



Yarriambiack
SHIRE COUNCIL

Minutes

Ordinary Meeting of Council

28 January 2026

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 strong and connected community prioritising sustainable and innovative approaches to support the wellbeing of our people, economy and environment.

We will achieve this shared vision by:

- ✓ Looking after our communities, with an aim of enhancing social connection through better infrastructure, safety, wellbeing, advocacy, health and education services.
- ✓ Supporting the diversification of our economy by focusing on tourism and agriculture.
- ✓ Committing to environmental responsibility by making decisions that consider the impact on our community ecosystem.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

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

RECORDING AND MINUTES

The recording of this Council Meeting will be made publicly available on Council's YouTube channel until the next scheduled Council Meeting, providing the community with enhanced access to Council decision-making and deliberations without the need for in-person attendance.

Council Meeting Minutes from the preceding 12 months are available on Council's website. The Minutes of this meeting will be published within 3 business days of the meeting's conclusion.

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 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.

The agenda, minutes and recording of this meeting will be made available to the public on the Council's website, accessible via the 'Council Meetings' page located on the homepage.

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 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 the recording. 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 recording 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 the 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 recording, 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 Wotjobaluk Country and Council pays 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	Andrew McLean	Hopetoun Ward
Deputy Mayor	Corinne Heintze	Dunmunkle Ward
Councillor	Melinda Keel	Dunmunkle Ward
Councillor	Kylie Zanker	Warracknabeal Ward
Councillor	Karly Kirk	Warracknabeal Ward
Councillor	Chris Lehmann	Hopetoun Ward

Council Officer	Tammy Smith	Chief Executive Officer
Council Officer	Tim Rose	Chief Operating Officer
Council Officer	Joel Turner	Chief Engineering Officer
Council Officer	Monique Metlika	Governance Support Officer

5 APOLOGIES

Name / Role	Description of Leave / Absence
Anita McFarlane	Chief Financial Officer

6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

6.1 MINUTES 10 DECEMBER 2025 – ORDINARY MEETING

Minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Council held on 10 December 2025 be taken as an accurate record and confirmed.

Resolution:

That the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 10 December, as circulated be taken as read and confirmed.

Moved Cr Zanker

Seconded Cr Heintze

That the recommendation be adopted.

Carried

6.2 MINUTES 10 DECEMBER 2025 – CLOSED (CONFIDENTIAL) MEETING

Minutes of the Closed (Confidential) meeting of Council held on 10 December 2025 be taken as an accurate record and confirmed.

Resolution:

That the minutes of the Closed (Confidential) Meeting of Council held on 10 December 2025, as circulated be taken as read and confirmed.

Moved Cr Kirk

Seconded Cr Keel

That the recommendation be adopted.

Carried

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

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
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.
26 February 2025 Item 15.1	Name the unnamed laneway 04 in Council's Road Register, as "Isbel Lane".	CLOSED Report presented in this Agenda for Council approval of name change.
30 June 2025 Item 15.5	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.	Not yet commenced. Agreement to be developed in February 2026.
29 October 2025 Item 15.8	Provide a report back to Council in 12 months' time, outlining the progress of sourcing alternative grants and/or revenue streams to fund the Automated Weather Station maintenance. Report due by 29 October 2026.	Report to be provided in October 2026.
26 November 2025 Item 14.3	Ensure that sanitary bins are available in Council's public toilets, wherever female disposal facilities exist.	Investigation and implementation plan to occur.
26 November 2025 Item 15.4	Commence community engagement process for proposal to sell land, former depot sites in Hopetoun.	CLOSED The 'Have Your Say' community engagement process closed at 5.00pm on Friday, 09 January 2026.
26 November 2025 Item 15.5	Commence community engagement process for proposal of the construction of a private hangar at Hopetoun aerodrome.	CLOSED The 'Have Your Say' community engagement process closed at 5.00pm on Friday, 09 January 2026.
10 December 2025 Item 15.1	Land transfer of land, Wheatlands Agriculture Museum, to the Warracknabeal and District Historical Society.	Lawyer engaged to commence the process.
10 December 2025 Item 15.2	Transfer of land, 40 Anderson Street Warracknabeal, to E2E Growth.	This will occur once funding is secured to develop the site.
10 December 2025 Item 15.3	Commence the community engagement process for the gifting of 2 Wood Street (SES Depot) to VicSES.	CLOSED The 'Have Your Say' community engagement process closed at 5.00pm on Friday, 16 January 2026.

Council Meeting	Recommendation Action	Action Taken
10 December 2025 Item 15.6	Enact lease agreements between Yarriambiack Shire Council and Horsham and District Kindergarten Association Inc. trading as Emerge Early Years Services (Emerge).	CLOSED Lease executed 10 December 2025 and came into effect 01 January 2026.
10 December 2025 Item 15.9	Enact lease between Yarriambiack Shire Council and Tempy Inc.	CLOSED Lease executed 10 December 2025.
10 December 2025 Closed Council Meeting Item 4.1	Prepare statements regarding Council's role and responsibilities in delivering the road works associated with the Donald Mineral Sands (DMS) Project.	CLOSED Media Release developed and to be distributed on 28 January 2026.

9 PETITIONS

No petitions received.

10 MINISTERIAL AND GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENCE TO COUNCILLORS ONLY

Outgoing		
Date	Recipient	Details
06/01/2026	Jess Wilson MP and Opposition Leader	Letter Invitation to meet with Council to discuss mining, renewable energy and transmission line projects and Council's position statement. (Cc Beverley McArthur MP and Emma Kealy MP)
20/01/2026	The Hon. Sonya Kilkenny – Minister for Planning	Letter regarding Environmental Effects Statement processes and availability of maps for mining and renewable energy projects for general public.

Incoming		
Date	Sender	Details
09/01/2026	The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos	Letter - Illegal Dumping Clean-Up Rebate Program Launch
13/01/2026	David Southwick MP	Email – Feedback on Victoria's Current Planning Framework
14/01/2026	Beverley McArthur MP	Email – Acceptance of Invitation to meet with Council to discuss mining, renewable energy and transmission line projects and Council's position statement. Mrs McArthur will arrange meeting with herself, Opposition Leader, Member for Lowan and Council.

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
09 February 2026	Ordinary Meeting
11 May 2026	Ordinary Meeting
10 August 2026	Ordinary Meeting
21 September 2026	Special Financial Statements and Performance Report Meeting

11.2 YARRIAMBIACK TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL

The Yarriambiack Tourism Advisory Committee of Council Meeting was held on 01 December 2025.

[Attachment: Yarriambiack Tourism Meeting Minutes - 01 December 2025](#)

Resolution:

That the minutes of the Yarriambiack Tourism Advisory Committee of Council Meeting held on 01 December 2025 be taken as read and confirmed.

Moved Cr Kirk

Seconded Cr Zanker

That the recommendation be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

12 ACTIVITY REPORTS

12.1 MAYOR ACTIVITY REPORT

Mayor Andrew McLean (January)		
Date	Activity	Location
10/12/25	Introduction Meeting with ARTC	Warracknabeal
12/12/25	Mayor, Deputy Mayor and CEO Catch Up	Online
13/12/25	Wotjobaluk Nations Festival	Dimboola
16/12/25	Hopetoun P-12 Annual Awards Night	Hopetoun
18/12/25	Meeting with DMS potential Environment Review Chairperson(s)	Warracknabeal & Minyip
19/12/25	Mayor, Deputy Mayor and CEO Catch Up	Warracknabeal
19/12/25	Meeting with Department of Premier and Cabinet and Resources Victoria Representatives	Online
19/12/25	Yarriambiack Shire Council Staff Christmas Party	Warracknabeal
02/01/26	Mayor, Deputy Mayor and CEO Catch Up	Online
05/01/26	Funeral Yarriambiack Shire Council Staff Member Shayne Fisher	Warracknabeal
09/01/26	Mayor, Deputy Mayor and CEO Catch Up	Online
16/01/26	Mayor, Deputy Mayor and CEO Catch Up	Online
19/01/26	Minyip Roads Discontinuation Meeting	Hybrid (Warracknabeal)
21/01/26	Beulah Progress Meeting	Beulah
23/01/26	Mayor, Deputy Mayor and CEO Catch Up	Online
26/01/26	Australia Day Breakfast	Hopetoun
26/01/26	Citizenship Ceremony	Warracknabeal

12.2 COUNCILLOR ACTIVITY REPORTS

Deputy Mayor Corinne Heintze – Dunmunkle Ward (January)		
Date	Activity	Location
11/12/25	Biomass to Biomethane Opportunities Seminar	Online
12/12/25	Mayor, Deputy Mayor and CEO Catch Up	Online
13/12/25	Wotjobaluk Nations Festival	Dimboola
16/12/25	Warracknabeal Energy Park Environment Effects Statement (EES) Hearing	Warracknabeal
17/12/25	Warracknabeal Energy Park Environment Effects Statement (EES) Hearing	Warracknabeal
20/12/25	Mayor, Deputy Mayor and CEO Catch Up	Online
05/01/26	Funeral Yarriambiack Shire Council Staff Member Shayne Fisher	Warracknabeal
09/01/26	Mayor, Deputy Mayor and CEO Catch Up	Online
16/01/26	Mayor, Deputy Mayor and CEO Catch Up	Online
20/01/26	Minyip Recreation Reserve Power Upgrade Briefing	Online
23/01/26	Mayor, Deputy Mayor and CEO Catch Up	Online
26/01/26	Australia Day Event	Minyip
26/01/26	Citizenship Ceremony	Warracknabeal

Cr Melinda Keel – Dunmunkle Ward (January)		
Date	Activity	Location
16/12/25	Warracknabeal Energy Park Environment Effects Statement (EES) Hearing	Warracknabeal
16/12/25	Murtoa College Presentation Evening	Murtoa
26/01/26	Australia Day Breakfast	Murtoa

Cr Chris Lehmann – Hopetoun Ward (January)		
Date	Activity	Location
16/12/25	Warracknabeal Energy Park Environment Effects Statement (EES) Hearing	Warracknabeal
26/01/26	Australia Day Event	Beulah

Cr Karly Kirk – Warracknabeal Ward (January)		
Date	Activity	Location
15/12/25	Presenter at Warracknabeal Secondary College Annual Awards Night	Warracknabeal
16/12/25	Warracknabeal Energy Park Environment Effects Statement (EES) Hearing	Warracknabeal
26/01/26	Australia Day Ceremony	Warracknabeal

Cr Kylie Zanker – Warracknabeal Ward (January)		
Date	Activity	Location
15/12/25	Vic Grid Community Webinar	Online
17/12/25	Environment Effects Statement (EES) Enquiry Panel	Warracknabeal
19/12/25	Meeting with Department of Premier and Cabinet and Resources Victoria Representatives	Online
12/01/26	Funeral Gwenyth Barbary, Yarriambiack Shire Council Community Asset Committee Volunteer	Woomelang
15/01/26	Wimmera Pride Project Meeting	Horsham
26/01/26	Warracknabeal Rotary Australia Day Celebrations	Warracknabeal

12.3 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER ACTIVITY REPORT

Tammy Smith (December and January)		
Date	Activity	Location
10/12/25	Introduction meeting with ARTC	Warracknabeal
11/12/25	Meeting with Department Transport and Planning Representative	Dimboola
11/12/25	Local Government Executive Round Table	Dimboola
12/12/25	Meeting with Executive Officer WSM ByFive and Rupanyup Primary School regarding BEEF Grants.	Rupanyup
12/12/25	Meeting with Executive Officer WSM ByFive and Minyip Primary School regarding BEEF Grants.	Minyip
12/12/25	Rural Councils Victoria, ByFive and North Central LLEN preparation meeting with Regional Education Commissioner	Online
12/12/25	EES Submission Feedback meeting with West Wind	Online
15/12/25	Rural Councils Victoria, WSM ByFive and North Central LLEN with Commonwealth Regional Education Commissioner	Online
15/12/25	MAV Connect	Online
17/12/25	Meeting with Regional Development Victoria	Horsham
17/12/25	Meeting with Resources Victoria CEO	Online
18/12/25	Meeting with DMS potential Environment Review Chairperson(s)	Warracknabeal & Minyip
19/12/25	Meeting Mayor, Deputy Mayor and CEO	Hybrid
19/12/25	Meeting with Department of Premier and Cabinet and Resources Victoria Representatives	Online
19/12/25	Yarriambiack Shire Council Staff Christmas Party	Warracknabeal
02/01/26	Meeting Mayor, Deputy Mayor and CEO	Online
05/01/26	Funeral Yarriambiack Shire Council Staff Member Shayne Fisher	Warracknabeal
09/01/26	Meeting Mayor, Deputy Mayor and CEO	Online
12/01/26	Funeral Gwenyth Barbary, Yarriambiack Shire Council Community Asset Committee Volunteer	Woomelang
13/01/26	Meeting with Department, Energy and Climate Action	Online
16/01/26	Meeting Mayor, Deputy Mayor and CEO	Online

Tammy Smith (December and January)		
16/01/26	RCV Executive Committee Meeting	Online
19/01/26	MAV Connect	Online
19/01/26	Minyip Roads Discontinuation Meeting	Hybrid (Warracknabeal)
22/01/26	RCV Committee Meeting	Online
23/01/26	Meeting Mayor, Deputy Mayor and CEO	Online
26/01/26	Australia Day Celebrations - Rupanyup	Rupanyup
26/01/26	Australia Day Ceremony	Warracknabeal

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 AND NOTICE OF MOTIONS

14.1 MAYORS REPORT

I would like to extend a warm welcome to everyone as we commence the 2026 year.

Firstly, I wish to recognise the devastating bushfires that have affected our Shire and State, including Wyperfeld National Park and nearby areas, as well as the ongoing challenges faced by local businesses.

The destruction seen in our neighbouring Shire, Horsham Rural City Council, where fires significantly impacted Natimuk and Quantong, highlights our vulnerability to extreme weather and fire hazards in the region. I send my heartfelt best wishes to the community as they recover from this devastating event.

I would also like to recognise the widespread devastation affecting the State and express my gratitude to the dedicated volunteer firefighters and State Emergency Services who work tirelessly to protect lives and property during these challenging times.

On behalf of the Yarriambiack Shire Council and Community I say – Thank You.

On other matters, the Environmental Effects Statement Inquiry for the Warracknabeal Energy Park concluded on Thursday, 22 January. On behalf of the Council, I would like to formally recognise the additional efforts made by Council Officers in preparing responses and ensuring effective representation of our Shire during the inquiry.

Council is looking ahead with optimism, with a range of initiatives underway that support community engagement, cultural recognition and infrastructure delivery.

We will be planning Cuppa with a Councillor session across the Shire in the first quarter of this year and will be sharing the program and dates in the coming weeks with the community.

