

Agenda

Council Meeting
Wednesday 28 August 2024 at 7pm
Gisborne Administration Centre
40 Robertson Street, Gisborne

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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, 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.

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

6.1	PETITIONS IN RELATION TO A MULTI-USE RECTANGULAR SPORTS PITCH IN WOODEND
Officer:	Lucy Olson, Senior Governance Officer - Council Business
Council Plan relationship:	4. Delivering strong and reliable government

Summary

Two petitions have been received (one electronic and one hardcopy) from Alistair Fletcher a resident of Woodend on behalf of 112 and 153 residents respectively stating:

“Mayor and Councillors of the Macedon Ranges Shire Council, we the undersigned, petition Macedon Ranges Shire Council as of 22nd June 2024 to develop and provide a multi-use rectangular pitch within Woodend where junior boys and girls can safely train and play soccer / rugby / hockey etc on a weekly basis. The pitch must meet Football Victoria's min current standards for junior competition, which include:

- *A min playing area of 70m x 50m, with an additional min 5m buffer space.*
- *The Playing Surface must be even and flat with a complete coverage of grass. Either natural grass or FIFA approved artificial grass pitches may be used.*
- *The surface must be free of potholes, foreign objects and protrusions of any kind through the surface, or any deviations that could be hazardous to players or officials as they move across the surface.*

Additionally, the site must also include a storage facility and some form of shelter (portable or permanent) for coaches and spectators. Ideal council sites for this development would be The Racecourse Reserve due to be developed under the Master Plan or Qualee Park as an alternative. See attached concept plan (to scale) for both sites. The playing surface must be ready to be used by the end of 2024.*

We believe that investing in this facility will not only benefit current residents, but also attract more families to Woodend, contributing to the growth and support of local businesses. We kindly urge the council to approve and prioritize the development of a multi-use rectangular pitch in Woodend, as it will greatly enhance the quality of life for all members of our community.

**The Racecourse concept is designed to be included in a multi sports development that compliments Equine and improve the current Netball, AFL & Cricket facilities at Buffalo Stadium.”*

Recommendation**That Council:**

- 1. Notes the two petitions, one electronic and one hardcopy, from Alistair Fletcher on the matter of a multi-use rectangular sports pitch in Woodend with 112 and 153 signatories respectively;**
- 2. Notes that the petitions have been circulated to all Councillors confidentially as they contain personal information; and**

- 3. Requests the Director Assets and Operations to prepare a report in response to these petitions to be presented at the 16 September 2024 Council Meeting.**
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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 Wednesday 24 July 2024, as circulated.

9 MAYOR'S REPORT**9.1 MAYOR'S REPORT - JULY-AUGUST 2024****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

The Council Plan is an important strategic document that sets out the vision, future direction and key objectives of Council. As Mayor, I have been reflecting on this term of Council and the key activities that build our strategic vision. Activities that are reported monthly in the Mayoral report are part of Council's action plan to deliver on the strategic vision. The four key strategic objectives are:

- Connecting Communities
- Healthy Environment, Healthy People
- Business and Tourism
- Deliver Strong and Reliable Government.

An important component of the Business and Tourism strategic objective is to provide an economic environment that promotes and supports local business diversity. On Friday 26 July, Eastern Macedon Ranges Business & Tourism Association (EMRBATA), hosted its 14th Annual Business Breakfast at The Lost Watering Hole Brewery in Lancefield. Sponsored by Bendigo Bank (Romsey and Lancefield Community Bank), the event featured local marketing and branding legend, guest speaker Ken Cato who presented on "The Power of Brand." With over 100 local business owners and relevant stakeholders in attendance, it was a fantastic opportunity to network across the business community and learn new facts about the impact of brand. The event supported local produce showcasing a variety of local businesses including Rafael's Coffee, Madelaine's Eggs, Force of Nature, Little Vic's, Chin Chin Farm, Lancefield Bakery, Lancefield Providore, Lost Watering Hole, Lancefield Guesthouse, Mount Monument, Bespoke Preserves and Pantry and Romsey Community Co-Op. Congratulations to all involved for another fabulous event.

Part of the strategic objective Healthy Environment, Healthy People is to improve healthy lifestyles, build social connection and inclusion, community safety, and arts and culture. On Friday 2 August, Council's youth music program Music in the Sticks (MITS) hosted the annual Battle of the Bands at Kyneton Town Hall. The night saw six local bands and artists compete for two prizes totalling more than \$1,500 in value. Sound, lighting, stage management and photography were operated by the MITS crew – young people from the Shire who have joined the program through an interest in the music industry. Local youth band Elo and the Shinkicks won the votes of the audience and judges alike, taking home both top prizes for the evening. 250 people were in attendance, supporting local youth, building social connections and celebrating local artistic talents.

The Community Funding Scheme and Events and Festivals Grant Celebration was held at the Kyneton Mechanics Institute on 19 August to celebrate the recipients of the Community Funding Scheme and Events and Festivals Grants. The worthy groups will now deliver on a range of exciting projects that involve cultural and community development activities, enhancing the effectiveness of local community groups, supporting local environmental priorities and enhancing community places and infrastructure.

Council also participated in National Tree Day on 31 July, with a community planting event along Smokers Creek, Hanging Rock. Thanks to our hard-working community volunteers, 150 plants were planted and guarded in the riparian zone of the creek to improve biodiversity and water quality along the creek. Residents might also see Council officers out and about from early September for the beginning of the tree planting program. Council contributed an additional \$90,000 in this year's budget to enrich the natural environment of the Macedon Ranges. This program provides multiple benefits to our community, including increased shade, elevated property values, improved noise and pollution absorption, enhanced mental health, and reduced rainfall runoff. These are all relevant to achieving the objective - Healthy Environment, Healthy People. Residents in relevant areas will be notified in advance of the tree planting schedule.

The second issue of ShireLife for 2024 was distributed to letterboxes from 12-16 August. This issue includes Budget 2024-25 highlights, Council election information, a feature on emergency preparation and recovery, and project updates including the opening of the Macedon Ranges Sports Precinct, Shared Trails update and other works across the Shire. There are two vouchers including another free group fitness class, and a free green waste drop-off.

Events

Councillors were pleased to be invited to the following events/meetings since the last Scheduled Council Meeting:

- Kyneton Fire Brigade awards presentation and 140-year celebration on 27 July
- Kenny's catch of the day – fishing for mental health at Lauriston Reservoir on 27 July
- Opening of the soccer shed at the Romsey Recreation Reserve on 28 July
- Citizenship ceremony at Kyneton Townhall on 30 July
- Rural Councils Victoria forum in Trawool on 2 August
- Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum meeting on 7 August
- Homelessness Week Barbeque in Kyneton on 8 August
- Workspace Board meeting in Bendigo on 8 August
- Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee meeting in Gisborne on 15 August
- Central Victorian Greenhouse Association online board meeting on 15 August
- Municipal Association Victoria (MAV) Emergency Management Committee meeting on 16 August
- Malmsbury Fire Brigade annual awards evening on 17 August
- Wreath laying ceremonies in Kyneton to commemorate Victory in the Pacific Day on 15 August and Vietnam Veterans Day on 18 August
- Mount Macedon ANZAC Day Dawn Service appreciation event in Woodend on 20 August

- Malmsbury Historical Society Annual General Meeting on 21 August
- Regional Roadshow workshop by NWMPHN Suicide prevention collaboration in Gisborne on 21 August
- MAV State Council meeting in Melbourne on 23 August
- Riddells Creek Mechanics Institute triennial meeting on 25 August
- TAC Victorian Top Tourism Town Awards in Lancefield on 25 August
- Friends of Kyneton Botanic Gardens AGM on 27 August

Current community consultations

- Naming the New Lancefield Kindergarten and Maternal and Child Health Facility: Closing 30 August 2024.
- Local Government Reforms 2024: Closing 4 September 2024.
- Woodend Racecourse Reserve Master Plan – Issues and Opportunities: Closing 5 September 2024.
- Children and Youth Engagement Survey: Closing 10 September 2024.
- Planning applications: You can view and have our say about current planning applications on Council's Statutory Planning Online Application Register.

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 - JULY-AUGUST 2024****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	23 July 2024
Venue	Gisborne Administration Centre at 9.00am
Present - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Annette Death • Cr Janet Pearce • Cr Jennifer Anderson • Cr Dominic Bonanno • Cr Rob Guthrie • Cr Geoff Neil • Cr Mark Ridgeway • Cr Christine Walker • Cr Bill West
Apologies - Councillors	NIL
Present - officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bernie O'Sullivan (Chief Executive Officer) • Shane Walden (Director Assets and Operations) • Rebecca Stockfeld (Director Planning and Environment) • Maria Weiss (Director Community) • Adele Drago-Stevens (Director Corporate) • Rob Ball (Manager Strategic Planning and Environment) • Amy Holmes (Manager Community Strengthening) • Stephen Pykett (Manager Economic Development and Visitor Economy)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benup Neupane (Coordinator Engineering Services) • Nicole Pietruschka (Coordinator Community Development and Youth) • Rebecca Pedretti (Coordinator Visitor Economy) • Leanne Khan (Coordinator Strategic Planning) • Lucy Olson (Senior Governance Officer) • Lisa Richards (Community Project Officer) • Dannielle Orr (Heritage Planner) • Cindy Stevens (Business Support Officer)
Apologies officers and presenters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eng Lim (Manager Engineering and Asset Services)
Presenters	NIL
Items discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor & CEO Only Session • Consideration of a Request for Inclusion of a Road onto the Public Road Register - Magnet Lane, New Gisborne • Consideration of a Request for Inclusion of an Access Lane onto the Public Road Register - Access Lane, High Street, Kyneton • Australia Day Grants Guidelines • Policy Reviews - DRAFT Council Support and Expenses Policy and DRAFT Councillor Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy • Draft Macedon Ranges Heritage Strategy 2024-2034 - Results of consultation • Removal of Lauriston Bridge superstructure components - Lauriston footbridge, Lauriston • Planning Matters • 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
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Date and time	30 July 2024
Venue	Gisborne Administration Centre at 8.30am
Present - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Annette Death • Cr Janet Pearce • Cr Jennifer Anderson • Cr Dominic Bonanno • Cr Rob Guthrie • Cr Geoff Neil • Cr Mark Ridgeway • Cr Christine Walker • Cr Bill West
Apologies - Councillors	NIL
Present - officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bernie O’Sullivan (Chief Executive Officer) • Shane Walden (Director Assets and Operations) • Rebecca Stockfeld (Director Planning and Environment) • Maria Weiss (Director Community) • Adele Drago-Stevens (Director Corporate) • Vishal Tandon (Manager Community Services) • Travis Fitzgibbon (Manager Communications and Advocacy) • Simon Finlay (Manager Parks, Recreation and Depot Operations) • Stephen Pykett (Manger Economic Development and Visitor Economy) • Eng Lim (Manager Engineering and Asset Services) • Samantha Waymouth (Coordinator Early Years Services) • Bill Pemberton (Coordinator Resource Recovery) • Daniel Trevillian (Coordinator Recreation) • Rebecca Pedretti (Coordinator Visitor Economy) • Jake Hart (Coordinator Civil Maintenance and Construction) • Benup Neupane (Coordinator Engineering Services) • Bodey Dittloff (Coordinator Communications) • Cindy Stevens (Business Support Officer)
Apologies officers and presenters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeetendra Dahal (Manager Civil Services and Resource Recovery) • Jedidiah Clark – RMCG Consultants
Presenters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Megg Caffin – RMCG Consultants

Items discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Only Session • Councillor & CEO Only Session • Lancefield Kindergarten Naming Process • Proposed Household Waste and Recycling Service Standard 2024 - Council Response • Woodend Racecourse Reserve Master Plan - Issues and Opportunities • Kyneton Mineral Springs Management Plan • Management of Unsealed Roads within Township Boundaries • Consideration of a Request for Inclusion of Road onto the Public Road Register - Red Gap Road, Lancefield • 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	NIL Did they leave the meeting? N/A
Conflicts of interest declared by officers	NIL Did they leave the meeting? N/A

Type of meeting	Councillor Briefing
Date and time	6 August 2024
Venue	Gisborne Administration Centre at 9.00am
Present - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Annette Death • Cr Janet Pearce • Cr Jennifer Anderson • Cr Dominic Bonanno • Cr Rob Guthrie • Cr Geoff Neil • Cr Mark Ridgeway • Cr Christine Walker • Cr Bill West
Apologies - Councillors	NIL
Present - officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bernie O’Sullivan (Chief Executive Officer) • Simon Finlay (Acting Director Assets and Operations)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebecca Stockfeld (Director Planning and Environment) • Maria Weiss (Director Community) • Adele Drago-Stevens (Director Corporate) • Travis Fitzgibbon (Manager Communications and Advocacy) • Jayde McBurnie (Coordinator Community and Social Planning) • Hayley Drummond (Coordinator Property and Valuations) • Bodey Dittloff (Coordinator Communication) • Suzanne Mihovilovich (Portfolio Lead – Governance) • Cindy Stevens (Business Support Officer)
Apologies officers and presenters	NIL
Presenters	NIL
Items discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor & CEO Only Session • Election 2024 update • Preparation work to be undertaken to inform the Deliberative Engagement Assembly • Kyneton Airfield - Hangar Leases • Planning Matters • 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	NIL Did they leave the meeting? N/A
Conflicts of interest declared by officers	NIL Did they leave the meeting? N/A

Type of meeting	Councillor Briefing
Date and time	13 August 2024
Venue	Gisborne Administration Centre at 9.00am
Present - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Janet Pearce • Cr Jennifer Anderson • Cr Dominic Bonanno • Cr Rob Guthrie • Cr Geoff Neil

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Mark Ridgeway • Cr Christine Walker • Cr Bill West
Apologies - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Annette Death
Present - officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bernie O'Sullivan (Chief Executive Officer) • Simon Finlay (Acting Director Assets and Operations) • Rebecca Stockfeld (Director Planning and Environment) • Maria Weiss (Director Community) • Adele Drago-Stevens (Director Corporate) • Eng Lim (Manager Engineering and Asset Services) • Rob Ball (Manager Strategic Planning and Environment) • Benup Neupane (Coordinator Engineering Services) • Leanne Khan (Coordinator Strategic Planning) • Bill Pemberton (Coordinator Resource Recovery) • Shafiq Mohamed (Team Leader Waste Management) • Lucy Olson (Senior Governance Officer – Council Business) • Jack Wiltshire (Strategic Planner) • Cindy Stevens (Business Support Officer)
Apologies officers and presenters	NIL
Presenters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Nevins (Independent member CEO Employment & Remuneration Committee)
Items discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO Employment & Remuneration Committee Meeting with all Councillors (without the CEO) • CEO Employment & Remuneration Committee Meeting with all Councillors with the CEO • Jeffrey Street, Woodend • Kerbside Collections Contract • Plan Victoria • Planning Matters • Council Meeting Agenda Review (2 weeks prior to the meeting) • Other Business
Conflicts of interest declared by Councillors and	NIL Did they leave the meeting? N/A

record of them leaving the meeting when the matter about which they declared the conflict of interest was discussed	
Conflicts of interest declared by officers	NIL Did they leave the meeting? N/A

Type of meeting	Councillor Briefing
Date and time	20 August 2024
Venue	Gisborne Administration Centre at 9.00am
Present - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Janet Pearce • Cr Jennifer Anderson • Cr Rob Guthrie • Cr Geoff Neil • Cr Mark Ridgeway • Cr Christine Walker • Cr Bill West
Apologies - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Annette Death • Cr Dominic Bonanno
Present - officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bernie O’Sullivan (Chief Executive Officer) • Simon Finlay (Acting Director Assets and Operations) • Rebecca Stockfeld (Director Planning and Environment) • Maria Weiss (Director Community) • Adele Drago-Stevens (Director Corporate) • Rob Ball (Manager Strategic Planning and Environment) • Eng Lim (Manager Engineering and Asset Services) • Sarah Annells (Manager Safer Communities) • Allie Jalbert (Coordinator Local Laws) • Hayley Drummond (Coordinator Property and Valuations) • Benup Neupane (Coordinator Engineering Services) • Leanne Khan (Coordinator Strategic Planning) • Lenka Thompson (Regional Housing Coordinator) • Lousie Dewberry (Senior Strategic Planner) • Cindy Stevens (Business Support Officer)
Apologies officers and presenters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jayde McBurnie (Coordinator Community and Social Planning)

Presenters	NIL
Items discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor & CEO Only Session • Capital Works Monthly Monitoring Report • Potential Fenced Dog Parks • Expression of Interest for 47 Brantome Street, Gisborne • Woodend Flood Study • Audit – Bus Stops • Draft Kyneton Urban Design Framework • Planning Matters • 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>

11 DIRECTOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT REPORTS

PE.1	DRAFT MACEDON RANGES HERITAGE STRATEGY 2024-2034
Officer:	Dannielle Orr, Heritage Planner
Council Plan relationship:	1. Connecting communities
Attachments:	1. Draft Macedon Ranges Heritage Strategy 2024-2034 (under separate cover) 2. Summary of submissions and officer response ↓

Summary

The draft Macedon Ranges Heritage Strategy 2024-2034 was released for public feedback in June 2024. The results of the community consultation have informed the final draft strategy, which is now presented for adoption (Attachment One).

Recommendation**That Council:**

- 1. Adopts the draft Macedon Ranges Heritage Strategy 2024-2034.**
- 2. Notifies all submitters regarding this resolution and thanks them for their feedback and participation.**

Background

The inaugural Heritage Strategy for Macedon Ranges was adopted in 2014 with a four-year timeframe to 2018. A review of the Heritage Strategy 2014–2018 and its 55 actions found that:

- 21.5 actions (39%) were complete
- 30.5 actions (56%) were not completed/started
- 3 actions (5%) were redundant.

For several reasons, the inaugural Heritage Strategy 2014-2018 was not revised at the end of its lifecycle. The development of the draft Macedon Ranges Heritage Strategy 2024-2034 (Heritage Strategy) began in March 2023. An initial round of consultation with the community and with relevant Council officers took place from May to July in 2023.

During the development of this draft Heritage Strategy, it has been key to select a limited number of actions that the organisation can commit to with available resources. This will set up this strategy for greater success with a smaller number of actions that can be realistically achieved. A longer cycle of ten years is also proposed, noting many of the priorities will occur over multiple years.

The consultation in 2023 informed the direction of the draft Heritage Strategy, to focus on building the organisation's capacity around natural, Aboriginal, and historic heritage matters, alongside Council's ongoing role in identifying and protecting sites of heritage significance in the shire.

The approach taken is a conservative one, to ensure that the Heritage Strategy contains a realistic set of actions tailored to existing staffing and having regard to the proposed ten-year timeframe for the work program. Additional actions are also included which can be completed if resourced via Council budget processes, grants etc.

The draft Heritage Strategy was prepared in late 2023 and early 2024. It was presented to Council at the 22 May 2024 Scheduled Council Meeting, at which it was resolved:

That Council endorses the release of the draft Macedon Ranges Heritage Strategy 2024-2034 for a four-week consultation process commencing in June 2024.

Discussion

The draft Heritage Strategy proceeded to consultation between Monday 3 June to Monday 1 July 2024, and included engagement with the community as well as relevant teams within Council. Consultation activities and responses are summarised in the next section.

As a result of the community consultation and organisation engagement, the following changes have been made to the draft Heritage Strategy.

- Two new actions:
 - In the 'Protecting' theme: "Strengthen the local policy for heritage in the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme" (insert as P1 and renumber actions)
 - In the 'Preparing' theme: "Advocate for better protection and processes for Aboriginal, local and state heritage in the Municipal Emergency Management Plan" (insert as Prep5 and renumber actions)
- Six minor changes, clarifications or insertions from the community consultation
- A number of minor changes to clarify wording, responsible units, stakeholder authorities, budget or timeframes from the organisation engagement.

The changes made in response to submissions are noted in the consultation summary attached. All other changes arising from organisation engagement are reflected in the final version of the draft Heritage Strategy.

Consultation and engagement

The first round of consultation and engagement included:

Community consultation: 'Love our heritage' photo survey, 22 May–23 June 2023

More than 40 photos and words were submitted, telling us what the community loves and wants to keep, or would change for the better regarding our heritage. A selection of these have been included are in the final document to showcase Macedon Ranges' heritage.

Organisation engagement: 26 June–19 July 2023

Council staff were engaged on the project through meetings with over 20 teams in all directorates.

The second round of consultation and engagement sought feedback on the draft Heritage Strategy and included:

Community consultation: 3 June–1 July 2024

Community members were asked to comment on the draft Heritage Strategy; community consultation included:

- 'Your Say' and project webpages with background materials and the draft Heritage Strategy
- Media release
- Social media posts
- Electronic direct emails.

The draft Heritage Strategy was also presented to the Macedon Ranges Heritage Council at their 21 May 2024 meeting. Additionally, information about the consultation was communicated through heritage industry and local government networks via online noticeboards such as the Heritage Victoria 'heritagechat' list.

A total of 11 submissions were received. Submitters comprised:

- The National Trust
- Five member groups from the Macedon Ranges Heritage Council
- Three Registered Aboriginal Parties
- The team for the Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid
- One resident.

Attachment Two provides a summary of the submissions together with an officer response.

Submissions were generally supportive of the draft Heritage Strategy or offered feedback with suggested changes. Three of the submissions were negative or critical. Broadly, the feedback included:

- Extensive commentary on heritage matters and suggestions for consideration as part of the implementation of specific actions
- Suggestions for minor changes
- Matters that were already covered in the document
- Matters that were outside the project scope or which relate to other Council processes.

Organisation engagement: 30 May–9 July 2024

In the same period, engagement occurred with all Council teams identified in the draft Heritage Strategy as responsible for an action. Responses were received from all areas of Council and noted:

- Support for the draft Heritage Strategy and alignment with relevant strategic work such as the 'Counting down to ZERO' plan and the next 'Reconciliation Action Plan' (in progress).
- Opportunities for changes and clarifications to action wording, external stakeholders, budgeting or timeframes.
- Actions which were already underway and suggestions for implementation.

Collaboration

The Heritage Strategy is principally focused on the Macedon Ranges Shire municipality and no other collaboration is required at this stage.

The draft Heritage Strategy includes individual actions that will require collaboration with other councils, governments and/or statutory bodies at the implementation phase, as indicated in the action plan.

Innovation and continuous improvement

The draft Heritage Strategy has been prepared using guides and toolkits from Heritage Victoria and the Victorian Heritage Council. These are best heritage practice guides from the Victorian Government written specifically for heritage strategies at a local government level. The guide and toolkits structure the Heritage Strategy around four topics – of ‘Knowing’, ‘Protecting’, ‘Supporting’, and ‘Communicating and Promoting’. A fifth topic, ‘Preparing’, has been included in the draft to account for climate change impacts to heritage assets.

Relevant law

Generally, the draft Heritage Strategy recommendations relate to heritage work required primarily at the local level, in accordance with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. However, consideration of Aboriginal, natural and state heritage, as well as records and place naming have also been incorporated into the draft Heritage Strategy, governed by these laws:

- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* and relevant state legislation enacting Native Title (Commonwealth) for Aboriginal cultural heritage
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Commonwealth) for natural heritage
- *Geographic Place Names Act 1998* for place naming
- *Heritage Act 2017* for state and archaeological heritage
- *Public Records Act 1973* for local government records

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

The draft Heritage Strategy is gender neutral in its recommendations. However, there will be positive gender, diversity and inclusion impacts resulting from some of the actions when implemented. This includes greater awareness of various types of heritage (Aboriginal, women’s, migrants etc.), greater access to heritage information for members of the community, and inclusion through incorporation of more diverse aspects of our history and heritage in processes such as place naming.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

The draft Heritage Strategy has been informed in part by the *State of Heritage Review: Local Heritage* (Heritage Council of Victoria, 2020) which identified issues and opportunities for local governments’ heritage work.

There is also a ‘Memorandum of Understanding for Heritage Data Sharing with State of Victoria between Heritage Victoria and Macedon Ranges Shire Council’ (2009), that pertains to the Victorian Heritage Database entries for the municipality, recommended for specific actions under the ‘Communicating and Promoting’ theme.

Relevant Council plans and policies

The draft Heritage Strategy project delivers a Council Plan item to ‘Finalise Council’s Heritage Strategy to guide Council’s priorities for further heritage protection’ (2021-2031 Year 4). It also supports and makes recommendations based on the following Council strategies, plans or policies:

- Asset Plan 2021-2031

- Counting Down to ZERO: Our plan to reach ZERO net emissions by 2030
- Economic Development Strategy 2021-2031
- Reconciliation Action Plan 2021-23 and draft Reconciliation Action Plan 2024

Climate Impact Assessment

How will the recommendation impact on Council's energy usage and greenhouse emissions profile?

The Heritage Strategy will not directly impact Council's energy usage or greenhouse emissions. Individual Heritage Strategy actions support the ongoing rollout of energy efficiency and emissions reduction programs for heritage assets that Council owns and manages.

How will the recommendations mitigate risks posed by climate change to Council operations and services?

The Heritage Strategy includes actions under the theme 'Preparing', which are specific to climate change risks. Damage caused to Council heritage assets by severe weather events impacts Council resources including budget and staff workload. Actions including future-proofing of Council's heritage assets and upskilling staff to manage affected heritage assets will help to reduce these resource impacts.

How will the recommendation help to prepare the community for future climate scenarios? The actions under the 'Preparing' theme support the community by:

- Seeking to protect heritage assets that the community uses and enjoys (including community buildings and significant landscape features).
- Supporting ongoing use of heritage buildings in more extreme climatic conditions.
- Providing information to the community on disaster preparedness for privately owned heritage assets.

Financial viability

The Heritage Strategy has been developed within the organisation using existing resources.

Strategy actions will have resourcing and budget implications, and these have been indicated in the Heritage Strategy action plan.

Sustainability implications

There are beneficial sustainability, social and wellbeing implications from the Heritage Strategy. We protect heritage because it connects us to the past, gives us a sense of place in the present, and preserves what we value for future generations to enjoy. Heritage helps connect us to place and supports our resilience and wellbeing in times of change. It belongs to all of us, and we are all responsible for caring for it now and ensuring it is here in the future, for generations to come.

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 Two

CONSULTATION SUMMARY AND RESPONSE

The table below provides a summary of each submission, the key issues raised, and any specific changes requested. A response including any recommended changes to the Heritage Strategy is also provided.

Abbreviations:

ACHRIS – the restricted / protected Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System

HO – Heritage Overlay in the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme

‘Heritage Strategy’ – the draft Macedon Ranges Heritage Strategy 2024-2034, that was made publicly available for consultation in June 2024.

No.	Submitter	Comment summary & key issues	Response / Actions	Change/s made to the Heritage Strategy
1	Kyneton Historical Society	Date correction on a ‘Love our heritage’ photo submission	All photos and comments (except for Hanging Rock image) were submitted by members of the public as part of the ‘Love our heritage’ photo survey. Referred to submitter.	Refer Submission 2
2	Friends of Kyneton Museum	Confirmed date on a ‘Love our heritage’ photo submission was a typographical error. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggested correction of wording to ‘established’ 	Submitter confirmed the 1968 date, and suggested word change in their own submission.	p.16 change the date in the photo caption to ‘1968’ and replace ‘set up’ with ‘established’
3	National Trust of Australia, Victoria	Background on the advocacy role of National Trust of Australia, Victoria Strong support for the draft Heritage Strategy and Action Plan Commend Council for other strategic heritage work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Macedon Ranges Thematic Environmental History Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid 	Noted, with thanks	No change
		Support particularly noted for numerous actions.	Noted, with thanks	No change
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggest reviewing and updating existing citations for places already in the HO (P1, CP3) Include consideration of issues that lead to poor heritage outcomes: facadism, unsympathetic urban development (S2) Include consideration of issues that lead to better heritage outcomes: protection for heritage streetscapes & precincts, mandatory height controls (S2) Recommend including the NTAV Advocacy Toolkit (S2, CP7) Provide adequate security for vacant buildings (P4) Recommend the ‘Heritage Council of Victoria guide for local council officers and Councillors’ toolkit (S1, S5 and CP5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted, with thanks. Each of these suggestions is relevant to the implementation stage of the actions listed, and will be considered further at that time. 	No change
		For future heritage studies (K2): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend studying gaps for Inter-War, Post-War, industrial heritage and women Recommend changing the long timeframe for heritage study work to short-medium term Recommend that studies are progressed to amendments to avoid delays and risk of losses Recommend that matters of heritage are best addressed through the amendment and Panel process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaps will be identified by the review of the Thematic Environmental History against currently protected places in the planning scheme K1, which may include these gaps noted by NTAV. The gap review work (action K1) and the corrections amendments (action P1) are the urgent priority and the heritage studies and planning scheme amendments (action K2) will commence following these. The ‘long’ timeframe indicates that this is project that will take many years and considerable commitment to complete it. The action regarding heritage studies and amendments (including Panel) have been paired together to budget, commit and plan for these in tandem and avoid delays, but ultimately progressing these projects is a matter for Council decision. 	No change

No.	Submitter	Comment summary & key issues	Response / Actions	Change/s made to the Heritage Strategy
		For local heritage policy (S2): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage a review of heritage policy and provisions in the planning scheme 	This was a gap identified through internal organisation engagement.	Support for inserting the new action (and re-number other actions accordingly): Protecting 1 (P1) Strengthen local policy for heritage in the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme'
		For training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend specific areas for heritage training e.g. assets, property management etc (S1, S5 and CP5) 	Training will be offered to all areas of Council, as a whole-of-organisation responsibility.	No change
		For community / external advice such as a Heritage Advisory Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommends other government, tourism and advocacy bodies that are useful for support (K3, K5, and S4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Macedon Ranges Heritage Council fulfills this role and their support is recommended for continuation (action CP6) The Heritage Advisor is already on many heritage committees, industry groups and networks. 	No change
		For Aboriginal heritage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend meaningful engagement and ongoing consultation with and Registered Aboriginal Parties (P2, CP1 and CP5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget has been allocated for consultation and engagement in the implementation stages. Ongoing consultation is also carried out through the Reconciliation Action Plan process. 	No change
		For natural heritage and landscapes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend adequate protections for trees and landscapes are implemented through local laws or in the planning scheme (CP4; Objective 5 'Preparing') 	Broader applications will be considered at the conclusion of the pilot Avenue of Honour tree project (action Prep2).	No change
4.	Gisborne & Mount Macedon Districts Historical Society	Spelling correction for 'Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung' in Acknowledgement	Checked with Reconciliation Action Plan officer and spelling in Heritage Strategy is correct.	No change
		More photos that could have been submitted to highlight Gisborne and Mount Macedon heritage.	Appreciated, but only half of the photos could be used in the Heritage Strategy. Consideration was given to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best illustration of heritage values, or a point that the strategy addresses Balance of representation across the shire Proportionate representation of types of heritage Size limitation of the document; there were more photos than text Resolution required for print 	No change
		Compliment and support for the draft Heritage Strategy	Noted, with thanks	No change
5.	Woodend & District Heritage Society	(Submission form) Woodend & District Heritage Society have many comments and questions.	Noted	No change
		(Submission attachment) They fully agree and support the Romsey & Lancefield Districts Historical Society submission	Noted	No change
		The Romsey & Lancefield Districts Historical Society submission is reproduced in full.	Refer to responses to Submission 6 below.	Refer Submission 6

