



Yarriambiack
SHIRE COUNCIL

Agenda

Ordinary Meeting of Council

30 June 2025

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

34 Lyle Street, Warracknabeal

MEETING OF COUNCIL TO COMMENCE AT 9.30AM

We acknowledge that the activities of Yarriambiack Shire Council are being held under the traditional skies and in the waterways and lands of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk people.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MAY VIEW THE MEETING VIRTUALLY VIA THE LIVESTREAM

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OUR VISION

A connected rural community who values its land and wellbeing.

We will achieve this vision through:

- ✓ Supporting agriculture
- ✓ Strengthening business and tourism
- ✓ Staying connected through infrastructure
- ✓ Being a supportive Council
- ✓ Looking after our communities
- ✓ Being environmentally friendly

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

We drive continuous and sustainable improvement in service provision, operational efficiency, and stakeholder relations to create a leading organisation.

LIVE STREAMING

Council meetings are now live streamed to allow those interested in viewing proceedings greater access to Council decisions and debate without attending the meeting in person.

1 WELCOME

2 STREAMING PREAMBLE

The Chief Executive Officer reads this section as part of the Meeting Governance process.

This Open Council Meeting is to be streamed live, recorded and published online.

I give notice to anyone who is in the gallery, that they may be recorded, and their image may be published online.

Anyone who submits a question as part of item 13 – Public Questions (of this Agenda) will have their name stated and recorded as part of the livestreaming and recording, which is published online.

The Mayor and/or the Chief Executive Officer have the discretion and authority at any time to direct the termination or interruption of livestreaming. Such direction will only be given in exceptional circumstances, where deemed relevant. Circumstances may include instances where the content of debate is considered misleading, defamatory, or potentially inappropriate to be published.

The stream will stop prior to the closed section of the meeting, and that will conclude the Meeting of Council, open to the public.

The public can view this livestream or recording via Council's YouTube Channel, with the link available via Council's website. The recording of Council Meetings will be available for viewing until the next scheduled Council Meeting.

Should technical issues prevent the continuation of the livestream, the meeting may continue provided the gallery remains open to the public in accordance with Council's meeting procedures and Governance Rules, clause 2.42.3 (g).

3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND PRAYER

Mayor to open the meeting at **9.30am** by acknowledging the Traditional Owners and offering the opening prayer.

3.1 ACKNOWLEDGING TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THE LAND

'We acknowledge that the activities of Yarriambiack Shire Council are held under the traditional skies and in the waterways and lands of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk people, and we pay respects to their Elders, past and present'.

3.2 PRAYER

Almighty God, without whom no Council can stand, nor anything prosper we ask that you be present and guide us in our deliberations today. We pray that we will be fair in our judgements and wise in our actions and that decisions will be made with goodwill and a clear conscience for the betterment and welfare of the people of Yarriambiack Shire.

Amen

4 PRESENT

Mayor	Kylie Zanker	Warracknabeal Ward
Deputy Mayor	Andrew McLean	Hopetoun Ward
Councillor	Corinne Heintze	Dunmunkle Ward
Councillor	Melinda Keel	Dunmunkle Ward
Councillor	Chris Lehmann	Hopetoun Ward
Councillor	Karly Kirk	Warracknabeal Ward

Council Officer	Tammy Smith	Chief Executive Officer
Council Officer	Tim Rose	Chief Operating Officer
Council Officer	Monique Metlika	Governance Support Officer
Council Officer	Daniel Brandon	Manager Business Systems
Council Officer	Rebecca Botheras	Sport and Recreation Coordinator
Council Officer	Anita McFarlane	Chief Financial Officer
Council Officer	Joel Turner	Chief Engineering Officer
Council Officer	Sarah Collins	Manager Community Strengthening and Engagement

5 APOLOGIES

Name / Role	Description of Leave / Absence

6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

6.1 MINUTES 28 MAY 2025 – ORDINARY MEETING

Minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Council held on 28 May 2025 be taken as an accurate record and confirmed.

Recommended Motion:

That the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 28 May 2025, as circulated be taken as read and confirmed.

6.2 MINUTES 28 MAY 2025 – CLOSED (CONFIDENTIAL) MEETING

Minutes of the Closed (Confidential) meeting of Council held on 28 May 2025 be taken as an accurate record and confirmed.

Recommended Motion:

That the minutes of the Closed (Confidential) Meeting of Council held on 28 May 2025, as circulated be taken as read and confirmed.

7 DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Pursuant to Division 2 – Conflict of Interest, of the *Local Government Act 2020* general and material conflict of interest must be declared prior to debate on specific items within the agenda; or in writing to the Chief Executive Officer before the meeting.

A Councillor who has declared a conflict of interest in respect of a matter must:

- a) Disclose the conflict of interest in the manner required by the Yarriambiack Shire Council Governance Rules (Chapter 5- Disclosure of Conflict of Interest at Council Meetings).
- b) Exclude themselves from the decision-making process in relation to that matter, including any discussion or votes on the matter at any Council meeting or delegated committee, and any action in relation to the matter.

General conflict of interest is if a relevant person has an interest in a matter if an impartial, fair-minded person would consider that the person's private interests could result in that person acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty.

- a) *Private interests* mean any direct or indirect interest of a relevant person that does not derive from their public duty and does not include an interest that is only a matter of personal opinion or belief.
- b) *Public duty* means the responsibilities and obligations that a relevant person has to members of the public in their role as a relevant person.

Material conflict of interest is if a relevant person has an interest in respect of a matter if an affected person would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter,

- a) The benefit or loss incurred may be directly or indirectly,

OR

- b) In a pecuniary or non-pecuniary form.

Councillors are also encouraged to declare circumstances where there may be a perceived conflict of interest.

7.1 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARED

Conflict Declared by	Agenda Item	Reason - Explanation
Councillor Corinne Heintze	15.5 Adoption of Sport and Recreation Allocation 2025-26	Secretary of Minyip Recreation Reserve.
Councillor Melinda Keel	15.5 Adoption of Sport and Recreation Allocation 2025-26	Husband and son are members of the Murtoa Recreation Reserve Committee.

8 BUSINESS ARISING

8.1 BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

As per ongoing and pending actions list, Item 8.2.

8.2 ONGOING AND PENDING ACTIONS

Council Meeting	Recommendation Action	Action Taken
26 June 2024 Item 15.3	Reallocation of SHARE Grant 2023-24 funding to the installation of Automated External Defibrillator (AED) machines at Council owned Senior Citizen buildings.	CLOSED The AED's have been installed.
28 August 2024 Item 15.13	Resheet a section of Mellis Road, from Stawell Warracknabeal Road to a property 4.3km to the East.	This job has been delayed at the request of the resident funding the project. Will be deferred until 25/26 financial year.
27 November 2024 Item 15.6	Apply for Living Libraries Infrastructure Program (LLIP) for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor Works funding at the Hopetoun Neighbourhood House (former Gateway BEET) building. Major Works at the Coopers Crossing, Emma's Café Library building in Minyip. 	CLOSED An application has been submitted to the Major Works stream of the Living Libraries Grant, requesting \$1 million for the proposed works at Emma's Cafe Library building in Minyip. Following a meeting with the department prior to the application deadline, it was decided not to apply for the works in Hopetoun during this round as the project was not fully scoped and ready for application. Instead, we plan to apply for the minor stream in the next round, which is anticipated to be around August or September. This funding application was unsuccessful.
26 February 2025 Item 15.1	Name the unnamed laneway 04 in Council's Road Register, as "Isbel Lane".	Community consultation completed on Thursday 24 April 2025. The naming process has commenced.
26 February 2025 Item 15.5	Make a financial contribution to the University of Melbourne to fund a Scholarship for a Masters research student for the primary purpose of conducting a social benefit cost analysis on mining within our Shire, to determine if mining will benefit or harm societal welfare.	Engagement with University of Melbourne has commenced.
26 February 2025 Item 15.6	Advocate to the State Government to amend the Rabl Park project scope of the election promise funding.	Advocacy and consultation with Minister Ermacora's office and Sport and Recreation Victoria has been ongoing.
26 March 2025 Item 15.1	Commence community consultation process to reduce speed limit in Scott Street Warracknabeal, from 50km/h to 40km/h between Phillip Street and Lyle Street Warracknabeal.	CLOSED Community consultation completed and the speed limit change is now enacted.
28 May 2025 Item 15.1	Enact Lease between Council and Hopetoun Recreation Reserve Incorporated.	CLOSED Lease has been fully executed 28 May 2025.

Council Meeting	Recommendation Action	Action Taken
28 May 2025 Item 15.3	Enact the Lease between Yarriambiack Shire Council and The Lions Club of Rupanyup for the ground and buildings known as Rupanyup Memorial Park and Caravan Park located at 89 Wimmera Highway, Rupanyup.	CLOSED Lease has been fully executed 28 May 2025.
28 May 2025 Item 15.4	Enact the Lease between Yarriambiack Shire Council and Hopetoun and District Historical Society Inc for the buildings and land known as Old Limestone Primary (State) School Building, Bristol Building and Shelter Shed.	CLOSED Lease has been fully executed 28 May 2025.
28 May 2025 Item 15.5	Chief Executive Officer to write to all applicable committees, outlining the endorsed funding model for consultation, inviting written feedback, and providing an opportunity to present at a Council Forum prior to final endorsement of the 2025/26 funding allocations.	CLOSED Letters were distributed 29 May 2025 with the offer of attending the Council Forum on 11 June 2025. Two committees attended the meeting to present their feedback.

9 PETITIONS

No petitions received.

10 MINISTERIAL AND GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENCE TO COUNCILLORS ONLY

Outgoing		
Date	Recipient	Details
19/06/2025	Vic Grid	Letter - Submission on Draft Victorian Transmission Plan

Incoming		
Date	Sender	Details
13/06/2025	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Email - Foreign Arrangements Scheme - Foreign Arrangements Branch

11 SPECIAL COMMITTEES

11.1 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE

The proposed scheduled meeting program is as follows for the next 12 months for the Audit and Risk Committee:

Date	Description
14 July 2025	Ordinary Meeting
22 September 2025	Special Financial Statements and Performance Report Meeting
10 November 2025	Ordinary Meeting

11.2 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The Special Audit and Risk Committee Meeting was held on Monday 16 June 2025 to discuss matters related to asset management.

[Attachment: Special Audit and Risk Committee Meeting Minutes – 16 June 2025](#)

Recommended Motion:

That the Minutes of the Special Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held on 16 June 2025 be taken as read and confirmed.

12 ACTIVITY REPORTS

12.1 MAYOR ACTIVITY REPORT

Mayor Kylie Zanker – Warracknabeal Ward (June)		
Date	Activity	Location
30/05/2025	Mayor, Deputy Mayor and CEO Catch Up	Warracknabeal
02/06/2025	Hopetoun Probus Meeting	Hopetoun
03/06/2025	Guest speaker at the Warracknabeal Men's Probus	Warracknabeal
03/06/2025	2025/26 Budget and 2025/29 Council Plan Community Consultation held in conjunction with Patchewollock Inc Meeting	Patchewollock
04/06/2025	Minyip Probus Meeting	Minyip
04/06/2025	Draft Victorian Transmission Plan Briefing – Vic Grid	Online
04/06/2025	2025/26 Budget and 2025/29 Council Plan Community Consultation held in conjunction with Brim Active Community Group	Brim
06/06/2025	Mayor and CEO Catch Up	Warracknabeal
06/06/2026	Warracknabeal Ladies Probus Meeting	Warracknabeal
10/06/2025	2025/26 Budget and 2025/29 Council Plan Community Consultation held in conjunction with Warracknabeal Action Group Meeting	Warracknabeal
11/06/2025	Council Forum	Warracknabeal
13/06/2025	Mayor and CEO Catch Up	Warracknabeal
16/06/2025	Internal Audit and Risk Committee Meeting	Online
18/06/2025	Warracknabeal Lions Club Meeting	Warracknabeal
20/06/2025	Mayor, Deputy Mayor and CEO Catch Up	Online
20/06/2025	RFDS Community Transport Update	Online
23/06/2025 – 27/06/2025	Australian Local Government Association National Conference Canberra	Canberra
26/06/2025	Rural Business and Community Ltd Board Meeting	Online
27/06/2025	Wimmera Pride Night Event	Horsham
29/06/2025	100 years of Patchewollock Celebrations	Patchewollock

12.2 COUNCILLOR ACTIVITY REPORTS

Deputy Mayor Andrew McLean – Hopetoun Ward (June)		
Date	Activity	Location
30/05/2025	CEO, Mayor and Deputy Mayor Catch Up	Online
03/06/2025	Sunraysia Highway Improvement Committee meeting	Online
03/06/2025	2025/26 Budget and 2025/29 Council Plan Community Consultation held in conjunction with Patchewollock Inc Meeting	Patchewollock
03/06/2025	Patchewollock Inc Meeting	Patchewollock
04/06/2025	Draft Victorian Transmission Plan Briefing – Vic Grid	Online
19/06/2025	Iluka Rehabilitation Tour	Ouyen
20/06/2025	CEO, Mayor and Deputy Mayor Catch Up	Online
27/06/2025	CEO, Mayor and Deputy Mayor Catch Up	Online

Cr Corinne Heintze – Dunmunkle Ward (June)		
Date	Activity	Location
04/06/2025	Draft Victorian Transmission Plan Briefing – Vic Grid	Online
04/06/2025	Minyip Progress Meeting	Minyip
10/06/2025	Yarrilinks Meeting	Rupanyup
11/06/2025	Council Forum	Warracknabeal
11/06/2025	Meeting with Minister D'Ambrosio, Chief Executive Officer Vic Grid, CEO Resources Victoria (online) and Jacinta Ermacora MP	Warracknabeal
19/06/2025	Iluka Rehabilitation Tour	Ouyen
24/06/2025	Wimmera Southern Mallee Development Board Meeting	Online

Cr Melinda Keel – Dunmunkle Ward (June)		
Date	Activity	Location
04/06/2025	Meeting with Emma Kealy in conjunction with Murtoa Recreation Reserve	Murtoa
04/06/2025	Draft Victorian Transmission Plan Briefing – Vic Grid	Online
11/06/2025	Council Forum	Warracknabeal
11/06/2025	Meeting with Minister D'Ambrosio, Chief Executive Officer Vic Grid, CEO Resources Victoria (online) and Jacinta Ermacora MP	Warracknabeal

Cr Chris Lehmann – Hopetoun Ward (May)		
Date	Activity	Location
04/06/2025	2025/26 Budget and 2025/29 Council Plan Community Consultation held in conjunction with Brim Active Group	Brim
04/06/2025	Draft Victorian Transmission Plan Briefing – Vic Grid	Online
11/06/2025	Council Forum	Warracknabeal
11/06/2025	Meeting with Minister D'Ambrosio, Chief Executive Officer Vic Grid, CEO Resources Victoria (online) and Jacinta Ermacora MP	Warracknabeal
19/06/2025	Iluka Rehabilitation Tour	Ouyen

Cr Karly Kirk – Warracknabeal Ward (June)		
Date	Activity	Location
04/06/2025	2025/26 Budget and 2025/29 Council Plan Community Consultation held in conjunction with Brim Active Group	Brim
10/06/25	2025/26 Budget and 2025/29 Council Plan Community Consultation held in conjunction with Warracknabeal Action Group Meeting	Warracknabeal
11/06/2025	Council Forum	Warracknabeal
11/06/2025	Meeting with Minister D'Ambrosio, Chief Executive Officer Vic Grid, CEO Resources Victoria (online) and Jacinta Ermacora MP	Warracknabeal
16/06/2025	Audit and Risk Committee Special Meeting	Online
19/06/2025	Iluka Rehabilitation Tour	Ouyen

12.3 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER ACTIVITY REPORT

Tammy Smith (June)		
Date	Activity	Location
30/05/25	Hopetoun Old School Site Strategic Planning Session	Warracknabeal
30/05/25	Mayor and CEO Meeting	Online
02/06/25	Combined Probus of Hopetoun Meeting	Hopetoun
02/06/25	Philanthropic Investor Meeting Housing	Online
02/06/25	Murtoa Carvan Park Service Agreement Negotiation	Warracknabeal
03/06/25	Warracknabeal Men's Probus Meeting	Warracknabeal
04/06/25	Minyip Probus Meeting	Minyip
04/06/25	Beulah Precinct Stakeholder Meeting	Beulah
04/06/25	Draft Victorian Transmission Plan Briefing – Vic Grid	Online
05/06/25	Rural Councils Victoria – Housing Inquiry Discussion	Online
05/06/25	Wimmera Southern Mallee By5 Steering Committee Meeting	Online
06/06/25	RWE Campbells Bridge Windfarm Project Update	Online
06/06/25	Warracknabeal Ladies Probus Meeting	Warracknabeal
06/06/25	Rural Councils Victoria Executive Meeting	Online
06/06/25	Rural Councils Victoria Consultation on Trunk Infrastructure with State Government representatives	Online
10/06/25	Community Consultation Budget Presentation Warracknabeal	Warracknabeal
11/06/25	Rural Councils Victoria Executive Drought Discussion	Online
11/06/25	Council Forum	Warracknabeal
11/06/25	Meeting with Minister D'Ambrosio, Chief Executive Officer Vic Grid, CEO Resources Victoria (online) and Jacinta Ermacora MP	Warracknabeal
12/06/25	Meeting with Emerge Early Years Services	Horsham
12/06/25	Meeting with State Government regarding Reconciliation Settlement Agreement Negotiations Update	Horsham
12/06/25	Meeting with representatives of Committees in Woomelang	Woomelang

Tammy Smith (June)		
13/06/25	Meeting with Cubico Sustainable Investments	Warracknabeal
13/06/25	Mayor and CEO Meeting	Warracknabeal
13/06/25	Wimmera CEO Meeting and Wimmera Southern Mallee Development Post Board Meeting Briefing	Horsham
13/06/25	Meeting with representatives from Murtoa College regarding transport and safety issues around the school	Murtoa
16/06/25	MAV Monday Connect	Online
16/06/25	Meeting with Wimmera Mallee Environmental & Agricultural Protection Association Inc representatives	Warracknabeal
16/06/25	Audit and Risk Committee – Special Meeting	Online
16/06/25	Rupanyup Lions Club Meeting	Rupanyup
18/06/25	Municipal Building Surveyor Business Case CEO Update	Online
18/06/25	Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Partnerships Housing Working Group	Online
18/06/25	Six Monthly Executive Meeting with Environment Protection Authority	Online
18/06/25	Warracknabeal Lions Club Meeting	Warracknabeal
19/06/25	Iluka Rehabilitation Tour	Ouyen
20/06/25	Mayor, Deputy Mayor and CEO Meeting	Warracknabeal
20/06/25	Rural Councils Victoria Executive Meeting	Online
20/06/25	Grampians Drought Coordination Group Meeting	Online
20/06/25	Rural Councils Victoria attendance at Regional Housing Inquiry	Online
24/06/25 – 27/06/25	Australian Local Government Association National Conference Canberra	Canberra
29/06/25	Patchewollock 100 Year Celebrations	Patchewollock

13 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Division 8 – Public Question Time (Yarriambiack Shire Council Governance Rules)

Community Members (excluding Councillors) may submit a question to Council.

Questions must be submitted in writing, stating the name and address of the person submitting the question, on an approved or permitted form by Council.