Council will be undertaking community consultation on our proposed waste and recycling changes which will feed into our budget and planning processes from 01 July 2026 and beyond, and the Tree Management Guidelines Strategy, Species List, Policy and Procedure.

Activity will commence at the Sheep Hill Silo from 27 January 2026, with a new image being painted on the silo, which continues the story and celebrates the richness of the area's Indigenous culture. The night sky represents elements of local dreaming and signifies the important exchange of wisdom, knowledge and customs from the Elders to the next generation.

In closing, we are pleased to announce that the new Warracknabeal Lions Park toilet facilities are now open to the public. Construction of the affordable home in Hopetoun is progressing well, with the framing and roofing completed. The Murtoa netball and tennis court project is nearing completion, and we anticipate opening the courts for the upcoming season. Additionally, the Hopetoun netball lighting project is scheduled for completion within the next month.

We look forward to providing further updates on all current projects in the next edition of Mayoral Matters.

14.2 WIMMERA SOUTHERN MALLEE BYFIVE FUNDING REQUEST

Presented by Councillor Karly Kirk, Warracknabeal Ward

SUMMARY

ByFive was founded in 2017 as a result of a unified commitment from Wimmera Southern Mallee (WSM) leaders to provide every child, irrespective of location, with the best possible start in life. Data indicating disparities between rural and urban children underscored the need for action, leading to the collective decision that geographic factors should not dictate opportunity. Consequently, ByFive was established to address these inequities.

ByFive was previously funded by the State Government; however, this funding concluded on 30 June 2025. ByFive is now working to become an independent organisation capable of operating without significant reliance on government support.

To achieve this goal, ByFive is requesting that Councils within the Wimmera Southern Mallee provide a one-off contribution to assist in establishing a sustainable financial structure for ongoing operations.

This paper and motion respectfully requests the Councillors to back this vision and allocate funding to ByFive, acknowledging its significance for our Shire and region.

Resolution:

That Council:

- a) Continue to formally commit as a key regional partner to the By Five vision and purpose, reinforcing our role in advancing early childhood outcomes across the region;
- b) Endorse a one-time financial contribution of \$33,000, contingent upon equivalent contributions being made by the other Wimmera Southern Mallee Councils; and
- c) Maintain strong advocacy for increased investment in rural children, families, and communities through State and Federal pre-budget submissions and election processes, ensuring the needs of our region remain visible and prioritised.

Moved Cr Kirk

Seconded Cr Zanker

That the recommendation be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: ByFive Paper - Yarriambiack Shire Council](#)

[Attachment: Letter - ByFive Transition Request](#)

DISCUSSION

The early years profoundly shape school attendance, mental health, education, and future economic outcomes, which in turn impact individuals, families, and communities like ours. There is no other organisation in the Wimmera Southern Mallee (WSM) doing the work of ByFive.

While our region has many strengths — strong sense of community, safety, and open spaces — equitable access to high-quality education and health services remains a challenge. Getting the early years right sets up children, families, and the future of our region for success.

ByFive Impact to Date

The collective impact of ByFive, particularly over the past four years has delivered measurable results across the WSM region:

1. Australian Early Development Census Improvement: In 2024, the WSM fell *below* the state and national vulnerability averages for the first time in 12 years — against State, National, and broader rural trends.
2. Paediatric Access: Wait times reduced by 75%, with over 800 co-consultations supporting more than 500 children in partnership with the Royal Children’s Hospital. This initiative also built the capacity of over 100 local professionals, including GPs, Maternal and Child Health nurses, and educators.
3. Early Childhood Education and Care: Developed a regional blueprint improving access, quality, and financial sustainability across small rural services. Advocacy efforts have focused on funding reform, infrastructure investment, and workforce priorities that reflect rural realities.
4. Antenatal Care: Supported health services to design alternative service models that provide care closer to home, strengthen local capacity, and build the future rural health workforce.
5. Allied Health: Trialled a local allied health service model delivering strong results for children, educators, and parents.
6. Regional Advocacy: Attracted national recognition and engagement with governments and sector leaders, positioning WSM as a leader in rural early years reform.

Specific examples of work undertaken in the Yarriambiack Shire

1. **Paediatric Services:** 25% (67) of children seen in 2024 were from Yarriambiack, with 84% of all children highly vulnerable. Maternal Child Health and Allied Health staff participated in monthly paediatric education.
2. **Community Voice:** Yarriambiack parents represented on the *Friends of ByFive* group. Yarriambiack Shire represented on the ByFive Steering Committee and Professional membership on the Advisory Committee. Communities across the Yarriambiack region have hosted many National leading experts to showcase the challenge of early years’ service access in rural Victoria, including Early Childhood Australia CEO Samantha Page, Royal Far West CEO, Jacqui Emery and Federal Shadow Minister for Education the Hon. Angie Bell.
3. **Antenatal:** Partnered closely with Rural Northwest Health Service in understanding adaptive service models which have been showcased across Victoria and Australia. Local women contributed pregnancy and service access experiences, which were shared with the Department of Health, and the Statewide Maternity Taskforce.
4. **Allied Health Access:** Connected and supported the introduction of weekly Allied Health servicing to Hopetoun P-12, St. Joseph’s and Beulah Primary schools. Evaluation data shows a clinical improvement in clinical outcomes for children, improved parent and educator confidence and wellbeing, with 84% of children stating this intervention has helped them at home and at school.
5. **Early Childhood Education and Care:** Yarriambiack have been key partners with ByFive in driving a more sustainable and accessible early childhood education and care service system for rural areas drawing attention to inequitable funding models that have been acknowledged nationally in the current policy reform space. ByFive has also partnered to submit an expression of interest for early childhood education and care infrastructure funding for Beulah, Minyip and Rupanyup.

Next Steps

Despite significant progress — including two State Awards for best practice and over 500 community members registering for their ‘*Back ByFive*’ event in April 2025 — no funding was allocated in the 2025–26 State Budget.

Sustaining and building on this success is critical. ByFive’s renewed funding and governance strategy includes engaging the corporate agriculture sector to help secure the region’s early years future.

Ensuring equitable access to high-quality services and supports remains at the heart of our work. The ByFive vision remains clear: *The Wimmera Southern Mallee is the best place to raise a child.*

Key Ask from ByFive

Become a Committed Partner

ByFive requests that Council join them in their vision and purpose as a key regional partner. Council's commitment will demonstrate our region's united focus on improving outcomes for children and strengthen ByFive's case for future funding.

Provide One-Off Transitional Funding

ByFive has reserved funds and is currently supported by Wimmera Southern Mallee Development to operate until 30 April 2026. To complete their transition into a new governance and funding model, ByFive are seeking a onetime contribution of \$33,000 per WSM council (a total of \$200,000 regionally).

Without this transitional support, the initiative cannot continue — risking the loss of ByFive's hard-won momentum, partnerships, and impact for local children.

OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

This Council report has been prepared in accordance with, and to give effect to, the overarching governance principles articulated in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, to the extent practicable.

14.3 RAIL FREIGHT ALLIANCE MOTION OF SUPPORT

Presented by Councillor Karly Kirk, Warracknabeal Ward (Councils' RFA Representative)

SUMMARY

By 2050 the freight task is predicted to triple, and by 2030 Melbourne is forecast to be the biggest city in Australia. Congestion within Melbourne is now a major factor and the cost of using Victoria's toll road system continues to climb well above the consumer price index (CPI).

More than one in five vehicles on Melbourne's toll roads is now a heavy vehicle, this trend is not predicted to decrease. The challenge of moving this freight throughout Victoria whilst keeping people safe, keeping within designated emissions, and providing a liveable state will be a challenge over the next decades.

The increase in High Productivity Freight Vehicles in Victoria is predicted to increase. Victoria needs a fit for purpose rail freight system. An efficient rail system with complementary infrastructure is vital for Victoria and Australia's economic prosperity.

The Sunshine Super Hub is part of Victoria's Big Build of projects and is jointly funded by the Federal and Victorian Governments. Works are expected to begin in 2026 and be completed in 2030.

As part of the Sunshine Super Hub development, it is proposed that two Sunshine Regional Rail Link Crossovers would be removed. Rail Freight would primarily be diverted an additional 47 kilometres via Geelong. This would increase train transit and cycle times and incur additional expense in crewing and fuel cost. The removal of these crossovers would have a detrimental impact on rail freight in Victoria, increasing rail costs and driving more freight to road.

This paper seeks support from fellow Councillors to raise concerns related to this matter directly with the Premier and other members of Government regarding the potential impacts to our Shire and region.

Resolution:

That Council:

- a) Write to the Premier of Victoria, the Hon. Jacinta Allan and Local Victorian members of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly to raise concerns regarding the removal of the Sunshine regional rail links.
- b) Endorse the Mayor to sign a joint letter of Mayors to the Premier regarding the removal of the Sunshine Regional Rail Link Crossovers.

Moved Cr Kirk

Seconded Cr Heintze

That the recommendation be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

ATTACHMENTS

The attachments are confidential information for the purpose of section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2020, specifically s3(1)(e) and s3(1)(g).

[Attachment: Rail Freight Alliance Members Brief Only](#)

DISCUSSION

Rail freight is vitally important for Yarriambiack Shire and the greater Wimmera Southern Mallee region.

As reported in the Wimmera Mallee News on 03 July 2024, the single Dooen intermodal centre (operated by SCT Logistics) shifts approximately 22,000 truck trips annually from

roads between Horsham and Melbourne to rail, relieving pressure on regional road networks.

It is widely acknowledged that fewer road trains translate to decreased maintenance needs for extensive local road networks, especially C-class routes, and helps councils manage budgeting pressures.

Rail offers economies of scale, with 270 containers weekly, mostly grain or legumes being transported from Horsham to Port of Melbourne¹. It is also more cost effective over long distances compared to road, particularly for bulk agricultural exports, enhancing supply chain performance².

The extra 47 kilometres of travel should concern our Council, the region, and the State Government because it could make rail freight unaffordable, potentially leading to more trucks on our roads. This issue is intensified by the emergence of new industries in our area, such as mineral sands mining, hay processing, and manufacturing. If rail freight becomes less cost-effective, we may see even more truck traffic due to these growing sectors.

The current state of our road network is deteriorating, and additional heavy truck traffic would further strain these existing infrastructure challenges.

OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

This Council report has been prepared in accordance with, and to give effect to, the overarching governance principles articulated in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, to the extent practicable.

¹ [Rail: the future of freight | Wimmera Mallee News | Local News covering Sport, Rural, Council & Business News for Horsham, Warracknabeal, Dimboola, Rainbow, Jeparit & Yaapeet in VIC Australia.](#)

² Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Transport Strategy Overview

15 REPORTS FOR DECISION

15.1 LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2026-2036 RECOMMENDATIONS

Prepared by Anita McFarlane, Chief Financial Officer

SUMMARY

Under section 91 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (The Act) Council must develop, adopt and keep in force a Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices, and the scope of a LTFP must be for a period of at least the next ten financial years.

Council undertook an extensive review and financial health check, which informed the 2026-2036 LTFP. The LTFP aligns with the Council Plan 2025-2029, and Council's Asset Management Strategy.

In addition, the LTFP will inform the budget process going forward.

Councillors formally endorsed the presented and attached LTFP on the 28 October 2025. In addition, Council engaged in a deliberative process over the past two months to communicate the results of the financial health check to the community and outline the necessary measures to ensure ongoing financial sustainability.

This report requests Councillors' endorsement to implement the recommendations derived from the financial health check that informed the LTFP, with these recommendations to take effect beginning in the 2026-27 budget year.

Resolution:

That Council:

- a) Endorse the recommendations of the Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) 2026-2036, which are based on findings from the financial health check and have been integrated into the plan's model;
- b) Endorse the implementation of the LTFP and its associated recommendations beginning with the 2026/27 budget cycle, extending throughout the subsequent ten-year period and for the full duration of the LTFP; and
- c) Endorse not seeking a rate cap variation for the 2026-27 budget year and review this option each year as part of the regular budget and long-term financial planning process.

Moved Cr Kirk

Seconded Cr Zanker

That the recommendation be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: Long Term Financial Plan 2026-2036](#)

[Attachment: Long Term Financial Sustainability Review Submission](#)

DISCUSSION

Council commissioned LGExperts (LGeX) to conduct a comprehensive Health Check and review of its LTFP, which has guided the development of Council's Long Term Financial Plan 2026-2036. The LTFP was prepared using the Local Government Victoria template and incorporates key elements identified during the Financial Health Review.

Council formally endorsed the LTFP on 28 October 2025, which included several recommendations. A community engagement process was subsequently undertaken to inform the community about these assumptions and/or recommendations. This paper

presents the recommendations included in the financial model, which are planned to be followed for the next ten years.

Financial Sustainability Recommendations

The LTFP presents a number of recommendations that have been incorporated into the model. It is advised that Council formally adopt these recommendations for implementation in the 2026-27 budget cycle and continue them over the subsequent ten-year period, as outlined below:

Enhance Financial Model Maturity

- a) Continue to enhance and support the integration between the financial model (LTFP and Budget) and the asset management strategy. Funding for the capital works program is to be allocated strictly based on available financial resources, rather than solely on requirements identified by asset management modelling. It is acknowledged that this approach will result in a substantial renewal gap over the ten-year period. However, it will maintain financial sustainability into the future.

Increase Asset Renewal Funding

- b) Review and adjust capital renewal budgets to exceed annual depreciation charges, especially for deteriorating infrastructure (roads, kerbs, footpaths). This will reduce the availability of funds for new and upgraded infrastructure, focusing heavily on renewals. However, this approach can only be applied where available financial resources exist.

Update Financial Model for Depreciation

- c) Ensure that all increases in depreciation are comprehensively integrated into the financial model to accurately represent renewal funding requirements. To support this, it is essential to allocate funding for asset management resources—including software, data capture, and modelling—so that precise data can be obtained, analysed, and implemented effectively.

Establish Strategic Asset Management Reserve

- e) Establish an annual transfer of \$250,000 to a newly created Council Reserve, with the understanding that this amount will be sourced through either capital works funding allocation or operating cost efficiencies.

Clear and well-defined guidelines for the use of the funds reserve will be developed and incorporated into the annual Budget commentary.

Advance Waste Charge Reform

- f) Continue transitioning waste charges to full cost recovery, and benchmark cost components (including corporate overheads) against similar Councils.

Refer to Council Report Waste and Recycling Review included in this Agenda.

Manage Grant Timing Variability

- g) Continue to monitor Victorian Grants Commission payment timing, and reserve any advanced payments received in June 2026 to stabilise financial planning in the 26/27 budget year. Utilise this approach moving forward.

Prepare for Financial Challenges

- h) Focus on reducing operational and capital expenditure and increase Council-controlled income, with an aim of addressing and funding Councils asset renewal gap.
- i) Continue to strongly advocate for additional grants without matching fund requirements.