No.	Submitter	Comment summary & key issues	Response / Actions	Change/s made to the Heritage Strategy
6.	Romsey & Lancefield Districts Historical Society	(Submission form) Concerned that the draft Heritage Strategy focuses only on Council's heritage assets. Questions that no mention is made of private or potential heritage residences in the Shire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The actions in the strategy relate both to Council and private heritage assets, however there is a strong focus on Council assets given its role as one of the largest asset owners / managers in the Shire. It is considered that appropriate management of Council heritage assets benefits the whole community. A number of actions relate to the identification and protection of heritage sites not currently covered by HOs, e.g. actions K1 and K2. Further, there are a number of actions directed to providing more information and resources for owners of heritage assets. 	No change
		Concern about the preservation of historic records held by Council.	Action P3 to develop a project for these records is a priority action, to begin in the short term of the next 1-3 years.	No change
		Questions the role and validity of the Macedon Ranges Heritage Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Macedon Ranges Heritage Council is an important community body that assists Councillors and officers with advice, information and communicating what is of value to these groups and the wider community on heritage matters. The Romsey & Lancefield Districts Historical Society is a member of the Macedon Ranges Heritage Council. Support for the Heritage Council's continuation is at action CP6 	p.37, insert a new glossary section to clarify these specialised committees and terms
		Questions the funding for the draft Heritage Strategy	The Heritage Strategy is intended to set out Council's priorities on heritage matters. If adopted, funding for projects is subject to Council's budgetary and planning process, as with other works and services.	No change
		(Submission attachment) Questions about the previous Heritage Strategy, reasons for its lack of implementation, lack of funding, longer timeframe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is covered in the Heritage Strategy in the 'Background' section and on the project page https://www.mrsc.vic.gov.au/Build-Plan/Heritage-Protection-and-Planning/Macedon-Ranges-Heritage-Strategy-2024-2034 The Heritage Strategy has been deliberately designed to work within and fully utilise existing resources, to set a Council-wide approach to heritage over a longer timeframe, to be more achievable, with options for additional resourcing and/or budget through the budget process. 	No change
		Questions about the 'Love our heritage' response rate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on officer experience, the response rate for this phase of consultation was good. All heritage / history groups in the shire participated, with the exception of the Romsey & Lancefield Districts Historical Society. 	No change
		Support for the goal for heritage in the Macedon Ranges	Noted, with thanks	No change
		For the 'Knowing' theme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difference between Council's heritage advisory service and the Macedon Ranges Heritage Council Difference between a planning scheme review and the actions of the heritage strategic work Priority of this theme Mention of the IT systems but no accompanying budget in the action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The previous local government heritage advisory service was funded by Heritage Victoria (funding now discontinued) and is outlined in the <i>State of Heritage Report</i> referenced. The Macedon Ranges Heritage Council is a local committee, not Council appointed. Two Councillors and the Heritage Advisor attend the meetings by invitation. The Heritage Council is a successful group, having been established since 1995, and their continuation is supported by action CP6. The Heritage Strategy only deals with the planning scheme around heritage aspects. A planning scheme review deals with the Planning Scheme as a whole, of which heritage forms only a part. Work from the Heritage Strategy will feed into the review, if adopted and as it is implemented. The 'Knowing' theme and actions are a key priority and therefore listed as short term, to commence immediately / as soon as practicable, if adopted. The IT systems discussed are a reference to existing systems Council uses such as AssetFinda and for Project Management. No additional budget is required for these; the actions that are related to better asset and project management using these IT systems are actions K3 and P5. 	p.37, insert a new glossary section to clarify these specialised committees and terms

No.	Submitter	Comment summary & key issues	Response / Actions	Change/s made to the Heritage Strategy
		For the 'Protecting' theme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern that the focus is on Council's heritage assets Question that no mention is made of private and other heritage assets in the Shire Concern about the mapping mistakes and errors in the HO controls Concern about the historic records and the short term priority for this action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As noted above, the strategy deals with both Council-managed and private heritage assets. There is community benefit in ensuring that Council's systems and processes for managing the heritage assets that we are responsible for are best practice. The Heritage Strategy does include all types of heritage – Aboriginal, natural and historic. The correction of the mapping mistakes and errors in the HO controls is a key priority for this reason, and are in action P1. The necessity for the historic records to be properly archived, in the best conditions for documents, so they can be accessed by everyone (including the Heritage Advisor) is a key priority of the Heritage Strategy, which is dealt with in action P3. It is thus given a short term timeframe, to commence immediately / as soon as practicable, if adopted. 	No change
		For the 'Supporting' theme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions regarding the roles of Council's Heritage Advisory Service and the Heritage Council of Victoria's Local Government Specialist Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current Heritage Advisory Service is offered internally to Council units, on key projects and business developments; and provides advice on relevant planning permit applications, as resourcing allows. It is currently resourced on a part-time basis and so cannot be requested on-demand at this time, and is therefore not advertised on Council's website. The success of this service will be evaluated in future reviews of the Heritage Strategy, if adopted, and changes may be recommended accordingly. The Heritage Council's Local Government Specialist Committee is not a Council-appointed committee, but a committee of the statutory advisory body, the Heritage Council of Victoria. Information about the committee is available on their website: https://heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/about-heritage-council/committees/ 	p.37, insert a new glossary section to clarify these specialised committees and terms
		For the 'Preparing' theme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggested rewording for heritage and climate change 	Noted	p.24, change sentence to read 'Heritage needs to be considered', as recommended
		Comments on use of language and phrasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Heritage Strategy follows the Macedon Ranges Shire Council Corporate Writing Style Guide. The purpose of the Heritage Strategy is to set out Council's priorities on heritage matters. If adopted, funding for projects is subject to Council's budget and planning processes, as with other works and services. 	No change
		Questions about the action plan resourcing and budget	The definitions for what is meant by different terms such as 'current capacity' etc are provided on p.26, in the Guide to the Action Plan.	No change
		Comment that the focus is Kyneton-centric	All attempts were made to ensure the heritage and discussion presented throughout the Heritage Strategy were balanced. Examples of contributions by community members relating to Romsey and Lancefield are included in the Heritage Strategy in relation to built structures, and mature exotic trees. As noted above, the Romsey & Lancefield Districts Historical Society were invited to contribute to earlier consultation, but did not.	No change
		There are many comments in this submission about the Annual Budget 2024-25.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These are beyond the scope of the Heritage Strategy. The 2024-25 budget is adopted and underway for the current financial year. Actions in the Heritage Strategy, if adopted, will be subject to budget processes for future financial years. It is recommended the submitter provides input to future Annual Budget processes to indicate support for heritage or other projects of importance to them. 	No change
		Statement about lack of Council funding for Council owned heritage sites, properties, gardens or streetscapes.	As noted above, the Heritage Strategy is intended to set out Council's priorities for heritage work. Some actions will be subject to future budget processes.	No change
7.	Resident	(Submission form) Noted that there was difficulty submitting extra pictures in the 'your say' form.	Noted, and referred to Communications.	No change

No.	Submitter	Comment summary & key issues	Response / Actions	Change/s made to the Heritage Strategy
		(Submission attachment) Background on resident's 25 years of experience living with Macedon Ranges' heritage.	Noted	No change
		Questions the wording of the strategy and its reliability if funding, staff etc are not available.	The purpose of the Heritage Strategy is to set out Council's priorities on heritage matters. If adopted, funding for projects is subject to Council's budget and planning processes, as with other works and services.	No change
		Questions the expansion of heritage to cover environmental and Indigenous heritage and considers this runs the risk of trying to include everything.	The Heritage Strategy follows the Heritage Victoria toolkit for municipal heritage strategies, which encourages a broad understanding of heritage, to include natural and Aboriginal heritage. This is also recommended as heritage industry best practice in the Burra Charter produced by Australia ICOMOS.	No change
		Concern about the lack of resources, and whether there will be a shire wide approach for new residents.	The Heritage Strategy has been deliberately designed to work within and fully utilise existing resources, to set a Council-wide approach to heritage. There are a number of actions related to residents, as well as new residents, such as initiatives to improve online information.	No change
		For the issue of new residents and population change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommends including history, heritage of the town, local groups details and contacts in the information kit for new residents • Notes that this is vital for establishing pride and celebrating our history 	This is the intention of actions CP3 and CP7, to provide this information online on Council's webpages. Some of this information is already provided, such as details of local history groups or in the heritage studies. The 'Communicating and Promoting' theme generally intends to make this information more easily accessible.	No change
		Concern about the loss of farming history due to deaths in the farming families, investors and development pressures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommends a list of research done or needing to be done by township, across the different towns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The broad history of farming and its significance in Macedon Range's development is dealt with in the Thematic Environmental History. A full list of previous heritage work already done was provided in the TEH as well as in the Heritage Strategy for this reason. • Farming history will also be evaluated for representation in the planning scheme by action K1 to identify if there are gaps with protection for places. The resulting list will be by theme but can include a secondary list by township. This will be considered in the implementation stage. • With regards to detailed histories, grants are available from Public Records Office of Victoria and letters of support are regularly provided by the Heritage Advisor for these worthy projects. Notice of these grant opportunities are circulated to the Macedon Ranges Heritage Council. • The action S3 will examine these grants to determine how to maximise these funding opportunities. • There are also many published resources that capture this history held in the local history collections of the Goldfields Library. 	No change
		Concern about the vulnerability of workers cottages that may not be protected. (Additional material) Five pictures of vernacular or 'miner's cottages' with some addresses supplied.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These will be checked and added to the working spreadsheet of 'potential' heritage places kept by the Heritage Advisor. The current spreadsheet totals nearly 1,000 sites (from the legacy heritage studies, and places noted since). • The intended approach is to prioritise future heritage study work so that the places most rare, at risk, or unprotected but significant to Macedon Ranges' development are actioned first, before places already well-represented such as town residential development. 	No change
		Suggestions for the operation of the Macedon Ranges Heritage Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommends formal roles being taken on, on a rotating basis • Possibility of sourcing resources for the group as a whole • Potential to increase access of Macedon Range's heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are matters for the Macedon Ranges Heritage Council to consider; it is not a Council-appointed committee. Two Councillors and the Heritage Advisor attend the meetings by invitation. The Heritage Council is a successful group, having been established since 1995 and their continuation is supported by action CP6. • It is not recommended that these comments are forwarded to the Heritage Council; it is at the submitter's discretion to make these suggestions to this community group. 	No change
		(Via email) Additional pictures emailed that had not been able to be attached to the 'Your Say' form.	Extra material was received by email and confirmed.	No change

No.	Submitter	Comment summary & key issues	Response / Actions	Change/s made to the Heritage Strategy
8.	World Heritage and Regional Development Lead City of Ballarat	Compliment and support for the draft Heritage Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support particularly noted for the inclusion of climate change 	Noted, with thanks	No change
		Correction of list of stakeholders – 2 options offered	Option 2 best represented what the Heritage Strategy was trying to demonstrate, i.e. the breadth of partner involvement and coverage of the World Heritage Bid: Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid. Local government partners: Ararat Rural City, Baw Baw Shire Council, Campaspe Shire Council, Central Goldfields Shire Council, City of Ballarat, City of Greater Bendigo, Golden Plains Shire, Hepburn Shire Council, Indigo Shire Council, Loddon Shire Council, Macedon Ranges Shire Council, Moorabool Shire Council, Mount Alexander Shire Council, Northern Grampians Shire Council, Pyrenees Shire Council. Registered Aboriginal Parties: Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, The Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation, Taungurung Land and Waters Council Aboriginal Corporation, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation. Tourism bodies: Daylesford and Macedon Ranges Tourism, Bendigo Regional Tourism, Tourism Midwest Victoria, Grampians Tourism, Tourism North East, Destination Gippsland, Murray Regional Tourism, Victorian Goldfields Tourism Executive.	p.37 change list of World Heritage project partners, as recommended
9.	Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation [NB: all RAP comments will also be referred for consideration in the Reconciliation Action Plan.]	Background on DJAARA and interconnections with Council's heritage work and wider initiative such as the World Heritage Bid. Statement of the legal status and functions of DJAARA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a Registered Aboriginal Party under the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i> Functions to advise generally (fa) and to the Minister on amendments (fd) Under the <i>Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010</i> with the Recognition and Settlement Agreement 2013 In strategies 'Local Government Engagement Strategy', 'Dhelkunya Dja: Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan' 	Noted	No change
		Acknowledge that MRSC is on Djandak (Country) and Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Countries. DJAARA acknowledge they speak for their Country, and are unable to speak on behalf of others.	Noted	No change
		Congratulate Council on the draft Heritage Strategy	Noted, with thanks	No change
		DJAARA have a major role to play in protecting and promoting cultural heritage on Djandak. They offer these three areas of feedback, following	Noted	No change

No.	Submitter	Comment summary & key issues	Response / Actions	Change/s made to the Heritage Strategy
		<p>For consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommends meaningful and early engagement • 'Love our heritage' engaged a narrow demographic, with values displaying one form of heritage • 'Goal' could include 'intangible heritage' to represent values of oral tradition and ceremony for Djaara culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget has been allocated for consultation and engagement in the implementation stages with Registered Aboriginal Parties. • Ongoing consultation is also carried out through the Reconciliation Action Plan process with all three Registered Aboriginal Parties and other Traditional Owners, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders who live in Macedon Ranges Shire. • The 'Love our heritage' photo survey was open for a period of 6 weeks, and open to all to contribute. It was widely advertised, but whether people chose to participate or not was entirely at their discretion. The selection used in the Heritage Strategy was carefully chosen to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Best illustration of heritage values, or a point that the strategy addresses ○ Balance of representation across the shire ○ Proportionate representation of types of heritage ○ Size limitation of the document; there were more photos than text ○ Resolution required for print. • The beautiful artwork by Maddi Moser was deliberately selected to be in a very prominent position and size in the Heritage Strategy, to highlight the key values of Aboriginal heritage foremost. • The goal is intended to capture both tangible heritage and intangible, or 'history', values. 	<p>p.10 insert 'intangible heritage', as recommended</p>
		<p>For the importance of Traditional Owners telling their own stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous 1990s heritage study work noted • Recent review heritage study work noted (C118macr and C127macr) • Caution about the representation of the Macedon Ranges Thematic Environmental History 2023 • Support for the next steps to analyse gaps in heritage work • Suggest a cultural values assessment by DJAARA on Djandak be prioritised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Macedon Ranges Shire has included Aboriginal heritage in heritage study work since 1996 with the formative Macedon Ranges Pre-Contact Pilot Study. • Notice for recent planning scheme amendments such as C127macr were sent to the relevant Registered Aboriginal Parties, including in this instance, identification of a potential scar tree. • The Macedon Ranges Thematic Environmental History 2023 was a project that reviewed secondary sources of material that were readily available (a desktop review), including the 1996 Pre-Contact Pilot Study and published resources on Central Victorian Aboriginal history and heritage. There was no resourcing for primary research. However, the project was undertaken over a number of years and included several lengthy consultation phases, widely advertised, and open to all for comment. • Gaps will be identified by the review of the Thematic Environmental History against currently protected places in the planning scheme (action K1), which may include this gap noted by DJAARA. If that is the case, a cultural values assessment will be considered in the implementation stage. 	<p>No change</p>
		<p>For identifying and protecting Djaara's cultural heritage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support noted for actions that improve cultural heritage information and protection (P2, S1, S4, CP1, CP2, and CP5) and that are being undertaken already or in the short term • Recommend that priority of Aboriginal heritage training for emergency officers (Prep4) be re-prioritised from medium term to short term. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on all heritage matters – including Aboriginal heritage – is a key priority in the strategy (S1). The training program over the life of the strategy has been deliberately designed to embed the general training first, succeeded by more specific training on particular forms of heritage or for particular work areas (Prep4) in following years. The intention is also to then consider ways to roll out the training for community groups, owners, businesses etc once the format and program has been established. This has been designed to work within existing resources (one Heritage Advisor). • The Heritage Advisor is aware of First Peoples' ACHRIS training being offered this year and this will be promoted through the organisation, once specific officers are cleared to be allowed use to this restricted / protected database. However, contact will be made with DJAARA to discuss the options they are referring to, as this is within current capacity. 	<p>No change</p>

No.	Submitter	Comment summary & key issues	Response / Actions	Change/s made to the Heritage Strategy
10.	Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation [NB: all RAP comments will also be referred for consideration in the Reconciliation Action Plan.]	For naming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider all council namings such as buildings, open spaces etc. 	These will all be considered in the implementation stage of the relevant action.	No change
		For Aboriginal heritage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend training for council workers about Act requirements such as CHMPs Recommend training to raise cultural awareness about the importance of protecting Aboriginal heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal heritage due diligences are provided as part of the Heritage Advisory Service, which is recommended for continuation (S4). Training will be offered to all areas of Council, as a whole-of-organisation responsibility (S1). 	No change
11.	Taungurung Land & Waters Council [NB: all RAP comments will also be referred for consideration in the Reconciliation Action Plan.]	For consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation period and extensions did not allow sufficient time for comprehensive feedback High level feedback provided as a result 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted. Budget has been allocated for consultation and engagement in the implementation stages with Registered Aboriginal Parties. Ongoing consultation is also carried out through the Reconciliation Action Plan process with all three Registered Aboriginal Parties and other Traditional Owners, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders who live in Macedon Ranges Shire. 	No change
		Correct reference for the RAP to 'Taungurung Land and Waters Council'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text in Acknowledgement of Country and artwork is previously approved content Discussion of Registered Aboriginal Parties in 'Communicating and Promoting' section has been checked Reference in World Heritage project is correct 	p.21 corrections made to fully title all Registered Aboriginal Parties
		For Aboriginal heritage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend commitment of financial and time resourcing for RAP- led management of Aboriginal heritage Recommend inclusion of the social significance (Criterion G) for Aboriginal people of historic heritage places as part of Conservation Management Plans Recommend a Whole of Country and co-design approach for all heritage spaces Recommend commitment to RAP assessments and protections for heritage spaces and places Recommend a living Country approach to heritage management 	This is the approach proposed for action P3 for those Aboriginal places that are currently listed in the Heritage Overlay. It is hoped that that through this particular project, and the discussions and relationships that will be developed with the Registered Aboriginal Parties about these important sites, a broader Council-wide approach can be developed for how Aboriginal heritage is managed. This broader approach to Aboriginal heritage will also be considered in the implementation stage of the relevant actions, such as training on the various forms of heritage, including Aboriginal heritage (S1).	No change
		For Heritage Strategy development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend co-design approach for development eg inclusion of workshops, funded community days and yarning sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Heritage Strategy has been developed in house using existing resources Budget has been allocated for consultation and engagement in the implementation stages with Registered Aboriginal Parties. Ongoing consultation is also carried out through the Reconciliation Action Plan process with all three Registered Aboriginal Parties and other Traditional Owners, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders who live in Macedon Ranges Shire. 	No change

PE.2	PLAN FOR VICTORIA SUBMISSION
Officer:	Leanne Khan, Coordinator Strategic Planning
	1. Connecting communities
Council Plan relationship:	2. Healthy environment, healthy people
	3. Business and tourism
	4. Delivering strong and reliable government
Attachments:	Council Submission to Plan for Victoria ↓

Summary

The Department of Transport and Planning has announced it will be preparing a new land use strategy through the Plan for Victoria process to guide how Victoria grows and develops in the period to 2050. Officers have prepared a submission responding to the engagement questions. Council is asked to endorse the submission.

Recommendation

That Council endorse the Submission to Plan for Victoria and submits to the Department of Transport and Planning.

Background

The Victorian State Government (Government) and councils play a critical role in how cities and towns are planned and grow. In 2017 the Government adopted a metropolitan planning strategy, Plan Melbourne 2017-50, to guide land use planning and development across metropolitan Melbourne. Integrating long-term land use, infrastructure and transport planning, Plan Melbourne aimed to set out the strategy for supporting jobs and growth, while building on Melbourne's legacy of distinctiveness, liveability and sustainability. One of the key elements of Plan Melbourne was the concept of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods, which aimed to encourage 'living locally' by enabling people to meet most of their daily needs within a 20-minute return walk from home.

The Government estimates that by 2050 Victoria will be home to more than ten million people, with eight million forecast to live in Melbourne and over two million in regional Victoria (Department of Transport and Planning, 2024). In response to this growth and change, the Government has commenced the preparation of a 'Plan for Victoria' (the Plan), which will supersede Plan Melbourne. This work started in late 2023, with the Government facilitating round table discussions and webinars with leaders and key decision-makers across local government, and the housing, development, environment and community sectors.

The Government has indicated that the Plan will focus on delivering more homes near transport, job opportunities and essential services in vibrant, liveable, and sustainable neighbourhoods with smarter and more sustainable solutions to support future growth. The Government has commenced a second round of engagement to inform the development of the Plan, with feedback sought on four pillars comprising:

- Affordable Housing and Choice
- Equity and Jobs
- Thriving and Liveable Suburbs and Towns

- Sustainable Environments and Climate Change

In June 2024 the Government released Housing Targets. Each of Victoria's 79 councils has been provided with a draft housing target for where the 2.24 million new homes could be built by 2051. It is recognised that Councils play an important role in creating new homes by developing local planning policies and granting permit approvals. They are designed to create more housing choice in areas with existing and planned public transport, jobs, and services in Melbourne and regional cities.

The draft targets were informed by:

- An area's proximity to jobs and services
- Level of access to existing and planned public transport
- Environmental hazards like flood and bushfire risk
- Current development trends and places already identified for more homes
- Demonstrated development potential in established regional cities in Victoria.

Discussion

Consultation on Plan for Victoria provides an opportunity for Council to input into a new statewide integrated land use planning and transport strategy. Council has prepared a submission (Attachment One) to outline how Plan for Victoria can support the Macedon Ranges' people, economy, environment and landscape. Council advocates for the following key outcomes for the Plan:

- Plan for Victoria must have regard for the Macedon Ranges Shires' status as a declared distinctive area and landscape
- Refine the draft housing targets to account for infill development in regional areas.
- Plan for Victoria should include mandatory affordable housing requirements and assist local government with resources and knowledge to deliver affordable housing outcomes
- Unlocking land that is ready for development requires a coordinated investment in utilities infrastructure – sewer, water, power, telecommunications:
 - Ensure land use planning growth is aligned with future infrastructure investment of water authorities and other utilities.
 - Ensure land use planning secures investment in telecommunications infrastructure.
 - Upgrade power supply to support the Gas Substitution Roadmap.
 - Resource councils to develop and implement Development Contribution Plans (DCPs) that identify joint investment to help fund necessary infrastructure for housing.
- Support local jobs.
- Reform the infrastructure funding and service delivery framework.
- Support increased liveability and through public transport connectivity.
- Recognise the importance of heritage places and spaces to thriving communities and neighbourhoods.

- Recognise the importance of streetscape and local movement networks on the health and liveability of communities.
- Support open space and recreation provision.
- Continue to support the Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid.
- Respond to bushfire risk in planning for new and existing communities.
- Support state-wide coordination of risk/hazard mapping in the Planning Scheme.
- Establish a consistent policy framework for environmentally sustainable development.
- Support the provision of open space for biodiversity.
- Support the implementation of 'Planning for Melbourne's Green Wedges and Agricultural Land.'

Consultation and engagement

The Department of Transport and Planning is undertaking consultation on the Engage Victoria site and has invited submissions by 30 August 2024. Ongoing consultation has been conducted since late 2023 including some round table discussions and webinars with leaders and key decision-makers across local government, and the housing, development, environment and community sectors.

Collaboration

Whilst no collaboration with other councils, governments and statutory bodies was required, it is noted that the Loddon Mallee Housing Coordination Project put in a joint submission regarding housing for the ten Loddon Mallee Councils.

Innovation and continuous improvement

N/A

Relevant law

This report and attached submission were prepared having regard for the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and objectives for planning in Victoria.

This report does not have any direct or indirect human rights implications under the 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

In preparing the submission, regard for the following state and regional plans have been considered:

- Plan Melbourne 2017-2050
- Macedon Ranges Statement of Planning Policy, 2019
- Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan, 2014
- Loddon Campaspe Regional Employment and Innovation Corridor Plan, 2022

Relevant Council plans and policies

In preparing the submission, regard for the following Council Plans and Policies have been given to:

- Priority Project June 2024
- Climate Emergency Plan (2023-2030)
- Riddells Creek Movement Network Plan (2024-2033)
- Kyneton Movement Network Plan (2024-2033)
- Gisborne Futures Structure Plan (July 2024)
- Romsey Structure Plan (May 2024)

Climate Impact Assessment

There are no impacts to climate change direct financial implications to Council in presenting this submission to the Department of Transport.

Financial viability

There are no direct financial implications to Council in presenting this submission to the Department of Transport and Planning.

Sustainability implications

The submission supports the enhancement of the built, natural, economic and social environment within Macedon Ranges and across Victoria

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.



Plan for Victoria – Submission by Macedon Ranges Shire Council

About the Macedon Ranges

Macedon Ranges Shire is located on the traditional land of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung peoples of the Kulin nation who are acknowledged as caretakers and traditional custodians of the land. The shire includes significant locations where intertribal affiliations with the clans were strengthened through the sharing of resources and social connections.

The traditional custodians of the shire continue to practice their culture and customs and experience a close spiritual, physical, social, historical and economic relationship with the land and waters that make up their country.

Macedon Ranges Shire is located approximately 60km northwest of Melbourne covering an area of 1,747 square kilometres. The shire is a peri-urban municipality located on the interface of metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

The Macedon Ranges Shire is renowned for its significant landscapes and diversity of open spaces that have high aesthetic, conservation, biodiversity, economic and cultural heritage values. The Macedon Ranges is declared a Distinctive Area and Landscape under state legislation and the Macedon Ranges Statement of Planning Policy (SPP) was gazetted for the shire in 2019.

The shire is located in the Loddon Campaspe Region. It contains the key regional townships of Gisborne and Kyneton and district townships of Riddells Creek, Lancefield, Romsey and Woodend, in addition to a number of smaller towns, villages and hamlets.

The Calder Freeway and Bendigo rail line and associated rail stations provide key infrastructure assets and connections from Melbourne to northern regional Victoria.

The 2021 ABS Census estimated the shire's population at 51,599. The regional towns of Gisborne and Kyneton and to a lesser extent Riddells Creek, Romsey, Woodend and Lancefield are expected to accommodate most of the shire's population growth.

In 2024, the Shire's population was estimated to be 53,787, with most of the population living in the Gisborne and Kyneton districts. The shire is expected to accommodate approximately 65,771 people by 2036, an increase of 22% (Forecast.id, 2024).

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What does the Macedon Ranges community need the Plan for Victoria to achieve?

Council has prepared this submission to outline how the Plan for Victoria can support the Macedon Ranges' people, economy, environment and landscape. Council advocates for the following key outcomes for the Plan:

- **The Plan for Victoria must have regard for the Macedon Ranges' status as a declared distinctive area and landscape**
- **Refine the draft housing targets to account for infill development in regional areas.**
- **The Plan for Victoria should include mandatory affordable housing requirements and assist local government with resources and knowledge to deliver affordable housing outcomes**
- **Unlocking land that is ready for development requires a coordinated investment in utilities infrastructure – sewer, water, power, telecommunications:**
 - **Ensure land use planning growth is aligned with future infrastructure investment of water authorities and other utilities.**
 - **Ensure land use planning secures investment in telecommunications infrastructure.**
 - **Upgrade power supply to support the Gas Substitution Roadmap.**
 - **Resource councils to develop and implement Development Contribution Plans (DCPs) that identify joint investment to help fund necessary infrastructure for housing.**
- **Support local jobs**
- **Reform the infrastructure funding and service delivery framework**
- **Support increased liveability and through public transport connectivity**
- **Recognise the importance of heritage places and spaces to thriving communities and neighbourhoods**
- **Recognise the importance of streetscape and local movement networks on the health and liveability of communities**
- **Support open space and recreation provision**
- **Continue to support the Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid**



- **Respond to bushfire risk in planning for new and existing communities**
- **Support state-wide coordination of risk/hazard mapping in the Planning Scheme**
- **Establish a consistent policy framework for environmentally sustainable development**
- **Support the provision of open space for biodiversity**
- **Support the implementation of 'Planning for Melbourne's Green Wedges and Agricultural Land'**

Each of these key requests are further discussed in our submission below.

The Plan for Victoria must have regard for the Macedon Ranges' status as a declared distinctive area and landscape

The Macedon Ranges became the first area to be declared a Distinctive Area and Landscape under the Planning and Environment Amendment (Distinctive Areas and Landscapes) Act 2018. This designation recognises the unique environmental and cultural values of the area, placing additional obligations on our operations regarding environmental conservation and sustainability, land use planning and emergency management. The Macedon Ranges Statement of Planning Policy also underscores the importance of properly engaging with the three traditional owners within the shire, the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung, and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples.

Plan Victoria must have regard for areas of Distinctive Area and Landscape as recognised in the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. Unlike other declared areas, our entire shire was recognised as a Distinctive Area and Landscape. An overview of the shire's landscape significance is provided in the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme at Clause 02.03-2 – Environmental and landscape values:

Macedon Ranges Shire has many significant landscapes including the Macedon Ranges and the Cobaws which are part of the Great Dividing Range. These provide topographic variety and relief, contrasted with deeply dissected river and creek valleys of the eastern volcanic plains. Significant landscapes include sites of national, state, regional and local significance such as Mount Macedon and Hanging Rock, and volcanic cones and peaks including Golf Course Hill, Melbourne Hill, Mount William and The Jim Jim that form dominant landscape features.



Landscape character within the shire is also defined by:

- Heritage gardens with native vegetation, exotic species, hedgerows, managed plantations and pastoral qualities.
- Significant views and vistas from and to the undulating wooded hills, also forming visual edges to the shire.
- Treed avenues within townships and on their approaches.
- Distinctive settlements set within a rural environment.

As a growing peri-urban municipality, competing demands (for example residential development, or clearing to reduce bushfire risk) pose challenges and threats that could have a detrimental effect on the shire's visual and landscape qualities.

Section 46 AZK of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* identifies that a responsible public entity (RPE) must not act inconsistently with any provision of the SPP that is expressed to be binding on the public entity when performing a function or duty or exercising a power in relation to the declared area. In Macedon Ranges' case, each of the 10 objectives set out in the SPP are binding on RPEs. These objectives must be a key consideration in the development of the Plan for Victoria to the extent that it impacts on Macedon Ranges.



'Big Idea' - Affordable Housing and Choice



Focused on providing Victorians with the choice of homes in the locations that they want to live. This responds to Victoria being the fastest growing state in the country, addressing issues around people being able to afford rent or purchase a property with the need for more density, diverse dwellings, and ensuring there are well designed homes.

Refine the draft housing targets to account for infill development in regional areas.

On 15 June 2024, Macedon Ranges was allocated a draft housing target of 12,700 new homes by 2050. It is understood that the draft target is informed by the available land inside our township boundaries and determined at a greenfield level only. This figure does not include infill development for regional Victoria.

Council also understands that each target for each Council was based on:

- An area's proximity to jobs and services
- Level of access to existing and planned public transport
- Environmental hazards like flood and bushfire risk
- Current development trends and places already identified for more homes
- Demonstrated development potential in established regional cities in Victoria

Council believes it can theoretically meet the housing target, however it is our position that not including areas of infill is shortsighted, and a missed opportunity to potentially include significantly more dwellings in regional areas. Given the crude assumptions identified for metro Victoria and current construction costs/feasibility, it could be that greenfield areas like the outer ring suburbs and regional Victoria does much of the heavy lifting in the short term.



The Plan for Victoria should include mandatory affordable housing requirements and assist local government with resources and knowledge to deliver affordable housing outcomes

There is an urgent need to provide for more affordable housing within Macedon Ranges and across the Loddon Campaspe region more broadly.

Compared to Regional Victoria, Macedon Ranges loses more people between the ages of 20 and 34, only for them to return between the ages of 34 and 50. Whilst we understand that many factors play a role in this, no doubt part of the issue is the limited availability of diverse and affordable housing in the shire:

- The median house price as at June 2024 is \$930,000, an increase of 33% in 5 years (source – [Domain](#))
- Just 6.4% of all dwellings are described as medium or high density 11% of all dwellings are 2 bedrooms or less.

In early 2023 Council surveyed local businesses to understand the housing needs of workers, with a focus on whether housing affordability and supply is affecting their ability to attract and retain staff. Over 50% of businesses felt that the local cost of housing was impacting recruitment and staff retention and had experienced staff leaving for opportunities closer to home. When asked about whether there were any gaps in the current property market, 65% reported a shortage of smaller dwellings, units or apartments for singles, young people and older people. Nearly 89% of respondents believed there was a shortage of rental properties and 42% felt there was a shortage of social and affordable housing.

Council adopted an Affordable Housing Policy in December 2021 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.