[Public Questions for Council – Yarriambiack Shire Council.](#)

Questions must be submitted 24 hours prior to a Council Meeting.

The questions will be answered at a Council meeting by the Mayor (Chairperson), or if delegated by the Chairperson, the Chief Executive Officer, a Councillor or a nominated Officer.

If questions are submitted less than 24 hours before the Council meeting, they will be answered at the meeting where possible, and if no answer can be given, then a written answer will be given to the person as soon as possible after the Council meeting.

No person can submit more than two questions at any Council meeting (unless permitted by the Chair – Mayor).

The question will not be allowed if:

- i. relates to a matter outside the duties, functions and powers of Council;
- ii. is defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial or objectionable in language or substance;
- iii. deals with a subject matter already answered;
- iv. is aimed at embarrassing a Councillor or an Officer;
- v. relates to a personnel matter; or
- vi. contains or refers or relates to Confidential Information.

Questions and answers must be as brief as possible, and no discussion is allowed other than for the purpose of clarification.

The Name of Person and Question will be read out by either the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer, and the nominated Councillor / Officer is to respond.

The party submitting the question need not physically attend the Council Meeting, however if they are not physically present at the part of the meeting allocated for public question time, the Mayor (Chairperson) may determine that a verbal answer will not be provided at the meeting and a written answer will instead be communicated after the meeting.

13.1 QUESTIONS SUBMITTED

Name:	Town:
Question:	
Respondent:	
Response:	

14 COUNCILLOR REPORTS

14.1 MAYORS REPORT

On Wednesday 11 June 2025, Minister D'Ambrosio, who serves as the Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Energy and Resources, and Minister for the State Electricity Commission, visited the Yarriambiack Shire Councillors.

The visit was in continuation of the delegation of Councillors who met with Minister D'Ambrosio and Minister Kilkenny at Parliament House on 13 May 2025.

Minister D'Ambrosio was joined by the Chief Executive Officer of Vic Grid, Alistair Parker, Matt Vincent, Chief Executive Officer of Resources Victoria (joined online) and Western Victoria, Member of the Legislative Council, Jacinta Ermacora.

The visit was a closed meeting, where Councillors were able to continue their discussions with Minister D'Ambrosio, Mr Parker and Mr Vincent regarding the recently released Draft Victorian Transmission Plan, mining and the community division experienced across not only our local government area, but more widely across the region.

As elected representatives, we, as Councillors, take our roles and responsibilities seriously. We have developed a position statement and will continue to advocate strongly for our community.

We appreciated Minister D'Ambrosio's visit, which allowed us to express our concerns about the Draft Transmission Plan. We sought clarification on projects planned outside the proposed renewable energy zones and the maximum megawatts capacity compared to the planned projects, which greatly exceed the limits in each REZ.

Our concerns were conveyed regarding mining rights taking precedence over a landholder's rights, potentially leading to displacement from their land for mining activities. We see this as unjust and unfair, and do not support this action.

We will continue to advocate for our community and engage respectfully with the State Government in meaningful discussions to ensure the voices of our community are heard.

In following on from the Minister's visit, we made a submission regarding the Vic Grid Draft Transmission Plan. This reiterated our feedback to the Minister on 11 June 2025.

In other news, we have opened the Scott Street amenities block. There is some minor works to still be conducted at the site, however, we are glad they are now open for public use.

The connecting infrastructure for the Hopetoun affordable housing project began on 16 June 2025. We look forward to construction starting soon.

I would like to extend my congratulations to the staff who have diligently worked to finalise the Council Budget and the Revenue and Rating Plan. Additionally, I express my gratitude to the team for compiling our feedback and for the development and finalisation of the Council Plan 2025-2029, which is being presented in this Agenda for adoption. We anticipate the release of the draft Asset Management Plan, Long Term Financial Plan, and Road Management Plan for public consultation in the upcoming months.

15 REPORTS FOR DECISION

15.1 COUNCIL PLAN 2025 - 2029

Prepared by Tammy Smith, Chief Executive Officer

SUMMARY

Council must adopt and prepare a Council Plan for the period of at least the next four financial years after a general election. Council must also prepare a Community Vision with an outlook of at least the next 10 years. This document presents both together under the four Strategic Objective areas of:

- An Innovative and Diversified Economy;
- A Healthy and Inclusive Community;
- A Resilient and Sustainable Natural Environment; and
- A Council that Services its Community.

This draft document also incorporates the Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Recommended Motion:

That Council:

- a) Adopt the Draft Long-Term Community Vision;
- b) Adopt the Council Plan 2025-2029 including the Health and Wellbeing Plan; and
- c) Adopt the Council Plan 2025-2029 Year 1 Action Plan;

that was developed undertaking a deliberative engagement process and acknowledging that the final draft was available for community feedback from Tuesday 03 June 2025 to Sunday 29 June 2025 as per Council's Community Engagement Policy.

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: Council Plan 2025-2029](#)

[Attachment: Council Plan Year 1 Actions 2025-2026](#)

DISCUSSION

The Draft Council Plan 2025-2029 incorporating the Community Vision and Health and Wellbeing Plan comes to Council for endorsement after undertaking a community consultation process, in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy.

The Draft Council Plan and accompanying documents present four overarching strategic objectives to guide Council's direction over the next four years.

The Draft Council Plan and accompanying documents have been prepared following extensive community consultation and reflect the themes that were apparent across the Council.

The Health and Wellbeing Plan has been integrated into the Council Plan. For this Council Plan, the Council has decided to exercise its powers under section 27 of the *Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. This section mandates that the Council must address the matters specified in section 26(2) within the Council Plan, prepared under section 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, or within a Strategic Plan approved by the Council, and that the Secretary grants the Council an exemption from complying with section 26.

The Council has applied for the exemption and integrated the Health and Wellbeing Plan into its Council Plan. As of 23 June 2025, final approval is still pending. Given this is the third incorporation, no barriers to approval are expected.

The Community Vision is a shared, aspirational view of a desired future for the Yarriambiack Shire. This vision shapes the Council Plan strategic objectives, priorities, indicators, measures, major initiatives and projects and actions.

The four strategic objectives are reflective of what our community said was important and responds to our key challenges through longer term priorities and an annual work plan of actions to report against.

RELEVANT LAW

- Section 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020* – Council Plan
- Section 88 of the *Local Government Act 2020* – Community Vision
- Section 27 of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* – Inclusion of Public Health and Wellbeing Matters in Council Plan or Strategic Plan

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

The Council Plan is the overarching Plan that sets the strategic objectives for Council over the four-year term. The objectives are used to drive the development of other plans, policies, services and activities undertaken by Council.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Nil.

OPTIONS

- a) Council could adopt the Council Plan in final, if satisfied the deliberative engagement principles of the Community Engagement Policy have been met.
- b) Council could opt to not endorse the Draft Council Plan and request that further deliberative engagement occur. In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* requirements, Council has until 31 October 2025 to adopt the Council Plan.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The Council Plan is the overarching document that sets the strategic direction for Council operations.

The Draft Council Plan has objectives for growing the economy through diversification, strengthening the environment through a range of measures that combat emissions and waste recovery, concentrating on delivering community wellbeing services that are critical to our townships health and ensuring that Council serves the community in all aspects of governance.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Extensive community consultation was undertaken with community sessions held across townships through day and evening meetings.

Hard copy surveys were distributed at the community consultation sessions and made available at Yarriambiack Libraries branches. The survey was primarily made available online, with 229 responses received and collated.

The draft Council Plan 2025-2029 was placed on public exhibition from 03 June 2025 to 29 June 2025.

To initiate discussions regarding the Council Plan, Councillors hosted 'Coffee with a Councillor' sessions across 11 townships within the municipality. The sessions were scheduled as follows:

- **Monday, 10 February 2025:**
 - **Murtoa:** 10:20am - 11:20am at Murtoa Neighbourhood House (SLAAM)
 - **Rupanyup:** 11:50am - 12:50pm at Robyn's Food Van
 - **Minyip:** 1:25pm - 2:25pm at Coopers Crossing Café
- **Monday, 24 February 2025:**

- **Patchewollock:** 10:45am - 11:45am at Patchewollock Community Store
- **Speed:** 12:20pm - 1:20pm at Speed Post Office
- **Lascelles:** 1:30pm - 2:30pm at Mallee Hen Café
- **Friday, 07 March 2025:**
 - **Woomelang:** 10:30am - 11:30am at Woomelang Multipurpose Centre
 - **Hopetoun:** 12:20pm - 1:20pm at Country Lane Delights
- **Monday, 24 March 2025:**
 - **Beulah:** 10:00am - 11:00am at Beulah Business and Information Centre
 - **Brim:** 11:30am - 12:30pm at McPhersons Store
 - **Warracknabeal:** 1:00pm - 2:00pm at The Local 165

The 2025-26 Budget and Council Plan 2025-2029 Roadshow was organised throughout the Shire, offering municipal residents the chance to provide in-person feedback on the draft Budget and Council Plan. The sessions were scheduled as follows:

- **Lascelles:** Tuesday, 06 May 2025 at 1:00pm, Lascelles Minapre Hotel.
- **Minyip:** Wednesday, 07 May 2025 at 5:30pm, Minyip Memorial Hall.
- **Rupanyup:** Monday, 12 May 2025 at 7:30pm, Rupanyup Senior Citizens Building.
- **Yaapeet:** Monday, 19 May 2025 at 5:30pm, Yaapeet Community Centre.
- **Murtoa:** Tuesday, 20 May 2025 at 6:00pm, Murtoa Neighbourhood House.
- **Beulah:** Wednesday, 21 May 2025 at 6:00pm, Supper Room - Beulah Memorial Hall.
- **Woomelang:** Tuesday, 27 May 2025 at 7:00pm, Woomelang Multi-Purpose Centre.
- **Hopetoun:** Monday, 26 May 2025 at 6:00pm, Hopetoun Recreation Reserve.
- **Patchewollock:** Tuesday, 03 June 2025 at 6:30pm, Patchewollock Hall.
- **Brim:** Wednesday, 04 June 2025 at 6:00pm, Brim Community Centre.
- **Warracknabeal:** Tuesday, 10 June 2025 at 6:00pm, Yarriambiack Shire Council Office.

At the time of writing the report, no public submissions were received on the draft Council Plan.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* requires entities to conduct gender impact assessments on all new policies, programs and services that directly and significantly impact the public as well as those up for review.

Gender Impact Assessment (GIA)	Status
Does this Council report recommendation a) Introduce a new policy, program and/or service; or b) Is it a review of a policy, program and/or service; that directly and significantly impacts the public?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A GIA has been completed. NO <input type="checkbox"/> A GIA is not required.
GIA Assessment - Council Plan 2025-2029.docx	GIA – Council Plan 2025-2029

RISK

Utilising the Risk Management Framework the following assessment has been made:

<i>Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level</i>	<i>Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk</i>	<i>Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level</i>
Corporate Governance, Compliance and Liability Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	Council Plan actions are reviewed and reported on quarterly by the Chief Executive Officer, tabled in a Council Meeting Agenda. In addition, the Mayor reports on progress annually via the tabling of the Annual Report, in accordance with the requirements of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> .	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Strategy Execution and Change Management Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	Operational resources, including staff and finances, are allocated to achieve the objectives outlined in the Council Plan.	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	By ensuring that Council actions are aligned with legislative requirements, good governance practices, and strategic objectives, the Council maintains compliance and minimises potential legal liabilities. Additionally, the Council reduces reputational risk by demonstrating its commitment to transparency, accountability, and effective community engagement, thereby maintaining public trust and preventing negative publicity.	Maintains Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

The Draft Council Plan relies on several regional and state plans and policies including:

- Victorian Government Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Regional Economic Development Strategies

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

15.2 CANNINGS CHANNEL REMEDIATION WORKS

Prepared by Joel Turner, Chief Engineering Officer

SUMMARY

Yarriambiack Shire Council engaged Water Technology to review the drainage performance of Cannings Channel and identify potential improvements to the drainage infrastructure. Several upgrade opportunities were identified to enhance the channel's capacity and effectiveness.

Recommended Motion:

That Council:

- a) Endorse the recommendation to upgrade Cannings Channel, including bank improvements between Government Road and the channel's southern starting point, along with the replacement of driveway culverts on Borung Highway to the value of \$230,000.
- b) Endorse for the works identified in item (a) be included in the Capital Works program for 2025/26 financial year, and the funds be reallocated from the operating budget for drainage works in 2025/26.
- c) Endorses the inclusion of the replacement and upgrade of the culvert crossing on Government Road in the 2025/26 financial year Capital Works program and reallocates funds from the operating budget for drainage works, provided no further drainage works are identified for the 2025/26 financial year by 30 January 2026.

ATTACHMENTS

[Confidential Attachment: Water Technology Scope of Works](#)

[Confidential Attachment: Channel Design](#)

DISCUSSION

Cannings Channel is a formal drainage asset situated directly east of Warracknabeal. The channel extends approximately 9 km, from south of the Borung Highway to Yarriambiack Creek to the north (see Figure 1).

To assess the channel's current performance and explore options for improvement, Council commissioned a study by Water Technology. The scope of the study included:

- a) Assessing the existing performance of Cannings Channel;
- b) Evaluating the impact of its current drainage capacity;
- c) Identifying improvement options; and
- d) Determining the potential benefits of those improvements.

Water Technology partnered with Ferguson and Perry to conduct detailed survey work along the channel. Using this data, a hydraulic analysis was completed to assess flow efficiency and capacity.

The contributing catchment area is illustrated in Figure 2.

Key issues identified:

1. The channel traverses very flat terrain, which limits natural flow.
2. Space is constrained upstream of the Borung Highway between the road reserve and adjacent private land.
3. The longitudinal gradient upstream of the Borung Highway is minimal, restricting the channel's capacity to convey water effectively.

Findings

The assessment identified a series of potential improvements aimed at increasing the

STAGE	IMPROVEMENT WORK	ESTIMATED ASSOCIATED COSTS
1	Widening and reshaping of banks along the Borung Hwy (25/26)	\$70,000
	Replacement of driveway crossing along Borung Hwy (25/26)	\$150,000
2	Replacement and relevening of culvert structure through the Borung Hwy (DTP owned asset) – (negotiate with Department of Transport and Planning regarding cost responsibility, potentially 26/27)	\$340,000
3	Replace and upgrade culvert crossing on Government Road (either 25/26 or 26/27)	\$65,000
4	Replacement of culverts downstream of Borung Hwy (26/27 or 27/28)	\$110,000
	Reshaping and delving length of channel to improve fall through to Yarriambiack creek (26/27 or 27/28)	\$350,000
OTHER	Site establishment and environmental works	\$9,500

Figure 1

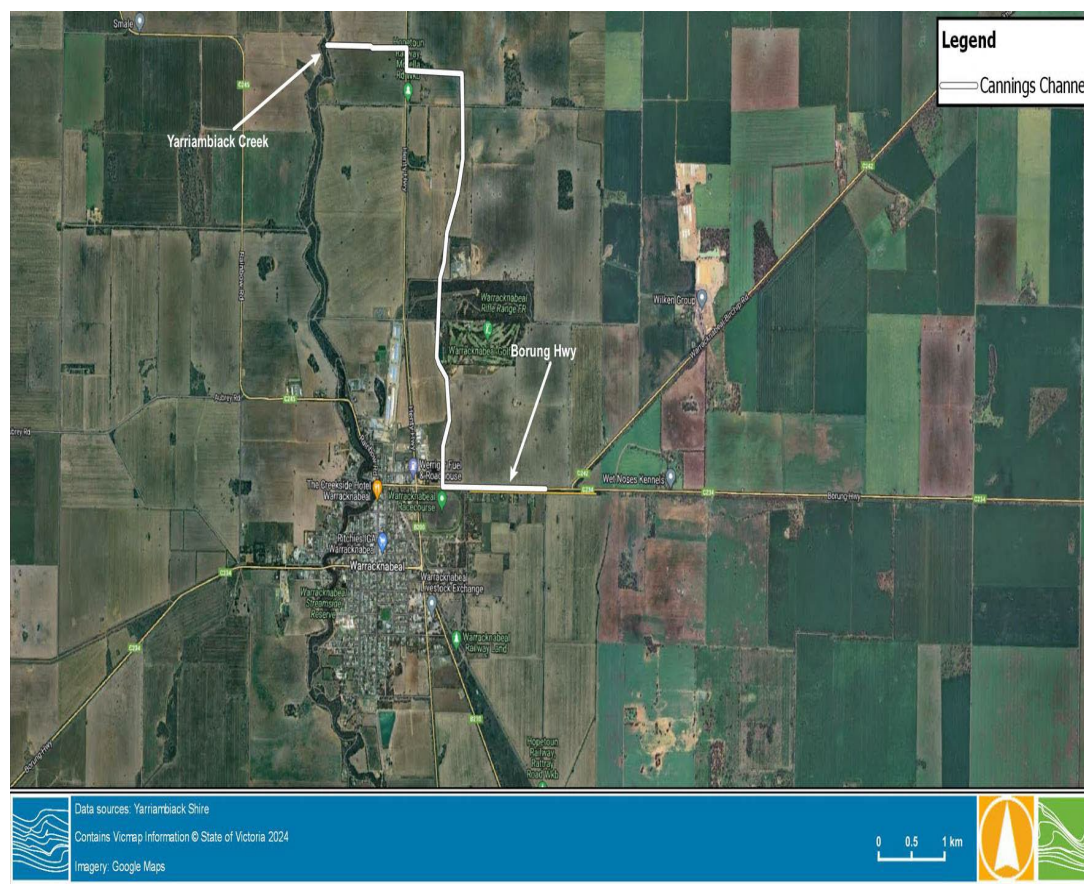
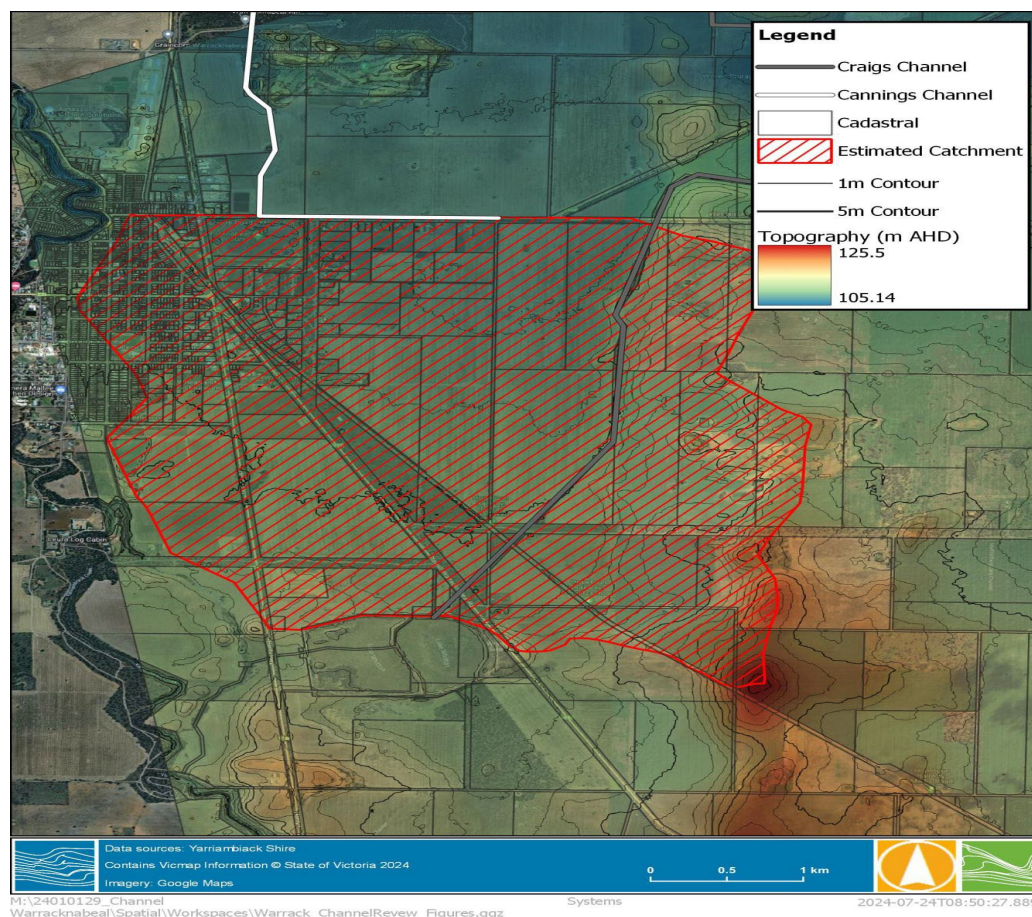


Figure 2



RELEVANT LAW

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Road Management Act 2004*

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Council Plan 2025-2029

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Nil.