- j) Continue to identify and sell / gift / transfer surplus assets to reduce Councils liability, operational and capital cost risks.
- k) Acknowledge that applying for a rate cap increase alone will not solve the Council's financial sustainability challenges and may only frustrate our community.
Therefore, it is recommended that Council does not pursue a rate cap variation for the 26/27 financial year, and that it commits to reviewing this matter each year as part of the regular budget and long-term financial planning process.

RELEVANT LAW

Local Government Act 2020, Section 91 – Financial Plan

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

LTFP forms part of Council's Strategic Planning Framework in conjunction with the Council Plan, Asset Management Plan (Asset Management Strategy), Community Vision and Revenue and Rating Plan. While also giving effect to the strategic planning principles.

The LTFP is an important strategic document for Council, as it establishes important short and long-term financial goals upon which Council can base its investment planning. It clarifies the actions required to achieve Council's various financial goals. A financial plan can help Council focus on important immediate steps, such as reducing debt and building savings for emergencies.

OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

This Council report has been prepared in accordance with, and to give effect to, the overarching governance principles articulated in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, to the extent practicable.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

- 26 July 2023 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 16.2 Long Term Financial Plan 2023-2033
- 29 October 2025 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 15.4 Long Term Financial Plan 2026-2036

OPTIONS

Councillors may decide to approve all, some, or none of the recommendations presented in this report.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The LTFP (10 Years) is a key strategic tool used to ensure the financial sustainability of Council. The Long-Term Financial Plan has been developed taking into consideration legislative requirements and internal resources.

Economic	The LTFP describes the challenges and sustainability issues facing Council. Although Council has an Economic Development Strategy, it is not in a position to lead economic development initiatives such as childcare and housing due to limited revenue beyond its core services.
Social	Council is expected to face service delivery challenges in the future due to costs rising faster than revenue. Capital works will be decreased to meet Council's commitments. This change may affect Council's capacity to invest in non-core services and assets related to active recreation and social activities.
Environmental	Council is obligated to carry out waste and recycling activities in compliance with legislative requirements. Given the significant costs associated with these services and a limited population base, Council must regularly evaluate its practices and ensure that the service operates on a full cost recovery basis.
Climate Change	Climate change is being addressed in line with the requirements of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> . Council has developed a Master Environment Strategy

	and is preparing a Tree Planting Strategy to help mitigate climate change risks. Appropriate resources have been allocated within the LTFP.
Financial	The LTFP adopts a financially sustainable approach to enable Council to effectively manage and mitigate risks within the scope of available financial resources. However, Council is projected to be unable to meet its renewal gap targets in the future, highlighting the need for ongoing advocacy to address this risk.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The LTFP 2026-2036 was presented to the community from 30 October 2025 to 19 December 2025. Engagement activities included social media, newspaper, website, and radio advertising. In addition, Council developed a video that was made available on our website and across our social media platforms.

Council clearly communicated the challenges faced and outline the strategies that will be implemented to ensure long-term financial sustainability.

Council received one submission, had 28 views of the LTFP video on YouTube, and 879 views of the Have Your Say reel on Facebook.

The LTFP has been shaped by thorough deliberative engagement throughout the formulation of both the Council Plan and the Asset Management Strategy. The final LTFP, reflecting community input, is now submitted to Councillors for endorsement and incorporates the recommendations that guided its development.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not required 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 LTFP has been developed utilising a robust financial model. It has also been informed by an extensive health check.	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Financial Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	The LTFP considers current and future financial sustainability, offering recommendations to manage risks and keep Council within its budget.	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Strategy Execution and Change Management Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	The LTFP identifies Council's challenges and is incorporated into the Asset Management Strategy, which includes the renewal gap. A reserve is suggested to provide Council with future funding for strategic initiatives.	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Talent Management Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	The LTFP reports on the projected employment levels and associated costs for the next 10 years.	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.

15.2 WASTE AND RECYCLING REVIEW

Prepared by Tim Rose, Chief Operating Officer, Anita McFarlane, Chief Financial Officer and La Vergne Lehmann, Waste and Sustainability Coordinator

SUMMARY

Yarriambiack Shire Council currently operates eight transfer stations, with two additional facilities temporarily closed. Currently, the communities of Patchewollock and Yaapeet are served by a skip bin service.

The Council is required to allocate significant financial resources for the ongoing operation of these stations and to ensure adherence to occupational health and safety standards. Currently, the waste and recycling services do not achieve full cost recovery, leading to cross-subsidisation from alternative revenue sources, such as rates. As a result, funds that could be designated for roads and related infrastructure are redirected.

The purpose of this paper is to request Council's endorsement to commence a community consultation process concerning the review of charging mechanisms and delivery models for waste and recycling services. The objective is to ensure that future decisions prioritise financial sustainability while delivering effective, purpose-driven services.

Resolution:

That Council:

- a) Endorse the initiation of the community consultation process described in this report, founded on the Waste and Recycling Review, which will inform the 2026/27 Budget and guide the long-term financial planning initiatives.
- b) Provides feedback on the draft community consultation brochures during the scheduled Council Forum on the 28 January 2026 before being released to the public; and
- c) Acknowledge at the conclusion of the community consultation process, the findings will be formally presented to Councillors, accompanied by recommendations from Council Officers regarding the future approach to waste and recycling, with the resulting actions commencing implementation from the 2026/2027 budget period.

Moved Cr Heintze

Seconded Cr Kirk

That the recommendation be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: Proposed Waste and Recycling Kerbside Collection Charges 2026-27](#)

The attachments are confidential information for the purpose of section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2020, specifically s3(1)(a), s3(1)(e), s3(1)(g).

[Attachment: LGeX Yarriambiack Waste Transfer Station Review](#)

[Attachment: Health and Safety Risk Assessment](#)

[Attachment: Community Consultation Brochure for All Residents](#)

[Attachment: Frequently Asked Questions for All Residents](#)

[Attachment: Survey for All Residents](#)

DISCUSSION

Background

Waste and recycling have long been identified as financial sustainability challenges for Yarriambiack Shire Council. This is due to its small population, large geographic area, and the fact that the Council does not fully recover the costs of providing these services.

As part of the Long Term Financial Plan assessment, Council conducted a comprehensive evaluation of transfer station and waste management operations, including an analysis of associated fees and charges.

Council engaged LGEExperts (LGeX) to undertake the waste and recycling review, with the findings and recommendations presented to both the Councillors and Audit and Risk Committee on 15 October 2025.

Further work was completed to explore and refine the recommendations and analysis, with a proposed model presented to Councillors on 10 December 2025.

This paper presents a proposal for community consultation, with the intention that some of the resulting recommendations be incorporated into the 2026/2027 budget and implemented from 01 July 2026.

1. Waste and Recycling Kerbside Collection Charges

Council currently offers the following kerbside collections:

Residential (Residents residing within Township Boundaries)

Residential Service	Timing	Number of services	2025/26 As per Budget
80L General Waste	Weekly	579	\$191.16
120L General Waste	Weekly	1984	\$265.38
240L General Waste	Weekly	232	\$516.51
Mixed Recycling	Fortnightly	2781	\$186.02
120L Glass Recycling	Bi Monthly	2753	\$93.02

Currently waste collection in urban (township) areas is a compulsory service unless there is vacant land. There are various combinations of bin sizes in general waste and mixed recycling but mixed recycling has been charged at the same rate regardless the size of the bin.

The number of services above varies slightly due to the number of bin services a property may have. For example, a resident may require two (2) general waste bins, one (1) mixed recycling and one (1) glass bin.

Council decided to gradually achieve full cost recovery in 2024/25 and 2025/26 by increasing charges by 10% in each year.

Residential - Proposed Changes

It is proposed that any new customers procuring services will be offered the 120L general waste, 240L mixed recycling and 120L glass recycling services. Any resident that currently has an 80L general waste collection or 240L general waste collection will remain the same unless the resident requests a change to their service.

It is proposed that in the 2026/27 financial year that the residential service charge increase again by 10%.

Based on the current number of services the 2026/27 charges would be as follows:

Residential Service	Timing	Number of services	2026/27 Proposed Budget
80L General Waste	Weekly	579	\$210.28
120L General Waste	Weekly	1984	\$291.92
240L General Waste	Weekly	232	\$568.16
240L Mixed Recycling	Fortnightly	2781	\$204.62
120L Glass Recycling	Bi Monthly	2753	\$102.32

The residential mandatory services will be represented on the Rates Notice from 2026/27 as follows:

Example 1 - Kerbside service incorporating general waste bin (120L), mixed recycling and glass recycling:

Kerbside Collection Service (120L)	\$598.86
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Example 2 - Kerbside service incorporating general waste bin (240L), mixed recycling and glass recycling:

**Kerbside Collection Service (240L)	\$875.11
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A proposal has been made to provide larger general waste bins (240L) for households with greater needs, such as larger families. This service would be considered under exceptional circumstances and the outlined increased fee (as above) would apply.

Rural

Rural Service	Timing	Number of services	2025/26 As per Budget
80L General Waste	Weekly	36	\$191.16
120L General Waste	Weekly	81	\$265.38
240L General Waste	Weekly	156	\$516.51
Mixed Recycling	Fortnightly	92	\$186.02
120L Glass Recycling	Bi Monthly	106	\$93.02

Currently waste collection in rural areas is an optional service. There are various combinations of bin sizes in general waste and mixed recycling, but mixed recycling has been charged at the same rate regardless the size of the bin.

The number of services above varies slightly due to the number of bin services a property may have. For example, a rural property may require 1 (one) general waste bin but opts to have no mixed recycling and no glass bin. This is also determined by the routes of the garbage and/or recycling truck i.e. the general waste may be collected at the gate of the rural property, but the recycling and glass may need to be taken to the main route of the recycling collection i.e. along the highway.

Like the residential charges, Council decided to gradually achieve full cost recovery in 2024/25 and 2025/26 by increasing charges by 10% in each year.

Rural - Proposed Changes

It is proposed that any new customers procuring services will be offered the 120L General Waste, 240L mixed recycling and 120L glass recycling services.

This will remain an optional service.

Any rural properties that currently has an 80L General Waste collection or 240L General Waste collection will keep that service unless the resident requests a change.

It is proposed that in the 2026/27 financial year the rural service will increase again by 10%.

Based on the current number of services the 2026/27 charges would be as follows:

Rural Service	Timing	Number of services	2026/27 Proposed Budget
80L General Waste	Weekly	36	\$210.28
120L General Waste	Weekly	81	\$291.92
240L General Waste	Weekly	156	\$568.16
Mixed Recycling	Fortnightly	92	\$204.62
120L Glass Recycling	Bi Monthly	106	\$102.32

The rural services will be represented on the Rates Notice from 2026/27 as follows if a customer opts into all services:

Example 1 - Kerbside service incorporating general waste bin (120L), mixed recycling and glass recycling:

Kerbside Collection Service (120L)	\$598.86
------------------------------------	----------

Example 2 - Kerbside service incorporating general waste bin (240L), mixed recycling and glass recycling:

**Kerbside Collection Service (240L)	\$875.11
--------------------------------------	----------

Example 3 – Kerbside general waste service bin only (120L):

**Kerbside Rural General Waste Service (120L)	\$291.92
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A proposal has been made to provide larger general waste bins (240L) for households with greater needs, such as larger families.

Commercial

Commercial Service	Timing	Number of services	2025/26 As per Budget
120L General Waste	Weekly	63	\$265.38
240L General Waste	Weekly	433	\$516.51
Mixed Recycling	Fortnightly	277	\$186.02
120L Glass Recycling	Bi Monthly	230	\$93.02

Currently waste collection for commercial properties is an optional service. There are various combinations of bin sizes in general waste and mixed recycling, but mixed recycling has been charged at the same rate regardless the size of the bin.

The number of services above varies slightly due to the number of bin services a property may have. For example, a commercial property may require multiple general waste bins but opts to have no mixed recycling and no glass bin.

Similar to residential and rural charges, Council decided to gradually achieve full cost recovery in 2024/25 and 2025/26 by increasing charges by 10% in each year.

Commercial - Proposed Changes

It is proposed that any new services will be offered the 120L General Waste, 240L mixed recycling and 120L glass recycling services.

This will remain an optional service.

Any Commercial properties that currently have a 240L General Waste collection will be maintained unless the proprietor requests a change to their service.

Council's commercial kerbside collection service is currently charged at the same rate as residential services.

The commercial service fees are proposed to increase by 50% on the 25/26 charges.

The reasons for this increase are as follows:

- a) Businesses (in most instances) can claim this charge as a tax deduction.
- b) The business can request multiple number of bins i.e. a hotel.
- c) A commercial business has other waste options for disposal. They can elect to take their own waste to the transfer station and therefore pay a gate fee. They could elect to engage a contractor to collect their waste i.e. skip bins.

If a business owner / proprietor opts out of having a Council service, this should in turn reduce the number of lifts in the contract, therefore reducing Council's collection costs.

Based on the current number of services the 2026/27 charges would be as follows:

Commercial Service	Timing	Number of services	2026/27 Proposed Budget
120L General Waste	Weekly	63	\$398.07
240L General Waste	Weekly	433	\$774.77
Mixed Recycling	Fortnightly	277	\$279.03
120L Glass Recycling	Bi Monthly	230	\$139.53

Impact of 50% increase:

Commercial Service	Number of services	2025/26 As per Budget	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Additional Revenue Per Annum
120L General Waste	63	\$265.38	\$398.07	\$8,359.47
240L General Waste	433	\$516.51	\$774.77	\$111,826.58
240L Mixed Recycling	277	\$186.02	\$279.03	\$25,763.77
120L Glass Recycling	230	\$93.02	\$139.53	\$10,697.30
TOTAL ADDITIONAL INCOME (assuming they all retain the service)				\$156,647.12

Other Considerations

Moving forward, all bins will feature a standard green body with lids in distinct colours, streamlining the process of acquiring additional bins.

The idea of introducing a flat waste levy to all assessments (5103), similar to the municipal charge, was considered. However, this approach would likely result in significant negative feedback, particularly from rural and commercial property owners who currently do not receive waste services. Although waste management is a shared responsibility, the method proposed in this report is expected to be better received.

Consideration was also given to increasing the municipal charge to address the need to achieve full cost recovery but by doing this the increase would become assessed as part of the rate cap and therefore this approach would not be feasible.

2. FOGO Considerations

Towards the end of 26/27 Council will need to implement an additional service in the form of a FOGO (food organics and garden organics) bin. We have yet to determine the nature of that service to the community as we have been awaiting the State Government service standards which will determine whether FOGO is a compulsory service and if residents can 'opt-out' or not.

Council will need to consult the community on their preference for a weekly or fortnightly FOGO service. The cost to residents would be:

Weekly - \$130 plus processing (to be determined)

Fortnightly - \$103.74 plus processing (to be determined)

These costs are based on our current contracted figures for weekly and fortnightly services and will need to be tendered for greater accuracy.