The reality is, without strong Planning Scheme provisions at the state level, Council's position is weak to negotiate affordable housing delivery through planning permits or planning scheme amendments. Whilst it is admirable that Plan Victoria seeks to promote affordable housing, it is unclear how this will be achieved in regional areas. As a regional Council facing growth and other significant pressures, the ability to resource and undertake a local planning-based Affordable Housing Policy and implement it for the shire, is beyond our capabilities and available expertise.



If the Plan for Victoria is genuine about ensuring affordable housing across Victoria, there must be grants and assistance to regional Council's to upskill and mandate affordable housing outcomes. The plan must also provide a stronger planning basis for the negotiation of affordable housing outcomes rather than the current reliance on voluntary agreements in the Planning Policy Framework.

Unlocking land that is ready for development requires a coordinated investment in utilities infrastructure – sewer, water, power, telecommunications:

- **Ensure land use planning growth is aligned with future infrastructure investment of water authorities and other utilities.** This will safeguard coordination between the various organisations to deliver well-serviced housing with the necessary infrastructure.

Council has recently adopted structure plans for both Gisborne and Romsey, which identify enough land to support growth and development until 2050. Work will be underway shortly to draft the Kyneton South Framework Plan for a 2050 horizon. Civil infrastructure upgrades are required to support the growth and development of these towns, with the water treatment plants in Gisborne, Romsey and Kyneton all in need of expansion/upgrade. Council is aware that the Romsey Recycled Water Plant has budget to begin increasing capacity. It is unclear on timeframes for equivalent upgrades for Gisborne and Kyneton.

- **Ensure land use planning secures investment in telecommunications infrastructure.** Our shire has known mobile and internet connectivity black spots, including, but not limited to, parts of the townships of Gisborne South, Kyneton, Lancefield, Tylden, and Woodend. In addition, localised connectivity issues are experienced throughout much of the shire. A survey conducted in the Macedon Ranges in May 2021 identified that over 70 per cent of respondents are not satisfied with their current reliability. Service reliability impacts on the ability of regional communities to actively plan and participate in business, social, learning and health activities online. The Macedon Ranges survey specifically asked respondents what services or activities they had been unable to undertake due to a lack of connectivity. Just under 60 per cent of responses referred to being unable to access education; over 90 per cent identified they were unable to work effectively from home.

Council, in partnership with the telecommunications industry will prepare a Digital Plan in 2024/25 to identify gaps in the service delivery. Funding to support these gaps are required.



- **Upgrade power supply to support the Gas Substitution Roadmap.** The Victorian Government has released a Gas Substitution Roadmap to help our State navigate the path to net zero emissions while providing greater choice and cutting energy bills. Whilst Council is supportive of the transition from gas, we note the issues with current power supply and capacity to support population growth.

Through the preparation of the Romsey Structure Plan Council was advised by Powercorp that the township is supplied by a 22kV feeder which has reached its capacity. Increasing the capacity is not easy, as the substations have current limiters to reduce the probability of fires starting from high voltage electrical assets. Council was also advised that housing developments without gas and with the need for EV charging station will need 1.5 to 2 times more power available in the network. In Romsey alone Council anticipates that there is capacity for 2,059 dwellings by 2050.

- **Resource councils to develop and implement Development Contribution Plans (DCPs) that identify joint investment to help fund necessary infrastructure for housing.** In 2020 the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) completed a review of development contributions (<https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/managing-development-contributions?section=>). It found that Victoria's development contributions are not delivering the infrastructure needed by growing communities to support their quality of life.

It further found that the DCP program carries significant barriers and risks for councils. Issues include the:

- cost of developing a DCP
- time it takes to develop and have a DCP ministerially approved
- complexity of DCPs and the expertise required to manage them effectively
- financial risks of entering into a DCP. For example, a DCP locks in councils to deliver infrastructure projects, even if development does not proceed and the council cannot collect levies.

These barriers and risks mean that some councils are reluctant to participate, leaving them without a formal program to obtain development contributions and therefore missing opportunities to fund community infrastructure in this way.



Macedon Ranges has two DCPs in Gisborne and Romsey. Recently Mesh Planning undertook a review of these, finding the DCPs need more oversight and active management. It found that the urban development that has occurred in the last 10 years has not matched the development projections included in the DCPs and does not reflect the new growth areas and change in urban growth that is now being planned for each township. As a consequence funding opportunities have been lost, leaving the DCPs and Council out of pocket. Mesh recommends that Council upskill its workforce to support ongoing DCP management.

'Big Idea' – Equity and Jobs



Ensuring as many Victorians as possible get to enjoy and receive the benefits of government investment through local employment infrastructure and services. Providing economic outcomes and innovation to excel and to reach their full potential during their working life.

Support local jobs

Remplan identifies the Shire's top industries as healthcare and social assistance, construction, education and training, retail and trade, accommodation and food services and manufacturing. Coming in 8th is professional services.

Of the residents in the Shire, our top occupations are professionals, technicians and trade workers, community and personal service workers, managers and labourers.

In 2021, 12,667 (50.2%) working residents of the Macedon Ranges Shire travelled outside the area to work. Of the 15,710 people who work in the Macedon Ranges Shire, 10,962 or 69.8% also lived in the area. A further 10% of the people who work in the Macedon Ranges come from the neighbouring municipalities of Hume and Melton.

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As mentioned, Council recently adopted structure plans for Gisborne and Romsey which identify land to accommodate demand for industrial and commercial development until 2050. The Macedon Ranges Shire has over 130 hectares of vacant industrial and commercial land across our major centres which provides ongoing opportunity for business growth, employment and economic development.

To the north of Kyneton there is an emerging employment precinct with approximately 75 hectares of vacant Industrial 1 Zoned land, adjacent to a 22-hectare Commercial 2 precinct that recently gained a planning permit to develop.

Gisborne's Business Park has seen ongoing growth over the last 10-15 years. There is approximately 6.2 ha of vacant Industrial 1 Zoned land in the park, and an additional 38 hectares of Industrial 3 Zoned land that is adjacent to a 9.4 ha Commercial 2 precinct proposed in the Gisborne Futures Structure Plan. The plan also proposed a new neighbourhood activity centre in New Gisborne that will provide additional commercial, retail and office spaces within 2.7 ha of Commercial 1 Zone and a 4.6 ha mixed use precinct.

Romsey currently has nearly 15 ha of available Commercial 1 land and over 12 ha of vacant industrial land. The Romsey Structure Plan is proposing to increase employment opportunities with an additional 15 ha of industrial land proposed.

The Macedon Ranges is the gateway to the Loddon Campaspe Regional Employment & Innovation Corridor. In 2022 a Roadmap was prepared which articulates a shared vision for the corridor and outlines the key priorities and directives which will form the catalyst for innovation and employment growth across the region. It is the first step in a long-term agenda to unlock Loddon-Campaspe's future prosperity and productivity through regional transformation. Successful implementation will require a coordinated approach to investment and a collaborative effort from government, industry and the community.

Council encourages the state government to support and assist the implementation of the roadmap to create the kinds of jobs we need in the region to support the liveability of or region.

Reform the infrastructure funding and service delivery framework

The ability for Macedon Ranges Shire Council to keep pace with development will be a challenging space financially. Council recently made a submission to the Victorian Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee's Inquiry into Local Government



Funding and Service Delivery in Victoria. The submission identified common issues faced across the local government sector including:

- Significant financial challenges resulting from cost shifting by state and federal governments.
- The impact of ongoing rate capping and grant funding models
- Infrastructure and service delivery challenges, including declining community satisfaction, and the responsibilities left to local councils to manage gaps in servicing from state and federal government and the market.
- The significant, and aging, capital and road assets maintained by local councils at increasing cost.
- The impact of emergency management and response, and increasingly frequent extreme weather.

State and federal government need to do more to support regional Councils to adjust to these challenges, to support new and existing communities.

'Big Idea' – Thriving and Liveable Suburbs and Towns



Ensuring we have high quality precincts and open space for everyone to use. Providing safer streets and prioritising more active transport and green streets. Increasing density requires better designing and construction to retain the heritage and character of the areas we want to protect.

Support increased liveability and through public transport connectivity

The lack of transport infrastructure in Macedon Ranges impacts significantly on many dimensions of liveability, such as access to education, health services, goods and services and recreational opportunities. This lack of infrastructure also has an impact on economic



development within the region. 'Liveability' needs to encompass both businesses and residents alike.

Whilst the Macedon Ranges does benefit from the Bendigo rail line, public consultations relating to our towns often highlight there is still a lack of services at peak times (frequency of services or capacity of services – number of carriages etc.) It is often reported that buses are nonexistent or infrequent, while existing services do not coordinate with scheduled v-line train services.

Plan Victoria must examine the issue of access to public transport in rural and regional areas as a factor in liveability as part of Plan Victoria.

Recognise the importance of heritage places and spaces to thriving communities and neighbourhoods

Macedon Ranges Shire is located on the traditional land of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung peoples of the Kulin nation who are acknowledged as caretakers and traditional custodians of the land.

Macedon Ranges has historic buildings and places that provide a window into Victoria's past, and particularly the wealth of the gold rush era. Historic Piper Street in Kyneton provides a 19th century streetscape of Victorian protected buildings, which is highly valued by the community and visitors alike.

There is a concern among heritage professionals that development proposed by Plan Victoria is without regard to the rich and unique heritage and history of Macedon Ranges. Population growth forecasts can be accommodated, but this development must occur sensitively and sympathetically to the Aboriginal, historic and natural values in this distinctive area.

It has been identified in recent strategic planning work that approximately two-thirds of the current Heritage Overlay controls in the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme require some form of correction. This means that the heritage that is known about and protected in the planning scheme is not as accurate, efficient or as sensitive to heritage places as it could be, and further work is required to remedy this situation. These places could be at risk from future development.

Recognise the importance of streetscape and local movement networks on the health and liveability of communities

At a local level, the streetscape and local movement networks of our suburbs play an

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important role in the health and liveability of communities. Planning should recognise the amenity, health and wellbeing benefits of attractive, landscaped streets and support their prioritisation for walking, cycling and other sustainable activities.

The state government should continue to support the funding of streetscape improvements through grant programs. The Gisborne Futures Structure Plan identifies a number of town centre improvements for roads which are the responsibility of the Department of Transport and Planning. The Kyneton and Riddells Creek Movement Network Plans also identify township centre improvements, as well as key infrastructure required to support the future growth of those towns. An example of this is the proposed Edgecombe Street Bridge in Kyneton which is identified as an important additional connection over the Campaspe River to facilitate the future development of land within Kyneton's protected settlement boundary.

Support open space and recreation provision

Public open space serves many important roles and functions. Open space is recognised as providing significant and important mental and physical health benefits, alongside opportunities for recreation, leisure and enjoyment. It can also provide a sense of place and pride for the community.

As pressure for redevelopment and housing density increases, it is expected that areas of private open space in development will become smaller. There will be a greater reliance on public open space in supporting everyday recreation and enjoyment.

There are existing gaps within the municipal open space network in the Macedon Ranges and an Open Space Strategy is under preparation. The Plan for Victoria should prioritise the identification and delivery of a variety of public open space and increase the contribution rate from the current default rate of 5% to support Councils' delivery of these spaces.

Continue to support the Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid

Macedon Ranges Shire Council is one of 15 councils, together with 8 Registered Aboriginal Parties and 8 tourism bodies, that have been working for over a decade on the Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid. The World Heritage Bid recognises that the 19th century gold mining landscape in the central area of Victoria has outstanding global heritage significance, as a turning point in world history.

The Victorian Government gave in-principle support to the Bid in 2022, and in 2023 provided \$3.8 million in funding to help the Bid progress to tentative listing over the next three years.



The Bid will bring substantial economic and tourism benefits for the heritage of the Victorian Goldfields, and its businesses and communities, particularly its First Nations people. It will support the region's thriving heritage cities and towns, but also help to transform some of the most socially disadvantaged areas of the state.

Like the Victorian Government, the Plan for Victoria should continue to support the Bid as part of the long-term planning for this important heritage mining landscape.

'Big Idea' – Sustainable Environments and Climate Action



Protecting what's important in our environment for future generations. Responding to growing population and increasing climate change which has impacts on biodiversity, water management, air quality, open space, resource recovery, and further urban growth on our agricultural land threaten by expanding residential areas.

Respond to bushfire risk in planning for new and existing communities

Castlemaine, Heathcote, Wedderburn and the Macedon Ranges and surrounding villages are some of the areas at highest bushfire risk in Central Victoria. This is because there are large areas of forest on the north and west sides of the communities with houses surrounded by forest.

Council has protected settlement boundaries on four of its six towns, with the exception of Gisborne and Romsey which are underway. The strategic bushfire assessments for both of these townships identify that on a catastrophic fire day, each could be impacted by ember attack and direct flames.

The Plan for Victoria needs to identify and respond to these risks at a strategic level and expand infrastructure and services as new communities develop.



Support state-wide coordination of risk/hazard mapping in the Planning Scheme

On 3 October 2017, mapping to support the Bushfire Management Overlay was introduced into planning schemes by Amendment GC13. This was a statewide amendment and used standard methodology to update the mapping, which is reviewed twice a year on an ongoing basis. The Department of Transport and Planning has committed to working with local councils, emergency services and other key stakeholders to ensure the map is accurate and as up to date as possible.

The 2022 Flood Event in Victoria - Inquiry Final Report (July 2024) was tabled in Parliament on 30 July 2024. The report makes the following findings and recommendations regarding the updating of flood mapping:

FINDING 6: Flood studies are an effective tool for assessing flood risk. However:

- they must use up-to-date methodologies, technology, and data
- there needs to be statewide coordination of the frequency they are conducted
- there should be statewide funding to ensure they are kept up to date.

RECOMMENDATION 7: That the Victorian Government ensure regional catchment management authorities, with local councils, are funded and resourced to conduct and implement up to date flood studies on a regular basis.

RECOMMENDATION 8: That the Victorian Government require peer review of publicly funded flood modelling as part of the next Victorian Floodplain Management Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 9: That Melbourne Water and other floodplain management authorities review flood models every five years and update the models at least every 10 years and after the occurrence of a major flood.

It is commendable that the Department of Transport and Planning has set up grant funding through the Regional Planning Hubs to support rural and regional councils to update flood mapping. However, Council believes that the updating of hazard/risk mapping should be undertaken at a State level, in the same way as the Bushfire Mapping Overlay amendments in recognition of the significance of flood hazards at a state level. To ask councils to fund and resource risks across council boundaries is another example of state government cost shifting.



The Plan for Victoria should include an action to update all planning schemes with updated flood overlay mapping, to be resourced, coordinated and completed at a statewide level. This will implement the findings of the Inquiry.

Establish a consistent policy framework for environmentally sustainable development

Council is supportive of the Council Alliance for Sustainable Built Environment's (CASBE) planning scheme amendment to include Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) targets in the planning scheme. Due to resourcing constraints, Council is not a member of CASBE.

The Gisborne and Romsey Structure Plans both support the introduction of ESD targets into the planning scheme.

Council encourages the state government, through the Plan for Victoria to introduce universal ESD requirements into the planning scheme with the appropriate training and resources to assist local government to implement these.

Support the provision of open space for biodiversity

Macedon Ranges Shire Council joined over 30 councils in Victoria and almost 100 councils across Australia in declaring a Climate Emergency. Climate change poses great risks to our landscapes, ecosystems and habitat. Increasing temperatures and decreases in annual rainfall can have a profound impact on our ecosystems' ability to support wildlife and provide humans with our most basic needs like food and clean water. Any increases in storm events can alter centuries-old habitat and diminish the health of our waterways. In addition to the climate emergency, we must acknowledge that we are also living amongst a biodiversity extinction crisis.

In 2023 Council engaged the community to develop our first Climate Emergency Plan 2023-2030. It identifies Council's role as actively protecting, enhancing and increasing existing natural habitats to best conserve biodiversity using indigenous plantings. The Plan identifies that Council requires the collaboration of state government to develop policy, support and fund the preservation of these spaces.

The buyback of land within the area known as Barrm Birrm, which forms part of Council's Priority Projects June 2024, is an example of a project needing collaboration from the state government. Barrm Birrm is a 118-hectare area of forested land, home to significant intact flora and fauna habitat. The site is affected by legacy planning issues from the 1880s, which over time saw this land subdivided into 162 lots and at the time of writing owned by 98



different landowners. Due to the site's natural values, high fire risk and lack of services, the land is not considered suitable for development. As a result, current planning controls prevent development in the estate. Council currently owns some of the land through a voluntary 'gift back' scheme, however this process has stalled over time. Council is seeking project funding of \$6.5 million to facilitate the public acquisition of the remaining sites to ensure long term protection of this significant natural asset for the Victorian community.

As well as public open space, the Plan for Victoria should include the provision of areas for biodiversity, wildlife corridors etc. to ensure we have the spaces we need to protect biodiversity.

Support the implementation of 'Planning for Melbourne's Green Wedges and Agricultural Land'

Plan Melbourne identified the action "Support Strategic Planning for agriculture", which led to the commencement of the Planning for Melbourne's Green Wedges and Agricultural Land project in 2018. This work concluded in 2024 with the release of the Planning for Melbourne's Green Wedges and Agricultural Land Action Plan 2024. The Plan for Victoria should acknowledge the importance of the Action Plan and facilitate the implementation of its 20 actions.

12 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORTS

CX.1	REPORT FROM THE 2024 NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT HELD IN CANBERRA BETWEEN 2-5 JULY 2024
Officer:	Rebecca Stockfeld, Director Planning and Environment
Council Plan relationship:	4. Delivering strong and reliable government
Attachments:	Nil

Summary

This report is presented to Council following attendance by Mayor, Councillor Annette Death and Acting Chief Executive Officer, Rebecca Stockfeld at the 2024 National General Assembly of Local Government which was held in Canberra between 2-5 July 2024.

Recommendation

That Council notes the report following attendance by Mayor, Councillor Annette Death and Acting Chief Executive Officer, Rebecca Stockfeld at the 2024 National General Assembly, incorporating the Australian Council of Local Government meeting, which was held in Canberra between 2-5 July 2024.

Background

Convened annually by the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), the National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA) is the peak annual event for local government, which attracted in excess of 1,200 attendees this year.

The event provided a unique opportunity for local government to engage directly with the Australian Government to develop national policy and to influence the future direction of councils and communities.

Mayor Annette Death and the Acting Chief Executive Officer (Acting CEO), Rebecca Stockfeld attended the 2024 NGA which was held in Canberra between 2-5 July 2024.

This year was the 30th anniversary of the NGA, which had the theme of Building Community Trust.

Discussion

The conference was held at the National Convention Centre and provided capacity for all delegates to participate and contribute. Both the Mayor and Acting CEO attended the Regional Forum, Welcome Reception and Exhibition Opening, the NGA (including consideration of motions and participation in various discussion sessions hosted as part of the NGA), the General Assembly Dinner and Australian Council of Local Government (ACLG) Forum and associated dinner. The Mayor and Acting CEO also attended the Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA) Networking Breakfast and a Press Club address by the President ALGA, Councillor Linda Scott.

Having both the Mayor and Acting CEO in attendance allowed for participation in separate discussion groups. The featured concurrent sessions included:

- Disaster Resilience and Recovery
- Energy Transition
- National Housing and Community Infrastructure
- Roads and Transport

Consultation and engagement

Prior to attendance at the NGA assistance was sought from the Federal Members for McEwen and Bendigo to coordinate meetings with the most appropriate Members of Parliament, Chief of Staff and/or Advisers to discuss the key priority projects for Macedon Ranges Shire whilst in Canberra.

Council's current key priority projects and issues include:

- Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct
- Daylesford to Hanging Rock and Kyneton Rail Trail
- Woodend Community Centre
- Hanging Rock Precinct Master Plan
- Kyneton Town Hall Reimagined
- Lancefield Kindergarten and Maternal and Child Health Centre
- Barrm Birm Bushland Protection
- Electric Vehicle Charging Stations
- Digital Connectivity and Communications
- Victoria's Big Housing Build
- Mental Health Service for Young People
- Healthy Landscapes – Private Land Conservation Program
- Aquatic Facility Feasibility Study

A range of Ministers, Shadow Ministers and Ambassadors presented to the NGA and ACLG and answered questions from delegates, including:

- Her Excellency, the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General
- The Honourable Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister
- The Honourable Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government
- The Honourable Kristy McBain MP, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories
- Councillor Linda Scott, ALGA President
- Anabelle Crabb, ABC Writer and Presenter
- Marcus Spiller, Founding Partner, SGS Economics and Planning
- Steve Verity, Principal Advisory, Asset Management, Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA)
- Simon Kuestemacher, Director and Co-Founder, Demographics Group

- Kate Fielding, Chief Executive Officer, A New Approach
- Rebecca McKenzie, Chief Executive Officer, Glen Eira City Council
- Ingrid Stonhill, Chief Executive Officer, Katherine Town Council
- Professor Valerie Cooms, Director, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research
- Tahlia Azaria, Executive Director, Young Mayors at The Foundation for Young Australians
- Stephen Yarwood, Urbanist and Former Lord Mayor of Adelaide
- Senator the Honourable Anthony Chisholm, Assistant Minister for Education; Assistant Minister for Regional Development
- Senator the Honourable Murray Watt, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; Minister for Emergency Management
- Senator the Honourable Tony Sheldon, Senator for NSW, Special Envoy for Disaster Recovery
- Brendan Moon AM, Coordinator-General of the National Emergency Management Agency
- The Honourable Emma McBride MP, Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention; Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health.
- The Hon Patrick Gorman, Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister, Assistant Minister for the Public Service
- Mrs Lisa Rauter PSM First Assistance Secretary, Partnerships and Project Division, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
- Mr Sam Grunhard First Assistance Secretary, Communications Services and Consumer Division, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
- Ms Renae Houston First Assistance Secretary, Industry Engagement and Quality Division of Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
- The Hon Darren Chester MP Shadow Minister Regional Development, Local Government and Territories.
- Mr Samuel Johnson, Awardee of Medal of the order of Australia (OAM)

A Welcome to Country was provided by senior Ngambri-Ngunnawal custodian Paul Girrawah House. He spoke about “looking to see, listening to hear and learning to understand” and that “respect shapes us and lifts up the people”.

A range of meetings, discussions and introductions were held with a range of officials including:

- Rob Mitchell MP, Federal Member for McEwen
- Lisa Chesters MP, Federal Member for Bendigo
- The Honourable Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government
- The Honourable Kristy McBain MP, Minister for Regional Development, Territories and Local Government

Collaboration

The following benefits were achieved as a result of attendance at the NGA:

- Representation of Macedon Ranges Shire Council's key priorities and issues.
- Networking with Councillors and CEOs from other local government areas across Australia, including hearing of innovative and award-winning programs and services being delivered by local governments across Australia, which may have applicability to our municipality.
- An opportunity to listen to presentations and keynote speakers addressing relevant issues for local government.
- Discussing the benefits and applicability of innovative new software, equipment and programs with the extensive range of trade exhibitors.

Innovation and continuous improvement

Following resolution at the Scheduled Council Meeting held on 27 March 2024, the below motion was submitted by Macedon Ranges Shire Council for consideration at the NGA:

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to include wildlife trauma and fatalities metrics in Federal road safety funding models.

The motion was passed unopposed. As a result, the National Executive of ALGA will now consider this motion, along with others passed at the NGA in their strategic plan and lobbying of the Australian Government on behalf of all councils across Australia.

Relevant law

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.

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 or policies which are applicable to the preparation of this report.

Relevant Council plans and policies

The subject matter of this report is in alignment with the Council Plan strategic objective, Delivering strong and reliable government.

Climate Impact Assessment

A climate impact assessment was not required in preparation for this report.

Financial viability

Below is a breakdown of costs associated with attendance at the NGA by the Mayor and CEO at the NGA:

- Conference, regional forum and conference functions - \$3194.88
- Travel and Parking - \$2018.99
- Accommodation - \$3240
- Meals - \$129.51

Sustainability implications

There are no sustainability implications as a result of the preparation of 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.

13 DIRECTOR CORPORATE REPORTS

COR.1	INSTRUMENTS OF APPOINTMENT AND AUTHORISATION
Officer:	Fiona Lang, Governance Officer
Council Plan relationship:	4. Delivering strong and reliable government
Attachments:	Instruments of Appointment and Authorisation ↓

Summary

This report seeks Council's approval to appoint authorised officers under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act) and the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) by an Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation. Under these Acts, only Council, by a resolution, can appoint authorised officers who must be employees of Council.

In addition, Council is required to revoke any Instruments for authorised officers who are no longer employed by Council.

Instruments of Appointment and Authorisation are required for three officers who have recently commenced with Council. In addition, an Instrument is required to be revoked as the authorised officer is no longer employed by Council.

Recommendation

That Council resolves that in the exercise of the powers conferred by section 147(4) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and section 313 of the Local Government Act 2020 Act:

- 1. Council officers named in the Instruments of Appointment and Authorisation provided in Attachment 1 be appointed and authorised;**
- 2. The Instruments of Appointment and Authorisation come into force upon signing and remain in force until Council determines to vary or revoke these;**
- 3. The Instruments of Appointment and Authorisation in Attachment 1 be signed; and**
- 4. The Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation for John Perry be revoked.**

Background

The appointment of Authorised Officers allows certain Council officers to act on behalf of 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* and the *Local Government Act 2020* officers represent Council in enforcing the provisions of the Acts.

Discussion

The following officers are required to be authorised officers under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the *Local Government Act 2020*:

- Emily Hardy – Senior Statutory Planning Officer

- Verity Games – Coordinator Statutory Planning and Subdivisions
- Rees May – Coordinator Statutory Planning and Compliance

The Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation for the following officer is to be revoked as they are no longer employed by Council.

- John Perry – Senior 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 the *Local Government Act 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 on 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.

Climate Impact Assessment

How will the recommendation impact on Council's energy usage and greenhouse emissions profile?

The recommendation will not impact Council's energy usage or greenhouse emissions.

How will the recommendations mitigate risks posed by climate change to Council operations and services?

Not applicable

How will the recommendation help to prepare the community for future climate scenarios?

Not applicable

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 -

Emily Hardy –Senior 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 28 August 2024

Signed:

Mayor, Councillor

Date:

Signed:

Chief Executive Officer

Date:



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

In this instrument "**officer**" means -

Verity Games – Coordinator Statutory Planning and Subdivisions

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 28 August 2024

Signed:

Mayor, Councillor

Date:

Signed:

Chief Executive Officer

Date:



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

In this instrument "**officer**" means -

Rees May – Coordinator Statutory Planning and Compliance

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 28 August 2024

Signed:

Mayor, Councillor

Date:

Signed:

Chief Executive Officer

Date:

COR.2	CONTRACTS TO BE AWARDED AS AT AUGUST 2024
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 notes that the following contracts will be awarded by Council officers under delegated authority:

- 1. C2025-73 Floodlighting Upgrade Riddells Creek Football Oval**
- 2. C2025-74 Footbridge Replacement Gisborne Botanic Gardens**

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 1 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.

C2025-73 Floodlighting Upgrade Riddells Creek Football Oval

This contract is to upgrade the lighting at the Riddells Creek Football oval to achieve a minimum 100lux, as per Australian Standard (AS2560.2.3 - Lighting for Football.)

The CEO has delegated authority to award this contract.

C2025-74 Footbridge Replacement Gisborne Botanic Gardens

This design and construction procurement is to engage a suitably qualified and experienced contractor to replace the footbridge over Jacksons Creek in Gisborne Botanic Gardens which was heavily damaged during the October 2022 flood event.

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 capital and operational 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.3	DRAFT COUNCILLOR AND DELEGATED COMMITTEE SUPPORT AND EXPENSES POLICY AND DRAFT COUNCILLOR AND COMMITTEE MEMBER GIFTS, BENEFITS AND HOSPITALITY POLICY
Officer:	Lucy Olson, Senior Governance Officer - Council Business
Council Plan relationship:	4. Delivering strong and reliable government
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft Councillor and Delegated Committee Support and Expenses Policy ↓ 2. Draft Councillor and Committee Member Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy ↓

Summary

Pursuant to sections 41 and 138 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) Council is required to maintain a Councillor Expenses Policy and a Councillor Gift Policy. These policies are to be reviewed once per term of Council, as such updated policies are presented for adoption by Council.

Recommendation

That Council:

- 1. Adopts the draft Councillor and Delegated Committee Support and Expenses Policy effective 29 August 2024 revoking all previous versions of the policy.**
- 2. Adopts the draft Councillor and Committee Member Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy effective 29 August 2024 revoking all previous versions of the policy.**

Background

Draft Councillor and Delegated Committee Support and Expenses Policy

Under section 41 of the Act Council is required to hold a policy which provides for the reimbursement of expenses of Councillors and members of a delegated committee, and the provision of resources and facilities for the Mayor and Councillors. The policy was last reviewed and adopted in August 2020.

Draft Councillor and Committee Member Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy

Section 138 of the Act requires that Council review and update a Councillor Gift Policy. The current Councillor Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy was adopted on 24 March 2021 and outlines clear direction and guidance to Councillors in relation to the acceptance or refusal of gifts, benefits and hospitality. The policy also applies to members of Council's delegated committee members.

Discussion

Draft Councillor and Delegated Committee Support and Expenses Policy

Officers have undertaken a comprehensive review of the current policy through comparison with the expense policies from five Victorian councils; City of Greater Geelong; City of

Greater Bendigo; Hepburn Shire Council; Mitchell Shire Council; and East Gippsland Shire Council.

The review also incorporated best practice guidance from the Local Government Inspectorate (LGI) following their September 2020 review of Councillor expenses and allowances and aimed to separate procedure from policy by removing procedural information to the newly created Councillor and Delegated Committee Member Expense Claim Procedure and Process document.

The comparison work completed with the policies from other councils and the LGI best practice guidance focused on four key topics:

- duties of a councillor
- timeframe for submission of claims
- mileage reimbursement rate
- transparency of travel claims

The key proposed changes within the draft Councillor and Delegated Committee Support and Expenses Policy are:

- inclusion of a list of specific 'duties of a Councillor' allowing for increased transparency of what constitutes a bonafide expense;
- a reduction in the time allowed for a claim to be submitted;
- a transition to the Australia Tax Office recommended reimbursement rate for mileage claims;
- an increased transparency and detail on the Councillor Claim Form;
- updates in line with the *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024*; and
- the removal of process information from the policy into a separate document.

Further to the changes listed above the policy has been reformatted using Council's policy template and reviewed against internal policies with relevant departments.

The following subject matter was moved from the policy to a new procedure document:

- The explicit procedure for a Councillor submitting a claim including submission email address and the approval chain.
- Specifics on what constitutes stationery, diary management, correspondence and meeting room coordination.
- IT support process details.
- The procedures for gaining approval from the Chief Executive Officer for training or for attending events.

Draft Councillor and Committee Member Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy

When reviewing the Councillor Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy officers focused on updating the layout of the policy to bring it in line with Council's policy template; improving the clarity of clauses which reference legislation; and the separation of process from the policy.

The content of the policy was compared with policies from City of Greater Bendigo, City of Ballarat, Mitchell Shire Council and Mount Alexander Shire Council.

It should be noted that the structure, level of detail and content of the policies varies markedly between councils.

There is currently no legislated timeframe for publishing the Councillor Gift Register to the public. Having reviewed the number of gifts received by Councillors during the current term of Council it is proposed that the frequency be reduced from monthly to quarterly.

The following subject matter was moved from the policy to a new procedure document:

- Procedure for declaring a gift including the contact email and form; and
- Actions for each specific type of gift, benefit, bribe or hospitality.

Consultation and engagement

No community consultation was undertaken in regard to either of these policies.

Collaboration

Officers worked with various departments across Council and reviewed policies from nearby Councils for reference.

Innovation and continuous improvement

Officers reviewed guidance from the LGI to update policy to be in line with industry best practice.

Relevant law

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020*
- *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024*
- *Local Government (General) Regulations 2015*

In accordance with the Gender Equality Act 2020, a Gender Impact Assessment was not formally required in relation to the subject matter of this report. However, during the reviews of these policies Officers considered:

- Gendered impacts of allowance and expense considerations e.g. the inclusion and representation of expenses related to caring responsibilities.
- Impacts on community members when considering standing for Council with regards to disability, age and mobility and coverage of expenses available to accommodate these needs.