OPTIONS

- Option 1: Accept the Officer's recommendation.
- Option 2: Deny the request and look to budget improvement works in future years.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Without the correct maintenance and improvement works done to the channel, water could continue to pool around the properties in a significant rain event. This could result in increased unbudgeted costs due to works being undertaken reactively, opposed to proactively.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Following the October 2022 rain event, community engagement was conducted in person with affected landowners. Water Technology was involved during this period to ensure the precise transmission of information.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not applicable.

RISK

Utilising the Risk Management Framework the following assessment has been made:

<i>Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level</i>	<i>Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk</i>	<i>Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level</i>
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	Council has promised works to occur to this drainage system and will need to carry out some work to satisfy that promise.	Reduces Residual Risk Level
Corporate Governance, Compliance and Liability Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	Council commissioning survey and design studies on the system and performing staged improvement works to protect properties.	Reduces Residual Risk Level
Financial Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	Carrying out due diligence and rectify and inefficiencies of the drainage system.	Reduces Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Nil.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

15.3 ADOPTION OF THE 2025/26 BUDGET

Prepared by Anita McFarlane, Chief Financial Officer

SUMMARY

The Yarriambiack Shire Council Draft Budget 2025-26 was presented to Councillors for endorsement to commence community consultation on 14 May 2025. Although not legally required to be endorsed in draft format before seeking community feedback, it was presented as a courtesy. This allowed Councillors to comment on the draft before it was published for community feedback in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy.

The Budget is now tabled and presented for adoption.

Recommended Motion:

- a) That in accordance with Section 94 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) the 2025-26 Budget as tabled and attached to this report be adopted.
- b) That the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to give public notice of this decision to adopt the Budget.
- c) That a copy of the adopted Budget be forwarded to the Minister for Local Government on the 30 June 2025.
- d) Declare the fees and charges for the 2025-26 financial year as contained in the 2025-26 Budget document (as attached). The Chief Executive Officer be authorised to approve amendments and inclusions to the fees and charges throughout the financial year.
- e) That Council approve the overall Capital Works program budget (as included in the 2025-26 Budget) of \$8,559 million and that:
 - a) the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to approve the reallocation of Capital Works funding between identified Capital Works areas to meet Council's strategic objectives; and
 - b) any removal of Capital Works program projects for the 2025-26 financial year, be approved by resolution of Council; and
 - c) All changes to the Capital Works program endorsed by the Chief Executive Officer be reported in the quarterly Financial and Non-Financial Performance Report presented to Council.
- f) That Council note the Community Consultation feedback submissions summarised in the Community Engagement section of this report; and
- g) That Council endorse the additions and changes to the Budget as outlined in the body of this report, which includes:
 - i. the addition of Cannings Channel works to the capital works program (as outlined in Report 15.2 of the Council Agenda),
 - ii. the addition of the Murdoch Street Hopetoun kerb and channel works, and the reduction of the Lascelles Street Hopetoun footpath length and cost,
 - iii. the 1km (one kilometre) Glenorchy Road shoulder resheet be removed, and the Banyena-Pimpinio shoulder resheet be increased from 1km (one kilometre) to 2kms (two kilometres); and
 - iv. the addition of the plant and equipment, excavator and water tanker and the removal of the mower and grader.

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: Budget 2025-26](#)

[Attachment: Submission](#)

DISCUSSION

In accordance with Section 94 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), Council is required to formally adopt a budget for each financial year and the subsequent three financial years by 30 June each year.

A Draft Budget has been prepared and is being presented to Councillors after seeking community feedback and formal adoption on Monday 30 June 2025.

1. Rates and Charges

The Draft Budget provides an increase in general rate revenue of 3% for the 2025-26 year. The rate cap has been set at 3% by the Minister for Local Government.

Council intends to raise \$15,590,269 in rates and charges which includes general rates (\$12,631,466), municipal charge (\$440,979), service charges (\$1,971,021) and payments in lieu of rates (\$480,603).

Differential Rate Changes

Council believes differential rates contribute to the equitable and efficient distribution of the rate burden to ratepayers. The differential rate is recommended to be maintained for the financial year at 42% less of the rate in the dollar.

The differential rate ratios are as follows:

- General Land (100% of the general rate in the dollar)
- Farmland (58% of the general rate in the dollar)

The rates in the dollar to be applied for the 2025/26 year are as follows:

Type	cents/\$CIV
General Land	0.3029
Farmland	0.1762

Municipal Charge

The municipal charge will increase from \$84.08 to \$86.60 per rateable assessment for the 2025-26 year. A person may apply to Council for an exemption from the payment of a municipal charge on rateable land in accordance with Section 159(3) of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

Waste and Recycling Charge

Ideally, Waste and Recycling should be full cost recovery to Council, with it being a user pays service. With the increases incurred via our waste and recycling contract, and with the State Government landfill levy increasing, it was identified that Council would need to raise the waste and recycling charges by 31% to be full cost recovery.

It was recognised that this would be a significant burden on our rate payers, and therefore the annual service charges for the collection and disposal of refuse and recycling will increase by 10.0%. It should be noted that Council will operate at a \$315,000 deficit for waste and recycling (up from \$200,000 in 2024/25), and there will need to be cost shifting across Council services to offset the deficit.

A waste service charge, recycling service charge and a glass recycling charge will be made on all improved properties within Council, excluding commercial and rural properties where such services are provided only upon request.

Council will be focusing on a detailed review of waste and recycling in mid to late 2025 with a recommendation being presented to Council on how to best meet community demand and service expectations whilst also addressing the rising cost into the future.

Free Green Waste

Council offered free green waste in the 2024-25 financial year for residents, with a load not to exceed greater than 6 x 4 trailer size. This offer was not available to businesses or commercial entities. This initiative will continue into the 2025-26 financial year.

The purpose of offering free green waste disposal is to prevent accumulation and motivate our residents to maintain their properties in good condition. This initiative aims to lower fire hazard risks and decrease the number of unattractive and dangerous properties. Such properties pose problems for Council Officers and often require significant time and money to resolve.

Declaration of Rates and Charges

Council will declare the rates and charges at the 23 July Council Meeting, after the Fair Go Rates System annual compliance has been completed as of 30 June 2025.

Payment in lieu of Rates (PiLOR) and Investment

Council has budgeted \$480,603 for PiLOR. Council has committed funds towards community asset investment in the 2025-26 year as follows:

- \$170,000 of this funding as a co-contribution and/or investment into the Hopetoun Swimming Pool upgrades (Council resolution 28 February 2024 and included in Capital Works budget 2024-25).
- \$100,000 co-contribution for the Murtoa Netball / Tennis Court Project as part of the Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Funding application (Council resolution 28 February 2024).

In addition, Council supports the community through financial allocations with the aim of supporting operating costs for Swimming Pools, Weir Pools, Recreation Reserves, specified Town Halls and Progress Associations (or equivalent).

2. Capital Works

The Roads to Recovery (R2R) Funding announcement was made in the 2024-25 financial year, with Council to receive \$11,642,207 for the five-year funding period from 01 July 2024 to 30 June 2029.

We have budgeted \$2.11 million in R2R Funding in 2025-26 and \$1.466 million in Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program. Council cash contribution towards our road network of \$488,600.

The proposed Budget provides the Capital Works projects that will be undertaken for the 2025-26 year which is classified by expenditure type and funding source (Pages 42 to 50).

The Capital Works program is less than the last two years' due to funding constraints.

	Project Cost \$'000	New \$'000	Renewal \$'000	Upgrade \$'000	Grants \$'000	Contributions \$'000	Council Cash \$'000
Property	340	340	-	-	-	-	340
Plant & Equipment	1,375	250	1,125	-	-	-	1,375
Infrastructure	6,844	177	3,439	3,227	6,038	45	760
Total	8,559	767	4,564	3,227	6,038	45	2,475

3. Employee Costs

The Employee costs have decreased from the 2024-25 financial year, due to the Maternal and Child Health transferring to West Wimmera Health Services, Murtoa Kindergarten transferring to the Department of Education and Beulah and Hopetoun Kindergarten transferring to Emerge. Council has factored in increases in Workcover

insurance, superannuation and Enterprise Bargaining Agreement increases. Council's FTE will reduce to 106.7 (2024/25: 123.0).

4. Schedule of Fees and Charges

The Budget presents the fees and charges of a statutory/non-statutory nature which will be charged in respect of various goods and services during the 2025-26 financial year. The fees and charges are based on information available at the time of publishing and may vary during the financial year subject to changes in Council's policy or legislation (Pages 59 to 72).

5. Changes to the Draft Budget

Cannings Channel: As per Council Report 15.2 of this Ordinary Meeting Council Agenda, it is recommended that the Cannings Channel works be included in the 2025/26 Capital Works program, and funds be reallocated from the drainage operating budget to enable the works to be completed.

Plant and Equipment: A recent assessment of the large northern water tanker has revealed significant failures in the tank's structural integrity, resulting in a reduced service life and necessitating its earlier inclusion in the plant replacement program. Meanwhile, the grader originally scheduled for replacement this year has been found to be in better-than-expected condition comparing to the water tanker and can be retained for an additional year. This adjustment has reduced the overall plant acquisition cost, enabling a small portion of the scope to shift from a planned mower replacement to a new excavator—previously unaffordable within the program. The proposed changes are outlined below:

Capital Works	Cost (Value)
Large Water Cart	\$450,000
5T Excavator	\$130,000
Grader (removed)	\$550,000
Large Mower (removed)	\$30,000

Murdoch Street Hopetoun: The Powerhouse Committee has requested that the kerb and channel be prioritised at Murdoch Street Hopetoun to assist with access to the Powerhouse building. It is recommended that the Lascelles Street footpath be reduced by 54 metres, equating to a cost reduction of \$16,910, making the revised cost of the Lascelles Street footpath \$19,000 leaving 60m of path. Additionally, it is proposed that the drainage allocation included in the budget be reallocated to the Murdoch Street Hopetoun kerb and channel works.

The program to be restated as follows:

Capital Works	Length	Cost (Value)
Lascelles Street 2 Hopetoun footpath	60m	\$19,000
Murdoch Street Hopetoun kerb and channel	52m (both sides)	\$102,352
Drainage Various (removed)	-	\$85,442
Lascelles Street 2 Hopetoun footpath (reduced)	114m	\$35,910

Southern Shoulder Resheets: It is recommended that the Glenorchy Road shoulder resheet of \$65,625 be removed from the capital works program, and instead the shoulders be maintenance graded in 2025/26. The Banyena-Pimpinio Road shoulders are assessed to be in a more deteriorated condition, and it is recommended that the funds be reallocated to extend the shoulder resheet on the Banyena-Pimpinio Road to 2kms to address the significant wear and tear.

Capital Works	Length	Cost (Value)
Southern: Banyena-Pimpinio Road	2 km	\$131,250
Southern: Banyena-Pimpinio Road (increased above)	1 km	\$65,625
Southern: Glenorchy Road (removed)	1 km	\$65,625

6. Conclusion

The Budget for 2025-26 is one of the most tightly constrained for many years. Council will no longer have available the Commonwealth Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Funding, and the Rate Cap of 3% into the 2025-26 financial year does not cover the rising costs that Council has experienced, especially with regard to insurance, Workcover premiums and materials.

Council's rates and charges only cover 50% of our operating costs, making our Council heavily reliant on grant funding. As funding continues to be scarce, we need to be hyper vigilant with regard to expenditure commitments and managing cashflow now and into the future.

RELEVANT LAW

- *Local Government Act 2020* - Section 94
- *Local Government Act 1989* - Section 159, 167 and 172

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Council Plan 2021-2025
- Draft Council Plan 2025 - 2029
- Debt Management, Relief and Hardship Policy

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable.

OPTIONS

The Council Budget is a statutory requirement and must be adopted each financial year by 30 June. Council can elect not to endorse the Draft Budget. However, Councillors need to be mindful they could be in breach of the *Local Government Act 2020* given the legislative requirement is to adopt a budget by 30 June 2025. This would also inhibit Council from performing duties and functions post 30 June. Council's Community Engagement Policy requires feedback for 28 days.

Council Officers modelled the financial implications of reducing general rates below the gazetted rate cap (3.00%). Modelling indicates a reduction of general rate revenue would impact Council's ability to sustain current service level standards and its ability to generate income through matched Government grants over a 10-year period and is not recommended.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Rate capping continues to place restrictions on Council's ability to raise its own source income and places an ever-increasing reliance on grants from other tiers of Government which can change over time. Council must be mindful of its own financial sustainability and therefore take a more conservative approach to debt than other levels of Government and/or the private sector may take.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Draft Budget 2025-26 was made available for community feedback in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy. The engagement process comprised of media information across print, social media, and was placed on Council's website. The Community Engagement process was also supported by in person community consultation forums across the Shire.

Feedback was invited from 15 May 2025 to 11 June 2025.

Council received one submission relating to Rabl Park. *The Murtoa Progress Association recommend to delay 2025-26 infrastructure works at Cromie Street Murtoa kerb and channel works and Degenhardt St Murtoa reseal in lieu of funding to complete the skate park project and utilise state funding allocation in time.* Community consultation has not occurred in relation to this request.

The Chief Engineering Officer does not recommend delaying the works, as they have been identified as a priority and would only have to be pushed out to the 2026/27 year.

The Chief Executive Officer recommends that Council continue to work with the State Government to rescope the Rabl Park project to fit within the \$200,000 budget and continue to look for funding opportunities to support the delivery of the entire \$350,000 project. In addition, the CEO confirms that the Community Health Department are working through how the project could be internally managed and delivered to save costs and deliver greater value for money.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not applicable for this report.

RISK

Utilising the Risk Management Framework the following assessment has been made:

Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level	Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk	Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level
Corporate Governance, Compliance and Liability Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	The Budget ensures compliance with the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> Requirements.	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Financial Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	The budget is prepared with a conservative lens and takes into consideration constraints around rate capping, reliance on grants, decreased funding opportunities, rising cost of raw materials, lack of available skilled trade. The prepared Budget has a focus on sustainable cost reductions to protect existing service levels.	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Strategy Execution and Change Management Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	Council's Budget has been aligned with Council's strategic priorities and changes to fees and charges will be communicated via the community consultation process.	Maintains Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Consideration has been given to other regional, state and national plans and policies as required throughout the preparation of this budget.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

15.4 REVENUE AND RATING PLAN

Prepared by Anita McFarlane, Chief Financial Officer

SUMMARY

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to prepare and adopt a Revenue and Rating Plan.

Section 93 of the *Local Government Act 2020* states that “A Council must prepare and adopt a Revenue and Rating Plan by the next 30 June after a general election for a period of at least the next 4 financial years.”

As the Revenue and Rating Plan is a key element of Council’s financial management framework, best practice dictates that this plan be reviewed and updated annually as part of the Council of the ongoing budget process.

Recommended Motion:

That Council:

- a) Endorse the Draft Revenue and Rating Plan 2025–2029 as attached to this report.

ATTACHMENTS

[Attached: Draft Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029](#)

DISCUSSION

Section 93 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to prepare and adopt a Revenue and Rating Plan by the 30 June following a general election. The plan is to be developed for a period of at least the next four financial years.

The plan includes all sources of revenue including rates, charges, grants, contributions, and other revenue streams such as interest and rental agreements.

The 2025-2029 plan was developed utilising the Local Government Revenue and Rating Plan Guide incorporating the *Local Government Act 2020* reforms, the Local Government Best Practice Guide 2014 and the Ministerial Guidelines for Differential Rating 2013.

The plan is reviewed and updated annually to reflect changes to Council’s operating environment.

The draft 2025–2029 plan incorporates the following updates:

- All financial tables have been updated to incorporate the 2025/26 budget period cycle.
- The wording of the Fire Service Levy has changed to Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund.

RELEVANT LAW

Section 93 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Council Budget 2025-2026
- Council Plan 2025-2029

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

- 23 June 2021 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 13.5 Revenue and Rating Plan 2021- 2025
- 29 June 2022 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 14.1 Revenue and Rating Plan 2022 - 2026
- 28 June 2023 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 16.2 Revenue and Rating Plan 2023 - 2027

- 26 June 2024 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 5.2 Revenue and Rating Plan 2024 – 2028

OPTIONS

Nil.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Social – The inquiry into the Sustainability and Operational Challenges of Victoria’s Rural and Regional Council’s identified that Council’s such as Yarriambiack have lower community income, fewer employment opportunities, and higher levels of disadvantage resulting in communities having a higher reliance on Council’s services with less capacity or means to pay for them. Regional Council’s also see a greater application of pension and other consideration discounts on Council rates and a higher cost of living.

Financial – The Revenue and Rating Plan addresses Council’s increased reliance on grants to meet operational requirements. Council has an inability to generate additional revenue streams in comparison to their metropolitan counterparts, such as parking fees, fines, development applications and user charges for facilities and services.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was undertaken as there were no significant changes made to the document. Only 2025/26 budget figures were update and relevant legislation amendments. Council did undertake an extensive budget consultation process which addressed these changes.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not applicable for this report.

RISK

Utilising the Risk Management Framework the following assessment has been made:

<i>Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level</i>	<i>Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk</i>	<i>Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level</i>
Corporate Governance, Compliance and Liability Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	This Revenue and Rating Plan ensures compliance with the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> requirements.	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Financial Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	The Revenue and Rating Plan identifies Council’s revenue streams and methodology for Rates and Charges. It highlights Council’s reliance on grants to meet operational requirements. Therefore, Council needs to be proactive in applying for and sourcing grants to meet organisational requirements.	Maintains Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

15.5 ADOPTION OF SPORT AND RECREATION ALLOCATION 2025-26

Prepared by Rebecca Botheras, Sport and Recreation Coordinator

SUMMARY

On the 28 May 2025, Councillors endorsed for the Chief Executive Officer to write to all applicable committees, outlining the endorsed sport and recreation funding model for consultation, inviting written feedback, and providing an opportunity to present at a Council Forum prior to final endorsement of the 2025/26 funding allocations.