An important decision that will need to be made in the future relates to selecting an appropriate bin size. Typically, a 120L bin is used for weekly collections, while fortnightly collections usually require a 240L bin. Alternatively, general waste collection can be shifted to every two weeks if FOGO is collected weekly, though this change may face some opposition from the community.

We will also need to purchase both FOGO bins (once the frequency and size of bins is determined) and general waste bins as they are due for renewal. It is estimated that the cost for Council of a 240L FOGO bin for all urban properties will be around \$166,000. Council will seek funding options to support the bin service rollout. However, if funding is unavailable, residents must cover the cost, and this is typically achieved by adding a one-off waste charge to the rates notice.

3. Transfer Station Fees

We have compared our existing charges with those of neighbouring councils.

General waste volume per cubic metre represents the primary concern due to its significant quantity and substantial influence on overall costs and revenue.

From a cost perspective it is also the area of greatest variability across our transfer stations. It ranges from \$436 per skip at Warracknabeal through to \$894 per skip at Woomelang. The cost variation between locations is a direct result of contractor travel. There has been a significant difference in the efficiency of the skips with Warracknabeal able to get about 30% more into each skip than other transfer stations because they are able to use a loader to push down the material and increase the volume in the skip, however this year we have seen a significant improvement in skip bin efficiency at a number of transfer stations.

Council General Waste Charge 25-26	\$Cubic metre
Yarriambiack	\$25

Council General Waste Charge 25-26	\$Cubic metre
Council 1	\$30
Council 2	\$36
Council 3	\$40
Council 4	\$40

Council decided to offer free green waste in 2024-25 and this initiative has continued into the current 2025-26 year. Despite there being no charge for green waste, it is envisaged that the volume will actually reduce once FOGO is implemented. We do not currently charge for e-waste either as this is a relatively small proportion of transfer station costs and some items are covered by product stewardship.

Other items like mattresses and tyres are charged at a rate that aims to recover our costs and prevent illegal dumping.

Scrap metal, car batteries and DrumMuster (where Council is the collection agent) all earn income for Council.

It is recommended that the cost per cubic metre be raised to \$45 in order to enhance cost recovery at the transfer stations. With projected 2024/25 volumes of approximately 200 skips throughout the year, this adjustment is anticipated to generate an additional \$120,000 in revenue from the transfer stations.

While the price of \$45 per cubic metre is higher than other councils, by the time this is implemented it is envisaged that the other councils will have a similar price point. This also allows us to maintain free green waste and e-waste for residents. A service that is extremely popular across the community. It should be noted the cost of disposing of green waste currently is factored into the cubic metre fee.

4. Transfer Station Opening Hours

It is proposed that operating hours be reduced at all transfer stations with the exception of Warracknabeal, only reducing hours on a weekend. This recommendation is based on the fact that Warracknabeal serves the largest population and exhibits the highest utilisation among all stations. It is also important to note that the location and operational efficiency of the Warracknabeal transfer station help offset costs at other sites. As a result, reduced days at Warracknabeal would have a greater financial impact than reducing days and hours at other transfer stations.

It is also recommended that some hours are retained during the week to accommodate commercial enterprises and tradespeople.

The proposed operating hours have been adjusted in accordance with the findings of the occupational health and safety assessment. Nevertheless, Council must acknowledge and accept a certain level of risk in maintaining the operation of all transfer stations.

- Speed/Tempy & Woomelang – 1 hour each on Wednesday morning.
- Rupanyup & Minyip – 1 hour each on Wednesday morning & Sunday Morning.
- Beulah – 1 hour on Wednesday morning & Sunday morning.
- Warracknabeal – 8am-12pm Tuesday through to Friday, 9am-12pm Saturday, and 11am- 2pm Sunday.
- Murtoa – 9am-12pm Tuesday & Friday – Sunday 12.30pm – 2pm.
- Hopetoun – 9am-12pm Tuesday - Sunday 11am-2pm - change of day.
- Thursday could then be utilised for a rotation of hard waste collections with 2 staff.

- Friday – Little Yellow wagon on a weekly rotation in the north – weeks 1 & 2 & down south on Tuesday – week 3

Transfer Station	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Warracknabeal	8-12	8-12	8-12 HW	8-12	9-12	11-2
Murtoa	9-12		HW	9-12		12.30-2
Minyip	YW	10.30-11.30	HW			10.30-11.30
Rupanyup	YW	9-10	HW			9-10
Beulah		9-10	HW	YW		8.30-9.30
Hopetoun	9-12		HW	YW		11-2
Woomelang		10.30-11.30	HW	YW		9-10
Speed/Tempy		9-10	HW	YW		
Yaapeet			HW	YW		
Patchewollock			HW	YW		

** (HW) Hard waste collection

** (YW) Little Yellow Wagon

5. Hard Waste Collection

There are several councils that have introduced some form of hard waste collection in recent years. One of the main reasons for doing so is to ensure some level of equity in the community to ensure that everyone has access to being able to get rid of hard waste at a reasonable cost. Given our aging population, along with those who have disabilities, it is the most vulnerable people in the community who currently have the least access to a hard waste service (i.e. collection or transfer station drop off). The use of commercial skip bins is also cost prohibitive for many people.

What can be collected will be critical, in part to ensure that our staff can physically move items and the truck can be appropriately and safely loaded. There are several Councils that already offer a hard waste service and have developed comprehensive guidelines that could be implemented and followed by Yarriambiack Shire Council.

Essentially the limiting factors, apart from weight and size, is excluding items that are already collected through the usual kerbside services, by the Little Yellow Wagon or fall under the category of hazardous waste (asbestos, chemicals etc).

With changes to the transfer station timetable, a hard waste collection could be developed to service different areas each Thursday. Charges for this service are intended to match the proposed 2026-27 transfer station general waste fee of \$45/cubic metre.

Two staff will be utilised to provide this service, and payment would be taken in the same way as they would at a transfer station. Bookings for up to 10 collections per day in each area could be accommodated, depending on truck capacity and volume.

A hard waste collection schedule would be developed that allows for grouped towns and surrounding eligible rural residents to be serviced together during a particular week. For example, week 1 a collection to the northern area, week 2 to central area, week 3 to southern area. This would ensure the vehicles and staff are utilised efficiently and effectively.

The proposed hard waste collection schedule would be similar to the following:

Week 1 – Northern Area

Week 2 – Central Area

Week 3 – Southern Area

Week 4 – Floating day to be determined each month based on demand.

Eligible residents for the service include holders of a Seniors Card and Disability Health Care Card. These individuals typically require additional assistance to access transfer stations.

Each residence can have up to 3 cubic metres collected. Council will confirm truck capacity for weight limits. Mattresses and tyres incur separate charges at standard transfer station rates.

It would be our recommendation that a hard waste service is provided to all residents in Yaapect and Patchewollock in lieu of the skip and local transfer station.

The Little Yellow wagon for recyclables will include textiles as well, and currently it collects, batteries, electrical items, paint and some chemicals.

We intend to offer this service on a full cost recovery basis.

6. Transfer Station Operations and Provisions for Rehabilitation

Following the identification of Health and Safety risks during the Waste and Recycling review, Officers will recommend that Council evaluate options to streamline the number of operational transfer stations in the future.

A formal recommendation is expected to be submitted to Council in early 2027, with proposed implementation from 01 July 2027, to address the risks outlined in the report.

In addition, as per the Long-Term Financial review presentation, Council holds provisions to rehabilitate the transfer stations. Council will be prioritising the rehabilitation of Yaapect in the next 12 months and will align the rehabilitation and closure plan into the future.

7. DrumMuster

It is recommended that the DrumMuster service remains at Warracknabeal and Murtoa as per normal. Other councils hold DrumMuster event days in some areas and this could be the model for Minyip, Rupanyup and Beulah moving forward. We will undertake consultation with local farmers in regards to this proposal.

8. Community Consultation

A brochure, along with frequently asked questions will be sent to all rate payers in Yarriambiack Shire outlining the proposed changes and seeking their feedback. The community will have the ability to access the survey either online or by requesting a paper copy.

The consultation will conclude in early March 2026, where Councillors will be presented with the findings and a final recommendation to be presented on 25 March 2026.

RELEVANT LAW

Local Government Act 2020

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council Plan 2025 – 2029 Strategic Objectives	Priorities
A Healthy and Inclusive Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate, prioritise, and invest in infrastructure that supports an accessible, inclusive, and socially connected community to improve liveability.
A Resilient and Sustainable Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for responsible land use, with consideration for the natural environment. Embed climate change action into everything we do with a focus on decreased emissions, heat reduction and emergency management preparedness.

Council Plan 2025 – 2029 Strategic Objectives	Priorities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide innovative solutions that meet the specific requirements of our community to enable compliance with the State Government Circular Economy policy. Elevate community education and positive engagement experience as a key priority while performing regulatory functions.
A Council that serves its Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake robust and transparent planning and risk management to ensure our organisation is sustainable now and into the future. Embed good governance practices into all decision making. Advocate for our community, on matters that are important to the entire municipal district. Build trust through engaging with our community, delivering quality services and outcomes. Consider a broad base of evidence before making decisions, ensuring value for money and responsive, innovative services and solutions are provided.
Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, Plans, Strategies and Frameworks	
Policy	Community Engagement Policy and Procedure
Plan	Long Term Financial Plan 2026-2036
Strategy	Master Environment Strategy

OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

This Council report has been prepared in accordance with, and to give effect to, the overarching governance principles articulated in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, to the extent practicable.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable.

OPTIONS

Councillors may decide to approve all, some, or none of the recommendations presented in this report.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The Waste and Recycling review has informed the Long Term Financial Plan (10 Years) and is a key strategic tool used to ensure the financial sustainability of Council.

Social	<p>Council is expected to face service delivery challenges in the future due to costs rising faster than revenue. Capital works will be decreased to meet Council's commitments. This change may affect Council's capacity to invest in non-core services and assets.</p> <p>Council needs to consider how it provides a waste and recycling service to its aging community that is fit for purpose, whilst focusing on financial sustainability.</p>
Environmental	<p>Council is obligated to carry out waste and recycling activities in compliance with legislative requirements. Given the significant costs associated with these services and a limited population base, Council must regularly evaluate its practices and ensure that the service operates on a full cost recovery basis.</p>
Climate Change	<p>Climate change is being addressed in line with the requirements of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>. Council has developed a Master Environment Strategy. Appropriate resources have been allocated within the Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP).</p>

Financial	The Waste and Recycling review along with the LTFP adopts a financially sustainable approach to enable Council to effectively manage and mitigate risks within the scope of available financial resources.
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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As outlined above, the community engagement process will commence on Thursday 29 January 2026, and conclude on 05 March 2026. The findings will be presented to Council on 11 March 2026 with a recommendation for decision presented to Councillors on 25 March 2026 at an Ordinary Meeting of Council.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not required 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 waste and recycling review and LTFP has been developed utilising a robust financial model. It has also been informed by an extensive health check.	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Financial Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	The waste and recycling review and LTFP considers current and future financial sustainability, offering recommendations to manage risks and keep Council within its budget.	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Strategy Execution and Change Management Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	The waste and recycling review identifies Council's challenges and outlines measures to mitigate the risks.	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.

15.3 COUNCIL PLAN 2025-2029 YEAR 1 ACTIONS – QUARTER 2

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. The Council Plan 2025 – 2029 was adopted on 30 June 2025 and incorporates the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan.

This report provides a quarterly update on the Year 1 Actions of the Council Plan, outlining their alignment with the plan's strategic priorities and objectives, as well as summarising progress for each action.

Resolution:

That Council:

- a) Endorse the progress of the Council Plan 2025-2029, Year 1, Quarterly Report – Quarter 2, as attached to this report.

Moved Cr Zanker

Seconded Cr Heintze

That the recommendation be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: Council Plan 2025-2029 Year 1 Actions Quarterly Report – Quarter 2](#)

DISCUSSION

The Council Plan 2025–2029 is a comprehensive strategic document that integrates the Community Vision, and the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, whilst also reflecting on the Long-Term Financial Plan, and the Community Engagement Policy and Procedure. This plan was formally adopted by Council in June 2025, following an extensive and inclusive community consultation process conducted in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy and Procedure. This process ensured that the voices and perspectives of residents, stakeholders, and community groups were actively considered in shaping the future direction of the Shire.

The Council Plan sets out four overarching strategic objectives that will guide Council's decision-making, resource allocation, and service delivery over the next four years. These objectives reflect Council's commitment to fostering a resilient, healthy, and connected community, promoting sustainable economic growth, protecting the natural environment, and upholding principles of good governance.

Each action within the Council Plan has been carefully developed to align with these strategic objectives. The actions were developed through community consultation, ensuring that they are responsive to local needs and aspirations, and that Council remains accountable and transparent in its operations.

The enclosed quarterly report offers Councillors and the community a comprehensive update on Council's progress in achieving its Council Plan objectives and priorities.

RELEVANT LAW

The obligation for Council to prepare and maintain a Council Plan, a 10-year Community Vision, and a 10-year Long Term Financial Plan is set out in Part 4, Division 1 – Strategic Planning and Financial Management of the *Local Government Act 2020*. These provisions ensure that Council's planning and financial management processes are transparent, forward-looking, and responsive to community needs.

Additionally, Council is required to develop and implement a Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, as mandated by the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. This requirement

reflects the importance of promoting and protecting the health and wellbeing of the community through strategic planning and coordinated action.

Together, these legislative frameworks provide the foundation for Council's long-term vision, strategic priorities, and commitment to the health, wellbeing, and prosperity of the Yarriambiack Shire community.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

The Council Plan serves as the principal strategic framework for Council, establishing the key objectives and priorities that will guide Council's direction over the four-year term. These strategic objectives provide the foundation for the development of all other plans, policies, services, and activities, ensuring that every initiative undertaken is aligned with the broader vision and goals of the Shire.

OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

This Council report has been prepared in accordance with, and to give effect to, the overarching governance principles articulated in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, to the extent practicable.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

On 30 June 2025, Council adopted the Council Plan 2025-2029.

- 30 June 2025 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 15.1 Council Plan 2025-2029
- 29 October 2025 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 15.3 Council Plan 2025-2029 Year 1 Actions – Quarter 1

OPTIONS

- a) Councillors could choose to revise the Council Plan actions and strategic priorities.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The Council Plan is the overarching strategic document guiding the operations and future direction of Council over its four-year term. It establishes clear priorities for Council and outlines how these priorities will be resourced, both financially and through staff allocation. The Plan also incorporates measurable indicators to track progress and ensure accountability in achieving its objectives.