These changes have improved the gender neutrality of the policy.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

- Local Government Inspectorate report, Councillor expenses and allowances: equitable treatment and enhanced integrity.
- Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal under the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019.
- Local Government (Councillor Remuneration Review) Panel Report Recognition and Support.
- The Victorian Government's Policy Statement on Local Government Mayoral, Councillor Allowances and Resources – April 2008.

- Conflicts of Interest in Local Government – published by the Victorian Ombudsman in 2008.

Relevant Council plans and policies

- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Public Interest Disclosures Policy and Procedure
- Fraud Management Policy
- Motor Vehicle Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Public Transparency Policy

Climate Impact Assessment

The recommendation has limited impact of Council's energy usage or greenhouse emissions profile. While there is some impact for the ability of Councillors to claim reimbursement for the use of vehicles and travel, the proposals in the draft policy do not significantly depart from current practice in energy use or greenhouse emissions.

The recommendation does not aim to mitigate the risks posed by climate change to Council operations and services, but does align with Council's other policies (for example those that govern vehicles and travel) that do include consideration of climate risks.

These policies are internal facing and do not directly impact the community's experience regarding climate change or greenhouse emissions.

Financial viability

No financial allocations have been adjusted in either policy. Council's annual budget covers funding of Councillor expenses.

Sustainability implications

Council is committed to protecting the environment and has proposed updates in the draft Councillor and Delegated Committee Support and Expenses Policy which align with this commitment such as reducing printing.

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



DRAFT Councillor and Delegated Committee Support and Expenses Policy

Date of Adoption			
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 Governance and Information		
Nominated Review Period	<input type="checkbox"/> Annually	<input type="checkbox"/> Every 4 years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>once per term of Council or as required</i>)
Last Endorsement Date	26 August 2020		
Next Endorsement Date			

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	1	15 July 2024	Lucy Olson
Second Draft	2	16 July 2024	Lucy Olson
Final Draft			
Approval			

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DRAFT

1. Policy Objective

This policy supports Councillors and members of delegated committees to perform their role, as defined under the *Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)*, by ensuring that expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their role are reimbursed.

The objective of this policy is to define the:

- the type and level of resources that shall be provided to Councillors and members of delegated committees to assist in the performance of their role;
- the provision of a vehicle to the Mayor;
- the expenses that Council shall reimburse a Councillor or a member of a delegated committee for;
- transparency and accountability protocols that shall govern the provision of these resources; and
- approval process for funding of Councillor attendance at events and training and development.
- policy background and scope.

1.1 Background

Required pursuant to s.41 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

1.2 Scope

The policy applies to Macedon Ranges Shire Councillors and to members of Council's delegated committees as indicated:

- Councillors: all sections of this policy apply.
- Members of Delegated Committees: sections 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 6.1, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6 and 7 apply.

All sections in this policy should be read together with the duties of a councillor as described in section 3.4.

This policy aligns with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020 (LGA 2020)* and responds to the Local Government Inspectorate report – Councillor expenses and allowances: equitable treatment and enhanced integrity; the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal under the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019; the *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024 (LGAA 2024)* and the Local Government (Councillor Remuneration Review) Panel Report published in January 2008—specifically the Guidelines for the reimbursement of expenses and resources and facilities support for Victorian Mayors and Councillors (the Guidelines).

2. Legislative Context

2.1 Local Government Act 2020

Sections 40, 41 and 42 of *LGA 2020* provide for:

- the reimbursement of expenses of Councillors and members of a delegated committee;
- the requirements for Council's expenses policy, and
- the provision of resources and facilities for the Mayor and Councillors.

3. Principles

Four key principals set out the guidelines for managing expenses relating to Councillors, Members of Delegated Committees and Council's Audit and Risk Committee. These are:

- Integrity
- Encouraging diversity in participation, equity and access
- Accountability and transparency
- Reasonableness and appropriateness

3.1 Integrity

Section 123 of *LGA 2020* provides that a Councillor (or member of a delegated committee) must not intentionally misuse their position to gain (or attempt to gain, directly or indirectly) an advantage for themselves or any other person; or to cause, or attempt to cause, detriment to the Council or another person.

3.2 Encouraging diversity in participation, equity and access

This policy encourages participation in the local government democratic process as it ensures that Councillors, and members of delegated committees, in the performance of their duties, will be supported in their role; and will not be financially or otherwise disadvantaged.

Reimbursement of bona fide expenses shall be applied in a non- discriminatory way and used in an equitable manner to cater for the full participation of all Councillors in Council business and with their communities, while also recognising individual needs and circumstances. Councillors work with a wide range of constituents and need to be accessible and stay informed.

Bona fide expenses reasonably incurred by Councillors in the performance of their duties and the provision of resources, so as to prevent disadvantage, are to remain separate to the provision of the annual Councillor Allowance.

3.3 Accountability and transparency

The reimbursement of bona fide expenses and the details and range of benefits provided to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors by the Council should be clearly stated, fully transparent and acceptable to their local community. Council will ensure that specific provisions that relate to the examining and reporting of the reimbursement of expenses for Councillors, Delegated Committee members and Audit and Risk Committee members in the *LGA 2020* are met e.g. Councillor allowances are published in the Annual Report.

In accordance with Council's Public Transparency Policy, documents to be made available to the public include a register of travel undertaken by Councillors and Council staff.

It is not appropriate for Council to provide for general expenses and/or allowances that are unrelated to actual expenses incurred and which could be designed to supplement Councillors' annual allowances entitlements under *LGA 2020*.

3.4 Reasonableness and appropriateness

Councillors and members of a delegated committee should be reimbursed adequately for bona fide expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their respective roles (*LGA 2020* Section 40).

These would generally include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- meetings of the Council, a delegated committee, its advisory boards, advisory or consultative committees;

- meetings, briefing sessions and civic or ceremonial functions convened by the Mayor or Council or a delegated committee;
- meetings of community groups, organisations and statutory authorities to which a Councillor has been appointed as Council representative or is authorised by Council to attend in their role as a Councillor;
- meetings, functions or other official role as a representative of the Mayor or Council or a delegated committee;
- other meetings, inspections, community forums or events attended by a Councillor in the course of their duties as a Councillor; and
- conferences, seminars, events and professional development being undertaken by a Councillor.

It is acknowledged that incidental private use of Council resources and facilities may occur from time to time and that such incidental private use should not be reimbursed.

4. Allowances

Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors will be provided with an annual allowance, pursuant to section 39 of *LGA 2020* and in accordance with the determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal under the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and *Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019*. The allowance framework, set by the State Government, provides for a multi-level structure based on Council population and total revenue. The maximum allowances are reviewed and adjusted annually.

Allowances are taxable income and are paid monthly in advance. Personal taxation and superannuation implications are the responsibility of individual Councillors.

In accordance with Section 30 of the *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Bill 2024 (LGAA 2024)* if a Councillor is stood down their allowance will be withheld. If that Councillor is not convicted their allowance will be reinstated and any back pay provided.

5. Resources, facilities and support

The following supports are provided to assist the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors in the performance of their roles.

5.1 Administrative Support

Administrative support e.g. diary management assistance, preparation of correspondence and meeting coordination, shall be determined by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in consultation with the Mayor.

5.2 Administrative areas and meeting rooms

Councillors wishing to access staff-only administration areas of Council are to be accompanied by a Council Officer.

All Councillors will have reasonable access to meeting rooms in Council facilities in all major townships.

5.3 Stationery

Council shall, upon request, provide Councillors with necessary stationery up to a value of \$60 per year.

5.4 Provision of printed materials

Consistent with Council's environmental and sustainability goals, all documentation related to Councillors fulfilling their roles will be provided electronically, using Council's secure systems.

Printing materials on request of Councillors will be charged a fee per printed page, deducted from individual training allowances, and requires approval. Printing costs and approval processes are outlined in the Councillor and Delegated Committee Member Expense Claim Procedure document.

5.5 ICT devices, vehicles and support

5.5.1 Hardware and email

All Councillors shall be provided with hardware to perform their duties as a Councillor as per the specification in the Councillor Information Technology List. Councillors shall also be issued with a Macedon Ranges Shire Council log in and email address. All use of information technology devices shall be in accordance with Council's ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

5.5.2 Support (Help Desk and Training)

Support for Councillors to set up their Council provided IT resources and day to day trouble shooting assistance and requests for assistance are provided by Council's Information Services Service Desk Staff.

5.5.3 Mobile phone

A mobile phone and phone number shall be issued to assist Councillors to perform their duties. The make, model and style of the mobile phone shall be determined by the Councillor Information Technology List, based on current telecommunications plans and offers available to Council and in consultation with the Councillor. Usage shall be restricted to the Councillor to whom the phone has been assigned and the assigned Councillor shall be responsible for all usage incurred on the mobile phone.

Councillors shall take care to safeguard all personal or Council information stored on mobile phones so as it cannot be accessed by other persons. Mobile phones shall be subject to Council's ICT Acceptable Use Policy. Mobile phones shall be kept in secure locations when not in use.

Councillors may use Council provided mobile phones for incidental private use.

Councillors shall seek the approval of the CEO prior to taking Council equipment on overseas travel. All associated cost of overseas usage will be the responsibility of the Councillor.

5.5.4 Equipment return

Council equipment shall be returned to Council within five working days of the cessation of the Councillors' term of office (election day) or if a person ceases to be a Councillor.

Equipment provided to Councillors remains the property of Council and will not be available for sale or transfer to Councillors at the cessation of the Councillors term of office by default.

5.6 Mayoral Vehicle / Transportation

Council will support the Mayor through the provision of a vehicle, for full private use in line with Council's Vehicle Policy (noting fringe benefit taxes do not apply), or through the reimbursement of Council business vehicular travel costs in line with this policy.

The annual cost of a vehicle will be determined by the Coordinator of Fleet and Store Services. This cost will represent the total annual operating cost for this vehicle, or the maximum reimbursement of Council business vehicular travel costs (i.e. submitted kms claims) per 12 months if the Mayor chooses not to be provided with a Council vehicle for full private use as above.

5.7 Training and Development

5.7.1 Councillor

Council identifies the training needs of Councillors and ensures that they have access to an induction program and ongoing training and professional development program compliant with section 42 of *LGAA 2024*, section 32 of *LGA 2020* and section 33A of *LGAA 2024* throughout their term.

Councillors must seek approval for training and professional development activities in writing from the CEO and outline the benefits and reasons for attendance. The reasoning should have a direct correlation to performing the role of Councillor. Such activities could involve seminars, conferences and more formal study courses.

Council will provide a maximum of \$8,000 per term per Councillor for Training and Development Activities. All approved costs related to training and development activities, including but not limited to training, conferences, seminars, development opportunities, individual memberships as well as accommodation and catering associated with training/conferences/seminars, will be recorded against the Councillors per term allowance. This allowance will not be utilised for induction training or group training opportunities.

The procedure for claiming expenses is outlined in the Councillor and Delegated Committee Member Expense Claim Procedure document.

The total cost of a training and development activity including fees, accommodation, travel or other general costs where known should be included in a single application to the CEO for approval.

The CEO will consult with all Councillors to identify training and development opportunities that best support their individual need Councillors across the Council term.

5.7.2 Mayoral training

Council will ensure the Mayor and Deputy Mayor receive mandatory Mayoral training in accordance with *LGAA 2024* section 27A. This mandatory training will be funded by the organisation separately to Councillor training allowances.

5.7.3 Group Training

During the term of Council, the CEO may, in consultation with Councillors identify group opportunities inclusive of sessions which involve strategic planning.

5.8 Employee Assistance Program

The Employee Assistance Program that is offered to all Council staff will be extended on the same basis to all Councillors.

6. Reimbursement of Expenses

In line with the principles underlying this policy the reimbursement of bona fide expenses incurred while performing duties as a Councillor or as a member of a delegated committee shall be applied in a non-discriminatory way recognising individual needs and circumstances and ensuring a Councillor or delegated committee member is not financially or otherwise disadvantaged.

Councillors and members of delegated committees are entitled to be reimbursed for the following expenses while performing duties as a Councillor or as a member of a delegated committee.

The procedure for claiming expenses is outlined in the Councillor and Delegated Committee Member Expense Claim Procedure document.

6.1 Private Vehicle Use

Councillors and members of delegated committees are entitled to be reimbursed for reasonable travel expenses incurred in the use of their private vehicle (including electric vehicles) when acting in their role as a Councillor or Committee Member.

Reasonable travel expenses for councillors include travel to and from:

- Council Meetings, Councillor Briefing Sessions, meetings of a delegated committee of Council, civic functions;
- meetings of community groups, organisations and statutory authorities to which the Councillor has been appointed the Council delegate;
- site inspections or meetings; and
- any meeting or other activity which the Councillor attends in performing duties as Councillor.

Reasonable travel expenses for a member of a delegated committee includes travel to and from a meeting of the delegated committee.

All mileage claims will be from each Councillor's or delegated committee member's notified place of residence and when submitted on the Claim Form shall be reimbursed, in accordance with the rate specified by the Commissioner of Taxation.

Vehicle travel that exceeds 600km (for one event/trip in total) requires approval from the CEO.

In any financial year a Councillor or delegated committee member may only claim a maximum of \$8,000 pursuant to this section.

6.2 Attendance at Events When Performing Duties as a Councillor

During the term of Council, it is expected that Councillors, especially the Mayor, may need to attend events representing Council.

Approval for Council to fund a Councillor's or the Mayor's attendance at an event should be sought from the CEO prior to confirming attendance. The request should outline the benefit and reasons the approval is being sought. Councillors can still make claims for reimbursement of travel and incidental costs consistent with sections 6.1, 6.2, and 6.4 of this policy, without prior approval.

Support under this section does not extend to events that Councillors attend outside of their formal role as a councillor, nor to events which are more appropriately considered training and development, and belonging to that category of support.

6.3 General Expenditure

General expenditure provides for miscellaneous expenditure directly related to the performance of duties as a Councillor or member of a delegated committee. General expenditure may include such expenses as the purchase of food and refreshments; car parking and public transport tickets; professional in-home care fees, i.e. nanny, baby-sitter; child care centre fees; hourly carer fees; care agency booking fees (if claimed); and reasonable travelling expenses to and from the place of care (if claimed by the carer).

General expenditure items submitted on the Claim Form require a tax invoice (or statutory declaration if not available) including name and address of the supplier and details of the goods or services supplied.

6.4 Submission and Approval of Claims

All claims for reimbursement shall be fully substantiated and details lodged on the Claim Form which must be lodged within 60 days of the claim.

The Councillor and Delegated Committee Member Expense Claim Procedure document outlines the process for the submission and approval of Claims.

6.5 Costs Not to be Reimbursed

6.5.1 Fines, Damage and Theft

Any expenses arising from a breach of road, traffic, parking or other regulations or laws or for damage or loss of a vehicle will not be reimbursed or funded by Council.

6.5.2 Costs not related to Councillors or Members Performing their Duties

Where it is determined by the CEO that a claim for costs is not related to the performance of the duties of a Councillor or member of a delegated committee, these will not be reimbursed.

6.5.3 Costs Related to Spouses for Specified Activities

The payment of travel, accommodation or any other expenses for spouses, partners or accompanying persons attending a conference will not be borne by Council.

6.6 Authorisation

The CEO, unless otherwise resolved by Council, is authorised to approve the organisation funding Councillors' attendance at training and development or confirming attendance and payment for events on criteria that ensure:

- the attendance is in the community interest and reflects the identified needs of the Councillor;
- equity and fair and reasonable access to all Councillors to training and development, noting that events will generally be attended by the Mayor in the first instance; and
- a quorum of Councillors is available to attend to the normal business of the Council.

6.7 Exceptions for Interstate and Overseas Travel

Interstate and overseas travel by a Councillor in an official Council business capacity must be recorded in a register and a report presented to Council within one month of returning.

Additionally overseas travel for a Councillor must be presented to a Council Meeting for approval prior to the travel.

7. Reporting to Council

Council will comply with the reporting requirements of section 40(2) of the *LGA 2020* for the expenses of Councillors, Delegated Committee members (e.g. Councillor allowances are published in the Annual Report).

Definitions

Term	Definition
The Act	The Local Government Act 2020.
Councillors	Elected Councillors whose term of office has not yet expired.
Duties as a Councillor	Duties performed by a Councillor that are necessary and appropriate for the purposes of achieving the objectives of a Council having regard to any relevant Act, regulations, Ministerial guidelines or Council policies.
Family member	A spouse or domestic partner of the person; or A son, daughter, mother, father, brother or sister that regularly resides with the person.
Member of Delegated Committee	Any Council-appointed member to a Delegated Committee (s.63 of the Act).
Claim Form	Councillor and Delegated Committee Member Expense Reimbursement Claim Form.
Childcare recipient	A child up to and including the age of 16 years
LGA 2020	Local Government Act 2020
LGAA 2024	Local Government Amendment Act 2024

References

- > Local Government Inspectorate report, Councillor expenses and allowances: equitable treatment and enhanced integrity.

- > Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal under the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019.
- > Local Government (Councillor Remuneration Review) Panel Report Recognition and Support.
- > The Victorian Government's Policy Statement on Local Government Mayoral, Councillor Allowances and Resources – April 2008.

Gender Impact Assessment

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

Related Policies

- > Councillor Code of Conduct
- > Vehicle Policy
- > ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- > Procurement Policy
- > Public Transparency Policy

Related Legislation

- > *Local Government Act 2020 (LGA 2020)*
- > *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024 (LGAA 2024)*
- > *Local Government (General) Regulations 2015*

Related Procedures

- > *Councillor and Delegated Committee Member Expense Claim Procedure*

Policy



Councillor and Committee Member Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy

Date of Adoption			
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 Governance and Information		
Nominated Review Period	<input type="checkbox"/> Annually	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Every 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Last Endorsement Date	24 March 2021		
Next Endorsement Date			

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	1	15 July 2024	Lucy Olson
Second Draft	2	16 July 2024	Lucy Olson
Final Draft			
Approval			

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1. Policy Objective

Section 138 of the *Local Government Act 2020 (LGA 2020)* requires Council to adopt and maintain a Councillor Gift Policy. This policy sets out the minimum standards for elected Councillors in the management of gifts, benefits and hospitality and the procedure for the maintenance of a Gift Register.

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear policy position for Macedon Ranges Shire Councillors, members of Council's delegated committees; and members of Council's Audit and Risk Committee in relation to gifts, benefits and hospitality. It supports those individuals in avoiding conflicts of interest and maintaining high levels of integrity, accountability and public trust.

This policy:

- provides clear direction and guidance to Councillors, members of Council's delegated committees; and members of Council's Audit and Risk Committee in relation to the acceptance or refusal of gifts, benefits and hospitality.
- ensures that members of the Macedon Ranges Shire community and other key stakeholders can trust that Councillors, members of Council's delegated committees; and members of Council's Audit and Risk Committee will not place their personal interests over their public duties when carrying out their official duties and functions.

Acting in accordance with this policy will ensure that Councillors are not compromised in the performance of their duties by accepting gifts, benefits or hospitality that may result in a sense of obligation or which could be interpreted as an attempt to influence. This helps to protect and promote public confidence in the integrity of Council.

2. Scope and Background

2.1. Background

Macedon Ranges Shire Council is subject to the Local Government Act 2020 (LGA 2020). The LGA 2020 establishes a legislative framework that provides for councils to be accountable to their local communities in the performance of functions, exercise of powers and use of resources.

Section 138 of the LGA 2020 requires councils to adopt, review and update a Councillor gift policy.



2.2. Scope

This policy applies to all Councillors of Macedon Ranges Shire Council; all members of Council's delegated committees; and members of Council's Audit and Risk Committee. References to Councillors in this policy should be read as including members of Council's delegated committees and Council's Audit and Risk Committee.

3. Key Principles and Accountabilities

The four key principles and accountabilities underpin this policy.:

3.1. Impartiality

Councillors have a duty to place the public interest above their private interests when carrying out their official functions and duties. Councillors will not accept offers from those about whom they are likely to make Council decisions.

3.2. Accountability

Councillors are held accountable to the community in relation to gifts, benefits and hospitality through the declaration of all non-token offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality. Council's gift register is publicly available.

3.3. Integrity

Councillors strive to earn and sustain public trust through providing or responding to offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality in a manner that is consistent with community expectations. Councillors will refuse any offer that may lead to an actual, perceived or potential bias or conflict of interest.

3.4. Risk-based approach

The Council, through its policies and processes will ensure gifts, benefits and hospitality risks are appropriately assessed and managed.

4. Definitions

The following terms used in this policy have the following meanings:

Term	Definition
Anonymous gifts	Any gift received by the Councillor, where the name and address of the person making the gift cannot be established.



Term	Definition
Associate	<p>An associate of a Councillor is any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a spouse or domestic partner of the Councillor. ● a person who has or has had an intimate personal relationship with the Councillor. ● a friend of a Councillor. ● a person who a reasonable person would consider to be the relative of a Councillor, including but not limited to grandparents, parents, children, siblings, aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews. ● a business partner of a Councillor. ● a person, including an entity, with which the Councillor has an employer/employee relationship of any kind.
Benefits	<p>Benefits are things of an incalculable value that are nonetheless attractive. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Preferential treatment. ● Privileged access. ● Access to discount or loyalty programs. ● Promises of a new job or future work as a consultant.
Bribes	<p>Bribes are offers of money or other inducements made with the intention of influencing a Councillor in the performance of their duties.</p> <p>Bribery or attempted bribery of a public official is a criminal offence.</p>
Ceremonial gifts	<p>Ceremonial gifts are official gifts provided as part of the culture and practices of communities and government, within Australia or</p>



Term	Definition
	<p>internationally. Ceremonial gifts are usually provided when conducting business with official delegates or representatives from another organisation or community.</p> <p>Ceremonial gifts are the property of Council, irrespective of value, and should be accepted by individuals on behalf of Council.</p>
Conflict of interest	<p>A conflict of interest is a conflict between a Councillor’s public duty to act in the best interest of the Council and their private interests (both material and general) and is defined in part 6 Division 2 of <i>LGA 2020</i></p>
Disclosable gift	<p>As defined in section 128(4) of <i>LGA 2020</i> the term “disclosable gift” means one or more gifts with a total value of more than \$500 (or any other amount prescribed by the regulations) received from a person in the five years preceding the decision on a matter.</p>
Gestures	<p>Gestures are very small gestures of appreciation or thanks of no value or almost no value. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Thank you cards. ● Souvenirs received at a seminar or conference, such as pens and mugs. ● Very small gestures of appreciation from the community or customers such as cut flowers or homemade baked goods.
Gift	<p>Section 3 of the <i>LGA 2020</i> defines the term “gift” as:</p> <p><i>any disposition of property otherwise than by will made by a person to another person without consideration in money or money’s worth or with inadequate consideration, including—</i></p> <p><i>(a) the provision of a service (other than volunteer labour); and</i></p> <p><i>(b) the payment of an amount in respect of a guarantee; and</i></p>



Term	Definition
	<p>(c) the making of a payment or contribution at a fundraising function;</p> <p>A broad range of free or discounted items and services are covered by this definition of “gift”.</p> <p>Section 3 of the LGA 2020 includes the full definition of “disposition of property”.</p>
Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Form	Council has a form for declaring the offers / receipt of gifts, benefits and hospitality. The form and the method of submission may be revised from time to time.
Gift disclosure threshold	The gift disclosure threshold is defined in Section 3 of the LGA 2020
Councillor Gift Register	Council’s Councillor Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Register.
Hospitality	Hospitality is the welcoming reception and entertainment of guests. This definition covers hospitality ranging from light refreshments at business meetings to expensive restaurant meals and sponsored travel and accommodation.
Value	Value means the face value or estimated retail value.

5. The “GIFT” Test

In deciding whether to accept an offer, Councillors should first consider if the offer could be perceived as influencing them in performing their duties or lead to reputational damage. The more valuable the offer, the more likely that a conflict of interest or reputational risk exists. The “GIFT” test was developed by the Victorian Public Sector Commission and is a useful tool in deciding whether to accept or decline a gift.

Councillors must consider the following:

- **Giver - Who is providing the gift, benefit or hospitality and what is their relationship to me?** Does my role require me to select contractors, award grants, regulate industries or determine government policies? Could the person or organisation benefit from a decision I make?

- **Influence - Are they seeking to gain an advantage or influence my decisions or actions?** Has the gift, benefit or hospitality been offered to me publicly or privately? Is it a courtesy or a token of appreciation or valuable non- token offer? Does its timing coincide with a decision I am about to make?
- **Favour - Are they seeking a favour in return for the gift, benefit or hospitality?** Has the gift, benefit or hospitality been offered honestly? Has the person or organisation made several offers over the last 12 months? Would accepting it create an obligation to return a favour?
- **Trust - Would accepting the gift, benefit or hospitality diminish public trust?** How would the public view acceptance of this gift, benefit or hospitality? What would my colleagues, family, friends or associates think?

6. Action required

Councillors are required to take specific actions to appropriately manage their obligations pursuant to different kinds of gifts, benefits and hospitality. These are outlined in the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality process document. In all cases the Councillor must submit a completed Council Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality form to the Governance team.

Any Councillor who believes they or another Councillor has been offered a bribe must refuse the offer and report the matter to the Chief Executive Officer of the Public Interest Disclosure Coordinator immediately. If the Councillor reporting was the intended recipient of the bribe they must also submit Council's Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality form as a matter of urgency, but no later than 48 hours after the offer or receipt of the bribe

7. Indirect Gifts

If a gift (with the exception of a token gift), benefit or hospitality is offered to an associate of a Councillor and a reasonable person would believe that it was offered because of that associate's relationship with a Councillor, the Councillor must:

- declare the gift, benefit or hospitality (even if declined).
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that the gift, benefit or hospitality is declined or returned by their associate.

8. General Prohibitions

Despite anything else in this policy and regardless of value, Councillors must refuse offers:

1. of money, or of items used in a similar way to money, or something easily converted to money (such as gift cards).
2. to voluntarily opt-in to collect rewards for personal use via a rewards program for any Council-related transactions, such as frequent flyer points available to be earned on a flight for Council purposes (transactions where rewards are automatically earned are exempt).
3. that are likely to influence them, or be perceived to influence them, in the course of their duties or that raise an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.
4. that are made by a person or organisation about which they will likely make or influence a decision, including in relation to grants, sponsorship, regulation, enforcement or licensing, particularly offers:
 - a) made by a current or prospective supplier.
 - b) made during a procurement or tender process by a person or organisation involved in that process.
 - c) that are likely to be a bribe or inducement to make a decision or act in a particular way.
5. where acceptance could be perceived as endorsement of a product or service, or acceptance would unfairly advantage the sponsor in future procurement decisions.
6. of a gift that is of a kind that is inconsistent with community values for the public service (such as cigarettes or cigars).
7. that are made by a person or organisation with a primary purpose to lobby Council.
8. that are made in secret.
9. of gifts from any individual or group that may have any involvement with any planning permit application or other planning matter.
10. are made by a person or organisation about which they will likely make a decision.
11. are likely to be a bribe.

12. of bequests in wills to Councillors resulting from their position with Council.

9. Breach of this Policy

A breach of this policy constitutes a breach of the Councillor Code of Conduct. The LGA 2020 provides that “any breach by a Councillor of the prescribed standards of conduct included in the Councillor code of Conduct” constitutes misconduct (see section 3). Councillors can raise conduct-related matters under the Councillor Code of Conduct.

Continued or repeated contravention misconduct may constitute serious misconduct. Allegations of serious misconduct are managed under the LGA 2020 section 154.

Councillors are required to ensure that they do not misuse their position as a councillor to gain or attempt to gain, directly or indirectly, an advantage for themselves or for any other person. Misuse of position is a serious criminal offence under section 123 of the LGA 2020.

10. The Councillor Gift Register

Where indicated in this policy, Councillors must submit a completed Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Form in alignment with the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Procedure document.

A Councillor Gift Register will be maintained which records all gifts (with the exception of gestures) with the following information:

- the Individuals name.
- the date on which the gift, benefit or hospitality was received/declined.
- the name of the individual/organisation providing/offering the gift.
- a description of the gift and the approximate value
- the action taken in relation to the gift.

A Councillor Gift Register will be maintained by the Governance Team for duration of each term of Council, published on Council's website and updated on a quarterly basis.

11. Disclosure requirements

In addition to the requirements in this policy to disclose gifts by way of submitting Council's Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality form, Councillors have other disclosure requirements in relation to gifts, benefits and hospitality, namely:

- a Councillor must disclose any gift valued at \$500 or more in their biannual personal interest return unless the gift is from a family member.
- a Councillor who has a conflict of interest as a result of receiving a gift or gifts from a person must disclose the conflict of interest in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Governance Rules.
- gifts above the gift disclosure threshold that are election campaign donations must be disclosed in an election campaign donation return.

12. Further Information

Councillors who are unsure about the acceptance of a gift, benefit or hospitality, or the application of this policy, should speak with the Chief Executive Officer or the Coordinator Governance and Information.

Gender Impact Assessment

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

References

- > The Resource Suite of the Victorian Public Sector Commission in relation to gifts, benefit and hospitality.
- > Recommendations from the 2019 review by the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission into Local Government Integrity Frameworks.
- > Conflicts of Interest in Local Government – published by the Victorian Ombudsman in 2008.

Related Policies

- > Councillor Code of Conduct
- > Councillor Support and Expenses Policy
- > Fraud Management Policy
- > Public Interest Disclosures Policy and Procedure

Related Legislation

- > *Local Government Act 2020*
- > *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020*

Related Procedures

- > Councillor and Committee Member Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Procedure

14 DIRECTOR COMMUNITY REPORTS

COM.1	COMMUNITY AWARDS REVIEW
Officer:	Lisa Richards, Community Projects Officer
Council Plan relationship:	1. Connecting communities 2. Healthy environment, healthy people
Attachments:	Nil

Summary

This report provides Councillors with an update and recommended changes for endorsement, following a review of Council's annual Community Awards program.

Recommendation**That Council:**

- 1. Endorses the Community Awards ceremony to be held in May during National Volunteer Week from 2025 onwards.**
- 2. Updates the Community Awards categories as described in this report.**

Background

Formerly known as the Australia Day Awards, Council's Community Awards were historically presented on 26 January at the Kyneton Town Hall, immediately following a formal Citizenship Ceremony. In 2024, the newly branded Community Awards was held on 25 January.

In delivering the 2024 Community Awards, officers sought nominations based on the award categories and guidelines previously used for the Australia Day Awards, which aligned to Council's Strategic priorities. These awards included:

- Citizen of the Year - Awarded to an individual of any age who has made a significant contribution to their community in the past calendar year or has demonstrated community service over some time.
- Connecting Communities Award - Awarded to an individual or group who has made a significant contribution to community life either through physical connections such as trails, paths, open spaces or infrastructure that enables the community to connect and participate, or social connections that ensure people have access to services and which create a sense of community and belonging.
- Healthy People, Healthy Environment Award - Awarded to an individual or group who has made a significant contribution in the areas of promoting healthy lifestyles for all ages and abilities, such as supporting mental health, recreation, community safety or arts and culture. It also includes protection of the natural environment such as biodiversity, climate change and waste reduction.
- Business and Tourism Award - Awarded to a group or individual who has demonstrated a significant achievement or ongoing community contribution to the economic vitality of the shire, including tourism, agribusiness, small business, and local employment.

Following the 2024 Community Awards Ceremony in January 2024, officers undertook a review of the Community Awards program. Officers considered (i) the timing of the Community Awards ceremony; (ii) opportunities to streamline Council's various award programs; and (iii) the relevance of the current award categories.

Discussion

Timing of the Community Awards ceremony

Traditionally, the Community Awards ceremony has been held immediately after a Citizenship ceremony in January. The review noted a disconnect between the two activities, in that attendees were engaged by one activity, not both. Many people attending the Citizenship ceremony left before the Community Awards ceremony commenced, resulting in a minor disruption. Separating the two ceremonies, ensures that both have a high community profile.