On 29 May 2025, Council initiated the committee consultation by writing to all Swimming Pool and Recreation Reserve Committees to outline the adopted annual allocation funding models for the 2025/26 financial year. Correspondence was sent to each committee secretary and/or president via email and post. To ensure the information was received and understood, the Sport and Recreation Coordinator conducted follow-up phone calls with each committee on 29 and 30 May 2025 (noting some committees did not answer, but voicemails were left).

The purpose of the communication was to provide clarity around Council's funding approach and to invite feedback from the committees. Out of the 21 committees contacted, two accepted the invitation to present at the Council Forum on 11 June 2025, where they provided feedback on the funding models directly to Councillors.

In response to the broader consultation, the majority of feedback received has been overwhelmingly positive. Committees expressed appreciation for the continued support and welcomed the transparency of the annual allocations. Many committee members also conveyed their gratitude to Council for its ongoing investment in community recreation facilities.

Recommended Motion (1) Recreation Reserves Funding Model:

That Council:

- a) Endorse the proposed Recreation Reserve Annual Allocation Funding Model as follows:

Recreation Reserves Funding Model:

- i. Mandatory annual reporting compliance with Consumer Affairs, Council, and/or Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.
 - ii. 66% of funding allocated via a weighted scoring system:
 - o 26% for Maximum Community Participation and Validated Community Benefit.
 - o 15% for Effective Maintenance, Management, and Sustainability.
 - o 26% for Shared Precincts, Partnerships, and Collaboration.
 - iii. 33% of funding allocated based on the population as a percentage of towns with Recreation Reserves.
- b) Endorse the total funding allocation of \$194,200 be allocated to recreation reserves in the 2025/26 financial year based on the recreation reserve scoring systems outlined in item (a), and in alignment with Councils Sport and Recreation Strategy 2025-2035.
 - c) Endorse the review of the funding inputs every four years, and within 12 months of a new Council term. With the next review to be undertaken between November 2028 and October 2029.
 - d) Endorse that the NBN Tower funding allocation for the Rupanyup Recreation Reserve does not form part of the Sport and Recreation annual allocation and is to be directly passed to the Recreation Reserve Committee annually; and
 - e) That Council enter into an agreement with the Rupanyup Recreation Reserve outlining that the funds received from the NBN Tower rental must be utilised towards infrastructure upgrades and/or ground and building maintenance at the Rupanyup Recreation Reserve.

Recommended Motion (2) Swimming Pools Funding Model:

That Council:

- a) Endorse the proposed Swimming Pools Annual Allocation Funding Model as follows:

Swimming Pools Funding Model:

- i. Mandatory annual reporting compliance with Consumer Affairs, Council, and/or Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.
 - ii. 40% of funding based on the total pool area (including toddler and learner pools).
 - iii. 35% based on pool usage and attendance.
 - iv. 25% based on the population as a percentage of towns with swimming pools.
 - v. Integration of maintenance and lifeguard costs into the overall funding allocation.
- b) Endorse the total funding allocation of \$269,429 be allocated to swimming pools in the 2025/26 financial year based on the swimming pool scoring system outlined in item (a), and in alignment with Councils Sport and Recreation Strategy 2025-2035.
- c) Endorse the emergency maintenance funding of \$35,000 per annum held currently by Council and only allocated on application, be distributed equally among all pools in addition to their regular annual allocation. Consequently, each of the eight pools within our Shire would receive \$4,375 to assist with urgent maintenance tasks in the 2025-26 financial year.
- d) Endorse the review of the funding inputs every four years, and within 12 months of a new Council term. With the next review to be undertaken between November 2028 and October 2029.

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: Swimming Pool and Recreation Reserve Annual Allocation Rational](#)

DISCUSSION

The consultation process provided valuable insights into how the adopted 2025–26 annual allocation funding models are being received by committees.

The table below summarises the key feedback received from committees:

Committee	Feedback Summary
Beulah Recreation Reserve	Provided a written letter via return email on 30 May 2025 thanking Council for its continued support of the Recreation Reserve. Councillors have been provided with a copy of the letter for their reference.
ANZAC Park	Verbally expressed disappointment with the proposed reduction in the annual allocation, noting concerns about the sustainability of the reserve's operations under the reduced funding. Representatives from the committee presented at 11 June 2025 Council Forum to provide feedback.
Rupanyup Recreation Reserve	Verbally acknowledged a reduction in funding but were not concerned, citing recent substantial infrastructure investment and additional income from the NBN tower outside of Council's Sport and Recreation allocations. The Rupanyup Recreation Reserve Committee then submitted a letter outlining that the proposed funding

Committee	Feedback Summary
	allocation needs to be increased due to the increased costs of day-to-day maintenance. Also noted capital works projects that need to be undertaken and questioned responsibility of completion.
Hopetoun Recreation Reserve	Verbally noted a slight funding reduction but expressed gratitude for Council's continued support in maintaining and operating the reserve.
Yaapeet Recreation Reserve	Contacted the Council front office to confirm receipt of the letter and thanked Council for its ongoing support.
Brim Recreation Reserve	During the budget workshop, a committee member thanked Councillors and extended their appreciation for the support received.
Minyip Recreation Reserve	Extremely appreciative of the additional funding. Indicated that the funds will significantly assist with ongoing upgrades, particularly in covering increased insurance costs related to reserve improvements.
Murtoa Recreation Reserve	Confirmed in writing that the committee are supportive of the funding allocation model and acknowledged that it looked fair.
Hopetoun Swimming Pool	Requested clarification regarding the integration of maintenance and lifeguard costs. After being informed that the existing community asset agreement remains in place and that responsibilities have not changed, the committee expressed satisfaction, especially in light of a substantial increase in funding.
Beulah Swimming Pool	Expressed concern about a decrease in funding and its impact on pool operations. The committee met with Councillors at 11 June 2025 Council Forum and provided feedback in person.
Minyip Swimming Pool	The committee sought clarification on what figures had been used for the Annual Allocation calculation.
Rupanyup Swimming Pool	The committee were wanting to know if the \$5000 emergency maintenance allocation budget was remaining, and whether council was going to complete an annual review of the funding allocations.
Murtoa Swimming Pool	The committee welcomed the increased funding but raised concerns about outdated data used in the funding model. Pool usage has risen significantly, including visitors from Horsham. Operating costs are growing, and savings are being depleted. Without new support, the pool may close by 2029/30. A shift in funding policy is urged to recognise pools as vital for community wellbeing in a warming climate.
Woomelang Swimming Pool	The Committee representative conveyed to the Chief Executive Officer she acknowledged the reduction in allocation but understood the methodology and agreed

Committee	Feedback Summary
	with the principles applied in the Sport and Recreation strategy.

Response to Feedback

The Rupanyup Recreation Reserve provided feedback that they required additional funds to support infrastructure projects. The Rupanyup Recreation Reserve is located on Council land. The NBN tower on Council land generates annual rental income. An historical verbal agreement has been in place between Council and the Recreation Reserve Committee, where the funds are passed directly to the Committee. In March 2025 the Rupanyup Recreation Reserve received \$9184.63 (ex GST) in addition to their Recreation Reserve allocation. The NBN funds should be utilised for direct infrastructure investment back into the grounds and building, and/or be utilised as a co-contribution to secure further funds. It is also recommended that Council enter into an agreement with the Rupanyup Recreation Reserve Committee outlining how the NBN funds should be expended going forward to formalise the arrangement.

The ANZAC Park Trustees Committee members presented to Council on 11 June 2025. The Trustees noted that they will have a funding allocation reduction of \$22,000 in 25/26 if the allocations are adopted as per the recommendation. ANZAC Park even with the new funding model, will receive \$16,731 more in their allocation, to that of the next closest reserve, being Murtoa.

The Beulah Swimming Pool Committee presented to Council on 11 June 2025. The Committee representative itemised in detail their costs associated with operating the pool in the 24/25 financial year. This exceeds the sport and recreation allocation provided in the 24/25 financial year. The Committee highlighted that if their funding was reduced, they would need to reduce their opening days, as they would not have the funds to pay lifeguards. This could impact the viability of the pool going forward. A solution to this feedback is provided under the Funding Allocations for 2025-26 section of this report.

The Rupanyup Swimming Pool sought clarification regarding the model being reviewed annually and updated. It should be noted that attendance records are annualised over a four-year period, and whilst they will be reviewed and updated annually, a "spike" in attendance in any one year will not result in an increase in funding. Council will review the sport and recreation strategy allocation inputs within 12 months of a new Council term (every four years).

Funding Allocations for 2025-26

In addition, the Funding Models Analysis Table has undergone a slight revision following the identification of an error in the previously listed amounts paid to Recreation Reserve committees in the 2024/25 financial year. This was due to the Rupanyup Recreation Reserve NBN tower payment being factored into the overall funding distribution model initially. However, when the 2024/25 funding allocations were distributed the NBN tower funds were removed from the equation as historically this revenue stream was not previously included in the calculation. Therefore, it would be unjust to remove this payment from Rupanyup without deliberative consultation.

Additionally, it was noted that the Brim Recreation Reserve receives additional revenue through an agreement with the NBN for a tower located on its site. However, it is important to clarify that the Brim Recreation Reserve is not council-owned, and the arrangement with NBN is a private agreement that does not involve Council. As such, it would be inappropriate for Council to use this private agreement as a basis for altering funding or support.

The table below now accurately reflects the actual amounts distributed to each committee in 2024/25. It also includes funding projections for the 2025/26 financial year, calculated using the revised funding model (as outlined in Officer Recommendation 1) and incorporating the approved 3% annual increase to the overall funding pool. The

tables presented below are further outlined in the Swimming Pool and Recreation Reserve Annual Allocation Rational document.

Furthermore, currently, Council holds an annual emergency maintenance fund of \$35,000 for swimming pools, which is allocated only upon application. To ensure a more equitable and proactive approach to addressing urgent maintenance needs, it is proposed that this fund be distributed equally among all pools in the Shire. With eight pools across the municipality, this would result in each facility receiving an additional \$4,375 per annum, in addition to their annual allocation based on the new funding model. This change aims to provide each pool with greater autonomy and responsiveness in addressing time-sensitive repairs and maintenance. This model is pending Council endorsement. Please refer to the Swimming Pools Funding 2025/26 tables 1 and 2 which display the variations to the funding, excluding and including the emergency maintenance allocation.

Table 1: Swimming Pools Funding 2025-26 – Excluding Emergency Maintenance Allocation

Swimming Pool	New Funding Model (2025-26)	Current Funding Model (2024-25)	Change (\$)	Change (%)
Warracknabeal	\$79,897	\$78,842	\$1,055	1.34
Minyip	\$27,951	\$28,178	-\$227	-0.81
Murtoa	\$44,092	\$40,094	\$3,998	9.97
Rupanyup	\$22,886	\$23,362	-\$476	-2.04
Beulah	\$20,487	\$24,627	-\$4,140	-16.81
Hopetoun	\$45,762	\$35,499	\$10,263	28.91
Woomelang	\$19,771	\$24,051	-\$4,280	-17.80
Tempy	\$8,583	\$9,114	-\$531	-5.83
Totals	\$269,429	\$263,767		

Table 2: Swimming Pools Funding 2025-26 – Including Emergency Maintenance Allocation

Swimming Pool	Proposed Funding Model (Annual Allocation + \$4,375 Emergency Maintenance Allocation)	Current Funding Model (2024-25)	Change (\$)	Change (%)
Warracknabeal	\$84,272	\$78,842	\$5,430	6.89
Minyip	\$32,326	\$28,178	\$4,148	14.72
Murtoa	\$48,467	\$40,094	\$8,373	20.88
Rupanyup	\$27,261	\$23,362	\$3,899	16.69
Beulah	\$24,862	\$24,627	\$235	0.95
Hopetoun	\$50,137	\$35,499	\$14,638	41.23
Woomelang	\$24,146	\$24,051	\$95	0.39
Tempy	\$12,958	\$9,114	\$3,844	42.18
Totals	\$304,429	\$263,767		

Table 3 : Recreation Reserves Funding 2025-26

Recreation Reserve	New Funding Model (2025-26)	Current Funding Model (2024-25)	Change (\$)	Change (%)
Warracknabeal	\$39,659	\$61,865	-\$22,206	-35.89
Minyip	\$19,009	\$13,972	\$5,037	36.05
Murtoa	\$22,928	\$20,639	\$2,289	11.09
Rupanyup	\$19,219	\$20,747	-\$1,528	-7.37
Brim	\$17,945	\$10,109	\$7,836	77.51
Beulah	\$15,436	\$10,215	\$5,221	51.12
Hopetoun	\$20,789	\$23,578	-\$2,789	-11.83
Woomelang	\$6,613	\$3,519	\$3,094	87.93
Yaapeet	\$5,391	\$3,679	\$1,712	46.54
Lubeck	\$6,351	\$3,679	\$2,672	72.63
Patchewollock	\$4,939	\$3,679	\$1,260	34.25
Speed	\$3,928	\$3,679	\$249	6.77
Tempy	\$11,993	\$9,183	\$2,810	30.60
Totals	\$194,200	\$188,543		

RELEVANT LAW*Local Government Act 2020***COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES**

- Sport and Recreation Strategy 2025-2035
- Council Plan 2021-2025: Strategic Objective 2 – A Healthy and Inclusive Community

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

- 28 August 2024 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes - 15.2 Sport and Recreation Strategy
- 28 May 2025 - Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes - 15.5 Sport and Recreation Allocation Adoption

OPTIONS

- a) Council could choose to reject the recommendation and request further community consultation be undertaken on the Funding Models for Recreation Reserves and Swimming Pools prior to final endorsement.
- b) Council could choose to reject the recommendation and request an alternative motion towards the Recreation Reserve and/or Swimming Pools Funding Models.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic: The proposed funding models support economic sustainability by ensuring equitable and efficient allocation of resources based on community need, usage, and compliance. This approach promotes long-term financial viability of facilities and encourages responsible management by community committees.

Social: The proposed funding models support social sustainability by promoting equitable access to facilities, encouraging community participation, and strengthening partnerships with local clubs and organisations. This helps foster inclusive, connected, and active communities across the municipality.

Environmental: The funding models support environmental sustainability by encouraging effective facility management and maintenance, including sustainable practices that align

with Council's long-term environmental goals. This helps ensure recreation assets are operated efficiently and responsibly.

Financial: The proposed funding models support financial sustainability by aligning funding with clear criteria such as compliance, usage, and population. This ensures a more accountable and transparent distribution of resources.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council undertook substantial community and stakeholder engagement during the development of the Sport and Recreation Strategy 2025–2035, ensuring that the Strategy reflects the values, needs, and priorities of the municipality's diverse communities. This process included targeted consultation with local sporting clubs, recreation reserve and pool committees, community groups, and state sporting associations, as well as broader community engagement through surveys, workshops, and online platforms.

As part of this consultation, the Council released a community survey specifically seeking community input on the draft funding models for Recreation Reserves and Swimming Pools Annual Allocations. Feedback received through this process provided a strong foundation for the development of the revised models. Since then, Council Officers have worked closely with Councillors to refine the models in alignment with the Strategy's guiding principles.

In addition, following the adoption of the 2025/26 Sport and Recreation Funding Allocation Models, Council initiated a targeted community consultation process to ensure transparency and encourage stakeholder feedback. On 29 May 2025, Council formally wrote to all Swimming Pool and Recreation Reserve Committees to outline the adopted funding models for the upcoming financial year. This correspondence was issued via both email and post to the respective committee secretaries and/or presidents.

To support understanding of the funding models and to provide an opportunity for dialogue, the Sport and Recreation Coordinator conducted follow-up phone calls with each committee on 29 and 30 May 2025. While not all calls were answered, voicemails were left with relevant information and contact details for further engagement.

The primary objective of this communication was to clarify Council's funding approach and invite feedback from committee members. Of the 21 committees contacted, two accepted the invitation to engage further by presenting their feedback at the Council Forum held on 11 June 2025. This direct engagement enabled Councillors to hear firsthand perspectives on the funding models and consider community insights as part of final review.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* requires entities to conduct gender impact assessments on all new policies, programs and services that directly and significantly impact the public as well as those up for review.

Gender Impact Assessment (GIA)		Status
Does this Council report recommendation c) Introduce a new policy, program and/or service; or d) Is it a review of a policy, program and/or service; that directly and significantly impacts the public?		YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A GIA has been completed. NO <input type="checkbox"/> A GIA is not required.
Link to Gender Impact Assessment	GIA – Sport and Recreation Strategy	

RISK

Utilising the Risk Management Framework the following assessment has been made:

<i>Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level</i>	<i>Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk</i>	<i>Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level</i>
Financial Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	The models are designed to improve transparency and accountability in resource allocation, aligning funding with defined criteria and strategic priorities. Ongoing monitoring and annual reporting requirements will help mitigate potential risks related to misallocation or misuse of funds.	Reduces Residual Risk Level
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	While changes to funding models may generate concern among some community members, the transparent, consultative approach taken by Council, along with opportunities for feedback and forum presentations, helps mitigate this risk. Clearly aligning funding with community benefit and strategic priorities further supports public trust and confidence in Council's decision-making. However, the reduction in the ANZAC Park funding does give rise to reputation damage, as the community may perceive the reduction as a lack of investment commitment in ANZAC Park.	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Corporate Governance, Compliance and Liability Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	The proposed funding models include mandatory compliance requirements with reporting obligations to Consumer Affairs, DEECA, and Council, strengthening oversight and accountability. This approach promotes good governance, reduces the risk of noncompliance, and ensures that Council meets its legislative responsibilities when allocating public funds	Reduces Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

15.6 LIBRARY LEASES AND MOU'S

Prepared by Sarah Collins, Manager Community Strengthening and Engagement and Jo White, Governance Officer

Yarriambiack Libraries has several satellite library branches including, library lockers, pick up and drop off services, and locations that host the Engagement Van.

A number of these agreements are due to expire; Council have updated these agreements in line with Council's Leases and Licencing Policy to continue a formalised relationship with each location.

Recommended Motion:

That Council:

- a) Note the Memorandum of Understanding Agreements as stated in this report for:
 - i. Brim Action Group – for the use of space at McPherson's CRT General Store and Café, Swann Street, Brim VIC 3391
 - ii. Lascelles Progress Association Incorporated – for the use of lockers at Boree Street, Lascelles VIC 3487
 - iii. Speed General Store and Post Office – for the use of lockers at 20 Chamberlain Street, Speed VIC 3488
 - iv. Yaapeet Community Club Incorporated – for the use of lockers at Opposite 14 Byrne Street, Yaapeet VIC 3424
- b) Endorse the License Agreements (as attached) between Yarriambiack Shire Council and:
 - i. Woomelang & District Bush Nursing Centre Incorporated – for the use of part of building at 16 Proctor Street, Woomelang VIC 3485
 - ii. Patchewollock Incorporated – for the use of part of building at 58 Federation Street, Patchewollock VIC 3491
 - iii. Murtoa and District Neighbourhood House Incorporated - for the use of part of building at 36 McDonald Street, Murtoa VIC 3390
 - iv. Minyip Progress Association Incorporated - for the use of part of building at 78 Main Street, Minyip VIC 3392
 - v. Beulah Historic, Learning and Progress Association Incorporated - for the use of part of building at 77 Philips Street, Beulah VIC 3395
- c) Endorse for the License Agreements (attached) to be for the amount of \$2,000 per annum plus GST.
- d) Endorse the Chief Executive Officer to make any administrative changes required for the License Agreements to be executed, providing the intent of the Agreement is not altered.
- e) Endorse the affixing of the Common Seal to the License Agreements as noted in this report in accordance with Council's Common Seal and Conduct at Meetings Local Law 2024.