Central to the Council Plan are objectives focused on driving economic growth through diversification, enhancing environmental sustainability by implementing measures to reduce emissions and improve waste recovery, and delivering community wellbeing services that are vital to the health of our townships. Furthermore, the Plan emphasises the importance of robust governance, ensuring that Council consistently serves the community with transparency, integrity, and responsiveness across all areas of its operations.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council undertook a comprehensive community consultation process to inform the development of the Council Plan. Engagement activities included a series of community sessions held across multiple townships, with both day and evening meetings to ensure broad participation. Hard copy surveys were distributed at these sessions and made available at Yarriambiack Libraries branches, while the survey was also accessible online, resulting in 229 responses that were carefully collated and considered.

To further encourage dialogue and gather feedback, Councillors hosted 'Coffee with a Councillor' sessions in eleven townships throughout the municipality. These informal gatherings provided residents with the opportunity to discuss local priorities and share their perspectives directly with Council representatives.

Additionally, Council organised a Budget and Council Plan Roadshow servicing eleven townships across the Shire, offering residents the chance to provide in-person feedback on both the draft Budget and the Council Plan.

The draft Council Plan was also placed on public exhibition, from 03 June 2025 to 29 June 2025, inviting further community input and ensuring transparency throughout the planning process.

This extensive engagement ensured that the Council Plan reflects the diverse needs and aspirations of the Yarriambiack Shire community, and demonstrates Council's commitment to open, inclusive, and responsive governance.

No public comments or submissions were received regarding the revision of the Council Plan. Following this period of public exhibition and consultation, the revised plan was formally adopted by Council on 30 June 2025.

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:

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	Progress on Council Plan actions is reported quarterly in alignment with Council's Performance Management Framework. In addition, the Mayor provides an annual report on the achievement of these objectives, as required under the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> . This approach ensures ongoing transparency and accountability in tracking Council's strategic priorities and outcomes.	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Strategy Execution and Change Management Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	Operational resources, including dedicated staff and financial allocations, are assigned to support the achievement of Council Plan objectives. This ensures that each strategic priority is adequately resourced, enabling effective implementation and delivery of Council's commitments to the community.	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	Quarterly reporting on Council Plan objectives and actions tracks progress and communicates updates to the community. In addition it ensures accountability and transparency.	Maintains Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

The Council Plan relies on a number of regional and state plans and policies including:

- Wimmera Mallee Destination Management Plan
- Victorian Government Active Recreation Strategy
- Victorian Government Recycling Victoria
- Regional Development Economic Development Strategies
- [State Government Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2027](#)

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 PROPOSAL TO SELL LAND, FORMER DEPOT SITES IN HOPETOUN

Prepared by Tammy Smith, Chief Executive Officer

SUMMARY

Yarriambiack Shire Council has conducted a comprehensive review of its Long Term Financial Plan, which was endorsed by Councillors on 29 October 2025 and subsequently released for community consultation. As part of this review and financial health assessment, it was determined that Council must reduce expenditure and, where feasible, divert surplus assets.

Two former depot sites in Hopetoun have been identified as excess to requirements and are proposed for consideration for sale. This report seeks endorsement to sell the land and former depots after undertaking the community consultation process.

Resolution:

That Council:

- a) In accordance with Section 114 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, and following completion of the community engagement process as outlined in the Council's Community Engagement Policy and Procedure, endorses the sale of the following properties:
 - i. 92 Cummings Street, Hopetoun (Lot 9 LP26623, Lot 10 LP26623, and Lot 11 LP26623), comprising a total area of 3,036 square metres; and
 - ii. 74-76 Cummings Street, Hopetoun (Lot 2 LP147375), comprising a total area of 1,543 square metres;
- b) Endorse for the Chief Executive Officer to be given delegated authority to carry out the sale of the land process, by completing the land transfer, and executing all necessary documentation required for the transfer of land ownership; and
- c) Endorse that the Chief Executive Officer (or her delegate) impose obligations and conditions on the sale of the land through the establishment of a 173 agreement, enacted under section 173 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* as follows:
 - i. That the use for this land is restricted to commercial and/or industrial use only.
 - ii. Not using the land for any other purpose than the intended one, as listed above without Council's consent.

Moved Cr Keel

Seconded Cr Lehmann

That the recommendation be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: Have Your Say Submission - Proposal to Sell Land, Former Depot Sites in Hopetoun](#)

DISCUSSION

Yarriambiack Shire Council has determined that two former depot sites in Hopetoun are no longer required. After undertaking the community consultation process in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* requirements, it is recommended that Council proceed with the sale of the land parcels.

The details regarding both sites are discussed below.

92 Cummings Street Hopetoun

This site was the former Council depot yard for the Hopetoun operations team, before a new depot was built at 78 Hopetoun-Aerodrome Road, Hopetoun in 2014.

Image 1: Image identifying the location of 92 Cummings Street Hopetoun



Image 2: Image identifying street view of former depot site of 92 Cummings Street Hopetoun



Figure 3: Image of New consolidated Depot, 78 Hopetoun Aerodrome Road Hopetoun, built in 2014.



Being a former Council depot site, a soil contamination assessment has been undertaken by Western Victoria Soil Testing. The National Environment Protection Measures (NEPM) Health Based Investigations level assessment identified that the site is deemed to conform with a Level D Category – Commercial / Industrial Use (HIL-D) sites.

Category D covers the least hazardous contaminated soil. Category D waste soil is defined in Waste disposal categories – characteristics and thresholds. The full details regarding the requirements relating to Category D soil is found on the Environment Protection Authority website as follows: [Manage waste soil | epa.vic.gov.au](https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/Manage-waste-soil).

In summary, Category D soil is classified as reportable waste, and the soil must be tested and disposed of at landfills authorised to receive it.

When reviewing the chemical findings in relation to the site's usage, none of the samples were found to exhibit concentrations exceeding the permissible NEMP HIL-D health limits.

It is noted, if Council was to sell the land, the chemical findings in relation to other *NEPM* levels (*Category A – Residential/Sensitive Site Use (HIL-A)*, *Category B – Medium to high-density Residential Use (HIL-B)* and *Category C – Public/Recreational Use (HIL-C)*), two (2) of the soil samples were found to exhibit concentrations exceeding the permissible *NEPM HIL-A, HIL-B* and/or *HIL-C* health limits.

To mitigate the risk of the site being utilised for anything other than Commercial and Industrial use, it is recommended that Council enact a Section 173 Agreement as a condition of sale, to impose such an obligation on a purchaser. Details regarding a section 173 Agreement will be further explained later in this report.

74 – 76 Cummings Street Hopetoun

This site was the former Telecom yard which Council took ownership of prior to amalgamations in approximately 1985. Council has generally used this site for the storage of bitumen emulsion and road sealing stone, of which the tank and stone storage has been moved to the old Iluka storage facility on the Hopetoun West road.

Image 4: Image identifying location of 74 – 76 Cummings Street Hopetoun



Image 5: Image identifying street view of 74 – 76 Cummings Street Hopetoun



Similarly to the details listed above, as the site is a former Council depot site, a soil contamination assessment has been undertaken. It is deemed to conform to the NEPM Health-based Investigation Level Category D – Commercial/ Industrial Use (HIL-D) sites.

When reviewing the chemical findings in relation to the site's usage, none of the samples were found to exhibit concentrations exceeding the permissible NEPM HIL-D health limits.

It is noted, if Council was to sell the land, the chemical findings in relation to other *NEPM levels* (Category A – Residential/Sensitive Site Use (HIL-A), Category B – Medium to high-density Residential Use (HIL-B) and Category C – Public/ Recreational Use (HIL-C), one (1) of the soil samples was found to exhibit concentrations meeting or exceeding the permissible NEPM HIL-A, HIL-B and/or HIL-C health limits.

To mitigate the risk of the site being utilised for anything other than Commercial and Industrial use, it is recommended that Council enact a Section 173 Agreement as a condition of sale, to impose such an obligation on a purchaser.

Section 173 Agreement

If Council is intending to sell the land, it is recommended that Council would require the purchaser to agree to certain conditions or obligations attaching to the sale, such as developing the land for an intended purpose and use.

The most common vehicle for imposing such obligations on a purchaser is an agreement pursuant to section 173 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Section 173 Agreement). This has the advantage of imposing positive enforceable covenants on the purchaser which are recorded on the title and attached to the land, so those obligations are binding upon any successor in title of the purchaser. Common forms of positive obligations to be included in such a Section 173 Agreement include (but not limited to):

- a) Not using the land for any other purpose than the intended one without Council's consent. This could mean outlining that the use for this land is restricted to commercial and/or industrial use.

Property Valuation and Funds Generated from the Sale

In accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*, a property valuation has been obtained from a person who holds the qualification or experience specified under 13DA (2) of the *Valuation of Land Act 1960* and that it is within the six-month period specified prior to the proposed sale. It should be noted that if the land is not sold within six months of the valuation report, a new valuation is required to be obtained.

The valuation for the following properties concluded that:

92 Cummings Street Hopetoun: The market value as of 13 October 2025, at date of valuation report issue was \$140,000 (one hundred and forty thousand) excluding GST and subject to Vacant Possession.

74 – 76 Cummings Street Hopetoun: The market value as of 13 October 2025, at date of valuation report issue was \$40,000 (forty thousand) excluding GST and subject to Vacant Possession.

This is the minimum market value, and Council would aim to achieve a higher price for the properties exceeding the market value amounts.

It is further recommended that on the sale of the depots the funds be quarantined for future investment into Hopetoun specific projects.

RELEVANT LAW

- *Local Government Act 2020* (The Act).

There are three essential elements of compliance with section 114 of the Act as follows:

- (a) Give public notice of the proposed sale in accordance with section 114(2)(a).
- (b) Undertake a community engagement process in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy pursuant to section 114(2)(b).
- (c) Obtain a valuation of the kind specified in section 114(2)(c) at least 6 months prior to the sale or gifting of the land.

The Council is required to ensure that, when publicly advertising the proposed gifting of land, it solicits feedback—whether in support or opposition—in accordance with Section 114 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Previous legal advice in relation to the Cromie Street Murtoa gifting of land decision, confirmed that section 114 does not preclude any proposed gifting of land as long as the following conditions above are met. In the absence of any specific guidelines, Council has been recommended to consider *Local Government Best Practice Guideline for the Sale, Exchange, and Transfer of Land* (**Best Practice Guideline**) dated June 2019, published by the former state Department of Planning and Community Development.

In the event that land is sold for less than market value or exchanged for land of a lesser value (or, for that matter, gifted), Council should explain the circumstances, reasons or factors which led to the decision to accept a sale price that is less than market value or land on exchange with a lower value or, as in this case, to gift land.

- *Planning and Environment Act 1987 – Section 173*
- *Valuation of Land Act 1960*

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council Plan 2025 – 2029 Strategic Objectives	Priorities
An Innovative and Diversified Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate and support agriculture, economic development and investment in our region.
A Resilient and Sustainable Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for responsible land use, with consideration for the natural environment.
A Council that serves its Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed good governance practices into all decision making. • Consider a broad base of evidence before making decisions, ensuring value for money and responsive, innovative services and solutions are provided.
Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, Plans, Strategies and Frameworks	
Policy	Asset Lifecycle Policy
	Community Engagement Policy and Procedure
Plan	Long Term Financial Plan

OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

This Council report has been prepared in accordance with, and to give effect to, the overarching governance principles articulated in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, to the extent practicable.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

- 27 November 2019 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 13.6 Proposed Sale of Lot 4, Industrial Land Hopetoun
- 24 November 2021 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 12.1 Sale of Dwelling 51 Gardiner Street Warracknabeal
- 24 November 2021 - Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 15.4 Sale of surplus land at Crown Allotment 7, Section 24 known as Duncan Street, Warracknabeal
- 26 November 2025 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 15.4 Proposal to Sell Land, Former Depot Sites in Hopetoun

OPTIONS

- Council could choose not to sell the land and instead lease the land. Council will still have responsibility over the land and will still be required to hold the land as an asset on the balance sheet. The annual leasing values are contained within the valuation reports.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic	The sale of commercial or industrial land facilitates business growth and enables enterprises to establish operations within our township.
Social	Council is in a constrained financial position, where priority projects are scoped, and do not have the financial contributions required to be pursued. Selling

	surplus assets enables funds to be generated to support and enact future projects, that meet the Council Plan objectives and the overall Council Vision.
Financial	Selling land helps Council achieve long-term financial sustainability by lowering asset holdings.
Environmental	The enactment of a 173 Agreement ensures that Council can ensure the land can be utilised for its intended use and purpose only.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement commenced on 27 November 2025 for a minimum of 28 days. As Council was heading into the Christmas break, the advertising was extended through December and into early January, closing on 09 January 2026.

Council advertised the proposed sale of the land in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy and Procedure, and the *Local Government Act 2020* requirements.

Council received one submission, which supported the proposal. A copy of the submission is attached to this report.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not required for this report.

RISK

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	Selling land helps Council achieve long-term financial sustainability by lowering asset holdings.	Reduces Residual Risk Level
Strategy Execution and Change Management Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	Selling land enables those funds to be utilised for alternative purposes, supporting the strategic vision and objectives of the Council.	Reduces Residual Risk Level
Environmental Sustainability Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	Ensuring a Section 173 Agreement is enacted with the sale of both properties mitigates environmental sustainability risks.	Reduces Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Department of Health - [Managing risks associated with land contamination. Guidance for councils.](#)

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 GIFTING OF 2 WOOD STREET (SES DEPOT) TO VICTORIAN STATE EMERGENCY SERVICES

Prepared by Jo White, Governance Officer and Tammy Smith, Chief Executive Officer

SUMMARY

Yarriambiack Shire Council is the owner of the property located at 2 Wood Street, Rupanyup, which is commonly referred to as the Dunmunkle State Emergency Services Unit Building. For an extended period, the State Emergency Services Victoria (SES) has occupied the premises under tenancy arrangements with Country Roads Board, VicRoads, the Shire of Dunmunkle, and, most recently, Yarriambiack Shire Council. In January 2019, SES Victoria entered into a twenty-year peppercorn lease agreement with Council.

The building has been used primarily for member training, equipment storage, and emergency response operations. As the premises is surplus to Council requirements, Council endorsed on the 10 December 2025 to commence the community consultation process to consider gifting the building and land to the SES.

With the community consultation process now completed, this report seeks endorsement to enact the transferring of ownership of the building and land to the SES.

Resolution:

That Council:

- a) In accordance with Section 114 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, and following completion of the community engagement process as outlined in the Council's Community Engagement Policy and Procedure, and detailed in the Community Engagement section of this report, endorses the gifting and transfer of the land known as 2 Wood Street, Rupanyup, Volume 8392 Folio 48 to the State Emergency Services Victoria;
- b) Endorse for the Chief Executive Officer to be given delegated authority to carry out the gifting and sale of the land process, by completing the land transfer, and executing all necessary documentation required for the transfer of land ownership; and
- c) Endorse that the Chief Executive Officer (or her delegate) impose obligations and conditions on the gifting of the land through the establishment of a 173 agreement, enacted under section 173 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. The conditions and obligations to be imposed are:
 - i. Not using the land for any other purpose than the intended one (Emergency Services Depot for training, storage and response purposes) without Council's consent; and
 - ii. Returning the land to Council (at Council's option) for nominal consideration in the event the land and buildings are not used for the intended purpose.