With Community Awards celebrating and acknowledging volunteers and volunteerism in our community, there is an opportunity to connect the Community Awards program better and more formally with volunteering. Council already recognises National Volunteer Week in May of each year. Holding the Community Awards ceremony during this week is the ideal time to acknowledge and celebrate volunteers within the shire.

Streamlining Council's awards programs

The review noted that Council's Youth Services Team currently deliver a separate Youth Awards program, usually scheduled in September. There is an opportunity to streamline both awards programs into one, in a celebration of community contributions across age groups. In addition to youth specific awards, young people would be eligible to be nominated in all Community Award categories.

Council has delivered a Seniors Celebration event in October aligned with Seniors Week for the past two years, which aimed to acknowledge the contributions of older residents across the shire. In 2024, officers have diversified the Seniors Week activities with a range of municipal-wide come and try sessions. It is acknowledged that older residents across the shire are invested in, and significantly contribute to volunteering across numerous types of events and activities, both individually and through various groups and clubs. For 2025, rather than develop a seniors' specific category, it is envisaged that older residents will likely be represented and celebrated across the categories.

Relevance of current awards

Officers reviewing the Community Award categories noted that:

- The Business and Tourism Award was a duplication of Josh's Rainbow Eggs Macedon Ranges Business Excellence Awards. Consequently, this award could be removed from this program.
- The Healthy People, Healthy Environment award covers a wide range of areas that residents contribute to their communities. There is an opportunity to separately recognise endeavours that focus on the environment and people/community.
- The Connecting Communities Award has had a focus on physical and social connections. This category is also very broad. The review considers this an opportunity to create a category with a clearer focus that better recognises the contribution that local volunteers make to their community.
- The current awards categories don't acknowledge community driven and organised events. There are a number of these events held in the Macedon Ranges that involve significant community participation to deliver and therefore could be better recognised.

- The Macedon Ranges is the home to numerous artists who make a significant contribution to community through their artistic expression. The current awards categories do not directly address this contribution.
- The current award categories do not acknowledge the importance of sport and recreation in our community, and all the volunteers who keep sporting clubs going. The volunteers in our sporting clubs actively facilitate people of all ages to participate in activities that deliver health and wellbeing benefits.

Officers propose several changes to Council's Community Awards categories, which address the issues arising from the review.

- **Citizen of the Year**

Awarded to an individual of any age who has made an extraordinary contribution to their community and demonstrated community service over many years.

- **Young Citizen of the Year**

This award recognises the outstanding contributions of a young person (under 25 years). By offering continual service, advocacy and determination to Macedon Ranges Shire and enable our communities to be better place. Service areas might include education and awareness on important topics, health, fundraising, charitable and voluntary services, business, sport, arts, the environment, or any other area that contributes to the advancement and well-being of our community.

- **Inclusive Communities Award**

Awarded to an individual or group who has made a significant contribution to inclusion and diversity within the community. This could include contributions to supporting connectedness amongst more isolated or vulnerable community members.

- **Contribution to the Environment Award**

Awarded to an individual or group who has made a significant contribution in the areas of protection of the natural environment, such as biodiversity, climate change and waste reduction. This could include contributions related to climate emergency, building disaster preparedness, sustainability, reducing impact on the environment, improving biodiversity.

- **Contribution to Community Arts Award**

Awarded to an individual or group who has made a significant contribution to community in the areas of arts and culture. This individual or group may have encouraged artistic expression in community members who would not usually participate in the arts or inspired community members with a performance or art installation.

- **Contribution to Sports and Wellbeing Award**

Awarded to an individual or club who has made a significant contribution to community in the areas of sports and wellbeing. This individual or club may have encouraged participation in sport by community members who would not usually participate in active recreation or inspired club members to do their personal best.

- **Youth Leadership Award**

Awarded to an individual or group (under 25 years) that has shown exemplary leadership, innovation, advocacy or service to Youth in the Macedon Ranges. This might include demonstrated leadership and teamwork skills within a community or

school setting, raising awareness on a particular topic or issue, advocating for change, inspiring other young people, mentoring fellow students or community members.

- **Community Event of the Year Award**

Awarded to an individual or group for the most outstanding community event of the year that involved significant community organisation, participation and attendance, resulting in a substantial impact across the shire.

Officers will prepare Community Awards Nomination Guidelines to assist individuals in making nominations for the awards program. This will be brought back to Council for endorsement later in the year.

Consultation and engagement

Internal units within Council have been consulted regarding recommended changes and are supportive of the recommendations.

Collaboration

No collaboration was required in relation to this report.

Innovation and continuous improvement

This review has sought to improve Council's Community Awards program. Research of other local government community awards programs was undertaken. Recommendations in this report are consistent with award categories offered by other councils. Additionally, by scheduling an awards ceremony during National Volunteer Week, the profile of Council's Community Awards Program will be raised.

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 summary, it was found that the recommended new award categories have been designed to be gender neutral. The award categories do not favour or present barriers for any gender.

Factors that are critical for gender equity include:

- Promotion of the Community Awards Program;
- Assessment criteria for the different award categories;
- The process of assessing nominees; and
- Data collection details

It is recommended that these factors be considered when preparing the Community Award Nomination Guidelines, to be endorsed by Council later in the year.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

There are no applicable regional, state or national plans or policies related to Council's Community Awards Program.

Relevant Council plans and policies

The recommendation in this report align with the Council Plan strategic priority of Connecting communities. A strategic objective within this priority is *We will provide support for volunteers, community groups and organisations, in recognition of their work in contributing to social connections.*

Climate Impact Assessment

The recommendation has no impact on Council's energy usage and greenhouse emissions. The recommendation does not mitigate risks posed by climate change to Council's operations and services.

With an award category specifically for a significant contribution in the areas of protection of the natural environment such as biodiversity, climate change and waste reduction, the award has the potential to inspire others in the community to prepare for future climate scenarios.

Financial viability

The Community Awards program will be delivered within budget parameters.

Sustainability implications

The Community Awards Program has the potential to inspire more community members to volunteer their time in supporting a range of community projects and activities, by highlighting and celebrating achievements through the Environment Award, thereby enhancing sustainability.

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	GAMBLING HARM MINIMISATION POLICY
Officer:	Amy Holmes, Manager Community Strengthening
Council Plan relationship:	2. Healthy environment, healthy people
Attachments:	1. Draft Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy ↓ 2. Draft Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy - Background Paper ↓

Summary

At the Scheduled Council Meeting on 28 February 2024, Council endorsed the release of the draft Gambling Harm Prevention Policy for public consultation. This report provides an overview of feedback received (including legal advice) and its implications for the policy. The report additionally recommends changes to the draft policy (which has been renamed the Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy) in response to feedback received, and alignment to the policy purpose. The background paper has been updated in response to legal advice.

Recommendation

That Council adopts the Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy and revokes the previously adopted Electronic Gaming Machine (Pokies) Community Policy as of Thursday 29 August 2024.

Background

Consultation process and overview

Over a four-week period (Monday 4 March to Sunday 31 March) Council sought feedback from the community on the draft Gambling Harm Prevention Policy, via the “Your Say” portal. The feedback page included a downloadable copy of the draft policy, the background paper, and the Council report. Additionally, community members were able to provide feedback via hard copy to customer service administration centres and through Council’s general email.

In total, 67 submissions were received. Of these, 31 were supportive of the policy while 36 submissions were unsupportive.

A key theme amongst submissions was support for the public health approach in the development of the draft policy.

Key themes within opposing submissions included:

- Concern regarding the sustainability of Kyneton Bowling Club.
- Financial and in-kind support provided to community groups by poker machine venues will be lost.

Legal advice was also provided by Council’s solicitor to ensure that the background paper and the policy had no legal consequences for Council.

Consideration of the legal advice, Councillor and community feedback, a range of amendments to the Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy (**Attachment 1**) and the background paper (**Attachment 2**) have been implemented.

Further, a one-month delay to the consideration of the policy was endorsed by Councillors through an alternative motion at the Council meeting on 24 July 2024 to enable additional time for community groups and local organisations to read through the draft policy:

Resolution:

That Council defers the Gambling Harm Prevention Policy report to the 28 August 2024 Scheduled Council Meeting.

Discussion

Amendments resulting from legal advice

Legal advice highlighted issues concerning having a predetermined position to oppose planning and licensing applications and misalignment between the draft policy and the planning scheme.

While the policy can give guidance for decision making, it cannot from a planning perspective pre-determine Council’s position. The policy can however outline how Council will assess an application for EGMs (electronic gaming machines) and the criteria it will use to do that.

In relation to policy alignment, while provisions in Council’s Planning Scheme are considered robust and comprehensive, there is an opportunity to strengthen these provisions. This might include having a broader set of objectives, including an objective around minimising harm to individuals and the community.

The following table illustrates the amendments made to the policy resulting from legal advice.

Topic / Issue	Wording in draft	Final wording
Not having a pre-determined position regarding approval applications	Oppose any planning and licensing application for additional EGMs and the transfer of EGMs within the Macedon Ranges when there is reliable evidence that the application will cause net social or economic detriment (as measured by an independent Social and Economic Impact Assessment) to the local area. When Council opposes an application, it will resource the representation at the Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission and subsequent representation at Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) hearings, if required.	Assess the social and economic impact of EGM approval applications and represent community interests in regulatory processes.
Policy alignment to the planning scheme	NA	Council will review the provisions of the Schedule to Clause 52.28 as part of Council’s next Planning Scheme Review required under section 12B(1) of the Planning and Environment Act, 1987 to

		make recommendations on the alignment between any gambling related policy and the Council’s Planning Scheme.
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Additionally, Council’s solicitor made recommendations to strengthen the background paper, which has been updated and is attached.

Amendments resulting from community feedback.

Kyneton Bowling Club

The central theme of feedback from the Kyneton Bowling Club and their members (19 submissions) was concern that the club would need to close at the expiry of their current lease in 2027, due to reliance on income generated by poker machine losses. Members were also concerned that the club would no longer be able to provide both financial and in-kind support to other community groups.

Officers met with the Kyneton Bowling Club Board and representatives to discuss their concerns. To provide greater clarity, and reasonable time for the Kyneton Bowling Club to work through alternatives for the club, the policy statement has been reworded (see table summary below).

Financial support provided to community groups from gambling providers

Opposing submissions raised concern that the financial and in-kind support provided to community groups by gambling venues would be either lost or compromised.

To provide a more balanced approach, ensuring disadvantage to community groups is minimised, a clear distinction that Council will enable provision of funding to groups in receipt of gambling profits, if it is for a separate activity to the one that is funded by gambling profits. This way, where Council provides financial support for a discrete project or activity it will not find itself in a situation where it might be seen as Council ‘partnering’ with a gaming venue to fund that activity. Additionally, to give community groups time to transition and prepare, it is proposed that this policy change becomes effective from 1 July 2025.

Topic / Issue	Wording in draft	Final wording
Kyneton Bowling Club	Ensure when all Council leases come up for renewal, new leases clearly state that any form of gambling is not permitted. New leases will have a clearly defined exit period (supported by a Council approved exit plan) for those currently holding an EGM licence.	Ensure where a Council lease holder with EGMs has a lease due for renewal, Council will actively engage with the leaseholder two years before expiry of that lease to discuss the implications of this policy. A new lease will clearly state the conditions and timing for an agreed transition period (negotiated between Council and the leaseholder, and further, formally endorsed by Council). EGMs and other forms of gambling will be permitted for that period only.

Financial support provided to community groups from gambling providers.	Not provide Council financial support or provision of grants for activities that receive sponsorships from gaming venues, online betting companies or other gambling providers.	Not provide Council financial support or provision of grants for a specific activity that also receives sponsorships from gaming venues, online betting companies or other gambling providers for that same activity in that financial year. [This policy position is to become effective from 1 July 2025 to allow community groups time to transition].
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Additional policy position to advocate for a lower municipal EGM cap

While not the subject of submissions from the community, the topic of advocacy was raised by Councillors during a Councillor Briefing session. With consideration to the Ministerial Order dated 20 September 2017, setting the “maximum permissible number of gaming machine entitlements under which gaming may be conducted in the region determined under section 3.45A.5(3A)” for Macedon Ranges Shire at 355 EGMs”, an additional policy statement has now been included in the Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy:

Advocate to the State Government to freeze the municipal EGM cap in the Macedon Ranges to the current number of machines.

Consultation and engagement

Consultation with community was conducted through the “Your say” portal on Council’s website. In total 67 submissions were received that have resulted in the modifications to the Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy. Further officers had direct meetings, phone calls and emails with impacted groups such as the Kyneton Bowling Club.

Following the deferral of a decision on the policy, as resolved at the 24 July 2024 Scheduled Meeting, Council officers emailed a copy of the draft policy with a supporting document *Fact Sheet: Policy sections and proposed implementation explained* to key stakeholders, and shared a copy of these documents on Council’s website. This targeted correspondence aimed to further ensure that key stakeholders had an opportunity to review the updated policy and to support their understanding and transition, particularly in relation to Council funding impacts.

Collaboration

Collaboration was not required in relation to this report.

Innovation and continuous improvement

The Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy replaces the Electronic Gaming Machine (Pokies) Community Policy which was endorsed by Council in 2009. Significant research and consultation has been undertaken in the development of this policy. Legal advice has also been sought to ensure the policy is compliant with all relevant legislation.

Relevant law

Legislation applicable to the subject matter of this report include:

- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- *Gambling Regulation Act 2003*
- *Gambling Regulation (Pre-commitment and Loyalty Scheme) Regulations 2014*
- *Gambling Regulations 2015*
- *Gambling Regulation Amendment (Gaming Machine Arrangements) Act 2017*
- *Gambling Legislation Amendment Act 2018*

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment has been conducted in relation to the subject matter of this policy. This assessment involved a review of the impact of gender and intersectionality on experiences of gambling harm and implications for gambling harm minimisation. This was followed by a review of each of the four key roles in relation to minimising gambling harms outlined in this policy and the extent to which gender, intersectionality and accessibility had been considered and addressed.

In summary, research has shown that women are disproportionately impacted by gambling harms, whether this be through their own gambling behaviour or the gambling behaviour of intimate partners or family. The impact of gender and intersectionality on experiences of gambling harm and approaches to minimisation can be divided into five key areas; women and gender diversity; family and intimate partner violence; children and young people; intersectionality and the gambling environment. Research in each of these areas highlighted the impact of socio-cultural, environmental and industry factors on attitudes towards gambling, awareness of risk and experiences of gambling harm. These considerations have been addressed under the key roles of Advocate and Partner (dot points 5-8) and Inform (dot points 3-4) in this policy.

It is also recommended that implementation of all actions related to Council's four key roles in this policy consider the following to ensure this policy contributes to a safer and more equitable environment for women and girls, people of different ages, cultural identities, First Nation's people, LGBTQIA+ and people with disabilities:

- The impact of gender, gender norms and structures on experiences of gambling harm.
- The correlation between family and intimate partner violence and gambling harm.
- The importance women's participation in decision-making.
- The impact of gender and intersectional characteristics on experiences of gambling harm and the need for partnership, collaboration and co-design to implement safe and appropriate minimisation and response actions.
- The correlation between gambling environments that serve multiple purposes (e.g. social, community and sporting venues) and awareness of risk and experiences of gambling harm, particularly for women and children.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

The relevant state policy regarding the subject matter in this report is Victorian State Government Planning Policy Framework

Relevant Council plans and policies

Relevant Council Plans and Policies include:

- Council Plan 2021-2032
- Electronic Gaming Machine (Pokies) Community Policy 2009

- Community Engagement Policy 2022
- Macedon Ranges Planning Policy Framework
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025
- Macedon Ranges Statement of Planning Policy

Climate Impact Assessment

- The recommendation will not have an impact on Council's energy usage and greenhouse emissions profile.
- The recommendation will not mitigate or increase risks posed by climate change to Council operations and services.
- The recommendation does not help or hinder the community to prepare for future climate scenarios.

Financial viability

The implementation of the Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy will be delivered within budget parameters.

Sustainability implications

Implementation of the Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy will contribute to reducing gambling harms in the Macedon Ranges community.

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



Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy

Date of Adoption	TBC 2024		
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		
Nominated Review Period	<input type="checkbox"/> Annually	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Every 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify</i>)
Last Endorsement Date	Not applicable (replaces Electronic Gaming Machine (Pokies) Community Policy 2009)		
Next Endorsement Date	TBC 2028		

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.

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Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines Council's commitment to minimising harm from gambling within the Macedon Ranges. It replaces Council's Electronic Gaming Machine (Pokies) Community Policy 2009.

Objective

The policy's objectives are to minimise the negative social and economic impacts of gambling on the Macedon Ranges community.

Role of Council

Council's policy direction focuses on four key roles in relation to minimising gambling harms:

- Lead:** Council will provide leadership by clearly stating its position on gambling and setting an example through actions in relevant strategic documents.
- Regulate:** Within Council's sphere of influence, it will regulate to reduce gambling harms.
- Advocate and partner:** Where appropriate, Council will partner with key stakeholders and advocate to state and federal governments and institutions to legislate and/or regulate to reduce gambling harms.
- Inform:** Council will keep the community informed and raise awareness about gambling harms that might affect them.

Policy

Council will:

Lead

1. Acknowledge gambling as a public health issue and, where appropriate, integrate harm minimisation into future planning and programming. This includes the Council Plan, the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, and the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme.
2. Continue to promote a variety of non-gambling events, activities and programs that encourage residents to lead active and healthy lives.
3. Not provide financial support or provision of grants for activities that take place in gambling venues.
4. Not provide Council financial support or provision of grants for a specific activity that also receives sponsorships from gaming venues, online betting companies or other gambling providers for that same activity in that financial year. [This policy position is to become effective from 1 July 2025 to allow community groups time to transition]
5. Not accept any financial or in-kind contributions from gambling or electronic gaming machine (EGM) operators.
6. Not organise any Council meetings, functions or programs in venues with EGMs.

Regulate

1. Assess the social and economic impact of EGM approval applications and represent community interests in regulatory processes.
2. Review the provisions of the Schedule to Clause 52.28 as part of Council's next Planning Scheme Review required under section 12B(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, to make recommendations on the alignment between any gambling related policy and the Council's Planning Scheme.
3. Discourage new or additional EGMs in communities and settlements where there are minimal or no alternative forms of recreation.
4. Not permit new or additional EGMs on Council owned or managed land.

5. Work with current EGM licence holders leasing Council owned or managed land to relinquish their EGM licence and divest themselves of EGMs.
6. Ensure where a Council lease holder with EGMs has a lease due for renewal, Council will actively engage with the leaseholder two years before expiry of that lease to discuss the implications of this policy. A new lease will clearly state the conditions and timing for an agreed transition period (negotiated between Council and the leaseholder, and further, formally endorsed by Council). EGMs and other forms of gambling will be permitted for that period only.
7. Not permit new or additional advertising and/or the promotion of gambling of any form at Council owned or managed facilities. Council will support clubs to exit existing sponsorship arrangements that involve the advertising or promotion of gambling.
8. Prevent access to gambling websites and explore options to block advertising from major online gambling companies on Council's information technology resources used by staff and the community.
9. Work with current community groups to divest themselves of gambling related sponsors and advertising arrangements.

Advocate and partner

1. Advocate to the state government to freeze the municipal EGM cap in the Macedon Ranges to the current number of machines.
2. Advocate to state and federal governments for regulatory and legislative reforms that minimise gambling harm from all forms of gambling in local communities.
3. Partner with other local government organisations, local government peak bodies and gambling networks to advocate for reforms that minimise gambling harm.
4. Consider making a submission on any EGM licence application for new gaming venues or additional EGMs in adjacent municipalities that are located within 15 kilometres of the municipal border.
5. Partner with key local community health and support agencies to minimise gambling harm in the Macedon Ranges.
6. Engage and partner with local communities to explore solutions that minimise gambling harm in their local communities.

7. Work with sporting clubs to deliver gambling free environments including online betting and gambling sponsorship and advertising.
8. Work with research bodies to understand the impact of gambling on the local community and specific community groups, including young people, women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

Inform

1. Apply a public health lens to all gambling-related communication.
2. Provide public notice to the community when there is an application for new gaming premises approval or the addition of EGMs at a gaming venue, and consult to understand the community's view.
3. Raise awareness of the gambling harms occurring locally by communicating gambling losses, EGM numbers, gambling prevalence, current public health research and health and wellbeing impact.
4. Support and promote gambling support services and programs in local communities, including specialist services for diverse community groups.

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.

This assessment involved a review of the impact of gender and intersectionality on experiences of gambling harm and implications for gambling harm minimisation. This was followed by a review of each of the four key roles in relation to minimising gambling harms outlined in this policy and the extent to which gender, intersectionality and accessibility had been considered and addressed.

In summary, research has shown that women are disproportionately impacted by gambling harms, whether this be through their own gambling behaviour or the gambling behaviour of intimate partners or family. The impact of gender and intersectionality on experiences of gambling harm and approaches to minimisation can be divided into five key areas; women and gender diversity; family and intimate partner violence; children and young people; intersectionality and the gambling environment. Research in each of these areas highlighted the impact of socio-cultural, environmental and industry factors on attitudes towards gambling, awareness of risk and experiences of gambling harm. These considerations have been addressed under the key roles of Advocate and Partner (dot points 5-8) and Inform (dot points 3-4) in this policy.

It is also recommended that implementation of all actions related to Council's four key roles in this policy consider the following to ensure this policy contributes to a safer and more equitable environment for women and girls, people of different ages, cultural identities, First Nation's people, and people with disabilities:

- The impact of gender, gender norms and structures on experiences of gambling harm.
- The correlation between family and intimate partner violence and gambling harm.
- The importance women's participation in decision-making.
- The impact of gender and intersectional characteristics on experiences of gambling harm and the need for partnership, collaboration and co-design to implement safe and appropriate minimisation and response actions.
- The correlation between gambling environments that serve multiple purposes (e.g. social, community and sporting venues) and awareness of risk and experiences of gambling harm, particularly for women and children.

Definitions

Term	Definition
People harmed by gambling	Terminology shift from 'problem gambling' to refer to people experiencing harm as a result of gambling, to recognise responsibility of gambling industry.
Safer gambling	Shift from 'responsible gambling', to include responsibility of gambling industry policies and protocols in implementing protective factors.
Gambling harms	Refers to any and all harms experienced as a result of gambling, including monetary loss, mental health and wellbeing, relationships, work and social outcomes.
Gambling	For the purposes of this policy 'gambling' refers to activities involving electronic gaming machines, casino games, lotteries, race betting, sports betting and similar activities. It excludes activities such as card games, raffles, sports tipping competitions, sweeps and bingo for club social activities and fundraising.
Gambling losses	Refers to monies spent on gambling that is not returned in winnings.
Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMS)	Refers to gaming machines as defined by the <i>Gambling Regulation Act 2003</i> .

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Related Policies

- > Council Plan 2021-2032
- > Electronic Gaming Machine (Pokies) Community Policy 2009
- > Community Engagement Policy 2022
- > Macedon Ranges Planning Policy Framework
- > Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025
- > Macedon Ranges Statement of Planning Policy
- > Victorian State Government Planning Policy Framework
- > Wyndham City Council, Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy and Action Plan 2018-2022
- > City of Greater Bendigo, Reducing Harm from Gambling Policy, 2021

Related Legislation

- > *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- > *Gambling Regulation Act 2003*
- > *Gambling Regulation (Pre-commitment and Loyalty Scheme) Regulations 2014*
- > *Gambling Regulations 2015*
- > *Gambling Regulation Amendment (Gaming Machine Arrangements) Act 2017*
- > *Gambling Legislation Amendment Act 2018*
- > *Local Government Act 2020*

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Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy 2024

Background Paper

Introduction

Gambling in all its forms is a legal activity in Australia. It is an area of much interest and controversy across the community, due to the very significant amount of income and losses generated by it. These losses are the cause of gambling harm suffered by some in the community. Consequently, the objective of the *Gambling Regulation Act 2003* (which governs the conduct of gambling activities in Victoria, other than the casino) is to foster responsible gambling in order to (i) minimise harm caused by problem gambling, and (ii) accommodate those who gamble without harming themselves or others.¹

The Productivity Commission Inquiry Report into Gambling (2010)² additionally concluded that in 2008–2009, the benefits from tax revenue and the enjoyment of gambling from a recreation perspective ranged between \$12.1 and \$15.8 billion, with the costs to problem gamblers estimated between \$4.7 and \$8.4 billion. Hence, according to the Productivity Commission, gambling in Australia produced an overall net benefit of between \$3.7 and \$11.1 billion in that year.

Gambling and gambling harm however are still a prevalent within the community. This is particularly so with regard to gambling on electronic gaming machines (EGMs), where studies have shown that a disproportionate percentage of gambling losses are by problem and at-risk gamblers.

Consequently, the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (a statutory authority) was created by the Victorian Parliament specifically to address the challenge of gambling harm in the Victorian community. It was brought into effect by the Victorian *Responsible Gambling Foundation Act 2011*. One of its functions is to fund research and other activities that add to the knowledge and understanding of gambling harm. Among the many research projects they have funded is the Victorian population gambling and health study 2018-2019³ where 10,638 randomly selected adults were surveyed to better understand gambling participation and behaviour.

This study found that:

¹ <https://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/resources/legislation-and-regulation/#gambling-legislation>

² <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/gambling-2010/report>

³ <https://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/resources/publications/victorian-population-gambling-and-health-study-20182019-759/>



- 69 per cent of Victoria's adult population gamble;
- 21.9 per cent of Victorians aged 18–24 years who gamble participate in sports betting. Within this age range, 31.9 per cent of Victorian men and 10.3 per cent of Victorian women who gamble are most likely to participate in sports betting;
- online gambling is growing in popularity, with 19.2 per cent of Victorian adults who gamble betting online;
- the prevalence of problem gambling has remained largely unchanged, from 0.8 per cent in 2014 to 0.7 per cent in 2018–2019;
- 39 per cent of people who experience problem gambling are in a state of high distress, compared to 5 per cent of Victoria's general population;
- about 330,000 adults in Victoria who gamble (9.6 per cent) experience at least one form of gambling-related harm;
- poker machines alone account for 37.7 per cent of gambling harm in Victoria;
- 70 per cent of gambling harm is experienced by people whose behaviour is not classified as problem gambling;
- 6.1 per cent of Victorian adults – about 300,000 people – are harmed by someone else's gambling.

It can thus be concluded that while gambling is legal and that the gambling industry contributes to an overall net financial benefit, there are many in the community who are either directly or indirectly harmed by gambling. It can also be concluded that any Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy endorsed by Macedon Ranges Shire Council needs to strike the right balance, with a focus on Council's sphere of influence.

This background paper provides the context for Council's Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy.

Population summary



Macedon Ranges Shire is on the Country of the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Peoples. Covering an area of approximately 1,747 square kilometres, the shire is located in central Victoria, about one hour's drive north-west of Melbourne. It is a semi-rural municipality known for its beautiful natural landscapes. The Macedon Ranges Shire population forecast for 2023 is 52,975 and is forecast to grow to 65,771 by 2036.

There are nine main townships and a number of smaller settlements spread throughout the shire, with the largest towns being Gisborne, Kyneton, Romsey and Woodend. Industries providing local employment in the shire include healthcare and social assistance, education and training, retail trade, agriculture, forestry and fishing.

Population of townships within the Macedon Ranges

Town	Estimated resident population ⁴
Gisborne	11,806
Kyneton	5,114
Lancefield	1,703
Macedon	1,654
Malmsbury	905
Mount Macedon	1,284
Riddells Creek	3,607
Romsey	4,224
Woodend	4,445

The population of townships across the Macedon Ranges (listed above) demonstrate that they are small communities. The nature of these villages is that they often have a limited range of accessible recreation options within the township. Research has demonstrated however that if gambling is

⁴ The most accurate count of the total population is Estimated Resident Population, which factors in an estimate of those missed in the Census and those who were overseas on Census night. <https://profile.id.com.au/macedon-ranges/population?WebID=170>



convenient, it becomes a significant risk factor for problem gambling⁵. It can thus be argued that Council has a role, where possible, to mitigate these risks. .

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage indicates the shire as a whole has a relatively low level of disadvantage. However, the townships of Kyneton, Lancefield and Romsey record higher levels of disadvantage than other townships in the shire⁶. Research has demonstrated that lower socio-economic status is a risk factor for problem gambling⁷.

Policy drivers

In understanding why Macedon Ranges Shire Council is pursuing a Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy, a number of 'drivers' need to be examined. These drivers provide the context and the authority for local government's involvement.

Local Government Act

The *Local Government Act 2020* is the first point of reference. In the first instance, the Act states that "*The role of a Council is to provide good governance in its municipal district for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community*". Section 9 of the Act further articulates the overarching governance principles and supporting principles that underpin its role. The relevant governance principles include:

- priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;
- the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted; and
- the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making.

⁵ Young, M, Markham, F & Doran, B 2012 'Placing Bets: gambling venues and the distribution of harm' *Australian Geographer*, vol. no. 4 pp. 425-44

⁶ <https://profile.id.com.au/macedon-ranges/seifa-disadvantage-small-area>

⁷ Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation. 'Background Paper: Risk Factors for Problem Gambling' May 2015



These principles direct local governments to seek the best economic, social, and environmental outcomes for the community. In doing so, it expects local government to engage with that community to achieve these outcomes.

Council Plan

The Council Plan Strategic Objective, *Healthy environments, healthy people* clearly states: *We will contribute to positive health and wellbeing in our community, by proactively supporting mental health, the prevention of violence against women, healthy lifestyles for all ages and abilities, social connection and inclusion, community safety, and arts and culture.*

Additionally, in the actions associated with the priority *Encourage active and healthy lifestyles for people of all ages and abilities*, the Council Plan states that it will continue to deliver the actions for the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021–2025.

Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan

The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 has nominated minimising harm from gambling as a new priority. As a result, Goal 4 of the plan is articulated as *A community that strives to reduce harm resulting from gambling, tobacco, alcohol and other drugs.*

In providing the evidence for the inclusion of this new priority for gambling, while most people who gamble show no sign of harm, almost one in five (around 550,000) Victorians who gamble may be experiencing harm from gambling⁸. For these people, gambling can have a ripple effect, impacting others. From a public health perspective, gambling-related harm may include relationship difficulties, health problems, emotional or psychological distress, financial problems, issues with work or study, cultural problems and criminal activity.

Community

From October to November 2022 (coinciding with Gambling Harm Awareness Week), officers facilitated an online community survey that explored attitudes to gambling and gambling harm. There were 77 responses received from across the Macedon Ranges, indicating an opposition to gambling and gambling products. Most of the respondents additionally expressed concern about

⁸ Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, Assessing gambling-related harm in Victoria: a public health perspective, 2016



gambling harm and indicated a belief that local government has a role to play in reducing gambling-related harm.

It should be noted that 77 survey responses do not make a statistically significant or even a representative sample of Macedon Ranges residents. Consequently, while no conclusions can be drawn from the survey, there is some community interest concerning this subject, and those interested are more likely to be concerned about gambling harm.

Impacts of gambling on health and wellbeing

Research published by the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation⁹ has found that gambling harm could be divided into seven dimensions:

- financial harm;
- relationship disruption, conflict or breakdown;
- emotional or psychological distress;
- decrements to health;
- cultural harm;
- reduced performance at work or study; and
- criminal activity.

The study also found that varying levels of harm are experienced across the population, including for low-risk and moderate-risk gamblers. It found that 85 per cent of the total harm from gambling in Victoria arises from low-risk gambling and moderate-risk gambling.

Harm from gambling is experienced not only by individuals, but also by families, friends, workplaces and local communities. At an individual level, gambling harm is known to exacerbate and contribute to other issues such as mental ill-health, use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, family violence and homelessness.¹⁰ At the population level, the estimated cost to Victorian communities has been

⁹ <https://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/resources/publications/assessing-gambling-related-harm-in-victoria-a-public-health-perspective-69/>

¹⁰ <https://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/resources/publications/hidden-harm-low-risk-and-moderate-risk-gambling-15/>



estimated at \$7 billion for 2014/15, which includes the costs to our governments, local communities, businesses, families and the individual.¹¹

Higher availability and accessibility of gambling venues and EGMs contributes to increased harm. Data and research show that locations with higher numbers of EGMs generally experience higher losses¹² and research has also linked a higher concentration of EGMs to higher rates of family violence.¹³ Availability and access to EGMs is also a key factor that normalises gambling in local communities, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children and young people.¹⁴

Research also indicates that some groups in our community are more likely to experience harm from gambling. Compared to people who do not experience harm from gambling, the following groups are over-represented amongst those who do experience harm¹⁵:

- men;
- people aged 18-29;
- First Nations people;
- people who are unemployed or not in the labour force;
- People with a disability
- people who are single, renting, living in stressed communities, and living on low incomes or receiving income support payments.