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: Draft Licence Agreement - Beulah Library Space](#)

[Attachment: Draft Licence Agreement - Minyip Library Space](#)

[Attachment: Draft Licence Agreement - Murtoa Library Space](#)

[Attachment: Draft Licence Agreement - Patchewollock Library Space](#)

[Attachment: Draft Licence Agreement - Woomelang Library Space](#)

[Attachment: Draft MOU - Brim Drop off Library Service](#)

[Attachment: Draft MOU - Lascelles Lockers Library Service](#)

[Attachment: Draft MOU - Speed Lockers Library Service](#)

[Attachment: Draft MOU - Yaapeet Lockers Library Service](#)

DISCUSSION

Yarriambiack Libraries is a vital service to our community and is further supported by our Engagement Van Officer visiting each location on a fortnightly basis, bringing library initiatives and customer service support. Yarriambiack Shire Council owns the Rupanyup Library, Warracknabeal Library, and Hopetoun Library. Without these satellite library services, which eliminate geographical barriers for residents unable to commute to these library hubs, our residents would have limited access to library items and activities that foster social connection and enhance wellbeing.

This paper seeks endorsement for the attached Licence Agreements for locations that have established library spaces and for noting of the attached Memorandum of Understanding Agreements (MOU's) for the drop off/ library locker service locations.

Council is currently implementing new agreements with each of the below community groups for the ongoing use of their spaces to allow us the ability to deliver Yarriambiack Libraries services to their communities:

Established library spaces:

- Minyip Progress Association Inc.
- Murtoa & District Neighbourhood House Inc.
- Beulah Historic, Learning & Progress Association Inc.
- Patchewollock Inc.
- Woomelang & District Bush Nursing Centre Inc.

Drop off / locker Services:

- Brim Active Community Group
- Lascelles Progress Association Inc.
- Speed General Store & Post Office
- Yaapeet Community Club Inc.

It is important to note that these Licence Agreements and MOU's are formalising the continuation of already existing relationships with these community groups and not-for-profits who use the proceeds gained from these agreements for activities that benefit their communities.

RELEVANT LAW

Local Government Act 2020

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Leases and Licensing Policy
- Council Plan 2021-2025: A Healthy and Inclusive Community

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable.

OPTIONS

- a) Council could choose to undertake a public advertisement of the above mentioned Licence Agreements; however, it should be noted:
 - Community consultation is not required under Section 115 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Social: The library services that are being formalised by these agreements reduce the geographical barrier required to reach one of the Council owned library branches in Hopetoun, Warracknabeal, or Rupanyup. This opens this service up to more community members who would otherwise not have been able to utilise the service.

Financial: The fees associated with the agreements are paid to not-for-profit community groups that invest these funds directly back into the community.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community consultation is not required under Section 115 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Gender Impact Assessment (GIA)		Status
Does this Council report recommendation e) Introduce a new policy, program and/or service; or f) Is it a review of a policy, program and/or service; that directly and significantly impacts the public?		YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A GIA has been completed. NO <input type="checkbox"/> A GIA is not required.
Link to Gender Impact Assessment	GIA – YSC Library License Agreements & MoU's	

RISK

Utilising the Risk Management Framework the following assessment has been made:

Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level	Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk	Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level
Corporate Governance, Compliance and Liability Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	The Licence Agreements enables Council to meet its corporate governance and compliance obligations and reduces liability risk.	Reduces Residual Risk Level
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	By entering into agreements with each group, Council can demonstrate its commitment to delivering these services for an extended time.	Reduces Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Public Libraries Victoria Strategic Plan 2023-27

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

15.7 GIFTING OF ASSETS - VINTAGE COUNCIL CHAIRS AND LARGE WOODEN TABLE

Presenter: Tammy Smith, Chief Executive Officer

SUMMARY

This paper seeks endorsement from the Councillors to gift three chairs and the Council Chambers table, with historical significance to the Warracknabeal Town Hall Committee of Management Inc. for the purpose of preserving, exhibiting and sharing their history with the community.

Recommended Motion:

That Council:

- a) Endorse the gifting of the Yarriambiack Shire Council, Council Chambers table and three chairs (as depicted in this report), which have historical significance, to the Warracknabeal Town Hall Committee of Management Inc.

ATTACHMENTS



DISCUSSION

The three vintage wooden Council chairs and the large Council table have historical significance, dating back to the Warracknabeal Shire. While appreciated for their history, the chairs have not been used for years due to comfort and practicality issues, along with the cost of restoration.

The large table, though impressive in size and style, is problematic:

- It is disconnected from Councillors' seating positions, not being conducive to Officer and Councillor discussions.
- It does not accommodate round table discussions.
- It cannot be reconfigured for different meeting styles.
- It poses a safety risk when moved due to its size and weight.

Lightweight adjustable flip top tables have been purchased as replacements to address these issues. To ensure the history of the table and chairs is preserved, the Warracknabeal Town Hall Committee of Management have been approached by Council Officers to assess if they would accept the assets being gifted to the Committee, for the purpose of preserving, exhibit and sharing their history with the community.

The Committee supports this initiative and wishes to make the table and chairs available in the Warracknabeal Town Hall.

Council's Asset Lifecycle Policy, section 14.5 Gifting of Surplus Assets to Not for Profit Community Groups states that the "*Chief Executive Officer is authorised to gift plant and equipment, information communication and technology and fixture and fitting assets to not for profit, community groups where a transparent process has been documented and undertaken; that can withstand public scrutiny*".

Given the historical nature of the assets, an expression of interest process is not being conducted. It is deemed unnecessary to sell the assets or gift them to an organisation that may not understand or preserve their history.

Therefore, for transparency, a paper is being put before Council to endorse the gifting of the assets to the Warracknabeal Town Hall Committee of Management.

RELEVANT LAW

Local Government Act 2020.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Asset Lifecycle Policy.

OPTIONS

- a) Councillors could choose not to gift the assets and instead acknowledge their relocation to the Town Hall, as they are surplus to Council's requirements.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Social: The historic furniture will be utilised by the Warracknabeal Town Hall Committee of Management. The assets history is to be preserved and can be visited by locals and tourists alike.

Financial: Council will not incur any costs in regard to the repair and maintenance of the vintage pieces.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engagement was undertaken with the Warracknabeal Town Hall Committee of Management and the Warracknabeal Historical Society Incorporated to ensure they would be able to accommodate the gifted furniture and that the assets history be preserved and shared within the community.

RISK

Utilising the Risk Management Framework the following assessment has been made:

<i>Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level</i>	<i>Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk</i>	<i>Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level</i>
Corporate Governance, Compliance and Liability Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	The gifting of the table and chairs to the Warracknabeal Town Hall Committee enables Council to meet its corporate governance and compliance obligations and reduces its liability risk.	Reduces Residual Risk Level
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	The gifting of the table and chairs to the Warracknabeal Town Hall Committee will ensure the history of these vintage pieces is preserved and shared well into the future. This should prevent any reputational damage or negative feedback.	Reduces Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

15.8 FUNDING APPLICATION – MINYIP RECREATION RESERVE LIGHTING UPGRADE PROJECT

Prepared by Rebecca Botheras, Sport and Recreation Coordinator

(Report revised 26 June 2025 and redistributed to Councillors and published on Council's website.)

SUMMARY

On Monday 27 February 2025, the Minister for Community Sport, The Hon. Ros Spence MP, announced the opening of the 2025–26 Country Football and Netball Program. This competitive Victorian Government initiative is delivered in partnership with the AFL, AFL Victoria, and Netball Victoria, and aims to support rural, regional, and outer metropolitan councils in developing and improving facilities for grassroots football and netball clubs, associations, and umpiring organisations.

Under the program, eligible councils may apply for up to \$250,000 in funding to assist in the delivery of infrastructure projects that benefit local sporting communities. Applications must be submitted by Council and are due by 5.00pm on Monday 07 July 2025.

Council has received a formal request from the Minyip-Murtoa Football Netball Club to consider submitting a funding application on their behalf for the Minyip Recreation Reserve Sports Lighting Upgrade Project. This project proposes to upgrade the existing lighting infrastructure to LED 100 LUX lighting on the main oval to meet current training standards, improve safety, and support greater participation and usage.

Recommended Motion:

That Council:

- a) Endorse the funding application for the Minyip Recreation Reserve Sports Lighting Upgrade Project under the 2025-26 Country Football and Netball Program;
- b) Authorise the inclusion of Council's contribution of Project Management services towards the delivery of the Minyip Recreation Reserve Sports Lighting Upgrade Project;
- c) Agrees to underwrite any cost escalation to the project budget to deliver the full scope of the project as outlined in the application; and
- d) Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to write a Letter of Support confirming the exact co-contributions amounts once the final project costings have been confirmed.

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: 2025-26 Country Football Netball Program Guidelines](#)

DISCUSSION

The Minyip-Murtoa Football Netball Club has taken proactive steps to ensure the project is shovel-ready by engaging a lighting contractor to prepare all necessary lighting designs and schematic plans, as well as provide a detailed quotation for the full scope of works. These plans and schematics are in the final stages of development and will be available prior to the funding application deadline.

Council Officers have held preliminary discussions with Sport and Recreation Victoria regarding the proposed project. Through this process, substantial supporting evidence has been compiled to demonstrate the strong need for the upgrade. Feedback from Sport and Recreation Victoria has indicated that the project is well-positioned and that the community need for improved oval lighting at the Minyip Recreation Reserve can be adequately demonstrated in the application.

Additionally, this project is part of strategic planning documents. To elaborate, the project is outlined in the Minyip Recreation Reserve Masterplan, Council's Sport and

Recreation Strategy and is included as part of Council's Priority Projects list that was submitted to the Victorian Government in 2024.

Following receipt of initial cost estimates, the project is estimated to cost around \$340,000. The project cost is inclusive of construction costs, permit requirements, an allowance for the identified Powercor Site Power Upgrade and contingency.

The Minyip-Murtoa Football Netball Club has confirmed that the required 25% co-contribution will be fully funded by the community, with \$20,000 already secured by the Rup-Minyip Cricket Club and Minyip Recreation Reserve Committee.

As such, Council is not required to provide financial support but will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) if the application is successful. Council would also be responsible for project management and delivery, which will form Council's contribution towards the project.

Council will provide an accompanying letter to the Council Resolution written and signed by the CEO at the time of application confirming final project costs and contribution amounts.

Funding outcomes are expected to be announced in October 2025.

No other requests have been received from football or netball clubs for Council to consider applying on their behalf under the 2025–26 Country Football and Netball Program.

RELEVANT LAW

Local Government Act 2020

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Council Plan 2025-2029: Strategic Objective 2 – A Healthy and Inclusive Community.
- Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2025-2035
- Minyip Recreation Reserve Masterplan

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

- 26 March 2025 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 16.2 Hopetoun Recreation Reserve Netball Sports Lighting Upgrade Project

OPTIONS

- a) Council may wish to reject the recommendation and/or seek further clarification on the funding application.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic: A significant investment into the Minyip Recreation Reserve will support and encourage the continued participation in sport and active recreation, whilst further attracting visitors from other communities and/or regions which will provide an economic benefit to the Minyip community.

Social: Investing in Sport and Recreation facilities paves the way for continued quality sport and active recreation opportunities which encourages participation, social interaction and improved health and wellbeing outcomes into the future.

Environmental: The project is proposed to have minimal impact to the land in which the upgrades are to occur. The project will incorporate LED lighting that will reduce annual power usage.

Financial: Progressing the project to application will not incur a financial contribution to Council but will reduce the ongoing long-term investment and support that would otherwise be required for the Minyip community towards the ongoing maintenance of the existing facilities / infrastructure.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council has undertaken substantial community and stakeholder consultation on the Minyip Recreation Reserves Sports Lighting Upgrade Project.

The project has been shortlisted from Council's Priority Projects Listing, that were identified following the development of the Minyip Community Action Plan, Minyip Recreation Reserve Masterplan, and most recently revisited during the consultation phase for the new Sport and Recreation Strategy.

However, following the announcement of the 2025-25 Country Football and Netball Program, Council Officers have met with the Minyip-Murtoa Football Netball Club Inc and the Minyip Recreation Reserve Committee. During these meetings, a detailed discussion was had around the funding opportunity, the funding guidelines, and the matching contribution requirements, while confirming project scopes, reconfirming that the projects were still of high importance and community priorities, and that there was community support should Council proceed to application.

The result of the community consultation over the past month has indicated that the Minyip community and relevant user groups are fully supportive of the projects, proven by the substitutional community contributions and the Letters of Support received.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A gender impact assessment is not required for this report.

RISK

Utilising the Risk Management Framework the following assessment has been made:

<i>Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level</i>	<i>Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk</i>	<i>Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level</i>
Program and Project Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	Supporting the funding application will show Council's commitment to supporting projects outlined in Community Action Plans, Masterplans and as part of Council's Priority Projects List.	Reduces Residual Risk Level
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	Council has provided funding application support towards other sport and recreation projects across the municipality. Showing support towards the Minyip Recreation Reserve Sports Lighting Upgrade projects will reduce the reputational risks to Council.	Reduces Residual Risk Level
Innovation Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	A significant financial investment into the community facility will assist in ensuring the facility infrastructure remains compliant and safe for continued use by the communities.	Maintains Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Active Victoria 2022-2026 - Strategic Framework Objectives: Connecting Communities and Building Value.
- Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2027 – Priority 3: Improving Wellbeing, Priority 5: Increasing Active Living.
- AFL Victoria Preferred Facilities Guidelines 2024

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

15.9 BRIM BOWLING CLUB LEASE

Prepared by Rebecca Botheras, Sport and Recreation Coordinator and Jo White, Governance Officer

SUMMARY

Yarriambiack Shire Council are the landowner of the Brim Bowling Club, located at 12 Swann Street, Brim, and a formal Lease Agreement is required to be implemented in line with the Council's governance obligations. The proposed lease will ensure the continued operation of the Brim Bowling Club within Council-owned facilities, outlining the rights and responsibilities of both parties.

This report seeks Council's endorsement for the implementation of the Lease Agreement.

Recommended Motion:

That Council:

- a) Endorse the Lease (as attached) between Yarriambiack Shire Council and Brim Bowling Club Inc for the buildings and land known as Brim Bowling Club, 12 Swann Street, Brim.
- b) Endorse the Lease for a period of 5 years.
- c) Endorse the Lease to be a peppercorn lease in accordance with the Leases and Licensing Policy, Schedule 1 – Category A, with a rental fee of \$1.00 (one dollar) + GST per year, deemed paid.
- d) Endorse the Chief Executive Officer to make any administrative changes required for the Lease to be executed, providing the intent of the Lease is not altered.
- e) Endorse the affixing of the Common Seal to the Lease in accordance with Council's Common Seal and Conduct at Meetings Local Law 2024.

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: Draft Lease - Brim Bowling Club Inc](#)

DISCUSSION

The Brim Bowling Club has been operating from the Council-owned Bowling Green and Clubrooms for several years, providing valuable sport, recreation and social opportunities to the Brim community. In accordance with the Council's governance obligations, it is necessary to formalise the arrangement through a Lease Agreement.

The proposed Lease Agreement has been carefully drafted to align with relevant policies and legislative requirements, including those related to public land use, community access, and facility management. Key provisions in the lease cover aspects such as the duration of the lease, maintenance responsibilities, rental terms, and compliance with the Council's broader objectives for community services. Additionally, the lease ensures that the Brim Bowling Club will continue to operate within the scope of its community-focused mission, contributing positively to the local community.

By endorsing the Lease Agreement, the Council will be fulfilling its responsibility as a landowner while providing the Brim Bowling Club with the security and clarity necessary for its ongoing operation. This arrangement also ensures that the facilities remain accessible to the wider community and continue to meet Council's strategic goals for public recreation and sport.

RELEVANT LAW

Local Government Act 2020.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Leases and Licensing Policy.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Nil.

OPTIONS

- i. Council could choose to undertake a public advertisement of the Brim Bowling Club Inc Lease.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic: The lease supports the Brim Bowling Club's operation, contributing to the local economy by providing sports and recreation services and attracting visitors.

Social: The Brim Bowling Club promotes community engagement by offering sport and recreational opportunities and social interaction. The lease provides stability for continued programs, attracting new members and enhancing the well-being of residents.

Financial: The lease clarifies rental and maintenance terms, supporting the Brim Bowling Club's financial sustainability. It also facilitates investments in upgrades, ensuring long-term viability and maintaining the facilities as a valuable community asset.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council Officers met with the Brim Bowling Club Committee on Thursday 05 June 2025. During this meeting, Council officers and the Brim Bowling Club Committee reviewed the draft lease, maintenance and servicing guidelines and Fair Access Policy, addressed questions and clarified concerns raised during discussions. As a result of this consultation, Council has received in-principal support from the Brim Bowling Club Committee towards the draft lease agreement.

Given that the Brim Bowling Club Committee are the land manager and the primary user of the facilities, and the consultation has resulted in their support, further community consultation beyond the Brim Bowling Club was not deemed necessary and, as such, has not been undertaken.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not applicable for this report.

RISK

Utilising the Risk Management Framework the following assessment has been made:

<i>Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level</i>	<i>Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk</i>	<i>Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level</i>
Corporate Governance, Compliance and Liability Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	The Lease enables Council to meet its corporate governance and compliance obligations and reduces its liability risk.	Reduces Residual Risk Level
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	The Lease Agreement enables the Brim Bowling Club Committee to manage the facilities and have day-to-day control over the operation and upkeep of the facilities.	Maintains Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

15.10 TRANSFER OF LEASE - 18 CROMIE STREET, RUPANYUP

Prepared by Jo White, Governance Officer

SUMMARY

This document seeks approval to transfer the lease of 18 Cromie Street, Rupanyup from Nutrien Ag Solutions Limited to MGM Group (Rupanyup) Pty Ltd, trading as Hurleys Home and Hardware. The current lease is set to expire on 31 October 2025. The Chief Executive Officer will initiate the community engagement process to establish a new five-year lease with Hurleys Home and Hardware, aimed at fostering economic development within our Shire.

Recommended Motion

That Council:

- a) Endorse that the lease for 18 Cromie Street Rupanyup be transferred from Nutrien Ag Solutions Limited to MGM Group (Rupanyup) Pty Ltd Trading As Hurleys Home and Hardware for the period 01 July 2025 – 31 October 2025 via the completion of the Transfer of Rights and Obligation document.
- b) Endorse the affixing of the Common Seal to the Transfer of Rights and Obligations document in accordance with Council's Common Seal and Conduct at Meetings Local Law 2024.
- c) Acknowledge that the Chief Executive Officer will commence the community consultation process in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy to enter into a 5-year lease with MGM Group (Rupanyup) Pty Ltd Trading As Hurleys Home and Hardware to commence from 01 November 2025 and concluding on 01 November 2029.