Moved Cr Kirk

Seconded Cr Zanker

That the recommendation be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: Letter from SES CEO - 02 December 2025](#)

[Attachment: Title - 2 Wood Street Rupanyup](#)

[Attachment: Have Your Say Feedback Submissions - 2 Wood Street Rupanyup](#)

[Attachment: Letter - Gifting of 2 Wood Street \(SES Depot\) Submission - 6 Community Groups](#)

The attachments are confidential information for the purpose of section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2020, specifically s3(1)(a), s3(1)(g).

Confidential Attachment: Land Valuation 2 Wood Street Rupanyup

DISCUSSION

The property was initially owned by the Country Roads Board, followed by VicRoads, which likely utilised it as a depot. Subsequently, after an operational review, the premises in Rupanyup were deemed surplus to requirements. For a considerable period, there appears to have been an arrangement allowing SES Victoria to use the facility as a base within the Dunmunkle area. In 1992, ownership of the property was transferred to the Shire of Dunmunkle, with the intention that the Dunmunkle SES Unit would continue to occupy it. Following local government amalgamations in 1995, the Shire became part of Yarriambiack Shire Council. From that time, Yarriambiack Shire Council received an annual Municipal Emergency Service Volunteer Unit Subsidy payment, which was matched by Council and subsequently provided to the Dunmunkle SES Unit. This funding arrangement concluded in 2016/17, at which point funds began to be paid directly to the Dunmunkle SES Unit.

The Yarriambiack Shire Council has continued to pay the utilities and the insurance costs for the building, with no subsidies being provided by the State Government from 2016/17. In 2025, Council negotiated that the utilities be paid by the SES.

SES Victoria has managed the building and land throughout this period, making improvements to both for the community's benefit. This support has been especially valuable during emergencies like floods, storms, bushfires, and accidents. Numerous volunteers have received training at this site, where various equipment and supplies are also stored.

Gifting of Land

The consideration of gifting land commenced in 2018 when SES Victoria was consulted regarding their preference for a land transfer as opposed to establishing a long-term lease, following the MAV/State Government/VICSES Memorandum of Understanding pertaining to volunteer unit facilities.

As no response was received, a long-term lease was instituted to provide secure tenure over the site and facilitate infrastructure investment.

During the current lease period, SES Victoria has completed various improvements at the premises. The most recent discussions about a potential land gift took place in November 2025 between Council and SES Victoria.

The site is surplus to Council's requirements and has been maintained solely for SES purposes, which do not constitute part of Council's core operations.

SES Victoria fully intends to maintain its presence in Rupanyup, as the location is strategically important, being north of the Dadswell's Bridge cutoff, and serves as a crucial operations base during flooding events. Council remains aware of the overhead costs tied to maintaining Council assets, including insurance and major works.

Although the Council is the legal landowner, it does not participate in daily operations or site developments. With SES Victoria expressing interest in managing, maintaining, and owning the property, it is proposed that the Council transfer ownership to SES Victoria and establish a Section 173 Agreement on the land to restrict its sale for private benefit or profit.

Section 173 Agreement

If Council is intending to gift land, it is best practice that Council would require the purchaser to agree to certain conditions or obligations attaching to the gift, such as developing the land for the intended purpose and returning the land to Council or compensating Council if the land is not developed and used for that purpose.

The most common vehicle for imposing such obligations on a purchaser is an agreement pursuant to section 173 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Section 173 Agreement). This has the advantage of imposing positive enforceable covenants on the purchaser which are recorded on the title and attached to the land, so those obligations are binding upon any

successor in title of the purchaser. Common forms of positive obligations to be included in such a Section 173 Agreement include:

- a) Not using the land for any other purpose than the intended one without Council's consent; and
- b) Returning the land to Council (at Council's option) for nominal consideration in the event the land is not developed and used for the intended purpose.

Land Valuation

A land valuation has been completed by a certified valuer, as required in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* requirements. This valuation was complete on 01 December 2025, and identified that the current market value, as is \$185,000 (one hundred and eighty-five thousand dollars) exclusive of GST and subject to vacant possession.

It is recommended for the Council to transfer ownership of the site to the SES, foregoing market value for the property, as the Council was not responsible for its initial financing and currently retains it exclusively for the benefit of the SES. The continued requirement to insure and manage risks associated with the site imposes a financial obligation on the Council, without delivering direct benefits or fulfilling a distinct purpose. This measure also aligns with the recommendations provided in the Long Term Financial Plan health check conducted by LGExperts.

Property Rates and Charges

Currently the land is not subject to property rates, and it is recommended that on transfer of the land to SES Victoria, in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989*, the land remains exempt from rates. However, the land will still be the subject of the Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund, along with waste and recycling charges.

RELEVANT LAW

- *Planning and Environment Act 1987* – Section 173
- *The Local Government Act 2020* (The Act).

There are three essential elements of compliance with section 114 of the Act as follows:

- (a) Give public notice of the proposed sale in accordance with section 114(2)(a).
- (b) Undertake a community engagement process in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy pursuant to section 114(2)(b).
- (c) Obtain a valuation of the kind specified in section 114(2)(c) at least 6 months prior to the sale or gifting of the land.

The Council is required to ensure that, when publicly advertising the proposed gifting of land, it solicits feedback, whether in support or opposition, in accordance with Section 114 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Previous legal advice in relation to the Cromie Street Murtoa gifting of land decision, confirmed that section 114 does not preclude any proposed gifting of land as long as the following conditions above are met. In the absence of any specific guidelines, Council has been recommended to consider *Local Government Best Practice Guideline for the Sale, Exchange, and Transfer of Land (Best Practice Guideline)* dated June 2009, published by the former state Department of Planning and Community Development.

In the event that land is sold for less than market value or exchanged for land of a lesser value (or, for that matter, gifted), Council should explain the circumstances, reasons or factors which led to the decision to accept a sale price that is less than market value or land on exchange with a lower value or, as in this case, to gift land.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council Plan 2025 – 2029 Strategic Objectives	Priorities
An Innovative and Diversified Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate and support agriculture, economic development and investment in our region.
A Healthy and Inclusive Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and/or maintain strong partnerships to deliver high quality services and sustainable infrastructure to enhance the social health and wellbeing outcomes for all our residents. Advocate, prioritise, and invest in infrastructure that supports an accessible, inclusive, and socially connected community to improve liveability. Promote and support volunteerism throughout our Shire, recognising that collaborative efforts can lead to enhanced outcomes for our communities.
A Resilient and Sustainable Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for responsible land use, with consideration for the natural environment.
A Council that serves its Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed good governance practices into all decision making. Consider a broad base of evidence before making decisions, ensuring value for money and responsive, innovative services and solutions are provided.
Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, Plans, Strategies and Frameworks	
Policy	Asset Lifecycle Policy
	Community Engagement Policy and Procedure

OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

This Council report has been prepared in accordance with, and to give effect to, the overarching governance principles articulated in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, to the extent practicable.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

- 25 March 2020 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes - Item 13.11 Proposed Transfer of Land Beulah Supermarket
- 26 August 2020 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes - Item 12.16 Proposed Transfer of Land Beulah Supermarket
- 29 October 2025 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 15.7 Proposal to Gift Wheatlands Agriculture Museum to the Warracknabeal and District Historical Society
- 10 December 2025 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 15.3 Gifting of 2 Wood Street (SES Depot) to Vic SES Dunmunkle

OPTIONS

- Council could choose not to gift the land to the SES; however, Council will need to increase its compliance oversight to ensure its meeting its governance requirements in relation to the management of tenanted land and buildings.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic	Gifting land for an SES Unit offers both direct and indirect economic benefits. When SES Victoria owns the land, it builds community ownership, strengthens local identity and pride, and encourages greater civic engagement and economic resilience.
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Social	The Dunmunkle SES Unit maintains active volunteers and a base for local operations. Council will establish a section 173 agreement for the property, stipulating that if the SES Dunmunkle Unit ceases operation, the site will either revert to Council or be transferred to a comparable organisation.
Financial	The enactment of a 173 Agreement ensures that Council can be compensated for any loss that Council may suffer as a consequence of a breach of condition and/or obligation. This agreement also ensures the land can be utilised for its intended use and purpose only.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement commenced on 11 December 2025 and concluded on 16 January 2026. The community engagement process occurred in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy and Procedure and the *Local Government Act 2020* requirements.

Council received five submissions regarding the gifting of the land and building to the SES. Two supported the proposal, whilst the remaining objected to the proposal.

The three objections to the proposal are as follows:

Objection 1: Six community groups collectively wrote to Council objecting to the gifting of the building and land. The reason for the objection was in summary, they wished for the building and site to be used for community activities, as they have not witnessed the site being used for SES activities for several years.

Objection 2: Notes that "It is not in the interest of the public are members of the Yarriambiack Shire to gift this land, the continued lease is the best option."

Objection 3: Notes "That location would be better served as a depot for the Rupanyup Lions Club and Rupanyup Major Events to store items used on a frequent basis for the local community. There is no active SES Unit in Rupanyup or district. Nearest unit is Warracknabeal. If it is required for storage of flood prevention or response equipment I suggest the Shire yards as a more appropriate venue. In times of fire and flood emergency it is more likely local farming and community groups including the CFA Brigades responding to the incidents. The time it would take for an authorised SES person to attend is quite lengthy. Use the facilities for local groups".

In response to Objection 1 and 3, although there is community interest in accessing additional assets and storage facilities, the Council currently has a 20-year, binding lease agreement with the SES. As such, community access or use of this site is not permitted during the lease period unless the SES chooses to terminate their lease. The SES has indicated that it uses this location as a regional training and storage facility, which serves as an essential resource for its operations. Whilst the Community may wish to use the site, Council has no ability to evict the SES and/or terminate the lease. It should also be noted that Council only holds the ownership of the site for the pure benefit and support of the SES as outlined in the report on how Council came to own the building and for what purposes. The Council will implement a section 173 Agreement to restrict the land's use solely to SES-related activities.

In response to Objection 2, Council has undertaken a detailed Financial Health Check due to being a financially unsustainable Council. It is recommended that where possible, Council dissolve its responsibilities for assets that are surplus to requirements. This could be via gifting and/or sale of those assets. This action aligns with our financial review and health check recommendations.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not applicable.

RISK

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	Transferring land helps Council achieve long-term financial sustainability by lowering asset holdings and reducing safety compliance obligations.	Reduces Residual Risk Level
Corporate Governance, Compliance and Liability Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	The proposal to transfer land is to be undertaken in accordance with the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> requirements and aligns with legal advice received.	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 RESCISSION OF EARLY YEARS PLAN 2023–2028

Prepared by Monique Metlika, Governance Support Officer

SUMMARY

The transition of the Beulah and Hopetoun kindergarten services to Emerge Early Years Services was completed in March 2025, following Yarriambiack Shire Council's formal relinquishment of its licence to operate these services.

As at 31 December 2025, Council also relinquished its licences for kindergarten services in Minyip, Rupanyup, and Warracknabeal.

In addition, in April 2025 Council transitioned Maternal Child Health (MCH) services to West Wimmera Health Service.

With kindergarten and maternal child health services within the Shire now transitioned to Emerge Early Years Services and West Wimmera Health Service, Council no longer directly operates any early years programs.

In light of these developments, the Yarriambiack Shire Council Early Years Plan 2023–2028 is no longer applicable and will be superseded by an Early Years Commitment Statement, scheduled for adoption prior to the 30 June 2026. This report seeks Council's formal endorsement to rescind the existing Plan and to proceed with the development of a new Early Years Commitment Statement for future Council approval.

Resolution:

That Council:

- a) Rescind the Early Years Plan 2023-2028 adopted on 25 October 2023; and
- b) Develop and formally adopt an Early Years Commitment Statement no later than 30 June 2026.

Moved Cr Heintze

Seconded Cr Keel

That the recommendation be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

ATTACHMENTS

Nil.

DISCUSSION

The Early Years Plan 2023–2028 served as a comprehensive roadmap for how Council planned, delivered, partnered, and advocated to achieve the best possible outcomes for Early Years communities through a whole-of-Council approach. This plan guided our efforts in leadership, advocacy, inclusive service facilitation, infrastructure development, and partnership building to reduce barriers and strengthen community capacity.

In 2025, Council resolved to transition away from being the direct provider of Early Years services. This decision was informed by several key considerations:

- *Specialist Expertise:* Early childhood education and care is a highly specialised service. As a small rural shire, Council acknowledged that it did not have the technical expertise required to maintain the level of oversight and quality assurance necessary for these services.
- *Sustainability and Quality:* Partnering with Emerge Early Years Services, a highly reputable cluster manager with proven experience in the Wimmera Southern Mallee region, ensured that children and families would receive high-quality education and care. Emerge's expertise in governance, compliance, and education positioned them to deliver services that meet and exceed regulatory standards.

In addition, West Wimmera Health Service was considered a more appropriate and established organisation to deliver MCH services across our community, with the appropriate clinical governance structures and allied health services available to support our families, staff and the wider community.

- *Community Benefits:* The transition allows Council to focus on its core roles, such as planning, advocacy, and infrastructure, while leveraging Emerge and West Wimmera Health Services capacity to provide responsive, inclusive programs. This model strengthened service sustainability, improved access to resources, and supported workforce development across the region.
- *Improved Accessibility and Staffing:* By moving to a cluster management model for kindergarten services and a health service for MCH services the community gained access to a larger pool of qualified staff. This reduced the risk of service disruptions.

The Early Years Commitment Statement, which will be developed and formally adopted by Council no later than 30 June 2026, will articulate Council's strong commitment to supporting early years development. This statement will be closely aligned with the objectives outlined in the Council Plan, ensuring that early childhood priorities are embedded within our broader strategic framework and guide decision-making across all relevant initiatives.