Social and personal factors such as mental ill-health, social isolation, financial insecurity, mortgage stress, and socioeconomic disadvantage all increase the risk of experiencing gambling harm.¹⁶

A public health approach

¹¹ <https://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/resources/publications/the-social-cost-of-gambling-to-victoria-121/>

¹² [Expenditure data | Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission \(vgccc.vic.gov.au\)](https://vgccc.vic.gov.au/expenditure-data/)

¹³ [The relationship between electronic gaming machine accessibility and police-recorded domestic violence: A spatio-temporal analysis of 654 postcodes in Victoria, Australia, 2005–2014 - ScienceDirect](#)

¹⁴ [Children's attitudes towards Electronic Gambling Machines: an exploratory qualitative study of children who attend community clubs | Harm Reduction Journal | Full Text \(biomedcentral.com\)](#)

¹⁵ <https://aifs.gov.au/research/research-reports/gambling-activity-australia>

¹⁶ <https://aifs.gov.au/research/research-reports/gambling-suburban-australia>



With gambling harm having such a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of people adversely affected by gambling, a public health approach to the issue is considered necessary. Generally, public health seeks to:

- Engage in organised efforts to improve health outcomes;
- Focus on those who are at risk of poorer health;
- Address health inequalities;
- Tackle the wider determinants of health and wellbeing; and
- Develop strategies to protect the population from hazards to health.

A public health approach to gambling recognises that there is a complex interplay of social, economic and environmental factors in play. These factors contribute to people's health and potential harm from gambling. By adopting this approach, it allows for coordinated and comprehensive actions which work to minimise gambling harm for the whole population, and not just individuals experiencing significant harm from gambling. Council's actions can play an important role in this approach, however multiple stakeholders must come together on this important issue including individuals, community groups, businesses and government at all levels¹⁷.

A public health approach is also consistent with Council's role to protect, improve and promote public health and wellbeing, as required under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*.

Recent government initiatives in response to gambling harm

In an acknowledgement of gambling harm suffered by community, as well as intense lobbying organisations such as the Alliance for Gambling Reform¹⁸ the federal and state governments have recently announced a number of measures to address gambling harm in the community.

Federal government

¹⁷ [using-a-public-health-approach-in-the-prevention-of-gambling-related-harm.pdf \(responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au\)](#)

¹⁸ <https://www.agr.org.au/> The Alliance for Gambling Reform collaborates with organisations concerned about the harmful effects of gambling in Australia. As a registered health promotion charity, we strive to make Australia a safer, healthier, and more equitable society by reducing gambling harm. We prioritise policies that prevent and minimise gambling harm and base our policies on lived experience and public health evidence. We believe that lived experience is critical to developing informed solutions.



On 28 June 2023, The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs tabled the report of its inquiry into online gambling and its impacts on those experiencing gambling harm, You win some, you lose more.

The report provides 31 recommendations that apply a public health lens to online gambling to reduce harm to Australians. This includes the Australian Government developing and implementing a comprehensive national strategy on online gambling harm reduction, supported by national regulation, an online gambling ombudsman, a harm reduction levy on online wagering service providers (WSPs), a public education campaign, more independent research and improved data collection. Additionally, a phased, comprehensive ban on online gambling advertising is recommended within three years.

State government

On 16 July 2023 the Victorian Government announced new reforms to protect Victorians from gambling harm. These reforms include:

- All EGMs in Victoria will require mandatory pre-commitment limits and carded play;
- Load up limits – how much money an individual can put into an EGM at a time – will be capped at \$100, down from the current limit of \$1,000;
- By mid-2024, mandatory closure periods will be enforced for all gaming machine areas in a venue, except the casino, between 4am and 10am; and
- The government will make it mandatory for all new EGMs to spin at a rate of three seconds per game, slowing the pace of the game down and limiting the amount that can be lost.

Advocates for gambling reform argue that while the initiatives announced by the federal and state governments are welcome, they do not go far enough.

These initiatives also demonstrate the level of concern governments have about the effects of gambling harm in the community.

Local EGM data

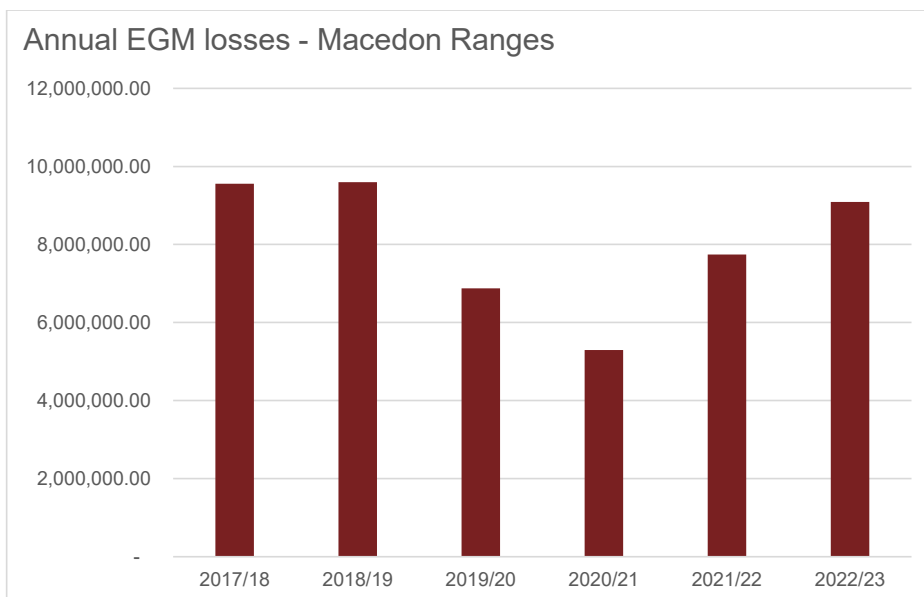
There are three EGM operators located in the Macedon Ranges. The total number of EGMs within the shire are 103. In 2022/23 these machines generated a total loss of \$9,089,731. The table below



illustrates losses over the last six years. As can be seen, losses are returning to ‘normal’ after a significant reduction in losses, due to COVID-19 lockdowns. While there are 103 EGMs located in the shire, the Ministerial Order dated 20 September 2017 caps the “maximum permissible number of gaming machine entitlements under which gaming may be conducted in the region determined under section 3.45A.5(3A)” for Macedon Ranges Shire at 355 EGMs. That is an additional 252 EGMs to what already exists.

In 2022/23, the total EGM losses in the Macedon Ranges can also be understood as;

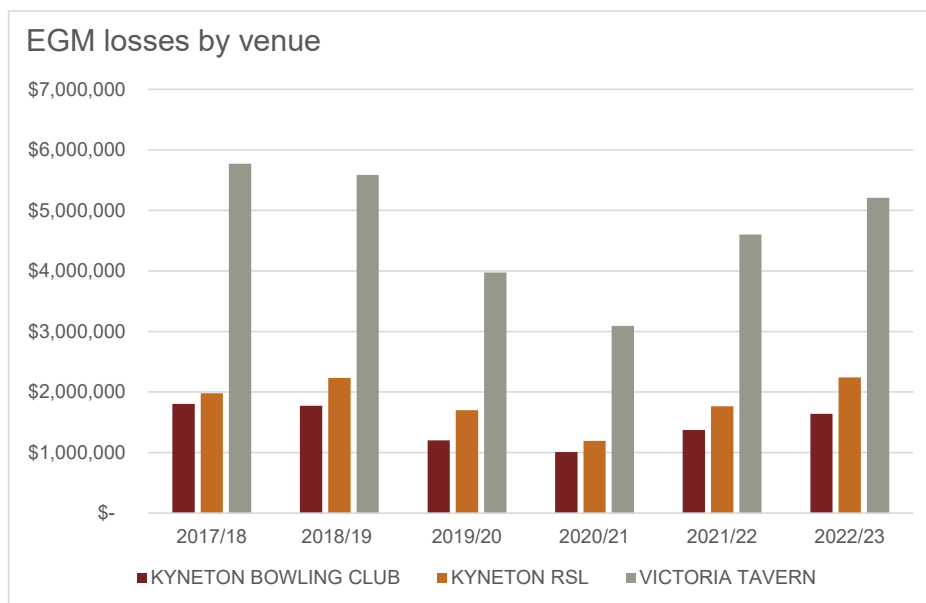
- each EGM generated on average \$88,250 in losses in that year;
- each day, on average \$24,903 was lost;
- losses were equivalent to \$225 being lost by every adult in the shire in that year;
- losses were equivalent to feeding 3,330 children for an entire year¹⁹.



¹⁹ <https://www.greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/gambling-social-statistics>



There are three EGM operators located in the Macedon Ranges. They are Kyneton Bowling Club (25 EGMs), Kyneton RSL (28 EGMs) and the Victoria Tavern in Gisborne (50 EGMs). The losses they have generated over the last six years is illustrated in the graph below.



Compared to other LGAs across Victoria, EGM losses and gambling harm incurred by the Macedon Ranges community (excluding any harm resulting from online/sports betting) are not considered extreme. Although EGM losses in excess of \$9M for the Macedon Ranges in the last financial year still appears to be too high for the community to sustain. Consequently, the policy positions listed in the Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy are aimed both at protecting local communities from being exposed to new EGM venues and/or increased numbers of EGMs, and improving the health and wellbeing of residents where their health is being compromised by gambling harm.

Council Response to Gambling Harm

In 2009, Council endorsed the Electronic Gaming Machine (Pokies) Community Policy²⁰. While the policy has adequately served Council, in view of research into gambling harm conducted in the last 15 years resulting in a better understanding it is timely that Council’s response to gambling harm be updated to reflect this research.

²⁰ <https://www.mrsc.vic.gov.au/About-Council/Our-Council/Policies/Electronic-Gaming-Machine-Pokies-Community-Policy>



Informed by peer reviewed research and acknowledging that gambling is a legal activity that has been shown to have a net economic benefit, Council's Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy aims to minimise the negative social and economic impacts of gambling on the Macedon Ranges community. The policy does this by articulating a policy position in each of Council's roles of providing leadership, acting as a regulator, advocating and partnering, and informing the community about this issue.

Lead

Council will provide leadership by clearly stating its position on gambling and setting an example through actions in relevant strategic documents.

Policy statements concerning this role clearly demonstrate Council's commitment to minimising gambling harm. They address acknowledging gambling as a public health issue, and using Council's 'voice' to promote non-gambling activities and encouraging healthy lifestyles. Council will also show leadership by not supporting activities that are associated with the gambling industry:

- Not provide financial support or provision of grants for activities taking place in gambling venues;
- Not accept financial contributions from gambling venues or companies;
- Not organise Council meetings/functions in venues with EGMs;
- Not partner with gambling venues/companies to fund specific activities of local community and sports groups.

It should be noted that while Council will not partner with gambling venues/companies to jointly fund specific activities of local community and sports groups, it does not suggest that local groups should not seek financial assistance from these venues/companies for other discrete projects. This approach is about maximising the benefits gambling venues/companies deliver for the community. Investment in community for the common good, is one positive contribution, among others, that gambling industry can make.

Regulate

Within Council's sphere of influence, it will regulate to reduce gambling harm.

Council's sphere of influence includes being a planning authority and a landlord.

Background paper - Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy

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Macedon Ranges Shire is located on Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country.



Council as a planning authority plays a key role in establishing planning policy and administering the planning scheme and assessing planning permits in accordance with those schemes for the area. The planning scheme, guides decisions on future use and development proposals and addresses the needs and opportunities of the area. In doing so, identify where development should take place and areas where development should be restricted. Hence, as a regulator, Council's policy position is to assess the social and economic impact of EGM approval applications and represent community interests in regulatory processes. This is a balanced approach consistent with Council's position that gambling is a public health issue. Additionally, to facilitate greater alignment between the Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy and Council's Planning Scheme, Council will review the Planning Scheme in 2025, and make recommendations to strengthen that alignment.

With Council as a landlord, it is inconsistent with the Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy and its public health approach to gambling to allow gambling or the promotion/advertising of gambling on properties that it owns or manages. While a number of policy statements address this issue, Council wishes to provide ample opportunity and adequate time for groups operating in properties where Council is the landlord, to restructure their operations so that they are no longer dependent on gambling revenue or sponsorship from gambling venues by promoting gambling.

Partner and advocate

Where appropriate, Council will partner with key stakeholders and advocate to state and federal governments and institutions to legislate and/or regulate to reduce gambling harm.

With Council having a clear position on gambling and gambling harm, Council is well positioned to partner with like-minded councils and community organisations to advocate for minimising gambling harm. Council, as a member of the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA), participates in the Local Government Working Group on Gambling²¹. The group provides an opportunity for councillors and council officers from VLGA member councils to come together to hear from informed speakers about current gambling harm minimisation research and policy and consider Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan implications and the regulatory environment.

As already discussed in this paper, both the state and federal governments have recently introduced measures to reduce gambling harm. Advocacy by local governments and other organisations has played a significant role in getting governments to seriously consider addressing gambling harm.

²¹ <https://www.vlga.org.au/governance-leadership/gambling/local-government-working-group-gambling-lgwgog>



Inform

Council will keep the community informed and raise awareness about gambling harm that might affect them.

There is a level of interest in the community concerning gambling, gambling harm, and the potential benefits gambling venues can bring to the community. That interest increases significantly whenever there is a planning permit application or gaming premises approval for a new EGM venue. Media outlets provide high profile coverage of these issues when they arise in the municipality.

With Council taking a public health approach to gambling, it is important to keep the community informed about current gambling statistics, gambling harm, and new EGM venue applications in the local community. The "Inform" section of the policy has a range of actions that address the function of keeping the community informed.

Conclusion

EGMs, online gambling, and gambling in its other forms are legal activities in Australia. Nevertheless, concerns about their harm to the community have been acknowledged by federal, state, and local governments across the country. Numerous academic institutions have additionally undertaken peer reviewed research that demonstrate a significant negative impact on the health and wellbeing of people affected by gambling.

A Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy will assist Council to meet its obligations under the Local Government Act 2020 and the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

COM.3	AUSTRALIA DAY GRANTS GUIDELINES
Officer:	Lisa Richards, Community Projects Officer
Council Plan relationship:	1. Connecting communities 2. Healthy environment, healthy people
Attachments:	Draft Australia Day Grants Guidelines 2025 ↓

Summary

The Australia Day Grants Guidelines 2025 have been prepared to provide a framework for the applicant and assessment of grants for Australia Day (26 January) events and acknowledgement ceremonies. The Guidelines are presented to Council for recommended adoption.

Recommendation

That Council:

- 1. Adopts the Draft Australia Day Grants Guidelines 2025;**
- 2. Opens applications for the 2025 Australia Day Grants from 2 to 29 September 2024; and**
- 3. Notes that as resolved in September 2022, the determination of the Australia Day Grants has been delegated to the Chief Executive Officer.**

Background

The Australia Day Grants Program is an annual program designed to support events and acknowledgement ceremonies that mark 26 January in a way that is respectful of all community members.

The program makes available small grants (up to \$1,000) for community activities held any day within one week on either side of 26 January (including on 26 January) to mark Australia Day with events consistent with traditional Australia Day events or other activities that are respectful of First Nations Australians.

Discussion

The Australia Day Grants Guidelines have undergone minimal changes between the last approved version for 2024 and the current draft recommended for 2025. The current guidelines continue to support the council's strategic goals and are consistent with the Council's Community Grant Policy.

Minor changes recommended for the 2025 Australia Day Grant Guidelines include:

- **Key Dates:** Revised opening and closing dates for applications.
- **Eligibility:** Modification to auspice arrangements.
- **Legal requirements:** Inclusion of responsible service of alcohol requirements.

Key dates

Opening and closing dates for applications have been brought forward by one month from the previous year's timeline. This adjustment was made based on feedback from grant recipients and officers involved in administering the grant program.

The new timeline offers applicants more time for essential planning following the notification of the grant outcome. This includes tasks such as submitting event permit requests, booking performers or speakers, and arranging for a Welcome to Country ceremony, which often needs to be completed at least two months before the event.

Additionally, the adjusted timeline provides extra time for document signing and payment processing before the end-of-year shutdown period.

Eligibility

The number of projects an incorporated organisation can auspice was adjusted to align with recent changes to the Small Project Grants and Community Funding Scheme Guidelines. This will ensure greater consistency across Council's community grant programs.

The following statements were included:

- For the purposes of the Australia Day Grants there is no restriction on the number of Australia Day grant projects that an incorporated organisation can auspice.
- Incorporated organisations who act as an auspice for another community group for the purpose of this grant may apply for their own organisation in each grant cycle, in addition to any and all auspice arrangements.

This statement was included based on officer feedback from the 2024 Australia Day Grant program, which identified community halls as adversely impacted by restrictions on the number of projects an incorporated organisation could auspice. Many of the community halls in the shire come under the auspice of Macedon Ranges Halls Inc. These changes will make the Australia Day Grants program more accessible to the community that fall under Macedon Ranges Halls Inc.

Legal requirements

Following feedback, adjustments to the Legal requirements section have been made to ensure compliance with responsible service of alcohol and liquor licensing legislation.

The following statement was included:

- All grant funded events must comply with current legislation on the Responsible Service of Alcohol and Liquor Licencing laws.

Consultation and engagement

As part of the review process, consultation and feedback were sought, and further clarification was provided regarding auspice eligibility arrangements.

Collaboration

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

Innovation and continuous improvement

Council officers review all feedback annually to ensure accessibility and a broad and equitable reach for the Australia Day Grants Program.

Relevant law

The Australia Day Award and Grant processes are consistent with the overarching governance principles in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment has been conducted in relation to the subject matter of this report. To support gender equity in the distribution of grant funds, gender equity questions have been included in the application, assessment, and acquittal forms for this program. These are designed to support applicants and assessors to consider/determine the extent to which gender equity, accessibility and diversity have been considered and planned for, for each grant project. Those applicants who can demonstrate stronger consideration of gender equity, diversity and accessibility/inclusion will receive a higher score than those that do not.

In addition, aligned with the Community Grants Policy and Assessment Panel Terms of Reference, efforts will be made to ensure the assessment panels for each category have an equitable representation of gender.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

There are no regional, state or national plans or policies to be considered in relation to this report.

Relevant Council plans and policies

The Australia Day Grants program is delivered in accordance with Council's Community Grants Policy.

The Australia Day Grants also contributes to the Council Plan priorities of Healthy People, Healthy Environment and Connected Communities.

Council greatly values the work of local not-for-profit groups providing services that are responsive, relevant and accountable. They connect people, reduce social isolation and contribute to a diverse and vibrant community. It is recognised that the activities of these groups can enhance economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing.

The Australia Day Grant is designed to assist not-for-profit groups and the invaluable work of the volunteers that run these organisations.

Grants offered to not-for-profit groups operating in the Macedon Ranges contribute to increased participation of residents in social and civic activities that benefit a broad range of people.

Climate Impact Assessment

In accordance with Council's Zero Net Emissions Plan, Counting-Down-to-Zero and the Climate Emergency Plan, a Climate Impact Assessment has been conducted in relation to the subject matter of this report.

As the recommendations in this report relate to funding for community-led projects, the impact on Council's energy usage and greenhouse emissions profile is not applicable. However, through the Australia Day Grant Guidelines document and the application, assessment and acquittal forms, applicants and assessors are encouraged to consider the impact of the proposed events on the environment. This has been included in the grant guidelines in Table 1: Assessment Criteria under Alignment to Council Priorities, with the following statement "*Consideration and planning to minimise environmental impact and promote sustainability*". Applications that demonstrate strong consideration and planning to minimise environmental impact will receive a higher score than those that do not. Embedding these considerations into the grant application, reporting and decision-making processes will build capacity to consider the impact of the projects on the environment and through scoring encourage applications that have a lower impact.

Financial viability

Funds for the 2025 Australia Day Grants have been provided within Council's adopted 2024-25 Budget.

Sustainability implications

Economic, social and environmental issues have been considered as part of the assessment of grants, as per the Australia Day Grant guidelines.

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.



Australia Day Grants Guidelines 2025



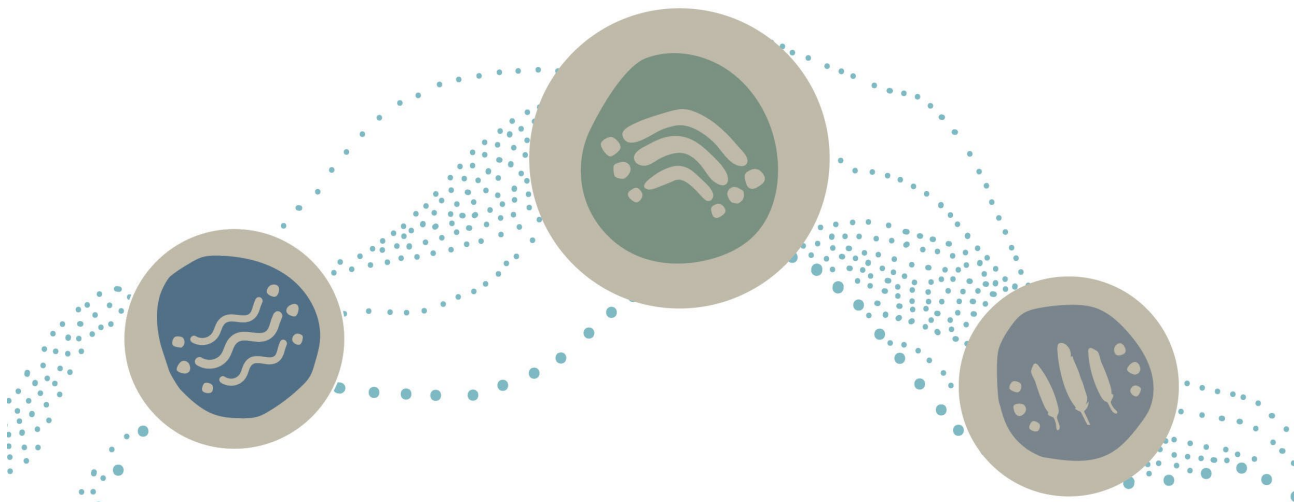
Acknowledgment of Country

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, 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.

Artwork by Taungurung artist Maddi Moser

"Both artworks talk about our connection, connection to Country, connection to places and connection to each other. This is signified by the whimsical circles that form the 'rivers'; that wrap around our lands and ourselves. It reminds us that we should look out for one another."



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Overview

The Australia Day Grants program provides grant funding to support community groups to mark 26 January through events/acknowledgement ceremonies in a way that is respectful of all community members. These events can be hosted on any day one week before or after 26 January 2025.

Council recognises that Australia Day/January 26 is not a day of celebration for all, especially for First Nations Australians. Any activities funded through this program should align to Council's vision:

"With our unique regional identity, Macedon Ranges Shire embodies a caring, resilient approach to community through our robust local economy, protection of the natural environment and a collaborative commitment to inclusivity for all."

Program Objectives

The intention of the Australia Day Grants program is to support local groups to organise an event/acknowledgment ceremony that achieves some or all the following objectives:

- Recognise and acknowledge days of significance to the local community
- Encourage community participation and contribute to health and wellbeing
- Deliver an event that is welcoming, accessible and inclusive
- Deliver a successful, safe and compliant event with consideration to environment impacts and sustainability
- Showcase community identity by engaging local talent or including artistic and/or cultural education
- Build new social connections and partnerships within the community or reinforce those that already exist
- Build understanding and respect for diversity and/or enable community members to learn about a local issue or need
- Support reconciliation and/or celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

How much is available?

The Australia Day Grants budget for 2025 is \$5,000 and provides grants of up to \$1,000 per group/event. Each group may only receive funding for one application per year.

Key dates/timelines

Applications open: Monday 2 September 2024, 9am

Applications close: Sunday 29 September 2024, 11pm

Applications assessed by panel: 1 October 2024

Recommendations to Executive: 7 October 2024

Outcomes announced: 25 October 2024

Funding agreements and payment: 25 October 2024

Event takes place: 19 January – 2 February 2025

Grants acquitted: 15 March - 29 March 2025

Eligibility

Who can apply?

Incorporated, community-based not-for-profit groups operating or being established in the Macedon Ranges are invited to apply.

For the purposes of the Australia Day Grants there is no restriction on the number of Australia Day grant projects that an incorporated organisation can auspice.

Government schools and churches can apply if they can demonstrate a need and a broad community benefit beyond the school community or congregation respectively.

We welcome applications from all not-for-profit community groups and encourage LGBTQIA+, First Nations and groups who have not applied for funding previously to apply.

Auspicing

If you are unincorporated you will need to find an incorporated organisation willing to act as an auspice for the purpose of this grant.

Incorporated organisations who act as an auspice for another community group for the purpose of this grant may submit an application for their own organisation in each grant cycle, in addition to any and all auspice arrangements.

Who will not be funded?

The following are ineligible to apply to the Australia Day Grants program.

- Individuals
- Political organisations
- For profit/commercial organisations
- Groups/auspices that are in debt to Council
- Groups/auspices that have not completed their reporting requirements of previous Council grants
- Groups that do not have the appropriate insurance to deliver the event
- Groups that have not demonstrated compliance with Child Safe Standards.

What will be funded?

Assistance with the costs associated with planning and delivering an event/acknowledgment ceremony. This may include:

- Venue costs
- Staging/equipment costs
- Marketing/promotional costs
- Catering costs
- Performer/artist fees
- Welcome to Country/cultural education fees.

Event conditions

- Priority will be given to events attracting a large number of participants
- The event must be free and open to all members of the public
- The event must be held within the shire
- Macedon Ranges Shire Council must be acknowledged as a sponsor
- The event must be held between 19 January and 2 February 2025.

What will not be funded?

The following list provides advice on what will not be funded through the program:

- Events that are not submitted by the application closure date
- Applications that are incomplete or fail to meet criteria
- Events that are not held between 19 January – 2 February 2025
- Events held outside the Macedon Ranges Shire
- Events that have already commenced, have been completed, or have received funding from another Council funding scheme for the same event/acknowledgment ceremony
- Are commercial, religious, political, discriminatory, sexist, racist or disrespectful
- Groups that receive direct income from electronic gambling machines/promote or involve gambling-related activities
- Events that do not support responsible serving of alcohol, see Legal requirements
- Fundraising activities
- Private events that are not broadly accessible to the community
- Events on private land that have not determined potential restrictions and permit requirements with Council's statutory requirements

- Do not have broad support amongst the community

Legal requirements

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.

Council does not auspice applicants.

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

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.

Please note: If your organisation is auspiced for the purpose of this grant, the auspice 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](#).

More details on the Child Safe Standards can be found on the Commission for Children and Young People website.

Responsible Service of Alcohol

All grant funded events must comply with current legislation on the Responsible Service of Alcohol and Liquor Licencing laws.

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 any events or activities in public open space, using Council facilities or sporting grounds. Other activities may also require public liability insurance.

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

Groups without public liability insurance

Groups who do not currently hold public liability insurance can contact localcommunityinsurance.com.au which offers an affordable public liability scheme for not-for-profit community groups. Alternatively, groups could seek an auspice with public liability insurance for the purpose of this grant.

How to apply

Applicants are advised to read the guidelines thoroughly before submitting their application. All applications must be submitted online, via Council's online grants management system, SmartyGrants. All applicants will receive an email acknowledgement via SmartyGrants once their application has been successfully submitted.

Assessment

Eligible applications are assessed by a panel of staff across the organisation, based on responses provided in the application form. Eligibility does not guarantee funding. All applications are scored based on the weighted assessment criteria in Table 1 (below). An application that scores 50 out of 100 and below will not be recommended for funding and will not be forwarded to Council or Council's delegate for approval.

Council reserves the right to exercise judgement on the appropriateness of funding eligibility criteria in respect to contentious, topical or contemporary issues where the event may be perceived to be in conflict with Council's objectives, plans or the wider wellbeing of its residents.

What we are looking for

The table below outlines the scoring for each criteria. Referring to this and the details contained in the scoring matrix at the end of these guidelines will help you to develop a strong application.

Table 1 **Assessment Criteria.**

Weighting	Criteria	What we are looking for
30%	Community engagement/benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of people participating ● Number of people benefiting from the event ● Impact of the community benefit (anticipated community outcomes) ● Community/stakeholder participation and/or involvement ● Supports local sourcing of goods and services where applicable
30%	Alignment to Council priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consideration and planning to minimise environmental impact and promote sustainability ● Demonstrate measures to make event safe, welcoming, accessible and inclusive e.g. consideration of gender equity and accessibility for diverse community groups
40%	Ability to deliver the event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrate sound budget ● Demonstrate clear event plan ● Demonstrate risk management plan ● Includes site plan ● Appropriate permits, permissions and insurances in place ● Demonstrate sound marketing/promotion plan

Budget

The budget needs to include all expenditure related to the event/acknowledgment ceremony for which you are requesting funding.

Please note: if expenditure exceeds the grant, the difference will be covered by the applicant.

See a sample budget in the table below:

Table 2 **Expenditure**

Expenditure type	Expenditure amount
Venue hire	\$100 (in kind)
Guest Speaker/musician	\$200
Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony	\$1,000
Marketing and Promotion	\$100 (in kind)
Printing	\$100
Catering	\$200
Total expenditure (please calculate)	\$1,700

For groups who are registered for GST, GST will be added to the amount requested (as such, your budget should be exclusive of GST). Grants to recipients not registered for GST will be made exclusive of GST. For information about GST and ABNs contact the Australian Taxation Office.

Permits, insurance and authorisations

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

Notification of outcome

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application in writing on 25 October 2024.

Funding agreements and payment

Successful applicants will be sent a funding agreement and recipient created tax invoice form to complete. All applicants are required to complete these forms and to sign and abide by the terms and conditions of a funding agreement. The event/acknowledgment ceremony must be completed by the date set in the funding agreement. Funds must be spent on the activities/events described in the application budget and event plan.

Conditions

In some cases, conditions such as additional approvals/permits maybe required to carry out the proposed event. Applicants should discuss their event with the responsible body e.g. Council or a Victorian Government department, prior to submitting their application. Your offer of funding may be made conditional to you obtaining further regulatory approvals.

Event registration

Once notified, successful applicants will need to submit an Event Permit application. Once approved these events will be listed on Council's website.

Grant acquittal

Successful applicants are required to submit a report (acquittal) on grant monies spent upon completion of their event/acknowledgment ceremony by the date set out in the funding agreement. This process is important as it enables Council to continuously evaluate and improve on this grant program. It also provides applicants an opportunity to reflect on the successes and learnings gained from their event. Groups who do not submit an acquittal will not be eligible to apply for further funding from Council until the event has been acquitted.

Incomplete activities/events and unspent funds

If an event can no longer be completed, please contact Council. Any unspent funds are to be returned to Council.

Contact information

For further information or to discuss your event ideas please visit [Council's website](#) or contact the Community Development team on:

Ph: (03) 5422 0333 **Email:** grants@mrsc.vic.gov.au

15 DIRECTOR ASSETS AND OPERATIONS REPORTS

AO.1	BARKLY SQUARE MULTIPURPOSE FACILITY LOCATION
Officer:	Daniel Trevillian, Coordinator Recreation
Council Plan relationship:	1. Connecting communities 2. Healthy environment, healthy people
Attachments:	1. Submissions Summary - Barkly Square Pavilion Location ↓ 2. Western Option Site Map ↓

Summary

This report presents the community consultation outcomes for the Barkly Square Multipurpose Facility location to Council for consideration and endorsement.

Recommendation

That Council endorses the Western Option location and progresses with design for the future Barkly Square Multipurpose Facility.