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: Transfer of Rights and Obligations - Lease 18 Cromie Street Rupanyup](#)

DISCUSSION

During the Council Meeting on 29 June 2022, the Council approved granting a lease for 18 Cromie Street, Rupanyup to Nutrien Ag Solutions Limited for a three-year term, ending on 31 October 2025. The block has been used for storage of supplies by the local hardware which operated under the Nutrien Ag banner.

In May 2025, Council was contacted by MGM Group (Rupanyup) Pty Ltd Trading As (TA) Hurleys Home and Hardware, who advised they had become the new owners of the Hardware Store and would like to take over the lease from 01 July 2025. Council advised we would require notice in writing from Nutrien Ag in regard to surrendering the lease.

Such notification was forthcoming, and a subsequent Deed of Surrender has been completed between Nutrien Ag and Council releasing them from the lease as of 30 June 2025.

Discussions have taken place and are ongoing with MGM Group (Rupanyup) Pty Ltd TA Hurleys Home and Hardware. They are aware the transfer applies for a 3 month term and then a new lease will be offered according to Council's policies regarding Leasing, Community Engagement and Transparency.

Endorsing the transfer of the lease to the new owners of the hardware and signing the Transfer of Rights and Obligations document will ensure that the Council's asset is protected and aligns with Council policy. Additionally, the Council will have three months to effectively and compliantly conduct community consultation in preparation for the next lease of this property.

RELEVANT LAW

Part 5, Division 4, Section 115 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Leases and Licenses Policy
- Community Engagement Policy
- Public Transparency Policy

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

- 29 June 2022 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes - Item 16.4, Lease - 18 Cromie Street Rupanyup

OPTIONS

Not applicable for the next 3 months and with the tenant already in situ, however, going forward:

- Council could consider alternative uses for the block of land.
- Council could opt to sell the block of land, opposed to leasing it. Noting the zoning is Public Use and would need to be rezoned prior to sale.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic: The leasing of the land provides an economic benefit to the Shire, enabling a local business to expand its offerings.

Social: Leasing the land ensures that Council can support a local business that provides a service to the local community, enhancing community connectedness, wellbeing and pride within their towns.

Financial: The lease reduces the financial burden on Council. Additionally, it provides for an opportunity to recover the monies invested in maintaining the site.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

While not applicable for this short-term transfer, moving forward, Yarriambiack Shire Council will enact the adopted Community Engagement Policy under the *Local Government Act 2020*, which requires deliberative engagement.

Council will invite community feedback regarding the potential lease of the site known as 18 Cromie Street, Rupanyup.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not applicable for this report.

RISK

Utilising the Risk Management Framework the following assessment has been made:

Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level	Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk	Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level
Corporate Governance, Compliance and Liability Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	Council has undertaken the process to lease Council owned land in accordance with the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> , Council's Community Engagement Policy and the Leases and Licences Policy.	Reduces Residual Risk Level
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	Publicly advertising the lease going forward will increase transparency in decision making, reducing the risk of reputational damage.	Reduces Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

15.11 FUTURE VISION FOR THE HOPETOUN FORMER SCHOOL SITE

Prepared by: Tammy Smith, Chief Executive Officer

SUMMARY

On 24 November 2021, the Yarriambiack Shire Councillors approved the acquisition of the former school site located at 11 Bruce Street, Hopetoun.

Council has commissioned a master plan, feasibility study, and business case for the redevelopment of the site. An affordable home is currently being constructed on this property, which will be managed and operated by Dunmunkle Lodge.

Council has had limited success with funding applications for the site. This report outlines steps for achieving the site's vision and seeks Councillor endorsement to begin the process.

Recommended Motion:

That Council:

Support the vision for the Hopetoun Former School site by endorsing the following actions:

- a) To amend C31yari to change the nominated zone for 11 Bruce Street, Hopetoun from Township Zone to Public Use Zone 6 - Local Government.
- b) Subdividing the Hopetoun Former School site into three distinct lots, being for Accommodation, Museum and Housing.
- c) Further subdivide the Housing lot into 10 separate titles.
- d) Endorse for the Chief Executive Officer to engage a consultant to develop a funding submission for the Regional Precincts and Partnership Program, Stream Two; and
- e) Explore the option of having a contingency plan for further funding if Council is unsuccessful with item (d).
- f) That Councillors and community be updated prior to the end of 2025 on the status of the Project.

ATTACHMENTS

[Link: Hopetoun Former School Site Master Plan](#)

[Link: Hopetoun Former School Site Advocacy Document](#)

DISCUSSION

On 21 May 2025 a Strategic Planning session was held with the Chair of the Hopetoun Old School Site Advisory Committee, the consultant engaged to complete the Feasibility and Business Case, the Mayor, a Hopetoun Ward Councillor along with key senior leadership staff.

The meeting was held to discuss the future direction for the site, reflect on unsuccessful funding applications and establish a plan to move forward.

A timeline of activities is outlined below, including recommended steps to move forward.

1. Land Settlement

On 10 November 2022 the site known as 11 Bruce Street Hopetoun (Hopetoun Former School Site) settled, with Yarriambiack Shire Council taking ownership of the land.

In accordance with the Victorian Government Land Transaction Policy, Council was required to rezone the site, from Public Use – Education to an applicable zone within the first 12 months of ownership. Council is currently going through a planning scheme amendment for this site. The planning scheme amendment – C31yari Corrections Amendment was first endorsed on 24 November 2021 and included the former school

site to be rezoned to Township Zone. On 29 March 2023 an amendment to C31yari was endorsed. The draft amendment has been submitted to the Department of Transport and Planning for comment, before commencing the formal advertising and approval processes. However, on review, it is now deemed more applicable that the site be rezoned to Public Use Zone 6 – Local Government.

2. Master Plan Vision for the Site

Council engaged a consultant to complete a master plan of the former school site in late 2021, with the works completed in April 2022. This included extensive community consultation. The master plan that was finalised included a housing development, accommodation venue and the State School being transformed into a museum.

3. Hopetoun Former School Site Feasibility Study and Business Case

Council was successful in receiving funding from the State Government, for the Hopetoun School Site Redevelopment Feasibility Study and Business Case. The funding was received via the State Government Investment Fast Track Fund.

On 23 August 2023, Council endorsed the Hopetoun Former School Site Feasibility Study and Business Case. This included allocating \$50,000 of funding from unallocated revenue to the residential development design phase of the project for the purpose of seeking future investment.

4. Regional Infrastructure Funding – Affordable Houses

Council received \$2.8 million in funding to build seven affordable homes, including one in Hopetoun. Construction is scheduled to begin within the coming months. Council has encountered challenges with installing connecting infrastructure, such as power, water, and sewer, which has delayed the start of the project.

5. Unsuccessful Funding Applications

Council has applied for numerous funding applications for either planning, and/or construction in relation to accommodation and housing to enact all or part of the master plan at the Hopetoun Former School Site.

Council (or in partnership) has applied for the following:

- i. Haven Home Safe applied for funding to deliver a Social Housing Project across Yarriambiack Shire. Part of this application was to support the construction of ten (10) social housing units in Hopetoun.
- ii. Council applied for the State Government Regional Worker Accommodation Fund. Council applied for \$902,500 for the construction of two dwellings and installation of connecting infrastructure. Council supported this application via Council resolution on 21 February 2024.
- iii. Council applied for the planning costs to enable the development of the Former School Site to be “shovel ready” via the Commonwealth Government Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program - Precinct Development and Planning Stream. The funding application was \$783,360.
- iv. Council applied for the State Government Enabling Tourism Funding to plan and prepare the site for tourism, including accommodation and a museum. The requested amount was \$498,360. The Council approved this funding application on 27 March 2024.
- v. Council applied for \$1.525 million from the Commonwealth Housing Support Program to prepare the site for housing by installing utilities and infrastructure such as power, water, sewer, drainage, footpaths, roads, kerbs, and channels.

6. Funded and/or Completed Projects

Council hired an architect to design the accommodation venue. The goal is to make the project investment-ready and attractive for funding. The Council allocated \$50,000 for this project.

A condition report on the State School building has been completed and can be utilised to inform funding applications to refurbish the former State School Building.

A heritage trail and museum study supporting the State School building's redevelopment are complete. This work is vital for funding applications.

Council has commissioned designs and a service plan for a 10-lot subdivision at the former School site. This supports our investment ready approach.

7. Steps to Move Forward

The workshop identified the following steps to be undertaken to move forward with future funding applications.

Housing

Hopetoun Former School Site Rezoning	<p>A planning scheme amendment is currently in process to rezone from Public Use Zone - Education to Township Zone.</p> <p>The rezoning of the entire property to Township Zone will have Windfall Gains Tax implications on Council, as the site is greater than 2 hectares and the Township Zone is a residential zone.</p> <p>The Master Plan for the site outlines that the whole site would not be used for residential purposes. Therefore, an initial rezoning would be recommended to change the land to Public Use Zone – Local Government before subdividing the land and rezoning the residential area to Township Zone. The residential area would be less than 2 hectares.</p>
Subdivision Former School Site	<p>The subdivision designs have been conceptually compiled. It is recommended to be investment ready, that Council move forward with the subdivision – three separate areas for accommodation, museum and housing. Further, break housing down into allotments for future sale / gifting options.</p>
Housing Subdivision and Development Options	<p>Consider the Wimmera Housing Innovation Program (WHIP) as an option. Private interest in investing in the housing subdivision was noted, making it likely to progress in the short term.</p>
Economic Development Options	<p>Consider opportunities on how the State Government Growth Strategy could link with the development of the Hopetoun Former School site.</p>
Enabling Infrastructure	<p>Continue to explore / apply for enabling infrastructure funding to develop the site.</p>

Former Primary School Buildings / Accommodation

Designs	Architect currently completing designs.
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Funding Applications	Regional Precincts and Partnerships Stream 2 to be priority for application.
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Former State School Building / Museum

Scope of Works	Scope of works defined in building report completed by building inspector.
Funding	Opportunity to apply for funding for refurbishment and link to heritage trail study to support the museum.

The following overall actions were identified to be undertaken:

1. Ascertain from Manager Development and Environmental Services timeframe for rezoning: It is estimated that the rezoning will not be complete before the end of the 2025 year.
2. Windfall gains tax implications: Council is seeking legal advice to inform implications and decisions to move forward.
3. Hire a land surveyor to subdivide the Hopetoun School site into four lots, then further divide the housing allotment into individual lots.
4. Reassess the Affordable Housing Project Funding and seek a variation to add the housing subdivision into the scope of works.
5. Create an advertising campaign for WHIP public investment opportunities once Council endorses the strategic vision.
6. Commence preparing a Regional Precincts and Partnerships Stream 2 application if this paper is endorsed by Council.
7. Engage a consultant to compile the funding application.
8. Ensure Council has a contingency plan, with the Federal Government Growing Regions Funding being a possible option for consideration. Noting Council must identify the co-contribution required.

The Regional Infrastructure Funding for the Affordable Housing Project currently has an estimated \$60,000 uncommitted. Some the funding will need to be allocated to the price rise for the delay in constructing the Hopetoun house. It is recommended that Council seek a variation to the funding agreement and include the Hopetoun Former School site subdivision in the scope of works. This action aligns with the Council's aim to increase housing options across the Shire.

RELEVANT LAW

Local Government Act 2020.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Council Plan 2025 – 2029: Strategic Objective 1: An Innovative and Diversified Economy
- Council Plan 2025 – 2029: Strategic Objective 2: A Healthy and Inclusive Community

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

- 24 November 2021 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 14.2 Planning Scheme Corrections
- 29 March 2023 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes –Item 17.3 Planning Scheme Amendment
- 23 August 2023 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 14.2 Endorsement of Hopetoun Former School Site Feasibility Study and Business Case

- 22 November 2023 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 16.2 Dunmunkle Lodge Housing Lease Agreement
- 27 March 2024 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 15.6 Enabling Tourism Funding Application
- 28 August 2024 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 15.14 Commonwealth Housing Support Program Application

OPTIONS

- Councillors could choose not to continue pursuing the site's vision and move to sell the property. It should be noted that there is significant interest invested in the site.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic: The accommodation venue will provide an economic stimulus for the Shire and region, as it was noted in the feasibility study and business case, there was limited facilities that could accommodate large groups. This would encourage groups to stay and spend time within our Shire.

Social: The redevelopment of the site provides an overarching benefit to the Hopetoun and district community. Beautifying and investing in the site, enhances social health and wellbeing outcomes within the municipal district. It creates a sense of pride, and the housing development provides opportunities for people to reside longer in their communities, increasing and/or enhancing social connection.

Financial: Council needs to ensure they invest in project planning to inform grant applications. There is a risk, in this current economic environment that Council could be exposed to cost escalation risks.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The development of the Masterplans for the Hopetoun Former School site undertook extensive community engagement.

Council endorsed a Hopetoun Old School Site Advisory Committee of Council, which was established via an open and transparent nomination process.

The Hopetoun Old School Site Committee was engaged as part of the Feasibility Study and Business Case development.

It is important to note, this project has been a community led and driven project. Council's role has been facilitating and enabling this project to succeed.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not applicable.

RISK

Utilising the Risk Management Framework the following assessment has been made:

Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level	Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk	Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level
Strategy Execution and Change Management Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	This project is aligned with the Council Plan objectives and strategic priorities, along with the Council's Economic Development Strategy, the Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Economic Development Strategy, Horizon Highway and WSMD Strategic Plan. It also supports the strategic vision for Tourism outlined in the WMT Strategy.	Reduces Residual Risk Level

Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level	Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk	Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level
Financial Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	Ensuring funds are dedicated to design and cost estimating will reduce Council's risk of overcommitment.	Increases Residual Risk Level
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	Council is committing to supporting this project, having a plan of action to move forward.	Reduces Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Victoria's Housing Statement - [A long-term housing plan | vic.gov.au](https://www.vic.gov.au/a-long-term-housing-plan)
- National Housing Accord - [Delivering the National Housing Accord | Treasury.gov.au](https://www.treasury.gov.au/delivering-the-national-housing-accord)
- Horizon Highway - Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Partnership Strategy
- Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Economic Development Strategy
- Wimmera Mallee Tourism Strategy
- Wimmera Southern Mallee 2023-2027 Strategic Plan
- Rural Council's Victoria Strategy 2020-2024

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

Councillor Chris Lehmann and Councillor Andrew McLean serve as appointed members of the Hopetoun Old School Site Advisory Committee. Their participation does not constitute a conflict of interest, as they are fulfilling their responsibilities under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

15.12 PUBLIC TRANSPARENCY POLICY

Prepared by Monique Metlika, Governance Support Officer

SUMMARY

The Council is required to adopt and maintain a Public Transparency Policy in accordance with section 57 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act). This policy is designed to give effect to the Public Transparency Principles as outlined in section 58 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

By implementing this policy, the Council ensures that its operations are conducted in an open and transparent manner, thereby promoting accountability and fostering public trust. The policy outlines the principles and practices that the Council will follow to make information accessible to the public, except where confidentiality is required under the provisions of the Act or where it is contrary to the public interest.

Recommended Motion:

That Council:

- a) Rescind the Public Transparency Policy adopted by Council on 25 October 2023; and
- b) Adopt the revised Public Transparency Policy as attached to this report.

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: Public Transparency Policy](#)

[Link: Public Transparency - Yarriambiack Shire Council](#)

DISCUSSION

Council is committed to the principles of public transparency, good governance, open and accountable conduct and making Council information publicly available, except where that information is confidential under the provisions of the Act or contrary to the public's interest. This policy aims to formalise Council's commitment to transparent decision-making processes and to promote public awareness of the availability of Council information.

The policy is supported by the Freedom of Information Part II Statement, which outlines in detail the types of information available to the public.

Council initially adopted the Public Transparency Policy on 26 August 2020. It was subsequently reviewed and adopted on 25 October 2023, adhering to its three-year review cycle.

Although the next review was scheduled for 25 October 2026, an earlier review was conducted to ensure the policy clearly outlines where information can be found on Council's website and to confirm compliance with section 57(c) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The following changes have been made to the revised policy:

- a) Administrative changes and updates.
- b) Reordering of contents.
- c) Ensuring that the location of Council records that at a minimum, will be available on Council's website, are defined and accessible.
- d) Addition of Section 4.1 *Council Information Required Under the Local Government Act 2020* – to ensure compliance with section 57(c) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
- e) Review and Update of Section 5 *Publications* – to accurately and comprehensively reflect Council's publications.

- f) Clarification in Section 8 *Non-Compliance with this Policy* – stating that the Governance Officer is the contact person for contesting decisions regarding the release of information.
- g) Addition of a disclaimer Section 12 *Monitoring, Evaluation and Review* – stating that administrative changes can be made without Council’s consideration and adoption, while any material changes to the policy’s intent require Council’s approval.

During the review and update of the Public Transparency Policy, it was identified as best practice to develop a dedicated webpage for Public Transparency, particularly concerning the required Registers. The Public Transparency webpage provides detailed information on the following topics:

- Public Transparency Policy
- Leases and Licences Register
- Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Register
- Conflicts of Interest (including Register)
- Interstate Travel (including Register)
- Donations and Grants Register
- Advisory Committees of Council Terms of Reference

You can access the Public Transparency webpage under the attachments section of this report.

Additionally, it is important to note that the Freedom of Information Part II Statement was reviewed and updated on 30 May 2025. The Freedom of Information Part II Statement and the Public Transparency Policy are closely related.

The Public Transparency Policy outlines the Council's commitment to transparency and specifies which documents are to be publicly available on the Council’s website. In contrast, the Freedom of Information Part II Statement details the documents that must be made available to the public, the methods of access, and the relevant legislation.

RELEVANT LAW

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Freedom of Information Part II Statement
- Governance Rules
- Information Privacy Policy
- Local Government Privacy Guide
- Council Plan: Strategic Objective 4 - A Council Who Serves its Community

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

- 22 July 2020 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 12.7 Public Transparency Policy and Freedom of Information Part II Statement
- 26 August 2020 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 12.6 Public Transparency Policy
- 25 October 2025 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 15.7 Public Transparency Policy Review

OPTIONS

- a) Council could choose to release the updated version of the Public Transparency Policy for public consultation. However, as there are no major changes it would be deemed unnecessary.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic: Without the Public Transparency Policy, there may be increased costs associated with managing public records and responding to information requests. This could strain Council's budget and divert funds from other essential services and projects.

Social: The absence of a Public Transparency Policy could lead to decreased public trust and confidence in Council. This may result in reduced community engagement and participation, negatively impacting Council's ability to effectively serve the community.

Financial: The financial sustainability of Council could be compromised due to the potential for increased costs associated with managing public records, legal actions, and decreased efficiency in Council operations.

Implementing the Public Transparency Policy is crucial for maintaining a harmonious and effective Council, which in turn supports the overall sustainability of the municipal district.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement occurred with the adoption of Council's first Public Transparency Policy to comply with the *Local Government Act 2020*.

No material changes have been made to the policy, and therefore it would be deemed that this is an administrative review of the policy and community engagement is not required.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not required for this report.

RISK

Utilising the Risk Management Framework the following assessment has been made:

<i>Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level</i>	<i>Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk</i>	<i>Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level</i>
Corporate Governance, Compliance and Liability Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	The Public Transparency Policy ensures compliance with the requirement under section 57 and 58 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> .	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	Ensuring that the Council's commitment to making documents available to the public, in accordance with legislative frameworks, is both obtainable and accessible.	Maintains Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

15.13 COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE AND FEE WAIVER POLICY

Prepared by Tammy Smith, Chief Executive Officer

SUMMARY

The Community Assistance and Fee Waiver Policy establishes a comprehensive framework for determining the type and extent of support provided to the Yarriambiack community as well as the method by which such assistance is documented.