RELEVANT LAW

Local Government Act 2020 – Section 9 'Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles'.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council Plan 2025 – 2029 Strategic Objectives	Priorities
An Innovative and Diversified Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for continued and enhanced funding to enable strategic investment in our roads, footpaths, and associated assets to support tourism, economic development and social inclusion and connection across our Shire. • Understand, support and advocate for services and associated skilled workforces to unlock economic and community development opportunities across our Shire.
A Healthy and Inclusive Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and/or maintain strong partnerships to deliver high quality services and sustainable infrastructure to enhance the social health and wellbeing outcomes for all our residents. • Advocate, prioritise, and invest in infrastructure that supports an accessible, inclusive, and socially connected community to improve liveability.
A Council that serves its Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake robust and transparent planning and risk management to ensure our organisation is sustainable now and into the future. • Embed good governance practices into all decision making. • Advocate for our community, on matters that are important to the entire municipal district. • Build trust through engaging with our community, delivering quality services and outcomes. • Consider a broad base of evidence before making decisions, ensuring value for money and responsive, innovative services and solutions are provided.
Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, Plans, Strategies and Frameworks	
Policy	Child Safety Code of Conduct
	Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Council Plan 2025 – 2029 Strategic Objectives	Priorities
Guideline	Maintenance and Servicing Guidelines
Plan	Council Plan
	Asset Management Plan
	Long Term Financial Plan
Strategy	Economic Development Strategy
Framework	Service Level Planning Framework

OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

This Council report has been prepared in accordance with, and to give effect to, the overarching governance principles articulated in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, to the extent practicable.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

- 10 December 2025 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 15.6 Emerge Early Years Services Building Leases and Service Agreement
- 27 August 2025 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 15.6 Transfer of Warracknabeal, Rupanyup and Minyip Kindergarten Services
- 26 March 2025 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 15.3 West Wimmera Health Services Leases for Maternal and Child Health Services
- 26 February 2025 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 15.8 Endorsement of Emerge Lease and Service Agreement for Hopetoun Early Years Centre
- 26 February 2025 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 14.2 Maternal Child Health Funding Municipal Association Victoria State Council Motion
- 26 February 2025 - Closed Council Meeting Minutes – Item 4.1 Endorsement of Communication and Engagement Plan Early Years Services
- 29 January 2025 - Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 15.4 Endorsement of Transition - Maternal Child Health (including Immunisation Services)
- 27 November 2024 - Closed Council Meeting Minutes - Item 4.3 Future Direction of Early Childhood Services Part 2
- 24 July 2024 - Closed Council Meeting Minutes – Item 4.4 Future Direction of Early Childhood Services
- 25 October 2023 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 15.5 Municipal Early Years Plan 2023-2028

OPTIONS

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic	The lack of adequate Early Years services represents a critical constraint on the region's economic growth and long-term prosperity. Persistent shortages of qualified educators and carers have limited families' ability to return to the workforce, reducing household income and overall productivity. This issue is further exacerbated by a severe skills and labour shortage across the Shire and surrounding region. Without accessible childcare, parents are unable to accept available positions or increase their working hours, directly restricting workforce participation and impeding business development. Transitioning Early Years services to a clustered model under Emerge is a strategic and necessary response to remove these barriers, strengthen workforce capacity, and safeguard the region's economic sustainability and competitiveness.
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Social	<p>Early Years services support children's social health, wellbeing, and development, forming the basis for lifelong learning. The Council prioritises equitable access to ensure all children can thrive. Moving to a cluster model with Emerge improves service quality, accessibility, and social sustainability by promoting inclusion and community connections. Similarly, shifting MCH services to West Wimmera Health Service increases inclusivity.</p> <p>This approach supports families, builds resilience, and ensures positive outcomes for young people, contributing to a more cohesive and vibrant community.</p>
Financial	<p>Transitioning Early Years services to Emerge and WWHS enables Council to optimise financial sustainability by reallocating valuable resources away from direct service delivery. This shift allows Council to concentrate on its core responsibilities, such as strategic planning, advocacy, and infrastructure development.</p>

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council will commence a community engagement process once the Early Years Commitment Statement is developed.

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	Developing and adopting a commitment statement provides assurance to the community that Council still values early years services and is committed to advocacy and supporting such services to thrive in our region.	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	As above, developing and adopting a commitment statement provides assurance to the community and mitigate reputational risk.	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.

15.7 DISCONTINUATION OF ROADS

Prepared by Tammy Smith, Chief Executive Officer and Joel Turner, Chief Engineering

SUMMARY

This report seeks Council's endorsement to formally discontinue and remove, from the Yarriambiack Shire Council Road Register, the following roads located within Mining Licence MIN5532, operated by Donald Project Pty Ltd, trading as Donald Mineral Sands (DMS), the operator of the Donald Rare Earth and Mineral Sands Project (Donald Project):

- R Funckes Road (2km: RA2 Rural Access Category 2 Gravel Road)
- AB Funckes Road (3.15km: RA5 Rural Access Category 5 Earth Road)
- Westerlands Road (1.26km: RA2 & RA5 Gravel and Earthen Road)

The request also identified a road within the mining licence that was not a declared road recorded in the Yarriambiack Shire Council Road Register as follows:

- Unnamed Road (within MIN5532) (1.73km: Not in Council Road register)

The request has been submitted by DMS to facilitate the construction and operation of the Donald Rare Earth and Mineral Sands Project in accordance with its State Government approved Work Plan.

Resolution:

That Council:

- a) Endorse for the following roads to be discontinued and removed from the Yarriambiack Shire Council Road Register as they are located within mining licence MIN5532 operated by Donald Project Pty Ltd, trading as Donald Mineral Sands and are identified for discontinuation within the approved work plan located within MIN5532:
 - i. R Funckes Road (Road ID 1526: Segment Data 2518: 2km)
 - ii. AB Funckes Road (Road ID 1527: Segment Data 9: 3.15km)
 - iii. Westerlands Road (Road ID 1399: Segment Data 3433 & 3434: 1.26km)
- b) Endorse for the following road to be no longer quarantined as a road, recognising it is not a declared road, and is not included in the Yarriambiack Shire Council Road register:
 - i. Unnamed Road (1.73km) located between AB Funckes Road and Gun Club Road.
- c) Endorse that the roads be discontinued in accordance with clause 3, Schedule 10 of the *Local Government Act 1989* and that the community consultation process has been undertaken in accordance with Councils Community Engagement Policy and Procedure and section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, as documented in the attached Discontinuation of Roads - DMS Report; and
- d) Upon discontinuance, formally endorse the return of any land situated beneath the roads to the Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action, as such land is vested in the Crown.

Moved Cr Kirk

Seconded Cr Zanker

That the recommendation be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: DMS Letter to YSC Discontinuance of select roads MIN5532 – 18 July 2025](#)

[Attachment: Final Report - Road Discontinuation Request - Donald Mineral Sands](#)

The attachments are confidential information for the purpose of section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2020, specifically s3(1)(a), s3(1)(b), s3(1)(e), s3(1)(g).

[Attachment: Final Report - Road Discontinuation Request - Donald Mineral Sands \(Councillor Version\)](#)

DISCUSSION

Yarriambiack Shire Council received a formal request from DMS, operator of the Donald Rare Earth and Mineral Sands Project, to discontinue several local roads located within Mining Licence MIN5532 to enable construction and operation of the mine. The affected roads include R Funckes Road, AB Funckes Road, Westerlands Road, and an unnamed track within the licence area.

The DMS Work Plan, approved by the Victorian Government in June 2025, requires the decommissioning of these roads prior to mining, with land reverting to Crown ownership following discontinuance, as the roads lie on Crown land. The Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action has stipulated rehabilitation and land restoration conditions to ensure the land is returned to agricultural use or native vegetation post-mining.

Council is required to follow the road discontinuance process under clause 3 of Schedule 10 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, including public notice and consideration of submissions under section 223. Consultation occurred from 08 October 2025 to 07 November 2025 through newsletters, social media, newspapers, direct letters, and phone calls to surrounding landholders. A total of 22 valid submissions were received, ranging from objections to operational concerns, including specific input from the Dunmunkle Land Protection Group. In addition, Council held a further meeting with submitters on 19 January 2026 to ascertain the full breadth of their concerns in relation to the road closures.

Traffic data collected during the 2025 harvest period demonstrated very low utilisation across all affected roads, with minimal heavy-vehicle traffic. Several viable alternative routes exist for local traffic, though some may require upgrades or create longer travel paths for farm machinery.

Public safety is a critical factor in evaluating the request for road discontinuation. The presence of increased heavy vehicle traffic, dust generation, deteriorated road conditions, and the roads' location within active mining blocks—including proximity to the Tailings Storage Facility—collectively present significant risks if the roads are kept open during operational activities.

Economically and strategically, the mine is a State and Commonwealth-recognised major project expected to generate 600 jobs and contribute \$205 million annually to the region, forming part of Victoria's critical minerals and renewable energy transition frameworks. Nevertheless, the Shire's agricultural sector continues to play a critical economic role. Community submissions have highlighted concerns about the compatibility of mining with farming, land rehabilitation processes, and associated fire risks.

Following assessment of legal obligations, public submissions, safety risks, regional strategic plans, and economic considerations, the attached detailed report concludes that road discontinuance is appropriate considering the location of the roads in a mine site.

This ensures public safety, aligns with State-approved mine plans, and recognises that failure to discontinue the roads may lead to the State invoking alternative powers to override Council's decision.

Therefore, it is recommended that Council proceed with discontinuing the nominated roads to prioritise public health, safety, and effective coordination with State-endorsed mining operations.

This recommendation in no way lessens the importance of agriculture and the farming sector within our community. However, as the responsible road authority, Council must fulfill its obligations under the *Road Management Act 2004*. Accordingly, following a thorough review of submissions and assessment evidence, Council sees no other option other than to close and discontinue these roads. Further details regarding this rationale and the decision-making process are provided in the attached report.

Council Officers have actively negotiated and secured a commitment from DMS to resheet a portion of Burrum Lawler Road and to cover the annual maintenance grading and material expenses for the alternative detour route around the perimeter of the discontinued roads. Additionally, DMS has agreed to upgrade the perimeter roads detailed in the attached report, to ensure all-weather access, with enhancements to Walsh Lane and sections of Gun Club Road scheduled during the first year of operation. Further upgrades to Minyip-Rich Avon Road and R Funckes Road are planned for 2026.

RELEVANT LAW

Council, as coordinating road authority, has the power to discontinue roads under:

- **Section 206 and Schedule 10 of the *Local Government Act 1989 (Vic)*** – provides Council power to discontinue roads.
- **Section 12 of the *Road Management Act 2004 (Vic)*** – recognises Council as coordinating road authority for local roads.

Notice and consultation must be undertaken in accordance with legislative requirements prior to final gazettal.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council Plan 2025 – 2029 Strategic Objectives	Priorities
An Innovative and Diversified Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate and support agriculture, economic development and investment in our region. • Advocate for continued and enhanced funding to enable strategic investment in our roads, footpaths, and associated assets to support tourism, economic development and social inclusion and connection across our Shire. • Understand, support and advocate for services and associated skilled workforces to unlock economic and community development opportunities across our Shire.
A Resilient and Sustainable Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for responsible land use, with consideration for the natural environment.
A Council that serves its Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed good governance practices into all decision making. • Advocate for our community, on matters that are important to the entire municipal district. • Build trust through engaging with our community, delivering quality services and outcomes. • Consider a broad base of evidence before making decisions, ensuring value for money and responsive, innovative services and solutions are provided.
Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, Plans, Strategies and Frameworks	
Policy	Community Engagement Policy and Procedure
Plan	Council Plan
Strategy	Economic Development Strategy
Other	Road Hierarchy

	Road Register Local Roads and Streets
	Yarriambiack Shire Council's Position on Mining, Renewables and Transmission Lines

OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

This Council report has been prepared in accordance with, and to give effect to, the overarching governance principles articulated in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, to the extent practicable.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

- 27 January 2021 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 14.4 Proposed Boroopka Lane and Meral Street Closure in Lascelles

OPTIONS

- Councillors could decline the request; however, this could result in the Minister enacting their powers under the *Road Management Act 2004*.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic	Considering the low use of the roads, in accordance with the Federal and State Government Plans, discontinuing the roads will support the Work Plan being enacted and the mine becoming operational. Alternative routes and upgrades have been negotiated to mitigate economic disadvantage to the agricultural sector.
Social	Risk of reduced access, safety concerns, and cultural impacts. Trust in Council depends on fair and transparent processes.
Environmental	Road reserves often support biodiversity and drainage; loss may cause vegetation issues.
Financial	Discontinuance lessens Council's maintenance obligations, while negotiated funding supports improved upkeep and upgrades for higher quality perimeter roads.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council followed the community consultation process in accordance with section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, and Council's Community Engagement Policy and Procedure.

Council advertised the proposal to discontinue the roads commencing on 08 October 2025 and concluding on 07 November 2025. Council received 23 submissions, of which 22 were valid (due to a double up of submissions).

Submitters were invited to a meeting on 19 January 2026, where they were provided with an opportunity to provide further information and clarification regarding the roads they utilise and the process for discontinuation.

A detailed explanation of the community engagement process is included in the attached report.

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
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	To mitigate reputational risks and negative perceptions from the farming sector the CEO and Chief Engineering officer invited those who made submissions to meet with them on 19 January 2026 to explain how decisions were made. Individual phone calls and texts were also made to outline the process. Council Officers worked to be clear and open about the decision-making process.	Maintains Residual Risk Level
Political Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	The decision to endorse the road closures poses a political risk if Councillors do not endorse the Officers recommendation. The mine is part of the State Government Critical Minerals Road map, classified as a Major Federal Project and has a State Government endorsed work plan, which includes the listed roads to be discontinued. The decision to discontinue the roads could be made by the Minister in accordance with the <i>Road Management Act 2004</i> .	Reduces Residual Risk Level
Corporate Governance, Compliance and Liability Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	Council has followed the requirements of the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> and Council's Community Engagement Policy and Procedure requirements. A detailed report outlining the process, including rationale for decision was produced and included with this report.	Reduces Residual Risk Level

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

- [Victorian Critical Minerals Roadmap - Resources Victoria](#)
- [Regional Economic Development Strategies \(REDS\) - Regional Development Victoria](#)
– Wimmera Southern Mallee

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 NAMING OF UNNAMED LANE BEULAH - ISBEL LANE

Prepared By Joel Turner, Chief Engineering Officer

SUMMARY

This report recommends that Council approve the renaming of Unnamed Laneway 04 in Beulah township to *Isbel Lane*. The name change was requested by the Isbel family to honour their parents, Ron and Milly Isbel. The proposal has undergone community consultation and was advertised in the Government Gazette in accordance with the Victorian Geographic Names Guidelines. No objections were received during the consultation process.

Resolution:

That Council:

- a) Adopt the recommendation to accept the name change of the Unnamed Laneway 04 in Beulah township to Isbel Lane, and to update Council's Road Register accordingly.

Moved Cr Keel

Seconded Cr Kirk

That the recommendation be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: Letter Road Naming Request](#)

[Attachment: YSC Letter - Isbel Lane Renaming](#)

[Attachment: Council Meeting Minutes - 26 February 2025 – Item 15.1 Road Naming – Isbel Lane Beulah](#)

Mapping of the nominated laneway in Beulah (Red line indicates laneway)



DISCUSSION

Background

On 23 October 2024, Council received a request from the Isbel family to name an unnamed laneway (Laneway 04 in Council's Road Register) after their parents, Ron and Milly Isbel.