Background

Barkly Square is home to the Kyneton and District Soccer Club, Kyneton Obedience Dog Club, and the Kyneton Small Bore Rifle Club. The Small Bore Rifle Club is housed in a standalone building and does not use the sports ground.

The initial project scope aimed to design a multipurpose facility adjacent to Beauchamp Street to replace aging infrastructure (Obedience Dog Club rooms, old soccer change rooms, social room area, and public toilet block).

Council has previously endorsed the development of a multipurpose facility for the Kyneton and District Soccer Club and Kyneton Obedience Dog Club at Barkly Square, Kyneton. However, during a detailed site assessment for the building, the location of heritage-listed trees and the potential establishment of building foundations within the Tree Protection Zone(s) posed significant construction challenges.

Discussion

Officers reviewed options to construct the facility in a modified form due to site constraints at the Beauchamp Street location. It was identified that constructing the facility without detriment to the trees would inflate construction costs and necessitate the building to be smaller than scoped, making it incapable of fully accommodating the requirements of the user groups.

This prompted a site review to determine a more suitable location for constructing the multipurpose facility. A second location (Western option) was investigated and is presented to Council for consideration as the preferred option.

Consultation and engagement

On 28 February 2024, the Council endorsed four weeks of Community Consultation to invite feedback on two location options to determine the preferred site of the new multipurpose

facility at Barkly Square in Kyneton. This consultation was undertaken from 4 to 31 March 2024 seeking feedback on Option 1 - Western Location and Option 2 - Beauchamp Street Location.

71 online responses were received with overwhelming support for Option 1 the Western option location. All but three responses demonstrated some level of support for the Western Site location. Attachment 1 summarises the submissions received. Attachment 2 identifies the preferred location on site and existing buildings intended to be removed as part of this project.

Collaboration

Innovation and continuous improvement

The Barkly Square design plan represents continuous improvement, as it identifies a long-term planned approach to future improvement options at the site.

Relevant law

In accordance with the Gender Equality Act 2020, a Gender Impact Assessment was conducted concerning the subject matter of this report.

Specifically, it recommends that:

The development of a multipurpose facility at Barkly Square, Kyneton, will provide increased gender-equitable opportunities for participation in formal sport and recreation through suitable facilities for active recreation and improved infrastructure in public open space.

This recommendation will deliver a planned and well-considered facility with a range of equitable and access requirements realised, providing an important community health and well-being function.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

The Victorian Government's Fair Access Policy Roadmap aims to develop a state-wide foundation to improve access to and use of community sports infrastructure for women and girls.

From July 2024, all Victorian Councils will need to ensure fair access to sporting facilities for people of all genders to be considered eligible to receive infrastructure funding. Council endorsed the MRSC Fair Access Policy at its 26 June 2024 Scheduled Council Meeting.

Relevant Council plans and policies

The Barkly Square multipurpose facility upgrade relates to the Council Plan 2021-2031 strategic objectives, as follows:

- *Connecting Communities*: Council will continue to maintain all the roads, paths, buildings, and open spaces in our built environment in a financially, environmentally, and socially sustainable way.
- *Healthy environment, healthy people*: to promote a healthy environment, healthy people Council aims to support mental health, prevent violence against women, and improve healthy lifestyles, social connection and inclusion, community safety, and arts and culture.

Other relevant Council plans and strategies that relate to this report include:

- Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2018-28;

- Open Space Strategy 2013;
- Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-25
- Events Strategy 2021-25
- Council Asset Plan 2021-2031.

Climate Impact Assessment

How will the recommendation impact on Council's energy usage and greenhouse emissions profile? This recommendation is not expected to impact on Council's energy use or greenhouse emissions profile.

How will the recommendations mitigate risks posed by climate change to Council operations and services? Council's Procurement Policy outlines the principles and requirements regarding sustainable purchasing, intending to "reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribution towards Council's carbon footprint". Additionally, a mandatory evaluation criterion relating to environmental benefit will be applied during the tendering stage to align contractors with Council's operating standards around emission reductions.

How will the recommendation help to prepare the community for future climate scenarios? The application of sustainable design principles in the design of the multipurpose facility allows for year-round use and access at night with the provision of LED lighting. This provision will enable the community to access and enjoy the facility in the cooler hours of the evening/night during hot weather. The recommendation of the Western location also protects heritage-listed trees that will continue to provide shade for the Barclay Square user groups for years to come.

Financial viability

Cost estimates for construction will be produced during the design phase of this project and the design may be subject to value management. This project is anticipated to be submitted to a future grant funding opportunity through Sport and Recreation Victoria.

\$167,000 from the 2023/24 MRSC Budget has been carried forward to the 2024/25 budget to complete the final building design. However, the construction of the multipurpose facility is subject to future funding and the council's consideration during annual budget processes.

Sustainability implications

The recommendation provides the opportunity to align the design with the vision of the existing master plan and mitigate any risks to the heritage-listed trees (Beauchamp Street frontage). Demolishing existing buildings near the heritage-listed trees may also assist their long-term health and this space reclaimed as landscaped open space.

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.

BARKLY SQUARE MULTIPURPOSE FACILITY LOCATION

Community Consultation Summary Period 4 – 31 March 2024

71 Submissions

Date	Submitter	Submission summary	Response/Actions
Mar 05, 2024, 10:37 PM	Submission 1	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 07, 2024, 11:22 AM	Submission 2	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 10, 2024, 04:01 PM	Submission 3	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 11, 2024, 09:28 AM	Submission 4	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 12, 2024, 08:29 PM	Submission 5	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 12, 2024, 08:38 PM	Submission 6	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 12, 2024, 09:13 PM	Submission 7	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 13, 2024, 09:54 AM	Submission 8	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 13, 2024, 11:02 AM	Submission 9	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 08:34 AM	Submission 10	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 10:26 AM	Submission 11	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.

Date	Submitter	Submission summary	Response/Actions
Mar 14, 2024, 10:30 AM	Submission 12	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 10:32 AM	Submission 13	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 10:37 AM	Submission 14	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 10:38 AM	Submission 15	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 11:02 AM	Submission 16	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 11:05 AM	Submission 17	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 11:21 AM	Submission 18	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 12:14 PM	Submission 19	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 12:23 PM	Submission 20	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 12:54 PM	Submission 21	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 12:57 PM	Submission 22	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 01:14 PM	Submission 23	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 01:15 PM	Submission 24	Support expressed for both options.	Noted.

Date	Submitter	Submission summary	Response/Actions
Mar 14, 2024, 01:16 PM	Submission 25	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 01:17 PM	Submission 26	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 02:34 PM	Submission 27	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 03:15 PM	Submission 28	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 03:54 PM	Submission 29	Support expressed for the eastern side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 04:18 PM	Submission 30	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 04:42 PM	Submission 31	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 05:17 PM	Submission 32	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 05:34 PM	Submission 33	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 06:48 PM	Submission 34	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 08:38 PM	Submission 35	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 08:59 PM	Submission 36	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 14, 2024, 09:33 PM	Submission 37	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.

Date	Submitter	Submission summary	Response/Actions
Mar 14, 2024, 10:58 PM	Submission 38	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 15, 2024, 07:40 AM	Submission 39	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 15, 2024, 09:50 AM	Submission 40	Support expressed for either option.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 15, 2024, 04:45 PM	Submission 41	Support expressed for either option.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 15, 2024, 08:39 PM	Submission 42	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 15, 2024, 09:36 PM	Submission 43	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 16, 2024, 08:39 AM	Submission 44	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 16, 2024, 01:21 PM	Submission 45	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 16, 2024, 01:25 PM	Submission 46	Support expressed for either option.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 16, 2024, 07:06 PM	Submission 47	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 17, 2024, 02:07 PM	Submission 48	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 17, 2024, 09:25 PM	Submission 49	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 18, 2024, 08:22 AM	Submission 50	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.

Date	Submitter	Submission summary	Response/Actions
Mar 18, 2024, 11:18 AM	Submission 51	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 18, 2024, 08:36 PM	Submission 52	Not supportive of the development / either option based on information provided.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 18, 2024, 11:02 PM	Submission 53	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 19, 2024, 08:58 AM	Submission 54	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 19, 2024, 01:14 PM	Submission 55	Not supportive of the development / either option based on information provided.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 19, 2024, 01:16 PM	Submission 56	Support expressed for either option.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 20, 2024, 02:58 PM	Submission 57	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 20, 2024, 09:30 PM	Submission 58	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 24, 2024, 09:06 PM	Submission 59	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 24, 2024, 09:16 PM	Submission 60	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 24, 2024, 09:26 PM	Submission 61	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 25, 2024, 07:21 AM	Submission 62	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 25, 2024, 07:56 PM	Submission 63	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.

Date	Submitter	Submission summary	Response/Actions
Mar 26, 2024, 10:26 PM	Submission 64	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 28, 2024, 10:59 AM	Submission 65	Support expressed for either option.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 28, 2024, 05:17 PM	Submission 66	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 28, 2024, 08:42 PM	Submission 67	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 30, 2024, 05:33 PM	Submission 68	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 31, 2024, 12:58 AM	Submission 69	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.
Mar 31, 2024, 09:37 PM	Submission 70	Feedback given only on Community Consultation timeframe and no expressed support provided for either option.	Noted. No change to report.
Apr 01, 2024, 07:27 AM	Submission 71	Support expressed for the western side of Barkly Square.	Noted. No change to report.

Western Option Site Map

Multipurpose Facility is proposed for construction on the west side of the reserve, with its location central along Western playing field.



1. The scope of the new building is located well away from the Beauchamp Street frontage. *
2. The new development is well away from the existing heritage-listed trees.
3. The existing public toilets (south side of the reserve) are demolished, and the Beauchamp Street boundary vista becomes more open to views. *
4. The demolition of the existing buildings near the heritage-listed trees (Beauchamp Street frontage) may assist the long-term health of the trees.
5. The existing soccer change room building (east end of the reserve) is retained. This is the most recent building on site and will continue to service the eastern playing field.
6. The location of the social room is well away from the residential area.
7. The proposed building area is a greenfield site without the constraints listed for the other option.
8. The location of the new building is central along the side of the playing field - thus better viewing is obtained.
9. The building can be designed as one type of architecture without risk of creating different architectural types along the Beauchamp Street frontage.
10. The existing Obedience Dog Club building (south side of the reserve) is demolished. The existing soccer club room (south side of reserve) is demolished. *
11. The proposed building location provides an option for car parking off street at the south-west end of the site, as well as disability-compliant access.
12. There is an option for tiered seating at the north side of the proposed building, if desired. Each playing field has its own set of changing rooms.
13. This proposal provides the opportunity to align the design with the vision of the existing masterplan, mitigate any risks to heritage-listed trees and provide each pitch with close-by change room access.

**Construction and demolition works as identified above is subject to future council budget consideration to complete these works.*

AO.2	REQUEST FOR INCLUSION OF AN ACCESS LANE ONTO THE PUBLIC ROAD REGISTER - ACCESS LANE, HIGH STREET, KYNETON
Officer:	Benup Neupane, Coordinator Engineering Services
Council Plan relationship:	1. Connecting communities 4. Delivering strong and reliable government
Attachments:	Nil

Summary

This report is prepared in response to a request (CRM 313293) to include an unnamed access lane off 78 High Street to the entrance of 80 High Street, Kyneton, in the Council's Register of Public Roads.

Officers assessed the unmaintained access lane under the Public Roads Procedure Policy (2018) before considering its inclusion in the Register of Public Roads. Our evaluation determined that the road width and dead-end turning area do not meet the minimum standards to facilitate service vehicle movement (e.g. waste collection), including visibility and sight distance, and that the road conditions do not meet minimum construction standards for Category 6.

Based on this evaluation, Council officers recommend against adding it to the Register of Public Roads.

Recommendation

That Council resolves not to include the existing unmaintained access lane section of High Street Kyneton in the Register of Public Roads and advises the requestor of this decision.

Background

The unnamed access lane is a 61-metre-long gravel track extending from High Street to the entrance of 80 High Street. It has a uniform carriageway width of approximately 3 metres within a 4-metre-wide reserve and has a small turning area of 10 metres by 7 metres. This section of the unnamed access lane provides primary access to two (2) dwellings and one secondary access for another dwelling facing New Street.

Refer to Figures 1 to 5 for a locality plan and photos of the unnamed access lane section.



Figure 1 – Locality Plan



Figure 2 – Entrance to unmaintained access lane via High Street



Figure 3 – Unmaintained Access Lane. Photo from the entrance looking inwards.



Figure 4 – Unmaintained Access Lane. Photo from the mid-block looking inwards.



Figure 5 – Dead-end of unmaintained Access Lane. Photo looking inwards.

Officers observed that the existing access track does not meet the road geometry, road reserve width, access turning radius, safe sight distance, road surface condition, and adequate drainage function.



Figure 7 – Lack of drainage system



Figure 8 – Several potholes along the road carriageway and limited sight of pedestrians and vehicular movement on High Street from Access 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 an unnamed section of access lane, High Street, Kyneton, 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	The unnamed access lane provides primary access to two dwellings. Another dwelling (No.14 New Street) has its rear boundary with secondary access to this access 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 low-density residential purposes.
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.

Criteria	Response	Comments
4. Whether the road connects into and forms a part of the wider network of public roads	No	The access lane does not connect to the broader 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 the unnamed access lane section is anticipated.
6. Whether the road is regularly required for <u>both</u> vehicular and pedestrian use;	Yes	Two residential dwellings regularly use this road as primary access for both vehicular and pedestrian use, with the third dwelling having secondary access.
7. Whether the Council or any of its predecessors or any other public authority has constructed the road at public expense;	No	There is no record.
8. Whether the Council has cared for, managed, or controlled the road regularly;	No	There is no record of the council managing the unnamed section of the access lane.
9. Whether the properties that enjoy a frontage to the road or require the road for access purposes have alternative access rights;	No	One property has dual frontage and primary access from New Street. The other two properties do not have 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 records that the access lane has ever been required for public use.
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 the Council has previously proclaimed the unnamed road 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.
14. Whether the road has been constructed by a developer or private owner or entity to Council's minimum standards;	No	This access track does not meet the Council's minimum standards in terms of road geometry, surface

Criteria	Response	Comments
		condition, access from the main street, etc.
15. Whether the use is occurring "as of right", in particular, evidence of previous permission;	Yes	There are building permits issued that require access from this section of the access lane.
16. Existing geometric standards and surface conditions are in accordance with Council's requirements;	No	It does not meet Council's minimum geometric standards. The existing gravel surface has few potholes and no drainage on either side of the road.
17. Whether the road contains assets owned and managed by public service authorities, gas, electricity, telecommunications, sewerage water; and	Yes	A request through Before You Dig Australia (BYDA) showed there are assets by public service authorities, including electricity and NBN, etc.
18. Whether the road has fencing, barriers, signage, or associated safety devices.	No	There is no traffic signage or safety devices on the road.

In reviewing the 18 considerations for adding a road to the Register of Public Roads, officers identified 4 criteria that were met. Based on these findings, officers recommend not including the unmaintained access lane in the 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).

Climate Impact Assessment

There is no climate impact resulting from this report.

Climate Impact Assessment is not applicable for this report.

Financial viability

Officers did not conduct a financial viability assessment, noting that widening the road reserve to comply with the minimum engineering standards requirement can only be achieved via land acquisitions, which is not feasible due to the surrounding land use/ownership.

Sustainability implications

If the unnamed access lane off High Street, Kyneton is 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.

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	REQUEST FOR INCLUSION OF A ROAD ONTO THE PUBLIC ROAD REGISTER - MAGNET LANE, NEW GISBORNE
Officer:	Benup Neupane, Coordinator Engineering Services
Council Plan relationship:	1. Connecting communities 4. Delivering strong and reliable government
Attachments:	Nil

Summary

This report responds to the resident's request (CRM 318150/314637) to include an access track named Magnet Lane, from 24 Magnet Lane up to 80 metres past the bend, to the Council's Register of Public Roads. The first 240 metres of Magnet Lane from the Saunders Road/Magnet Lane intersection up to 24 Magnet Lane is on the Register of Public Roads. Please refer to the locality map.

Officers assessed the access track condition under the Public Roads Procedure Policy (2018) before considering its inclusion in the Register of Public Roads. Officers also determined that the track, including the drainage system, needs considerable repairs, including drainage outfall, to meet the Council's minimum standards for a Category 5 unsealed local road. The Council officers recommended not adding the access track section of Magnet Lane to the Register of Public Roads.

Recommendation

That Council resolves not to include the existing unmaintained access track section of Magnet Lane in the Register of Public Roads and advises the requestor of this decision.

Background

The unmaintained section of Magnet Lane consists of a 250-metre-long gravel track extending from 24 Magnet Lane. It has a uniform carriageway width of approximately 4 metres and is within a 20-metre-wide reserve.

Magnet Lane is a privately managed local access road that terminates at the access to 40 Magnet Lane. This section of Magnet Lane provides access to 5 dwellings and a vacant lot.

See Figures 1 to 5 for a locality plan and photos taken of Magnet Lane.

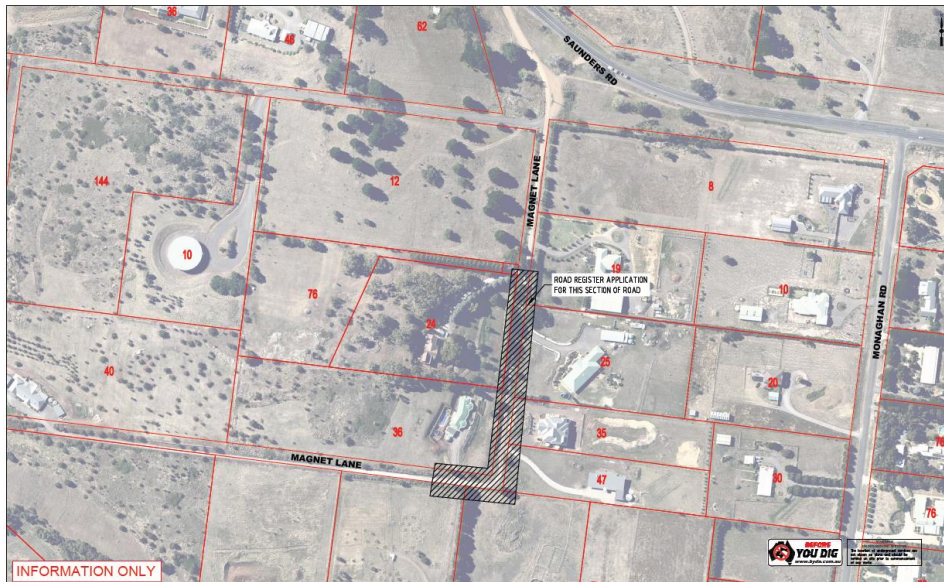


Figure 1 – Locality Plan of a requested section of unmaintained track



Figure 2 – Photo of Magnet Lane in front of 24 Magnet Lane



Figure 3 – Magnet Lane bend at requested section



Figure 4 – Table drain near to the Bend of Magnet lane



Figure 5 – Utilities (Telstra) along Magnet Lane

The investigating officer observed multiple potholes and drainage issues past the bend, whereas the condition of other section surfaces was good. Limited table/swale drains along Magnet Lane and drainage outfall from the subject section have impacted the road condition. Surface runoff along the carriageway is visible.



Figure 7 – Existing drainage system



Figure 8 – Scouring of the road surface along the longitudinal section

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 Magnet Lane, New Gisborne, 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	Magnet Lane provides access to five dwellings and a vacant lot.
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 low-density residential purposes.
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 does not 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 Magnet Lane is anticipated based on the current land use.

Criteria	Response	Comments
6. Whether the road is regularly required for <u>both</u> vehicular and pedestrian use;	Yes	Five residential dwellings would regularly use this section of Magnet Lane 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;	Yes	The council has previously maintained the partial portion of the requested road from 24 Magnet Lane up to the bend.
8. Whether the Council has cared for, managed or controlled the road regularly;	Yes	A specific section of Magnet Lane from the intersection at Saunders Road to 24 Magnet Lane is on the public road registry. While maintaining this section of Magnet Lane listed in the road register, Council maintenance crew has extended maintenance up to the bend of Magnet Lane.
9. Whether the properties that 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 records that the road has ever been required for public use.
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 the Council has previously proclaimed Magnet 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 for Magnet Lane upgrade.
14. Whether the road has been constructed by a developer or private owner or entity to Council's minimum standards;	No	This access track does not meet the Council's minimum standards.
15. Whether the use is occurring "as of right", in particular evidence of previous permission;	Yes	Building permits issued for the existing building require using an unmaintained section of Magnet Lane.

Criteria	Response	Comments
16. Existing geometric standards and surface conditions are in accordance with Council's requirements;	No	The existing gravel surface has few potholes scouring in a longitudinal direction due to an overland flow path and no drainage on one side of the road.
17. Whether the road contains assets owned and managed by public service authorities, gas, electricity, telecommunications, sewerage and water; and	Yes	A request through Before You Dig Australia (BYDA) showed that public service authorities have assets, including gas, electricity, water, etc., within the road reserve.
18. Whether the road has fencing, barriers, signage or associated safety devices.	No	There are no traffic signage and safety devices on the road.

In reviewing the 18 considerations for adding a road to the Register of Public Roads, officers identified 6 criteria that were met. Based on these findings, officers recommend not including the access track section of Magnet Lane in the Council's Register of Public Roads.

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).

Climate Impact Assessment

Climate Impact Assessment is not applicable for this report.

Financial viability

The officer did not conduct a financial viability assessment, noting that it requires significant road upgrade to meet Council's minimum standards and that the drainage outfall sits outside Council's road reserve.

Sustainability implications

If this access track section of Magnet Lane is 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. However, there are no significant social or environmental issues for this request.

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.4	REQUEST FOR INCLUSION OF ROAD ONTO THE PUBLIC ROAD REGISTER - RED GAP ROAD, LANCEFIELD
Officer:	Eng Lim, Manager Engineering and Asset Services
Council Plan relationship:	1. Connecting communities 4. Delivering strong and reliable government
Attachments:	Nil

Summary

This report is prepared in response to a request by an internal officer.

Officers recommend correcting a historic error in the Council's Asset Management System and the Public Road Register by including Segment 1 Red Gap Road as a Category 4 unsealed road in the Public Road Register, removing Segment 2 Red Gap Road, and registering it as a Fire Access Track.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. **Includes Segment 1 of Red Gap Road (855 metres of fire access track extending from the bend of West Goldie Road towards the east side of Red Gap Road) as a Category 4 unsealed road in the Register of Public Roads; and**
2. **Removes Segment 2 of Red Gap Road (1060 metres of access track extending from the end of Segment 1) from the Register of Public Roads and register it as a Fire Access Track.**

Background

The Red Gap Road section between West Goldie Road on the west to Mount William Road on the east has a total length of 3,295 metres, consisting of three (3) segments as shown in Figure 1 (Locality Plan) on the next page:

- Segment 1 on the western end consists of 855 metres of fire access track extending from the bend of West Goldie Road towards the east side of Red Gap Road,
- Segment 2 consists of 1060 metres of access track extending from the end of Segment 1, and
- Segment 3 on the eastern end consists of 1380 metres of access track extending from the end of Segment 2 to Mount William Road.

Officers have identified segments 1 and 2 are incorrectly registered in the Asset Management System and incorrectly advertised on the Public Road Register since at least April 2014. Their current maintenance practice is inconsistent with their status, as shown in Table 1.

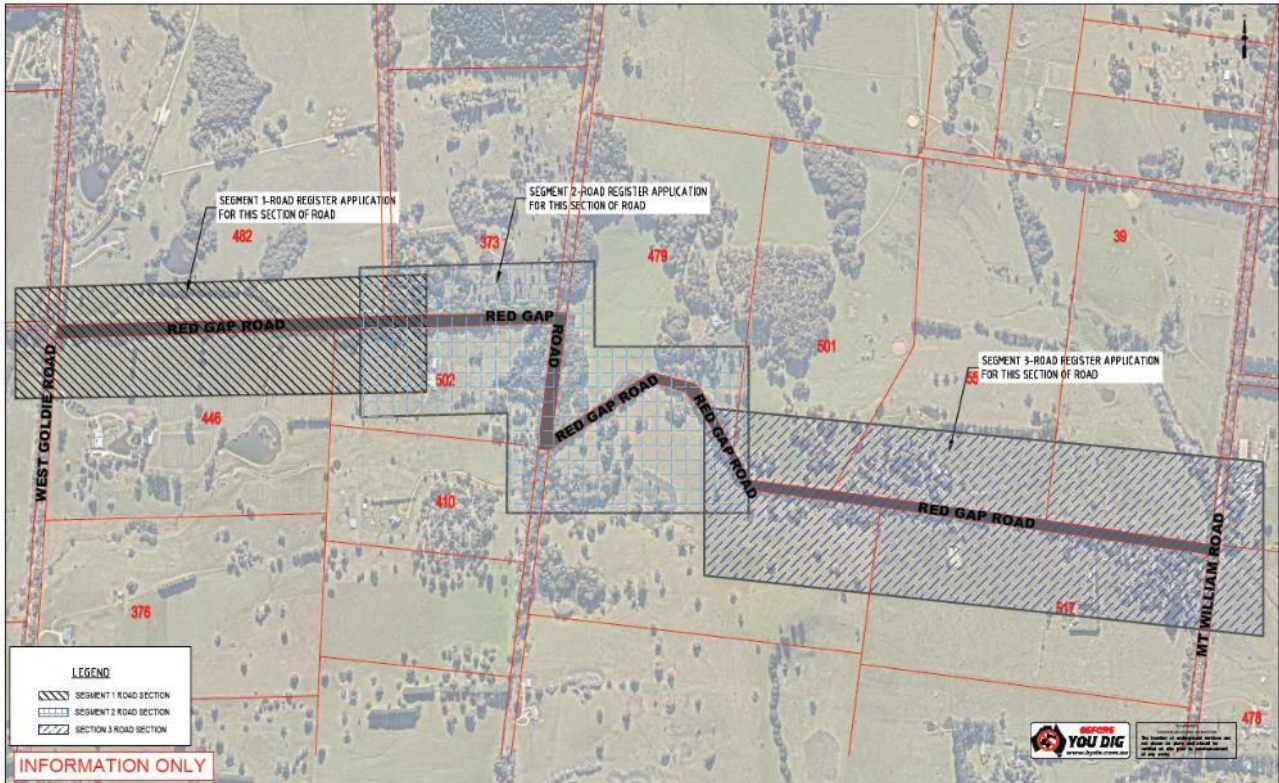


Figure 1 – Locality Plan

	Segment 1	Segment 2	Segment 3
Asset ID	101973	103343	103342
Status in Public Road Register	No (Fire Access Track)	Yes Category 4 unsealed road	Yes Category 4 unsealed road
Maintenance status	Maintained by the grading/resheeting crews for at least the last ten years	Maintained as a Fire Access Track only	Maintained by the grading/resheeting crews for at least the last ten years
Current condition (as of June 2024)	The condition is satisfactory with some minor potholes. Drainage can be improved.	The condition is poor. Drainage can be improved. Additional traffic signs are required at the road bends.	The condition is satisfactory with some potholes. Drainage can be improved. Additional traffic signs are required at the road bends.

Table 1 – Segment Description

Figures 2 to 6 provide photos of the section of Red Gap Road in question.



Figure 2 – Segment 1 near the West Goldie Rd intersection



Figure 3 – Existing drainage system on Segment 1



Figure 4 – Existing drainage system on Segment 2



Figure 5 – Existing drainage condition on Segment 3.



Figure 6 – Segment 3 Red Gap Rd intersecting with Mt William Rd.



Figure 7 – Existing potholes in Segment 1



Figure 8 – Existing potholes on segment 2.

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 Red Gap Road, Lancefield, against the criteria for inclusion into the Register of Public Roads:

Criteria	Segment 1 Response	Segment 2 Response	Segment 3 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	Yes	Yes	Segment 1 – 2 properties Segment 2 – 3 properties Segment 3 – 5 properties
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	No	No	The land is utilised for very low-density residential purposes.

Criteria	Segment 1 Response	Segment 2 Response	Segment 3 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	No	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	Yes	Yes	Yes	Each segment connects 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	No	No significant change or increase in traffic volumes is anticipated.
6. Whether the road is regularly required for <u>both</u> vehicular and pedestrian use;	Yes	Yes	Yes	Collectively, it directly serves 10 properties that would 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;	Yes	Yes	Yes	Council previously maintained the requested segments.
8. Whether the Council has cared for, managed, or controlled the road regularly;	Yes	Yes	Yes	Segment 1 is registered as Fire Access Track while Segments 2 and 3 are registered as Category 4 roads.

Criteria	Segment 1 Response	Segment 2 Response	Segment 3 Response	Comments
9. Whether the properties that enjoy a frontage to the road or require the road for access purposes have alternative access rights;	No	No	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	No	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	No	No	There are no records related to the condition of planning approvals.
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	No	No	There is no record that Council has previously proclaimed a public highway.
13. Whether the road has ever been constructed under a special charge scheme or a private street scheme;	No	No	No	There is no record of any Special Charge Scheme initiated by the Council or resident.
14. Whether the road has been constructed by a developer or private owner or entity to the Council's minimum standards;	No	No	No	This road does not meet the Council's minimum standards.
15. Whether the use is occurring "as of	Yes	Yes	Yes	There are building permits issued.

Criteria	Segment 1 Response	Segment 2 Response	Segment 3 Response	Comments
right", in particular evidence of previous permission;				However, there is no available record of Planning permits.
16. Existing geometric standards and surface conditions are in accordance with Council's requirements;	No	No	No	The road width does not meet Council standards. Drainage can be improved.
17. Whether the road contains assets owned and managed by public service authorities, gas, electricity, telecommunications, sewerage, and water; and	Yes	Yes	Yes	A request through Before You Dig Australia (BYDA) showed there are assets by public service authorities including gas, electricity, etc.
18. Whether the road has fencing, barriers, signage, or associated safety devices.	Yes	Yes	Yes	There is some traffic signage but not adequate.
Total no. of YES	8	8	8	

The assessment in the table above only showed a score of eight (8) for all three segments out of 18.

The above assessment is not pass-fail, but the eight criteria score indicates that if the three segments were assessed, they would not be recommended for the Public Road Register.

Notwithstanding, officers are recommending correcting the historic error by including Section 1 as a Category 4 unsealed road in the Public Road Register and removing Section 2, registering instead as a Fire Access Track.

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 for this report's subject matter.

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).

Climate Impact Assessment

Climate Impact Assessment is not applicable for this report.

Financial viability

The officer did not conduct a financial viability assessment, noting that the decision reflects current maintenance practice for this road.

Sustainability implications

There are no significant social or environmental issues for this request.

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.5	MANAGEMENT OF UNSEALED ROADS WITHIN TOWNSHIP BOUNDARIES
Officer:	Jake Hart, Coordinator Civil Maintenance and Construction
Council Plan relationship:	1. Connecting communities
Attachments:	Options Analysis - Management of Unsealed Roads within Townships ↓

Summary

This report summarises a comprehensive overview and analysis of different options to manage unsealed roads within township boundaries in Macedon Ranges Shire.

Unsealed roads are common in Australia and present unique challenges in terms of maintenance and durability, especially when located in townships.

The report discusses the challenges of management options for maintenance and introduction of pavement treatments for unsealed roads. It details issues such as ongoing maintenance requirements, the impact of weather conditions, and the need for regular inspections and repairs.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. **Proceeds with the Special Charge Scheme process for Noonan Grove, Woodend, under the previous Special Charge Scheme Policy (Special Charge Scheme for Infrastructure Works Policy 2018).**
2. **Prepares a detailed Special Charge Scheme for sealing of the unsealed section of Noonan Grove for future Council consideration; including further direct contact with benefiting residents.**
3. **Supports undertaking an unsealed road network condition audit to inform the future management of Council's unsealed road network.**
4. **Supports the trial of a “Light Pavement and Spray Seal” for suitable unsealed roads within township boundaries.**
5. **Notes officers will prepare matrix criteria and strategy to determine the priority and suitable treatment options for various unsealed road types in townships.**

Background

Of the 860 km of unsealed municipal roads, 76 km are within township boundaries. Typical customer service requests for unsealed roads are for maintenance; township requests also include concerns regarding dust and sealing of the roads. It should be noted that while there are requests to seal some unsealed roads within townships, some residents also prefer their roads to remain unsealed as it keeps that rural feel.