This policy outlines the specifics regarding the types of assistance and fee waivers available, including the eligibility criteria and governance structures that facilitate the management of these requests.

Recommended Motion:

That Council:

- a) Rescind the Community Assistance and Fee Waiver Policy adopted on the 25 May 2022; and
- b) Adopt the revised Community Assistance and Fee Waiver Policy as attached to this report.

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: Community Assistance and Fee Waiver Policy](#)

DISCUSSION

The Community Assistance and Fee Waiver Policy mandates a comprehensive review and update every three years. This regular review cycle ensures that the policy remains relevant and effective in providing support to the community. By periodically assessing and revising the policy, we can address emerging needs, incorporate feedback, and align with best practices and regulatory requirement.

The following changes have been made to the revised policy:

- a) Restructured the policy to ensure flow of information for ease of reading.
- b) Redefined where planning permits are permissible to be waived in accordance with the Planning and Environment (Fee) Regulations 2016.
- c) Removed the ability to waiver building permit fees, as Council must comply with the Competitive Neutrality Policy. The competitive neutrality principles aim to promote efficient competition between public and private businesses. Specifically, they seek to ensure that government businesses do not enjoy competitive advantages over their private-sector competitors by virtue of their public-sector ownership.
- d) Provided greater definition and scope for when transfer station fee waivers will be considered and approved.
- e) Included the consideration of Local Law Permit fee waivers for registered events.
- f) Expanded policy now includes Financial Assistance with Grant and Project Co-contributions for community clarity.
- g) Expanded to include Community Group allocations, such as Halls, Progress Associations (or equivalent) Weir Pools, Recreation Reserve and Swimming Pools. A criteria has been included to define conditions for receiving allocations.
- h) Expanded to include Township Anniversary Milestone Contributions.

RELEVANT LAW

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- Planning and Environment (Fee) Regulations 2016

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Council Plan 2025-2029: Strategic Objectives 4: A Council that Services its Community.
- Priority Projects Framework
- Project Management Policy
- External Private Works Policy

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

- 25 May 2022 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 12.2 Community assistance and Fee Waiver Policy

OPTIONS

- a) The Councillors could choose to make alterations to the policy, and/or request that the policy is released for community feedback. It should be noted that the wavering of planning permits criteria is included in regulation. Councillors do have the choice, where applicable, to waive permit fees via a resolution of Council. Council nominated building permit fees may be waived; however, it is recommended that Councillors do not provide a benefit that competes with private industry. Council also incurs costs for the building permit process, waiving the fees would inhibit Council from recovering the costs associated with engaging a contractor to perform the works.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic: The policy includes financial contributions for community groups in relation to Weir Pools, Swimming Pools, Recreation Reserves, Halls and Progress Associations (or equivalent). Supporting volunteers to operate and manage important assets and groups supports economic development and prosperity of our townships.

Social: Financial contributions and the waiving of fees, where possible, assists with enhancing social assets and amenity, enhancing the health and wellbeing of our community.

Financial: A clear framework outlining where Council will provide a waiver of fees, ensure Council is being fiscally responsible, and is recouping costs associated with providing a service for the community.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement has not been undertaken with the revision of this policy.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not applicable for this report.

RISK

Utilising the Risk Management Framework the following assessment has been made:

<i>Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level</i>	<i>Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk</i>	<i>Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level</i>
Corporate Governance, Compliance and Liability Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	A framework for fee waivers and community assistance is necessary to ensure all parties understand the process and expectations clearly.	Reduces Residual Risk Level
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	A clear framework reduces the risk of reputational damage and ensures a transparent, equitable process is applied to decision making.	Maintains Residual Risk Level

<i>Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level</i>	<i>Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk</i>	<i>Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level</i>
Financial Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	A clear framework and clarity regarding Councils fee waivers and access to funding allocations ensures Council can mitigate its financial risks.	Reduces Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

15.14 INTERNAL RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

Prepared by Monique Metlika, Governance Support Officer

SUMMARY

On Wednesday 25 June 2024, the *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024* (the Amendment Act) was given Royal Assent. The Amendment Act includes reforms to strengthen Council leadership, capability and Councillor conduct, improve early intervention and effective dispute resolution and strengthen oversight mechanisms. The Amendment Act introduced several modifications to the *Local Government Act 2020*, with some changes becoming effective on 26 June 2024 and others on 26 October 2024. On 26 October 2024, the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Amendment Regulations 2024 (Amending Regulations) came into effect which amended the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020 to implement these reforms.

As prescribed in section 140 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, for the purposes of ensuring good governance and standards of conduct are observed and maintained by a Council, the Council must implement and adopt any prescribed procedures in relation to dealing with alleged breaches of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

Recommended Motion:

That Council:

- a) Adopt the Internal Resolution Procedure as attached to this report, in accordance with section 140 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
- b) Councillors commit to adhering to the Model Councillor Code of Conduct and will address any breaches in accordance with the Internal Resolution Procedure.

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: Internal Resolution Procedure](#)

DISCUSSION

The Internal Resolution Procedure outlines the process for resolving disputes between Councillors at Yarriambiack Shire Council. It encourages a respectful and non-violent working environment and provides a structured approach to handle alleged breaches of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

The procedure includes stages such as direct discussion, conciliation, and formal dispute resolution, aiming to minimise costs and disruptions while maintaining effective working relationships. The document also specifies the roles and responsibilities of the involved parties, confidentiality requirements, and circumstances where the procedure does not apply.

RELEVANT LAW

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

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Council Plan: Strategic Objective 4 - A Council Who Serves its Community
- Model Councillor Code of Conduct
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Manual
- Information Privacy Policy

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Nil.

OPTIONS

- a) Council could choose to release the Internal Resolution Procedure for public consultation. However, given that this procedure is mandated under section 140 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, it is deemed unnecessary.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic: Without an internal resolution procedure, unresolved disputes among Councillors could lead to increased legal costs and potential financial liabilities for the Council. This could strain Council's budget and divert funds from other essential services and projects.

Social: The absence of a structured approach to resolving disputes may result in a toxic work environment, decreased morale, and reduced productivity among Councillors and staff. This could negatively impact Council's ability to effectively serve the community and maintain public trust.

Environmental: While the direct environmental impact may be minimal, the indirect effects could be significant. A dysfunctional Council may struggle to implement and enforce environmental policies and initiatives, hindering progress towards sustainability goals.

Climate Change: A lack of effective governance and dispute resolution could impede Council's ability to plan and execute climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. This could result in missed opportunities to address climate risks and enhance community resilience.

Financial: The financial sustainability of Council could be compromised due to the potential for increased costs associated with unresolved disputes, legal actions, and decreased efficiency in Council operations.

Implementing the internal resolution procedure is crucial for maintaining a harmonious and effective Council, which in turn supports the overall sustainability of the municipal district.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not required for this report.

RISK

Utilising the Risk Management Framework the following assessment has been made:

<i>Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level</i>	<i>Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk</i>	<i>Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level</i>
Corporate Governance, Compliance and Liability Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	Implementing the Internal Resolution Procedure decreases corporate governance, compliance, and liability risk by ensuring adherence to good governance practices, maintaining compliance with legislative requirements, and reducing potential legal liabilities associated with unresolved disputes.	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	Implementing the Internal Resolution Procedure decreases reputational risk by demonstrating the Council's commitment to good governance and transparency, thereby maintaining public trust and preventing negative publicity.	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Financial Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	Implementing the Internal Resolution Procedure safeguards the Council's financial sustainability by mitigating the risk of increased costs	Reduces Residual Risk Level

<i>Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level</i>	<i>Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk</i>	<i>Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level</i>
	associated with unresolved disputes, legal actions, and decreased operational efficiency.	
Strategy Execution and Change Management Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	Implementing the Internal Resolution Procedure ensures that Councillors can work cohesively and effectively deliver the objectives of the Council Plan.	Reduces Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

15.15 COUNCILLOR CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Prepared by Monique Metlika, Governance Support Officer

SUMMARY

On Wednesday 25 June 2024, the *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024* (the Amendment Act) was given Royal Assent. The Amendment Act includes reforms to strengthen Council leadership, capability and Councillor conduct, improve early intervention and effective dispute resolution and strengthen oversight mechanisms. The Amendment Act introduced several modifications to the *Local Government Act 2020*, with some changes becoming effective on 26 June 2024 and others on 26 October 2024. On 26 October 2024, the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Amendment Regulations 2024 (Amending Regulations) came into effect which amended the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020 to implement these reforms.

The Amending Regulations do not mandate that Councils adopt a Confidentiality Policy. However, Councils may choose to adopt any policy, protocol, or procedure they deem appropriate for good governance and are encouraged to do so to guide Councillors in meeting the standards of conduct outlined in the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

Recommended Motion:

That Council:

- a) Adopt the Councillor Confidentiality Policy as attached to this report.

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: Councillor Confidentiality Policy](#)

DISCUSSION

As a best practice, we have chosen to implement a Councillor Confidentiality Policy (the Policy) to ensure good governance and to help Councillors meet the standards of conduct outlined in the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

The Councillor Confidentiality Policy aims to protect Council information provided to Councillors to assist them in their roles while ensuring it is managed securely before a Council decision is made. The Policy emphasises the importance of confidentiality to allow Council officers to provide candid views and facilitate open discussions. It also ensures compliance with legal confidentiality provisions related to personal and health information.

Additionally, the Policy reinforces the public transparency principles, stating that Council information should be available except in specific circumstances provided by law. It includes provisions for the classification of internal documents by the Chief Executive Officer, ensuring that documents are subject to access controls if their disclosure would be contrary to the public interest.

RELEVANT LAW

- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- *Health Records Act 2001*
- Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2024*

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Information Privacy Policy
- Public Transparency Policy
- Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy and Procedure

- Model Councillor Code of Conduct
- Local Government Privacy Guide

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Nil.

OPTIONS

- a) Council could choose to release the Internal Resolution Procedure for public consultation. However, it is deemed unnecessary.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic: Without the Councillor Confidentiality Policy, there may be increased costs associated with managing confidential information and responding to breaches of confidentiality. This could strain Council's budget and divert funds from other essential services and projects.

Social: The absence of a Councillor Confidentiality Policy could lead to decreased public trust and confidence in Council. This may result in reduced community engagement and participation, negatively impacting Council's ability to effectively serve the community.

Financial: The financial sustainability of Council could be compromised due to the potential for increased costs associated with managing confidential information, legal actions, and decreased efficiency in Council operations.

Implementing the Councillor Confidentiality Policy is crucial for maintaining a harmonious and effective Council, which in turn supports the overall sustainability of the municipal district.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not required for this report.

RISK

Utilising the Risk Management Framework the following assessment has been made:

<i>Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level</i>	<i>Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk</i>	<i>Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level</i>
Corporate Governance, Compliance and Liability Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	Implementing the Councillor Confidentiality Policy reduces corporate governance, compliance, and liability risk by ensuring the secure management of confidential information, maintaining compliance with legal requirements, and mitigating potential legal liabilities associated with mishandling confidential data.	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	Implementing the Councillor Confidentiality Policy reduces reputational risk by ensuring the secure management of confidential information, thereby maintaining public trust and preventing negative publicity.	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Financial Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	Implementing the Councillor Confidentiality Policy reduces financial risk by ensuring the secure management of confidential information, thereby mitigating potential costs associated with breaches of confidentiality, legal actions, and decreased operational efficiency.	Reduces Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

15.16 COUNCILLOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PROGRAM

Prepared by Monique Metlika, Governance Support Officer

SUMMARY

On Wednesday 25 June 2024, the *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024* (the Amendment Act) was given Royal Assent. The Amendment Act includes reforms to strengthen Council leadership, capability and Councillor conduct, improve early intervention and effective dispute resolution and strengthen oversight mechanisms. The Amendment Act introduced several modifications to the *Local Government Act 2020*, with some changes becoming effective on 26 June 2024 and others on 26 October 2024. On 26 October 2024, the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Amendment Regulations 2024 (Amending Regulations) came into effect which amended the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020 to implement these reforms.

Section 33A of the *Local Government Act 2020* mandates that a Councillor must complete professional development training annually to ensure that the Councillor understands their role and responsibilities.

Recommended Motion:

That Council:

- a) Adopt the Councillor Professional Development Policy and Program as attached to this report.

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: Councillor Professional Development Policy and Program](#)

DISCUSSION

The Councillor Professional Development Policy and Program (the Policy and Program) outlines the Yarriambiack Shire Council's approach to enhancing the skills and knowledge of its Councillors. The Policy and Program aligns with section 33A(3)(b)(i) of the *Local Government Act 2020* which mandates that Councillors undertake professional development training annually, starting from the first full calendar year after their election.

The training outlined in the Policy and Program includes mandatory candidate training, induction program for newly elected Councillors, and ongoing professional development activities throughout their term. The document emphasises the importance of good governance, compliance with legislative obligations, and the development of leadership skills. It also outlines the specific training modules required by regulation 6(A)(2) of the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020, which Councillors are obligated to complete.

The program aims to ensure Councillors are well-equipped to fulfill their roles effectively and make meaningful contributions to their communities. It features a well-organized schedule of training activities aimed at addressing any skills or knowledge gaps and offering refresher courses. The document also highlights the importance of certification and the consequences of failing to complete the required training.

RELEVANT LAW

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

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Council Expense Policy
- Model Councillor Code of Conduct

OPTIONS

- a) Council could choose to release the Councillor Professional Development Policy and Program for public consultation. However, it is deemed unnecessary.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic: The policy ensures that Councillors are well-equipped to fulfill their roles effectively, which can lead to better decision-making and resource management. This can result in cost savings and more efficient use of public funds

Social: By providing ongoing professional development, the policy helps Councillors stay informed about best practices and emerging issues, which can enhance their ability to serve the community effectively. This can lead to improved community engagement and trust in local government

Environmental: The policy includes training on environmental issues and climate change, which can help Councillors make informed decisions that promote environmental sustainability and resilience.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not required for this report.

RISK

Utilising the Risk Management Framework the following assessment has been made:

<i>Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level</i>	<i>Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk</i>	<i>Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level</i>
Corporate Governance, Compliance and Liability Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	The Councillor Professional Development Policy and Program reduces corporate governance, compliance, and liability risk by ensuring that Councillors are well-equipped to fulfill their roles effectively, adhere to good governance practices, and comply with legislative obligations.	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	The Councillor Professional Development Policy and Program reduces reputational risk by ensuring that Councillors are well-equipped to fulfill their roles effectively, adhere to good governance practices, and stay informed about best practices and emerging issues, thereby maintaining public trust and preventing negative publicity.	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Financial Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	The Councillor Professional Development Policy and Program reduces financial risk by ensuring that Councillors are well-equipped to fulfill their roles effectively, leading to better decision-making and resource management, which can result in cost savings and more efficient use of public funds.	Reduces Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

15.17 LEASES AND LICENSING POLICY

Prepared by: Jo White, Governance Officer

BACKGROUND

The Leases and Licensing Policy details a comprehensive framework for managing assets on behalf of the community.

Council Officers are currently negotiating a high volume of leases and licences. Although the Policy isn't due for review until November 2026, Council Officers are requesting a minor change to the policy to assist with negotiations with Community groups.

Recommended Motion:

That Council:

- a) Endorse the adoption of the attached Leases and Licensing Policy; and
- b) Rescind the Leases and Licensing Policy that was adopted on 22 November 2023.

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: Leases and Licensing Policy](#)

DISCUSSION

The Leases and Licensing Policy details the process of Council entering into formal agreements with community groups and other organisations, to occupy Council managed assets for the greater benefit of the Community.

Council have 70 plus tenanted buildings/locations across the Shire, many of which have been occupied long term. The Governance Team and relevant Managers are working towards putting in place Leases or Licences to ensure Council's assets are managed and protected, and the tenant is aware of their responsibilities.

Historically, this Policy has offered a maximum Lease or Licence term of five (5) years. Having the option to offer a longer term of seven (7) years for existing tenants would have the following benefits:

- Improve Council's administrative efficiency without governance principles being compromised;
- This action by the Council demonstrates a commitment to its long-term tenants, often volunteer organisations responsible for maintaining the Council's assets.

The Leases and Licensing Policy mandates a comprehensive review and update every three years. This regular review cycle ensures that the policy remains relevant and effective in providing support to the community. By periodically assessing and revising the policy, we can address emerging needs, incorporate feedback, and align with best practices and regulatory requirement.

The following changes have been made to the revised policy:

- Increasing Lease/Licence Term from 5 years to 5-7 years.
- Amendment of Council Position Titles.
- Blanket rule regarding Public Liability Insurance – minimum of \$ 20 million to all tenants.
- Included requirement for all tenants/Licensees to have a Key register.

Going forward, the review cycle would revert to a 3 year cycle from November 2026.

RELEVANT LAW

Local Government Act 2020.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Leases and Licencing Policy
- Public Transparency Policy
- Community Engagement Policy
- Council Plan 2025-2029 Strategic Objective 4: A Council who Serves its Community.

OPTIONS

- a) Council could choose to leave the standard five (5) year term in place and not accept the changes.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Social: The majority of Council's tenants are community groups run by passionate teams of volunteers. by enabling the option of longer lease/licence terms, Council demonstrates faith in their management.

Financial: The Governance Team and relevant Managers spend a great deal of time preparing and negotiating the Lease and imbedded documents. Doing this less often has economical benefits.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not applicable.

RISK

Utilising the Risk Management Framework the following assessment has been made:

<i>Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level</i>	<i>Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk</i>	<i>Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level</i>
Corporate Governance, Compliance and Liability Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	The option for longer term leases and licences will continue to enable Council to meet its corporate governance and compliance obligations and reduces its liability risk.	Reduces Residual Risk Level
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	The option for longer term leases shows good faith in Council's tenants minimising any reputational damage or negative feedback to Council.	Reduces Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

16 COUNCIL REPORTS FOR NOTING

16.1 COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY 2025

Prepared by Tammy Smith, Chief Executive Officer

SUMMARY

Council participates in the Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey each year. This report provides an update on the 2025 results.

Recommended Motion:

That Council:

- a) Note the 2025 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey for Yarriambiack Shire Council; and
- b) That the results will be published on Council's website.

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: Community Satisfaction Survey 2025 – Yarriambiack Shire Council Report](#)

[Attachment: Community Satisfaction Survey 2025 – Yarriambiack Shire Council Tailored Report](#)

DISCUSSION

Background

Council participates annually in the Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey each year. The survey is conducted by the Department of Government Services on behalf of participating Councils. A minimum of 400 local residents and ratepayers in each municipality over 18 years of age are selected at random.

Council moved to a quarterly data capture process, opposed to an annual process for the 2023 year, and continued this into 2024 and 2025.

Interviews were undertaken across Yarriambiack Shire Council. These interviews were conducted on a quarterly basis, via a telephone survey which collected direct feedback from the community about Council. It covered:

- Council's overall performance.
- Community consultation and engagement.
- Customer service.
- Overall council direction.

In 2024 Council also introduced an additional question in relation to roads, to better understand and pinpoint what particular roads are an area of concern for residents.

Performance Across the Sector

Yarriambiack Shire scored 56 for overall Council performance. This was higher than the small rural shire average of 54 and the state wide average of 53.

