18 without residents upgrading this section to Council's current minimum standard.

Since the assessment in the table above only showed a score of 2 which is lower than the minimum 3 out of 18, officers recommend not to include the fire access track section of Pattinsons Lane in Council's Public Road Register.

Consultation and engagement

Council officers did not undertake community consultation or engagement at this stage due to the nature of this request.

Collaboration

Council officers did not undertake collaboration with other local governments or statutory authorities as it was not considered necessary for this recommendation.

Innovation and continuous improvement

Council officers prepared this recommendation following Council's Public Roads Procedure Policy (2018).

Relevant law

This recommendation does not have any direct or indirect human rights implications.

Under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required relating to the subject matter of this report.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

This recommendation has no direct or indirect policy or legislative implications on regional, state, or national plans or policies.

Relevant Council plans and policies

Council officers prepared this recommendation following Council's Public Roads Procedure Policy (2018).

Financial viability

If Pattinsons Lane, Goldie, were added to the Register of Public Roads, it would require considerable repairs and upgrades to meet minimum construction standards for a Category 6 unsealed local road. The works include but are not limited to the following:

- 1) The addition of pavement materials and regrading of the road carriageway,
- 2) The creation of table drains on both sides of the road carriageway, and installation of culverts at low points, and
- 3) vegetation clearing

Council officers estimate that the total cost to complete items 1, 2, and 3 is \$26,000, excluding GST. Therefore, officers do not consider direct council investment in these works the best value for the municipality.

Sustainability implications

If Pattinsons Lane, Goldie, was added to the Register of Public Roads in its current condition, works to repair and upgrade the access track will require considerable resources and costs.

Inclusion on the road register would include a need to widen the road surface which will also impact the native vegetation and fauna habitat. The existing width of the fire access track section of Pattinsons Lane is only 3.0m. Category 6 road requires a 6.0 m carriageway and 1.5 m table drains on either side.

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

16 NOTICES OF MOTION AND RESCISSION

No. 57/2022-23: NOTICE OF MOTION - MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA STATE COUNCIL MOTIONS
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I, Councillor Jennifer Anderson, give notice that at the next Meeting of Council to be held on 26 April 2023, I intend to move the following motion:

That Council endorses the Macedon Ranges Shire Council delegate attending (in-person or electronically) the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council meeting on Friday 19 May 2023 to vote on the motions at their discretion due to the time constraints caused by the timing of the release of the MAV State Council motions.

17 URGENT BUSINESS

18 CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS**Recommendation**

That pursuant to section 66(1) and (2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council closes the meeting to the public to consider the confidential report(s) listed below, which are confidential on grounds provided in Section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*:

18.1 Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct

Confidential reasons**18.1 Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct**

This matter is considered to be confidential under Section 3(1) - a and g(ii) of the Local Government Act, and the Council is satisfied that discussion of this matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest as it deals with Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released and private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

The report recommends a resolution authorising the CEO to vary the Macedon Ranges Regional Sports precinct up to an amount, prior to that amount being known and if public would prejudice the Council's ability to provide best value for money for the Macedon Ranges Community.