Over the past five years, customer requests for unsealed roads have increased by approximately 75%, from around 800 per year in 2019 to 1,400 now. This reflects the impact of reduced maintenance due to emergency response to storms and floods, people moving

to townships from metro areas (with metro-based expectations) and increased traffic on unsealed township roads.

In 2023, Council officers investigated a Special Charge Scheme in Noonan Grove, Woodend. At the 23 August 2023 Council Meeting, Council resolved:

“That Council:

- 1. Delays determining an outcome on the Special Charge Scheme for sealing Noonan Grove until completion of the review of the Special Charge Scheme and the completion of an options analysis and recommendations managing unsealed roads within township boundaries;**
- 2. Notes officers will implement a limited trial of dust suppression during the summer of 2023;**
- 3. Notes officers will provide a report for Council consideration by 31 March 2024, detailing an options analysis complete with recommendations and costing for managing unsealed roads within township boundaries; and**
- 4. Notes officers will review and update the Special Charge Scheme Policy for presentation of the draft policy for consultation by 22 December 2023.”**

This report responds to resolution three (3), providing an options analysis and recommendations for managing unsealed roads within township boundaries. The original timeframe for the report was extended at the Scheduled Council Meeting on 31 March 2024, providing an extension for the final report to 30 September 2024. The report also discusses the next steps for Noonan Grove, Woodend.

Discussion

Officers investigated several potential activities to refine the municipality's management of unsealed roads. Officers assessed each activity considering cost-effectiveness, environmental impact, and durability.

The treatments and management options for unsealed roads that have been analysed as part of this report include:

- Unsealed with Maintenance grading and re-sheeting
- Dust suppression treatment
- Full-depth pavement – considering the value of Urban v Rural standard & a Special Charge Scheme
- Light pavement and spray sealing
- Unsealed Road Signage

Recommendations for the Future Management of Unsealed Roads within Townships

Based on the analysis presented in the report (**Attachment 1**), there is no one-size-fits-all solution for managing unsealed roads within townships; each road should be assessed on a case-by-case basis using the cost-benefit analysis factors outlined in the report. However, Council Officers have prioritised the following recommendations to provide direction for future management:

Encourage Special Charge Scheme for Future Sealing:

- Residents should be encouraged to undertake the Special Charge Scheme for sealing unsealed roads within townships, per the recently endorsed Special Charge Scheme

Policy. This offsets the cost to Council and ensures an overall majority supporting the proposal.

- The construction standard (rural or urban) should be determined on a case-by-case basis, focusing on the proximity to the town centre and surrounding township character – noting the default should be for an urban standard.
- Note that this requires a significant Council capital contribution.

Roads Remain Unsealed with the Addition of Periodic Condition Audits:

- Unsealed roads currently provide the Council with a cost-sustainable asset. Dust levels and road conditions can improve with minor operational and renewal improvements.
- Council Officers should submit a business case for future budgets to undertake a condition audit and gravel depth investigations of the Council's unsealed road network every five years, with an estimated cost of \$45,000 for the condition audit and an additional \$85,000 for the gravel depth testing, noting this is for the entire 860 km network.
- These audits will inform the future re-sheeting program and prioritise the re-sheeting of roads in townships.

Trial the “Light Pavement and Spray Seal” Option:

- Based on the cost-benefit analysis, the “light pavement and spray seal” option is a potential financially sustainable asset management option.
- Council Officers recommend trialling this option in the future and will submit a business case as it comes with upfront costs.
- Council Officers will develop an evaluation criterion to assess and identify suitable roads to trial, ensuring no additional hazards or maintenance issues are created.
- It is recommended that the capital expenditure for this trial be in addition to existing road funding, especially considering the sizeable, sealed road renewal gap.

These recommendations aim to provide a balanced and informed approach to managing unsealed roads within townships, ensuring financial sustainability, and improving road conditions and community satisfaction.

Appendix 1 provides further detailed information, including a list of advantages and disadvantages for each option, complemented by a cost-benefit analysis. Appendix 2 provides a detailed 25-year cost breakdown.

Following the presentation to the Scheduled Council Meeting in September, officers recommend completing a strategy similar to the *Strategic Footpath Plan* that includes a prioritisation matrix for determining Council-funded activities on unsealed roads in townships.

Based on the above recommendations as part of this review and the resolution at the 23 August 2023 Council Meeting, Council Officers propose that the Special Charge Scheme process for Noonan Grove, Woodend, is recommenced under the old Special Charge Scheme Policy (Special Charge Scheme for Infrastructure Works Policy 2018) as per the Council Resolution at the 23 November 2022, Schedule Council Meeting, where it was resolved:

“That Council:

1. Proceed with undertaking the next steps to prepare a detailed Special Charge Scheme for sealing of the unsealed section of Noonan Grove for future Council consideration; including further public consultation and direct contact with benefiting residents as outlined in the Special Charge Scheme for Infrastructure Works Policy (2018) and this report;
2. Not proceed with the sealing of the unsealed section of Christian Street, Woodend; and
3. Advise the first-named petitioner of this Council resolution. “

The Special Charge Process would recommence based on the support received when only directly benefiting residents were surveyed (only residents along the unsealed section of Noonan Grove), where Council Officers received the below response outcome:

Within Noonan Grove,

- 21 letters sent
 - fourteen (14) replied YES,
 - four (4) replied NO and
 - three (3) did not reply (therefore deemed to be a NO response)
- result: 66.67% support.

The Special Charge Scheme would not include residents on neighbouring streets that receive special benefits.

The next steps in the Special Charge Scheme process for Noonan Grove will involve Council's Engineers conducting a preliminary design and detailed cost estimate, including a feature survey and geotechnical investigations. This preliminary design and detailed cost estimate will be used in a final survey of Noonan Grove residents (as per the previous policy) to gauge their final support for the project. The results will be considered at a future Council Meeting. It is important to note that the construction costs, which determine the cost distribution for properties included in the Special Charge Scheme, are likely to have increased due to cost escalation.

Consultation and engagement

Through both the Dust Suppression Trail and Noonan Grove Special Charge Scheme, community consultation has been undertaken. The specifics of the consultation have been further discussed in this report and **Attachment 1**.

Collaboration

Collaboration was not required in relation to this report.

Innovation and continuous improvement

The recommendations demonstrate a commitment to innovation and continuous improvement by integrating innovative maintenance techniques, proactive maintenance and asset management strategies, and community-driven approaches. The decisions are informed by thorough research, expert advice, and community feedback, ensuring effective and sustainable practices for managing unsealed roads within township boundaries.

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. The future management of unsealed

roads within townships considers the GIA challenges as part of the cost-benefit analysis for each road. When considering the option for each road, the following should be considered:

- Unsealed with Maintenance grading and re-sheeting (status-quo)
 - Low Benefit
 - This option doesn't address equality, accessible access, smoother travel paths, dust concerns, or increased safety.
- Dust suppression treatment
 - Low Benefit
 - This option provides the same low benefits as the status-quo option. While the dust concerns are addressed, chemical concern issues are present. Furthermore, the roads can become wet and more muddy than usual, making pedestrian use difficult.
- Full-depth pavement – Urban Standard – Special Charge Scheme
 - High Benefit
 - This option considers all gender impact challenges as it provides a smoother road surface, accessible and safe paths of travel, no health concern issues and can also address security with the inclusion of street lighting.
- Full-depth pavement – Rural Standard – Special Charge Scheme
 - Moderate Benefit
 - This option considers some of the identified gender impact challengers as it provides a smoother road surface and no health concern issues. It doesn't address accessible and safe travel paths; however, the sealed road surface provides a smooth surface for pedestrians, which would suffice for low traffic and pedestrian volumes.
- Light pavement and spray sealing
 - Moderate Benefit
 - This option considers some of the identified gender impact challengers as it provides a smoother road surface and no health concern issues. It doesn't address accessible and safe paths of travel; however, the sealed road surface does provide a smooth surface for pedestrians, which would suffice for low traffic and pedestrian volumes.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

The Road Management Act 2004 (Victoria) establishes a coordinated management framework for roads in Victoria, Australia. The Act clearly delineates the responsibilities of road authorities, including local councils, in managing roads, including unsealed roads and mandates road authorities to develop and adhere to Road Management Plans.

Relevant Council plans and policies

This report relates to Council's Road Management Plan, which outlines Council's legislated maintenance responsibility for unsealed roads. It also refers to Council's Special Charge Scheme Policy, both the superseded policy (Special Charge Scheme for Infrastructure Works Policy 2018) and the current policy.

Climate Impact Assessment

How will the recommendation impact on Council's energy usage and greenhouse emissions profile?

Each option has been assessed for environmental factors as part of the cost-benefit analysis and will continue to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for each sealed road.

How will the recommendations mitigate risks posed by climate change to Council operations and services?

Any future upgrade to unsealed roads within townships will help mitigate risks posed by climate change, particularly resistance to future extreme weather events.

How will the recommendation help to prepare the community for future climate scenarios?

Any future upgrade to unsealed roads within townships will help offer reliable access, essential for emergency services and evacuation during extreme weather. They also cut down on dust and air pollution, which can worsen with climate change.

Financial viability

A comprehensive cost analysis has been completed and is further discussed in **Attachment 1**, for each management option analysed.

Sustainability implications

Environmental factors have been considered as part of the cost-benefit analysis within **Attachment 1**.

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.

Appendix 1 – Options Analysis - Advantages and Disadvantages of Each Option

Unsealed Option with Maintenance Grading & Re-Sheeting

This option reviews the current townships' unsealed road maintenance practices and considers operational enhancements.

Maintenance Inspection and Grading Program for Township Unsealed Roads

The Council maintains an inspection and grading program supported by a capital works re-sheeting program. The inspection program is based on the Road Management Plan (RMP) requirements and may have increased frequency based on historical data and knowledge of a road's characteristics and usage patterns. The operational grading inspection program meets and often exceeds the RMP minimum requirements, providing a higher level of service for many of the Council's unsealed roads, particularly within townships. These inspections assess road conditions and, as required, trigger maintenance to keep the road within service levels. Where frequent maintenance is required or significant damage is evident, the road will be scheduled for the capital works re-sheeting program.

Re-Sheeting Program

Unsealed roads experience material loss due to weather conditions and vehicle traffic. This may occur more due to water runoff in township areas.

Council allocates approximately \$0.9 million to \$1.1 million annually for re-sheeting, historically enabling the re-sheeting of 50-75 km of road annually. This program ensures that the roads remain in good condition, extending their lifespan and improving overall safety and usability for residents and visitors.

For information, the cost of re-sheeting township roads is 125% of the cost of re-sheeting rural roads due to the need to match existing gradients and drainage.

Advantages and Disadvantages of unsealed roads remaining in their current state.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Capital expenditure:	As the road will remain in its existing condition, there will be no upfront capital expenditure.	
Maintenance and Renewal	Unsealed roads are easily repaired and renewed with internal resources.	Unsealed roads require regular maintenance and renewal.
Weather Impact:		Adverse weather conditions quickly degrade the road, necessitating urgent repairs on damaged roads and

	Advantages	Disadvantages
		impacting routine maintenance activities.
Dust Generation:		Unsealed roads generate dust, potentially reducing air quality where houses are close to the road.
Customer Satisfaction	Higher levels of dissatisfaction are mainly due to dust generation, general ride discomfort, and concerns for pedestrian safety, such as when there are no footpaths and people need to walk on the roads.	
Potential Improvement	Increase the re-sheeting budget given the additional costs associated with re-sheeting in townships.	

Dust Suppression Option

Council undertook a dust suppression trial in late November 2023 on three roads as follows:

- South Road, Woodend – from Black Forest Drive to Kathryn Crescent;
- Honeysuckle Road, Woodend – between Stuart Drive and Barbara Street;
- Noonan Grove, Woodend.

The product is widely recognised for reducing dust levels by up to 95% and minimising maintenance requirements for unsealed roads.

Officers undertook visual assessments throughout the trial until the end of March 2024.

The Officer's findings and initial resident feedback throughout the trial were:

- dust suppression successfully reduced dust levels on three observed roads. Honeysuckle Lane and Noonan Grove maintained lower dust levels until the end of February, while South Road lost its effectiveness by mid-January.
- Dust suppression treatments are more effective on roads with thicker layers of suitable material, which allows for better bonding with the suppressant.
- The effectiveness of the dust suppressant product relies heavily on the precise preparation of the road surface before application.
- Residents reported that roads treated with the dust suppressant product became 'slushy' after rainfall events. This led to increased dirtiness of motor vehicles, necessitating more frequent washing, mud on residents' driveways, and residents' inability to walk on the road. This slushiness persisted throughout autumn and early winter.
- Some residents expressed concerns about using chemicals on the roads, particularly regarding the safety of pedestrians and dogs and raised concerns about environmental impacts.

Officers surveyed residents living on the three roads involved in the trial. The survey was distributed on 27 May 2025 and remained open for three weeks, with 18 responses. A summary of the feedback follows:

- 83% of residents noticed a positive difference regarding dust levels on the trial roads.
- 61% of residents would support a broader and more regular implementation of dust suppression.
- Only 17% of residents would be open to a resident pay system for future use of dust suppressants on the road.
- Other common views from the survey included:
 - The dust suppressant effectiveness was affected by heavy rain in December and January.
 - Residents prefer the road be sealed rather than money spent on short-term solutions and chemicals.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Dust Generation	Decreases airborne dust particles, improving air quality for residents.	
Expenditure	It does not require significant upfront investment to achieve dust mitigation.	Requirements for regular reapplication means this becomes an annual cost.
Longevity		Effective for only short periods and may need repeat applications.
Concerns		Some community members may oppose chemical use due to environmental or health concerns.
Customer Satisfaction	83% of residents noticed a positive difference regarding dust levels on the trial roads. 61% of residents would support a broader and more regular implementation of dust suppression. Only 17% of residents would be open to a resident pay system for future use of dust suppressants on the road.	
Potential Improvement	N/A	

Special Charge Scheme: Full-depth Pavement – Urban v Rural Standard

Council Officers assess each road to determine what is the recommended construction standard (rural or urban standard) depending on several factors such as:

- Location of the road and construction standard of the surrounding roads.
- Connecting footpaths and common pedestrian routes to determine if pedestrian infrastructure is required.
- Existing road drainage infrastructure and existing drainage issues.
- Effects on existing vegetation
- Vehicle speed and road safety

The advantages and disadvantages of each construction standard type are as follows.

If infill or new development occurs within a township boundary, the proponent pays for the road, drainage, and footpath upgrades. If Council considers upgrading a road, it should be upgraded to the same standard as for these types of development.

Sealed Urban Standard Road

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Dust Generation	Nearly Eliminated	
Expenditure		High construction cost due to higher material costs, design standards and additional features.
		Requires more complex and higher renewal costs than unsealed roads.
Longevity	Remains within service levels longer than an unsealed road – resulting in a reduction in maintenance activities.	
Community Impact	Provides a smoother, more durable surface, ideal for higher traffic volumes.	Significant disruption during construction due to the extensive work required.
	Enhanced Safety: This includes kerbs and footpaths, improving vehicle and pedestrian safety.	High upfront costs for property owners, resulting in potential financial hardships.
	Better Drainage: Typically includes advanced drainage systems, reducing the risk of flooding and water damage	
	Higher property values due to improved infrastructure and aesthetic appeal.	
Customer Satisfaction	High for the outcome. Potentially not happy with cost contribution via Special Charge Scheme.	
Potential Improvement	Could consider other sealing options.	

Sealed Rural Standard Road

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Dust Generation	Nearly Eliminated	
Expenditure	Less expensive than Sealed Urban Standard Road	High construction cost due to higher material costs, design standards and additional features.
		Requires more complex and higher renewal costs than unsealed and more frequent renewal than urban sealed roads.
Longevity	Remains within service levels longer than an unsealed road – resulting in a reduction in maintenance activities.	
Community Impact	Provides a smoother, more durable surface, ideal for higher traffic volumes.	Significant disruption during construction due to the extensive work required.
	Slightly higher property values due to improved infrastructure and aesthetic appeal.	High upfront costs for property owners, resulting in potential financial hardships.
		It lacks advanced safety features such as kerbs and footpaths, potentially resulting in pedestrian safety and vehicle speed issues.
Council Impact		Set a precedence for not upgrading roads to full sealed urban road standard.
Customer Satisfaction	High for the outcome. Potentially not happy with cost contribution via Special Charge Scheme.	
Potential Improvement	Could consider other sealing options.	

Light Pavement and Spray Sealing Options

A light pavement and spray seal involves applying a sealed surface to an existing unsealed road without significant pavement treatment or a formal pavement design. This method includes the following steps:

1. Addition of Material: Re-sheeting usually requires only small amounts of unsealed road material to be added to the existing surface.
2. Shaping the Road Surface: The road surface is shaped to achieve the required cross-fall for adequate stormwater runoff.
3. Applying the Spray Seal creates a sealed surface.

While the light pavement and spray seal option offers several cost-effective benefits, it must be noted that it also increases the risk of compromised seal integrity and isolated road failures. These risks can be mitigated through mechanical testing of the existing unsealed road pavement's structural integrity; however, the risk remains higher compared to a road with a formal engineered pavement design and treatment.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Dust Generation	Nearly Eliminated	
Expenditure	Less expensive than Sealed Urban Standard Road	Lower construction cost (compared to sealed roads) due to reduced materials, design standards and additional features.
		Requires more frequent renewal.
Longevity	Remains within service levels longer than an unsealed road – resulting in a reduction in maintenance activities.	
Community Impact	Provides a smoother, more durable surface, ideal for higher traffic volumes.	It lacks advanced safety features such as kerbs and footpaths, potentially resulting in pedestrian safety and vehicle speed issues.
	Reduced disruption during construction due to the reduced pavement treatments.	
	Moderate upfront costs for property owners, resulting in potential financial hardships.	
Council Impact		Set a precedence for not upgrading roads to fully sealed urban road standards.
		It may not be as durable as full pavement treatments, potentially requiring more frequent maintenance and resealing.
		Not suitable for roads with heavy traffic or significant load-bearing requirements due to the lack of formal pavement design.
Customer Satisfaction	Moderate for the outcome.	
Potential Improvement	Could consider other sealing options.	

Cost-Benefit Analysis

Officers conducted a rigorous cost-benefit analysis, accounting for each treatment option's potential benefits and drawbacks. This enables informed decision-making to determine the most suitable treatment for unsealed roads within township boundaries.

Cost Estimation Analysis

Council Officers have conducted a cost estimate analysis of options by calculating and comparing the 25-year costs per kilometre of road. This analysis considers:

- **Capital Depreciation:** Depreciation over the asset's life, recognising that sealed road pavements and asphalt-wearing courses have lifespans exceeding 25 years. Therefore, the depreciation amount for 25 years will differ from the upfront capital costs.
- **Annual Maintenance Costs:** Regular maintenance expenses incurred each year.
- **Periodic Renewal Costs:** Costs for significant repairs or renewals that occur periodically.

This method provides a comparative overview of the long-term financial implications of each option. However, it is essential also to consider the actual upfront capital costs when making a final decision.

Treatment Option	Upfront Capital Costs	Overall 25 Year Asset Costs	Council's 25 Year Asset Cost
Unsealed Status-Quo	\$0	\$281,826	\$281,826
Dust Suppression	\$0	\$531,826	\$531,826
Special Charge Scheme - Full Depth Pavement – Rural Standard	\$850,000	\$502,363	\$228,607
Special Charge Scheme - Full Depth Pavement – Urban Standard	\$2,800,000	\$977,500	\$350,250
Light Pavement and Spray Seal	\$102,000	\$277,269	\$277,269

Table 1: Cost estimation comparison summary for each option – per km.

The following assumptions have been made when calculating the costs shown in table 1:

- All costs have been calculated for 1km of road, within township boundaries.
- For the special charge scheme options, a Council contribution of 35% to the capital depreciation has been adopted.
- Depreciation rates used for each asset component are the current rates applied in Council's asset system.
- To solely compare the road and associated road drainage, footpath costs have not been considered part of the Urban Standard option. The upfront costs would need to be increased by approximately \$300k per km, including footpaths.

For further details and a comprehensive cost breakdown, please refer to Appendix 2.

Key findings from the cost estimation analysis:

- **Unsealed Roads** currently provide Council with a cost-sustainable asset due to the lack of upfront capital investment and low depreciation costs.
- **Dust Suppression**, based purely on cost, is an unsustainable option, nearly doubling the 25-year asset cost and providing no long-term benefit from an asset cost point of view.
- The **light pavement and spray seal** option provides Council with a cost-sustainable alternative. It has low upfront costs and a 25-year asset cost that is slightly less than the unsealed status quo option. However, does require an initial upfront capital cost.
- Both **full-depth pavement options** accompany high costs; however, when completed as part of a special charge scheme, the 25-year asset costs for a **rural standard** provide the Council with the lowest costs. The **urban standard** still attracts the highest 25-year asset costs.

Cost-Benefit Analysis

While financial sustainability is crucial in evaluating each treatment option, it is equally important to consider a broader range of factors. In addition to the cost estimation analysis, Officers have considered a range of elements as part of the overall cost-benefit analysis. These comprehensive considerations provide a holistic view of the benefits and drawbacks of each treatment option, ensuring that the final decision is well-informed and balanced. This involves evaluating:

- Environmental benefits: extreme weather resistance, impacts from vegetation, potential pollution, and carbon emissions.
- Social benefits: dust levels, road conditions, property value increase, and overall quality of life.
- Community Safety: improved road & pedestrian safety and drainage improvements.
- Durability and longevity of the road treatment and the likelihood of reaching its predicted asset life.

The below summary table provides an overview of each option assessed against each factor. The benefits are then further discussed below the table.

Treatment Option	Environmental Benefits	Social Benefits	Community Safety	Durability /Longevity
Unsealed Status-Quo	Low-Moderate	Low	Low-Moderate	Low
Dust Suppression	Low	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate	Low
Special Charge Scheme - Full Depth Pavement – Rural Standard	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	Low	Moderate-high
Special Charge Scheme - Full Depth Pavement – Urban Standard	Moderate	High	High	High
Light Pavement and Spray Seal	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	Low-Moderate	Moderate

Table 2: Benefit Analysis Summary for each option.

Key findings from the cost-benefit analysis as summarised in table 2 and discussed as part of the cost estimation analysis:

- **Unsealed roads within townships** provide the Council with a cost-sustainable asset; they rank low in the other factors assessed. Leaving unsealed roads as status quo does provide some environmental benefits, as there are no construction vegetation impacts or carbon emissions. However, these benefits are arguably offset due to unsealed roads not being resistant to climate change and future extreme weather, which results in possible erosion.
- **The dust suppression option** provides low-moderate social benefits due to decreased dust levels; however, it provides limited other benefits and has a high 25-year asset cost.
- While **full-depth pavement urban standard option** has the highest upfront and 25-year asset costs, this option provides a long list of other benefits, such as no dust, increased property value, better road and pedestrian safety, durability, and better management of stormwater runoff, all of which result in mitigation of risk posed by climate change.
- The **full-depth pavement rural standard option** ranks low in the community safety area as sealing an unsealed road increases vehicle speed. Therefore, without providing a kerb and footpath pedestrian safety is compromised. Furthermore, this option only provides limited drainage for stormwater management, leading to potential flooding issues. However, the full-depth pavement rural standard option does have its place, where pedestrian safety and stormwater management are not major factors. In those situations, the full-depth pavement rural standard option brings benefits such as; dust mitigation, increased property value, better road conditions, low carbon emissions and durability.
- The **light pavement and spray seal option** presents similar benefits and disadvantages to the full-depth pavement rural standard option. However, differs due to the low upfront costs, thus providing a cost-sustainable option, but brings with it, the unknown durability factor.

Operational and management review and benchmarking of current unsealed road practices

Council officers engaged an unsealed roads specialist to comprehensively review the management practices associated with our unsealed road network. The initial review and a staff training session lasted four days and occurred in November 2023. This included field training for operators, establishing quality standards, assessing maintenance and renewal programs, reviewing service levels, and benchmarking against other councils.

Based on the data collected over the four days, the consultant has provided Council Officers with a comprehensive report. Please see the below summarised key findings:

- A recent assessment of grader and plant operators has confirmed their high competency. However, it has been suggested that a regular quality assessment of the grading practices be introduced to ensure continued excellence and adherence to best practices.
- The current inspection and maintenance program is efficient and effective. However, there is an opportunity to implement more detailed inspection assessments and establish operational service levels focused on "running surface smoothness," complementing the functional legislative service levels outlined in the Road Management Plan.

- Council's current maintenance and renewal practices for unsealed roads demonstrate significant innovation, particularly in using flow-cons and belly dumpers to spread gravel more efficiently and effectively.
- To enhance the longevity and performance of the roads, proactive drainage and gravel retrieval works should be undertaken before re-sheeting.
- Compared to the state average for Councils with similarly sized unsealed road networks,
 - our Council delivers a predicted running surface service smoothness of 67.5 km/h, slightly lower than the 69 km/h average. To achieve the state average running surface service smoothness level, it is estimated that Council would need to increase its operational spending by \$200K to \$1.5 million annually.
 - our Council's predicted network gravel coverage is 50%, slightly below the average of 52%. To maintain this gravel coverage, it is recommended that Council allocate a minimum budget of \$1.04 million annually. This recommendation aligns with Council's 2023/24 and 2024/25 budgets of \$1.1 million and \$1.03 million, respectively. However, the review has suggested that officers undertake a comprehensive unsealed road network condition survey approximately every five years. Such periodic surveys would provide valuable data to inform future budgeting and maintenance strategies, ensuring the sustainability and quality of the unsealed road network.

The Civil Maintenance Team is currently developing operational improvements to further enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of unsealed road maintenance.

Appendix 2 – Cost Analysis – 25 Year Asset Costs

Year	Unsealed - Status Quo - per km			Council Pay Dust Suppression Dust Suppression Chemical - per km			Special Charge Scheme (Council pay 35%) Sealed (Rural Standard) - per km			Special Charge Scheme (Council pay 35%) Sealed (Asphalt) per km (Urban Standard)			Council Pay Full Initial Capital Costs Light Pavement Seal - per km		
	Capital / Depreciation	Annual Maint	Renewal	Capital / Depreciation	Annual Maint	Renewal	Capital / Depreciation	Annual Maint	Renewal	Capital / Depreciation	Annual Maint	Renewal	Capital / Depreciation	Annual Maint	Renewal
0	\$0.00			\$0.00			\$850,000.00			\$2,800,000.00			\$102,000.00		
1	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
2	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
3	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
4	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
5	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
6	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
7	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
8	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
9	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
10	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
11	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
12	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
13	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
14	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	\$35,000.00
15	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	\$40,000.00
16	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
17	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00	\$16,200.00	\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
18	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00	\$40,000.00	\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
19	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
20	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
21	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
22	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
23	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
24	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
25	\$4,273.03	\$5,000.00		\$4,273.03	\$15,000.00		\$16,846.53	\$1,000.00		\$38,600.00	\$500.00		\$7,090.74	\$1,000.00	
	\$106,825.83	\$125,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$106,825.83	\$375,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$421,163.19	\$25,000.00	\$56,200.00	\$965,000.00	\$12,500.00	\$0.00	\$177,268.50	\$25,000.00	\$75,000.00
25 year Asset Costs		\$281,825.83			\$531,825.83			\$502,363.19			\$977,500.00			\$277,268.50	
25 years Asset Cost to Council		\$281,825.83			\$531,825.83			\$228,607.12			\$350,250.00			\$277,268.50	

AO.6	CAPITAL WORKS MONITORING
Officer:	Nicholas Wallace, Project Management Office Analyst
Council Plan relationship:	4. Delivering strong and reliable government
Attachments:	Nil

Summary

This report provides transparency on cost escalations and variances for infrastructure projects. It seeks either further funding, project cancellation, a reduction in the scope of the project or the return of funds from completed projects to manage projects within the allocated annual capital works program budget.

Recommendation

That Council:

- Adopts the following changes to the Capital Works Program budget relating the following infrastructure projects:**
 - 101268 – Gilbert Gordon Social clubrooms renewal: Increase budget by \$18,224;**
 - 100835 – Bridge Design Darraweit Valley Road Darraweit Guim: Increase budget by \$38,000;**
- Note that Recommendation 1 (above) results in a surplus of \$343,776 in the Financial Year 2024/2025 Capital Works Program Budget.**

Background

The Council budget process begins in October of the previous year. This means pricing may change during the 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 can be outside this estimate. As projects are completed, unspent contingency funds will be returned to the consolidated Capital Works Program Budget.

During the year, emergency projects may need funding or grants requiring contribution by Council. By transparently and regularly reporting to Council officers, we ensure the Capital Program is delivered with good governance and to the best advantage.

Discussion

Each year in October, officers create business cases for capital works projects. Budget estimates are built based on previous costs, with a percentage added to indicate expected price escalations before the project tender. The project management framework enables project change management up to the initial budget contingency. Any change in price or unexpected cost during construction above the total project budget requires further approval.

There are three main reasons why a project may require more funds than budgeted:

- Cost escalations in materials and labour

- Unforeseen circumstances
- Scope irregularities

As each project is allocated a fixed budget, good governance means that any expenditure above this budget figure needs oversight. The Capital Works Monitoring Report provides a transparent methodology for approving or refusing cost adjustments.

Before presenting a project for review for additional funding, the project sponsor and project manager will have investigated methods to value-manage the project by reducing the scope without changing the project. The project scope items are identified as must, should, could and won't items to be included. In value management, the 'could' items would first be reviewed and removed if required. 'Should' items would be reviewed; however, they may need to stay within the scope to reap the full benefit of the project. 'Must' items are usually required for statutory or policy requirements.

This month, officers have identified the following infrastructure projects requiring changes to budget and/or scope:

Infrastructure Project	Progress with Project	Original budget	Reason for Progression or Non-Progression	Change to the budget – () is an additional cost to the budget
Financial position following previous decisions	N/A	N/A	Bring forward \$400,000 resulting from the resolution of the July 2024 Scheduled Council Meeting.	\$400,000
101268 – Gilbert Gordon Social clubrooms renewal	In Progress	\$35,000	Quotations received for the proposed work indicate the current budget is not adequate to complete the scope. The requested total budget is \$53,224 based on the lowest of the two quotations for the deck works, which includes a 15% contingency (~\$6.5K) on the proposed contract value as there is a risk in dealing with weathered timber.	(\$18,224)
100835 – Bridge Design Darraweit Valley Road Darraweit Guim	In Progress	\$200,000	During the current repairs to the bridge, further concrete defects have been discovered warranting further investigation and the inclusion of strengthening of wing walls which was not	(\$38,000)

Infrastructure Project	Progress with Project	Original budget	Reason for Progression or Non-Progression	Change to the budget – () is an additional cost to the budget
			scoped in the original contract. Additional funds are required for the successful completion of the repair works.	
			Total	\$343,776

This calculation currently results in a **surplus of \$343,776** in the 2024/2025 Capital Works Program budget.

Consultation and engagement

Stakeholders will be identified within individual infrastructure projects. 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 publicly providing this report in the Scheduled Council Meeting agenda, the community can understand the decisions made promptly without waiting for a quarterly, six-month or annual report.

Collaboration

Council officers share initiatives across neighbouring Councils, reporting similar challenges and impacts 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. In response to the current economic environment, an agile response is required. 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 no specific law relating to the information provided within this report.

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required regarding the subject matter of this report. Officers have noted gender impact within each business case for infrastructure projects.

Relevant regional, state and national 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 adapts its infrastructure project delivery within budget.

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 adapts its infrastructure project delivery within budget

Financial viability

The processes described in this report detail how Council adapts 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.

16 NOTICES OF MOTION AND RESCISSION

Nil

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 C2024-68 Kerbside Collection, Transport and Processing Services Tender outcome**Confidential reasons****18.1 C2024-68 Kerbside Collection, Transport and Processing Services Tender outcome**

This matter is considered to be confidential under Section 3(1) - 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 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.