Performance Across Yarriambiack Shire

Council's top performing areas were recreational facilities, elderly support services and waste management, and the bottom three performing areas were sealed local roads, lobbying and community decisions. However, community decisions results improved from 2024.

Council's customer service results increased from 2024 from 67 to 68, which is greater than the small rural and the statewide average.

Waste management improved by two points; however, it scored lower than the small rural average by one point, and was on par with the statewide average. Waste

management continues to be a challenge for our Council, as we navigate the high cost of servicing our community.

Improvement Areas

Sealed local roads continue to score poorly at 35, two points higher than 2024 and less than the small rural average of 44 and state average of 45.

In 2024 Council introduced an additional question to the survey, requesting residents identify the roads they were most concerned about. This continued into 2025.

When analysing the verbatim detailed comments in relation to the roads, it identified that majority of the concerns raised related to Vic Roads roads.

Whilst we recognise our roads require increased investment and continue to lobby both Commonwealth and State Government for further funding to address our renewal gap, it should be noted that our scoring also reflects the state of our surrounding Victorian Government owned, maintained and managed roads.

RELEVANT LAW

Local Government Act 2020

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Council Plan 2025-2029, Strategic Objective 4: A Council Who Serves its Community

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable.

OPTIONS

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

One of the Overarching governance principles in section 9 of the Local Government Act 2020 is that the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted.

There are no sustainability implications identified in this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The survey is conducted annually by the Department of Government Services on behalf of participating councils. A minimum of 400 local residents and ratepayers in each municipality over 18 years of age are selected at random.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not applicable.

RISK

Utilising the Risk Management Framework the following assessment has been made:

<i>Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level</i>	<i>Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk</i>	<i>Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level</i>
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	Council has reflected on the results of the Community Satisfaction Survey and will work to address each of the areas identified as lower than either the state or rural average.	Maintains Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

16.2 EMERGENCY SERVICES AND VOLUNTEERS FUND UPDATE

Prepared by Tammy Smith, Chief Executive Officer, at the request of the Mayor

SUMMARY

From 01 July 2025, the Victorian State Government will replace the Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL) with the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF).

The aim of the fund is to generate revenue to make sure the Emergency Services have the resources they need to keep Victorians safe, and to help them recover from natural disaster.

This paper describes the changes and potential effects on Shire rate payers. It also provides an overview of the legal advice received.

Recommended Motion:

That Council:

- a) Note the report and consider the reports contents to inform future actions and notices of motion.

ATTACHMENTS

Link: [Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund | dtf.vic.gov.au](https://dtf.vic.gov.au/emergency-services-and-volunteers-fund)

Link: [Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund update | MAV website](#)

DISCUSSION

1. Background

The ESVF will apply from 01 July 2025. Active volunteers and life members of Victorian Emergency Services are entitled to a rebate on the ESVF on their principal place of residence or farm, which will be administered by the State Government through the Department of Government Services.

Similar to the FSPL, the ESVF will be calculated based on a fixed charge that varies by property type, and a variable charge based on property value.

Pensioners, veterans, and single farm enterprises will continue to receive concessions. At this stage, the concession remains unchanged despite a significant increase in the ESVF compared to the FSPL.

The ESVF will still be collected through local councils.

The Victoria State Government has communicated that every dollar raised will go towards vital life-saving equipment, vehicles, staff, training for volunteers, community education, and recovery support for when Victorians need it most.

The FSPL was implemented in 2013 following a recommendation of the Bushfire Royal Commission. FSPL liabilities comprise a fixed charge and a variable component:

- The fixed charge is different for residential and non-residential properties and increases annually based on the consumer price index. In 2024-25 the residential fixed charge was \$132 and the non-residential fixed charge was \$267.
- The variable component is based on a property's capital improved value (CIV) and a variable rate (cents per \$'000 of CIV) depending on its property classification.

Pensioner Concession Card and Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card holders are entitled to a \$50 concession on their FSPL liability for their principal place of residence. Farmers with multiple properties that operate as a single enterprise may be eligible to pay a single fixed charge under the single farming enterprise exemption.

From 01 July 2025, the vacant land category will be abolished, with vacant land allocated to its corresponding land use classification.

Variable rates will increase to raise additional revenue to fund the services being covered by the ESVF.

From 01 July 2026, a new category will be created for residential principal place of residence and non-principal place of residence residential properties will incur a non-residential fixed charge.

The existing \$50 concession for pensioners and veterans, and the concession for single farm enterprises will continue to apply. Fixed rates will continue to be set in alignment with CPI.

2. Changes to the Initial Proposed ESVF

The State Government has outlined several changes to the ESVF on the back of advocacy from across the sector and the community. The initial proposed rate of 83 cents per \$1,000 CIV was reduced to 71.8 cents.

However, further changes have occurred, with the Primary Production variable rate of 28.7 cents per \$1,000 CIV being frozen for the 2025-26 financial year. However, it is envisaged that it will go up to 71.8 cents per \$1,000 CIV in the 2026-27 financial year.

Table 1: Comparison of 2024-25 FSPL and 2025-26 ESVF variable rates

Sector	FSPL Current rates (2024-25)			ESVF Rates (2025-26)		
	Variable rate (cents per \$1,000 CIV)	Fixed charge (\$)	Median liability (\$)	Variable rate (cents per \$1,000 CIV)	Fixed charge (\$)	Median liability (\$)
Residential PPR*	8.7	132	191	17.3	136	254
Residential non-PPR*	8.7	132	191	17.3	136	254
Commercial	66.4	267	748	133	275	1,239
Industrial	81.1	267	859	133	275	1,246
Primary Production	28.7	267	621	28.7	275	629
Public Benefit	5.7	267	320	5.7	275	328
Vacant**	29.0	267	503	N/A	N/A	N/A

The estimated impact on Primary Production of \$2.5million increase is not applicable for the 25/26 financial year, as the primary production rate has been frozen. However, as the increase has only been placed on hold for 12 months, the impact is likely to be realised in 26/27 financial year.

Category	FSPL Total 24-25	ESVF Total 25-26	Increase
Commercial	\$74,890.56	\$101,243.40	\$26,352.84
Exempt	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Industrial	\$108,179.95	\$140,186.72	\$32,006.77
Non Leviable	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Primary Production**	\$1,987,189.69	\$4,547,595.05	\$2,560,405.36
Public Benefit	\$32,844.86	\$33,915.68	\$1,070.82
Residential	\$519,087.36	\$587,050.64	\$67,963.28
TOTAL	\$2,722,192.42	\$5,409,991.48	\$2,687,799.06

** primary production ESVF modelled on 71.8 cents per \$1,000 CIV which is not applicable for the 25-26 financial year.

3. Legal Advice

Councillors have requested to assess their options regarding opposing the levy and have relied on the legal advice sourced by the Municipal Association of Victoria to assist with their decision making.

The key questions that the Councillors wished to understand, which is in alignment with the MAV legal advice is as follows, including a summary of the answers:

- a) *When the Fire Services Property Levy Amendment (Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund) Bill 2025 (the Bill) becomes law and commences to operate, will councils be obliged to collect the Emergency Services and Volunteers Funding Levy (the Levy)?*

The Council is obligated to collect the ESVF. Although a council is not subject to penalties for failing to fulfill this duty, the Victorian Government may seek an order in the nature of Mandamus to compel compliance with its legislative obligations. An order in the nature of Mandamus compels a public body to perform a statutory duty. Furthermore, the Victorian Government possesses a range of extra-legal measures to address a council's failure to collect the Levy.

The Victorian Government could look to have Councillors suspended or even dismissed from office if the duty to collect the Levy was not performed. And then there is a range of extra-legal measures available to it. It is possible that critical funding could be withheld from a council if it refused to collect the Levy.

- b) *If a ratepayer pays less than the aggregate of a council's rates and charges and the Levy, must a council allocate a proportion of what has been paid towards payment of the Levy? Does it make any difference if the ratepayer explicitly says that they are refusing to pay the Levy?*

If a ratepayer pays less than the aggregate of a council's rates and charges and the Levy, a council must proportionally allocate some of the amount paid towards the Levy. This is irrespective of whether the ratepayer has expressly indicated that they do not wish to pay any part of the Levy.

- c) *Can a council collect the Levy through a separate invoice or must the notice levying payment form part of the Rates Notice sent by the council?*

A council cannot use a separate invoice to collect the Levy. Rather, the Levy must appear on a council's Rates Notice. That said, it is open to a council to create a very distinct part of its Rates Notice devoted to the Levy. Equally, a council could make

provision for the Levy on a separate page of its Rates Notice as long as it could be said that both pages constituted a single Rates Notice.

4. Consideration for Councillors

Councillors may consider instructing the CEO not to collect the levy or to pass it on. However, it is important for Councillors to recognise their role and legislative authority regarding requesting actions from the CEO that may conflict with legislative requirements. It would be recommended that Councillors seek legal advice before making such a request.

Councillors also need to consider implications for withholding the levy payment. Yarriambiack Shire Council is heavily reliant on grant funding. In the 25/26 financial year, the budget estimates that 44% of the Council's income will be derived from grants. If grant funding was withheld from Council (as a result of Council withholding the levy payment), we would experience significant cashflow implications.

Rates notices are printed on both sides. Separating the Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund levy on the front page is being considered to clarify it is separate from Council rates and charges, while avoiding extra pages.

There are serious concerns relating to primary producers not paying the ESVF in a protest against the decision. As outlined in this report, Council is still required to pass on the levy payment, as a percentage of the amount collected. Regardless of the reason for the reduced payment, the payment must be divided between the council's rates and charges and the quantum of the Levy proportionally paid. The concern relating to non-payment has eased, with the State Government freezing the ESVF variable rate for primary producers for the 25/26 financial year.

Primary producers constitute approximately 85% of the Council's rates base. The majority of our rates are collected in February each year, when full payment is required. The Council often encounters cashflow challenges between November and February and relies on its redraw facility to meet commitments as it awaits the payment of rates and charges. During this upcoming period, Council Officers will closely monitor the situation, as the Council may need to increase its overdraft, and potentially delay works until sufficient funds are available.

RELEVANT LAW

Local Government Act 2020

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

- 26 February 2025 – Ordinary Meeting of Council Minutes – Item 16.1 Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund

OPTIONS

This paper has been requested by Councillors for information only, to inform future decision making and Councillor direction in relation to this matter.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Social: According to the 2021 Census by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Yarriambiack Shire Council residents have a median weekly income well below the Victorian and Australian averages. Additionally, 27.5% of residents earn less than \$650 per week, compared to 16.4% in Victoria and 16.5% in Australia. Our residents also have higher rates of long-term health conditions than the state and national averages.

Financial: Based on our Census statistics, additional financial pressures may affect ratepayers' ability to pay and place further strain on the Council's cashflow position.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There has been limited consultation with the community and Council in relation to this charge. Council is not the responsible entity for undertaking the community consultation process.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not applicable.

RISK

Utilising the Risk Management Framework the following assessment has been made:

<i>Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level</i>	<i>Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk</i>	<i>Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level</i>
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	The impact of this ESVF is highly likely to have an impact on Councils reputation, as the charge will be on the rates notice, and as it is paid to Council, it will be deemed as a Council charge.	Increases Residual Risk Level
Financial Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	It is highly likely rates arrears will increase due to the increasing financial pressure on our rate payers, due to the rising cost of living. Council risks experiencing a cashflow issue, with primary producers outlining they will not pay the ESVF.	Increases Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

[Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund | dtf.vic.gov.au](https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/emergency-services-and-volunteers-fund)

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

16.3 CUSTOMER REQUEST MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT

Prepared by Daniel Brandon, Manager Business Systems

SUMMARY

This report outlines the comprehensive analysis of Council's Customer Request Management (CRM) activities from 01 July 2024 to 30 June 2025. It includes detailed accounts of the total CRMs managed within this period, as well as those carried forward from previous periods. Additionally, the report highlights overdue and on hold CRMs including insight into the reasons for their delays and when they are expected to be resolved.

Recommended Motion:

That Council:

Note the report attached and presented.

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: CRM Quarterly Report March 2025 – May 2025](#)

DISCUSSION

The attached report outlines the comprehensive analysis of Council's Customer Request Management system (CRM) activities from 01 July 2024 to 30 June 2025. It includes detailed accounts of the total CRMs managed within this period, as well as those carried forward from previous periods.

Special focus is given to the CRMs created and closed between March 2025 - May 2025, alongside those placed on hold with respective rationales.

Additionally, the report highlights overdue CRMs and provides insight into the reasons for their delays and when they are expected to be resolved.

Community Engagement

Council has been improving its Customer Request Management system and its reporting, recording, and analysis processes based on community feedback. Methods to capture CRMs include:

- Calls through our Customer Service team
- Snap Send Solve app
- Direct reporting on our website
- Reporting via our Community Engagement Van

Customer Request Summary and Actions

Since 01 July 2024 Council has received 2502 customer requests.

The CRMs created between March 2025 - May 2025 amounted to 637, with a significant number of CRMs related to Rates (107), Waste Rubbish and Bins (83), Planning and Building (64), and this indicates a high level of activity in these areas during this period.

The CRMs closed during the same period totalled 486. The highest number of closed Rates (105), Planning and Building (51) and Other Enquiries (36). This suggests that these areas were effectively managed and resolved within the given timeframe.

CRMs placed on hold were only 13 in total. The reasons for placing CRMs on hold varied, with some awaiting further information or resources, while others were scheduled for future resolution.

Overdue CRMs continue to be a focus, with 239 CRMs remaining unresolved past their expected resolution dates. The highest number of overdue CRMs were related to Trees (46), Sealed Roads (39), Planning and Building (30). The report provides rationales for

these delays, including resource constraints, scheduling issues, and ongoing inspections or quotations for work to be done.

Roads Summary

Council has 4,824 kms of roads to manage and maintain, across 7,326 square kilometres. Between March 2025 - May 2025 Council has continued to focus on its maintenance grading program and will continue to do this over the next few months to address any outstanding CRMs lodged.

A summary of the of grader activities that have occurred across the Shire during this period are included in the attached report.

RELEVANT LAW

Not applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Council Plan 2021-2025 - Strategic Objective 4: A Council Who Serves its Community
- Community Engagement Policy
- Customer Service Charter

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable.

OPTIONS

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Council has competing priorities, and due to financial constraints cannot action all CRMs in a manner expected by the submitter/requestor. CRMs are prioritised according to risk, location and groupings for efficiency gains and achieving value for money when engaging contractors or undertaking internal works.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Promotion to the community to report any problems or issues via our CRM system directly or through the Snap, Send, Solve application.

Providing a weekly update to residents regarding the ongoing work being carried out on our extensive road network by our grader teams.

As noted in the report, enhancements have occurred with our CRM system which will continue to improve how we engage with the community.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not applicable.

RISK

Utilising the Risk Management Framework the following assessment has been made:

<i>Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level</i>	<i>Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk</i>	<i>Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level</i>
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	It is important for Council to manage its communication effectively in regard to CRM's. The community needs to know they have a mechanism of reporting, and feedback is provided on timeframes and actions taken.	Maintains Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

17 PERMITS ISSUED

List of permits issued in May 2025 is listed below for noting.

Recommended Motion:

That Council:

Note the permits issued by Council between 01 May 2025 to 31 May 2025.

Reference No	Description	Address	Date of Issue
Planning Permits			
PA20250049	2 lot subdivision (re-subdivision)	Rupanyup	07/05/2025
PA20250055	Construction of a single storey dwelling	Lubeck	07/05/2025
PA20250053	Construction of two single storey dwellings	Hopetoun	07/05/2025
PA20250054	Construction of a swimming pool	Warracknabeal	07/05/2025
PA20250056	Two lot subdivision (rural dwelling excision)	Speed	07/05/2025
PA20250057	Two lot subdivision	Lah	07/05/2025
Local Law Permits			
09/25	Roadside Trading Activity Permit	Warracknabeal	01/05/2025

18 CLOSED DECISIONS TO BE RECORDED IN OPEN COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

The following Council decisions have been made in a Closed Confidential Council Meeting and are being recorded, where appropriate, in the Agenda of an open Council meeting for public transparency.

Recommended Motion:

That Council:

- a) Determines, pursuant to section 125(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, that the Resolution(s) made and outlined in the table below, while a meeting was closed to the public be made publicly available; and recorded in the public Minutes of this meeting.

Date	Item Number and Title	Decision
28 May 2025	Item 4.1 C354-2025 – Murtoa Recreation Reserve Netball / Tennis Courts Construction	<p>Recommended Motion:</p> <p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Endorse the recommendation that iDwala Pty Ltd be awarded contract C354-2025 based on their tendered price submission of \$879,602.80 (ex GST) for the Netball & Tennis Courts Construction - Murtoa Recreation Reserve. b) Endorse that a contingency amount of 10% be included in the total cost of the project rounded up to \$967,563.08. c) Approve the affixing of the Common Seal to the Contract between Yarriambiack Shire Council and iDwala Pty Ltd in accordance with Council's Common Seal and Conduct and Meetings Local Law 2024. <p>Resolution:</p> <p>Moved Cr Kirk Seconded Cr Heintze</p> <p>That the recommendation be adopted.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>Carried</u></p>

19 URGENT BUSINESS

Business cannot be admitted as urgent business, other than by resolution of Council. Council must only admit business as urgent if the business:

- a) Cannot safely or conveniently be deferred until the next Council meeting; or
- b) Involves a matter of urgency, as determined by the CEO.

Councillors may ensure that an issue is listed on an Agenda by submitting a Notice of Motion in accordance with Governance rules, item 2.13.

If the CEO rejects the Notice of Motion, they must provide a response to the Councillor as outlined in 2.13 (e) of the Governance Rules.

20 NEXT MEETING

Monday 23 July 2025

21 CLOSED

Council will close the Ordinary Meeting of Council and move to the Closed (Confidential) Meeting of Council. Noting the meetings will be considered as two separate meetings

Recommended Motion:

That the Ordinary Meeting of Council is now closed at (time).

Council will now proceed to the Closed (Confidential) Meeting of Council.

SUMMARY CLOSED (CONFIDENTIAL) MEETING AGENDA

That, in accordance with sections 66(1) and 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the meeting be closed to members of the public for consideration of the following confidential items:

1. APPOINTMENT OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

This Agenda item is confidential information for the purpose of section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*:

- a) Because it is personal information, being information which if released would result in unreasonable disclosure of information about any person (section 3(1)(f)); and
- b) This ground applies because the Agenda Item concerns human resource information about the Audit and Risk Committee Chairperson, that would, if prematurely released, compromise Council's position in relation to the requirement to comply with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*.

2. C361-2025 PROVISION OF INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES

This Agenda item is confidential information for the purpose of section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*:

- i. Because it is Council business information, being information that would prejudice Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released (section 3(1)(a)); and
- ii. This ground applies because the Agenda Item concerns the progress of ongoing contractual negotiations that would, if prematurely released, diminish the strength of Council's position in those negotiations.

3. DIMBOOLA-MINYIP ROAD HEAVY SAFETY AND PRODUCTIVITY PROGRAM

This Agenda item is confidential information for the purpose of section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*:

- a) Because it is Council business information, being information that would prejudice Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released (section 3(1)(a)); and
- b) This ground applies because the Agenda Item concerns the progress of ongoing contractual negotiations that would, if prematurely released, diminish the strength of Council's position in those negotiations.