Geographic Naming Guidelines

In accordance with the *Geographic Names Guidelines – Principle (H): Using Commemorative Names*, the following criteria apply:

- If named after a person, that individual should be or have been held in strong regard by the community.
- Preference is given to unofficial names already used locally.
- When assigning a commemorative name, naming authorities should consider the person's achievements, historical relevance, association with the area, and the significance of the family/person to the land.
- For example, a family associated with the area for at least 50 years.

Request Details

The children of Ron and Milly Isbel respectfully requested that the unnamed laneway between Phillips Street and Gladstone Street in Beulah be named "Isbel Lane". This request honours their parents, who were long-standing and dedicated members of the Beulah community. Further details are provided in the attached letter dated 23 October 2024.

Council Decision and Consultation Process

Council approved the recommendation at the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 26 February 2025 to proceed in accordance with the Victorian Geographic Naming Guidelines and commence community consultation.

- Notification was provided via social media, local newspapers, and letter drops to adjoining property owners, allowing 30 days for objections or comments. No objections were received.
- A subsequent notice was published in the Victorian Government Gazette on 11 September 2025, with a further 30-day objection period. Again, no objections were received.

RELEVANT LAW

- *Local Government Act 1989*
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Road Management Act 2004*

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council Plan 2025 – 2029 Strategic Objectives	Priorities
A Healthy and Inclusive Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and/or maintain strong partnerships to deliver high quality services and sustainable infrastructure to enhance the social health and wellbeing outcomes for all our residents.
A Resilient and Sustainable Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for responsible land use, with consideration for the natural environment.
A Council that serves its Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed good governance practices into all decision making. • Advocate for our community, on matters that are important to the entire municipal district. • Build trust through engaging with our community, delivering quality services and outcomes. • Consider a broad base of evidence before making decisions, ensuring value for money and responsive, innovative services and solutions are provided.
Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, Plans, Strategies and Frameworks	
Policy	Community Engagement Policy

Plan	Council Plan
Strategy	Economic Development Strategy
Other	Road Hierarchy
	Road Register Local Roads and Streets

OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

This Council report has been prepared in accordance with, and to give effect to, the overarching governance principles articulated in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, to the extent practicable.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Councils last road naming adoption was Minapre Road and was gazette on the 14 October in 2021.

29 September 2021 – Ordinary Meeting of Council – Item 14.3 Naming of Unnamed Road (2050) North of Maxwells, Minapre Road Lascelles

OPTIONS

- a) Option 2: Deny the request and leave the lane as an unnamed laneway.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Social	Benefits for maintaining a rich history within the township of Beulah.
Financial	Minimal financial implications with signage and advertising of new laneway name.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council approved the recommendation at the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 26 February 2025 to proceed in accordance with the Victorian Geographic Naming Guidelines and commence community consultation.

- Notification was provided via social media, local newspapers, and letter drops to adjoining property owners, allowing 30 days for objections or comments. No objections were received.
- A subsequent notice was published in the Victorian Government Gazette on 11 September 2025, with a further 30-day objection period. Again, no objections were received.

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
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	Council assessed the naming proposal as submitted by the family members.	Reduces Residual Risk Level
Political Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	Council assessed the naming proposal as submitted by the family members and follow due process through Geographic Name Guidelines.	Reduces Residual Risk Level
Corporate Governance, Compliance and Liability Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	Follow due process as per the <i>Local Government Act 1989, Local Government Act</i>	Reduces Residual Risk Level

Strategic Risk Description and Residual Risk Level	Action to Mitigate/Reduce Risk	Does Action maintain or reduce Residual Risk Level
	2020, Road Management Act 2004 and the Geographic Name Guidelines.	

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Victorian Geographic Name Guidelines.

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 LEASE ENDORSEMENT – HOPETOUN AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC – HOPETOUN MEMORIAL HALL

Prepared by Jo White, Governance Officer

SUMMARY

Yarriambiack Shire Council is the owner of both the building and land at the Hopetoun Memorial Hall, situated on Austin Street, Hopetoun. In accordance with the Council's Leases and Licensing Policy, a formal Lease Agreement must be established. The proposed lease aims to provide for the ongoing operation of the Hopetoun Memorial Hall within council-owned premises, clearly defining the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved.

This report recommends that Council endorse the attached lease agreement.

Resolution:

That Council:

- a) Endorse the Lease (as attached) between Yarriambiack Shire Council and Hopetoun and District Historical Society Inc for the building and land known as Hopetoun Memorial Hall, 13 Austin Street, Hopetoun.
- b) Endorse the Lease for a period of seven 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 as 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.

Moved Cr Lehmann

Seconded Cr Heintze

That the recommendation be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment: Building Lease – Hopetoun and District Historical Society Inc – Hopetoun Memorial Hall](#)

[Attachment: Maintenance and Servicing Guidelines – Hopetoun Memorial Hall](#)

DISCUSSION

The Hopetoun Memorial Hall foundation stone records that the Soldier's Memorial Hall opened in 1923. The official party on the day included relevant dignitaries, but poignantly, also four local mothers who had lost children in the Great War. The stone also reads that the building was erected by 'a grateful public' as a tribute to 'the men of Hopetoun and District who fought in the Great War'. There can be no question of the importance and symbolism the Hall represents to the local community.

Over the last 100 years, the Hall has been the location of weddings, cabarets, parties, community events, meetings, exhibitions, a movie theatre, a sports venue and so much more. Throughout that time, an energetic and passionate Committee of volunteers have operated and managed the Hall. In accordance with Council's governance obligations, it is necessary to formalise the arrangement through a Lease Agreement.

Whilst the Hall is adequately managed, the Hall Committee are not incorporated nor hold Public Liability Insurance, posing a risk both to Council and the volunteers. Both Incorporation and Public Liability are a requirement to enter into a Lease with Council.

The current Committee are elderly, are of limited numbers and are not in a position to pursue Incorporation. Whilst they are more than happy to continue their roles, their preference is that an incorporated body hold the lease, and they operate as a sub-committee under the incorporated body's tenancy.

In recent months there has been discussion with the local Hopetoun and District Historical Society Inc (H&DHS) who are well versed as tenants with Council, holding leases with Council for the Old School Site, Corrong Homestead and the old Scout Hall.

Late last year, Council's Governance Officer met with the H&DHS Committee to discuss transferring the Hall lease. A draft lease outlined that the Hall Sub-Committee would manage daily operations, reporting to H&DHS annually, while H&DHS would only add the Hall to their Public Liability Insurance. Council would redirect funds to H&DHS for the insurance premium, with the Hall Committee covering any shortfall. If the Hall Committee dissolved, responsibility would return to Council. The meeting ended positively, and H&DHS has confirmed acceptance of the lease agreement.

The proposed Lease Agreement has been carefully drafted to align with relevant policies and legislative requirements, including those related to 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 Hopetoun Memorial Hall 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 Hall Committee and the H&DHS with the security and clarity necessary for their ongoing operation.

RELEVANT LAW

Local Government Act 2020.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council Plan 2025 – 2029 Strategic Objectives	Priorities
A Healthy and Inclusive Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and/or maintain strong partnerships to deliver high quality services and sustainable infrastructure to enhance the social health and wellbeing outcomes for all our residents. Advocate, prioritise, and invest in infrastructure that supports an accessible, inclusive, and socially connected community to improve liveability. Promote and support volunteerism throughout our Shire, recognising that collaborative efforts can lead to enhanced outcomes for our communities.
A Council that serves its Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake robust and transparent planning and risk management to ensure our organisation is sustainable now and into the future. Embed good governance practices into all decision making. Advocate for our community, on matters that are important to the entire municipal district. Build trust through engaging with our community, delivering quality services and outcomes. Consider a broad base of evidence before making decisions, ensuring value for money and responsive, innovative services and solutions are provided.
Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, Plans, Strategies and Frameworks	
Policy	Leases and Licences Policy

OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

This Council report has been prepared in accordance with, and to give effect to, the overarching governance principles articulated in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, to the extent practicable.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

- 10 December 2025 – Ordinary Meeting of Council – Item 15.9 Lease Endorsement – Tempy Inc - Memorial Park and Tempy Memorial Hall
- 10 December 2025 – Ordinary Meeting of Council – Item 15.9 Lease Endorsement – Tempy Inc - Memorial Park and Tempy Memorial Hall
- 28 May 2025 – Ordinary Meeting of Council –Item 15.4 Building Lease Endorsement for Hopetoun And District Historical Society Inc - Hopetoun Old School Site
- 27 November 2025 - Ordinary Meeting of Council –Item 15.9 Peppercorn Leave – Warracknabeal Town Hall
- 27 July 2022 - Ordinary Meeting of Council – Item 16.3 Hopetoun Scout Hall Lease - Hopetoun and District Historical Society Inc.

OPTIONS

While the Council has the option to publicly advertise the Hopetoun Memorial Hall lease, it is determined that this approach may not serve the best interests of the community, given that a committed and effective committee has expressed interest in managing the lease.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic	The lease supports the Hall's operation, contributing to the local economy by providing a community venue and attracting visitors.
Social	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 Hall's financial sustainability. It will assist to maintaining the hall as a valuable community asset.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engagement has been undertaken with the Hall Committee and the H&DNH as outlined above in the discussion section of this report.

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
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 an effective governance structure whilst also allowing the Hall Committee to still have autonomy to manage the day to day operations.	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 APPROVAL FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PRIVATE HANGAR AT HOPETOUN AERODROME

Prepared by Tammy Smith, Chief Executive Officer

SUMMARY

Yarriambiack Shire Council received a proposal from Mr Grant Wilson, a resident of Yarriambiack Shire, seeking approval to construct an aeroplane hangar at the Hopetoun Aerodrome. The proposed hangar would be owned by Mr Wilson, with Council entering into a long-term ground lease agreement at market rates.

This report updates the Council following the community consultation process, noting that three submissions were received, all in support of the proposal.

At the Council meeting on 26 November 2025, if no objections were received, the Chief Executive Officer was authorised to approve the hangar construction under the conditions specified in the Council report, item 15.5.

Resolution:

That Council:

- a) Notes the report providing an update regarding Council Decision 15.5 on the Proposal for the Construction of a Private Hangar at Hopetoun Aerodrome, dated 26 November 2025.

Moved Cr Kirk

Seconded Cr Zanker

That the recommendation be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachments: Have Your Say Submissions - Proposal for Construction of Private Hangar at Hopetoun Aerodrome](#)

DISCUSSION

Background

Mr Grant Wilson submitted a request to build a hangar at the Yarriambiack Shire Council Hopetoun Aerodrome, located at 78 Hopetoun Aerodrome Road, Hopetoun Vic 3396.

A preliminary assessment of the Hopetoun Aerodrome site was completed, which indicated that an existing office building needs to be demolished to allow for the construction of a hangar. This would be at the cost of Mr Wilson and would need to be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced demolition company on Council's panel of preferred supplier list.

This would enable the hangar to be built within the footprint that is acceptable to the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) requirements.

Figure 1: Site Map Hopetoun Aerodrome Buildings



The red outlined building will be demolished. A new hangar may be built adjacent to the existing one on site.

The construction of the hangar must be in accordance with Council's Project Management Policy and Procedure, Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Manual, and Occupational Health and Safety legislation. In addition, all works at the site must meet the *Local Government Act 2020* and CASA requirements.

On 26 November 2025, the Yarriambiack Shire Councillors approved the commencement of the community consultation process regarding this request. In the absence of objections, the Council endorsed for the Chief Executive Officer to be delegated authority to approve the construction of the hangar at Hopetoun Aerodrome.

The consultation process was undertaken, with no objections being received.

Council Officers will now move forward, working with Mr Wilson to construct the hangar, and to develop the ground lease for Mr Wilson and Council's endorsement.

RELEVANT LAW

- The *Local Government Act 2020* (The Act).
- *Valuation of Land Act 1960*

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council Plan 2025 – 2029 Strategic Objectives	Priorities
An Innovative and Diversified Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate and support agriculture, economic development and investment in our region.
A Resilient and Sustainable Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for responsible land use, with consideration for the natural environment.
A Council that serves its Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed good governance practices into all decision making. • Consider a broad base of evidence before making decisions, ensuring value for money and responsive, innovative services and solutions are provided.
Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, Plans, Strategies and Frameworks	
Policy	Leases and Licences Policy
	Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Manual
	Community Engagement Policy and Procedure
	Project Management Policy

OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

This Council report has been prepared in accordance with, and to give effect to, the overarching governance principles articulated in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, to the extent practicable.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

- 22 November 2023 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes - Item 16.1 Warracknabeal Aeroclub Lease Agreement
- 24 May 2023 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes - Item 15.1 Hopetoun Caravan Park Private Cabins Lease Agreement
- 26 November 2025 – Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Item 15.5 Proposal for the Construction of a Private Hangar at the Hopetoun Aerodrome

OPTIONS

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Social	Backing a private hangar at the Council aerodrome promotes social and recreational opportunities and increases airport use.
Financial	<p>Council could generate additional income from the ground lease, that would not otherwise have been available. In 2023, the Ground Lease valuation for the Warracknabeal Aeroclub was \$1,615.00 per annum, plus GST, with a Consumer Price Index (CPI) review on the anniversary of the commencement date of the agreement.</p> <p>This funding could contribute to the running and operational costs associated with the aerodrome.</p>

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement commenced on the 27 November 2025 for a minimum of 28 days. As Council was heading into the Christmas break, the advertising was extended through December into early January, concluding on 09 January 2026.

Council received three submissions, all supporting the proposal.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not required for this report.

RISK

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	Provides an opportunity for additional income generation to contribute towards the operational cost of the aerodrome.	Reduces Residual Risk Level
Program and Project Risk - Residual Risk Level Medium	The project will be overseen by Council in accordance with the draft MoU. This ensures compliance oversight.	Reduces Residual Risk Level
Reputational Risk - Residual Risk Level Low	Ensuring Councils decision making process is transparent and undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy and Procedure will mitigate reputational risk.	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.

17 PERMITS ISSUED

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

Resolution:

That Council:

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

Moved Cr Heintze

Seconded Cr Keel

That the recommendation be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

Reference No	Description	Address	Date of Issue
Local Law Permits			
21-25	Keeping more than allowed number of animals - Renewal	Warracknabeal	03/12/2025
16-25	Roadside Trading Activity Permit – Services Australia	Warracknabeal and Hopetoun	03/12/2025
22-25	Placing shipping container on private land.	Warracknabeal	17/12/2025
100/25	Discharge of Fireworks	Radda Park Brim	22/12/2025
Planning Permits			
PA20250070	Six lot subdivision and construction of four dwellings with shared carport and driveway	Murtoa	22/12/2025
PA20250073	Construction of 2 Grain Storage Sheds	Beulah	22/12/2025
RRWP & APP Permits			
2025-16	Heritage Insight are conducting an archaeological survey to identify Aboriginal cultural heritage and/or areas of sensitivity.	Various road reserves in the central are of the YSC.	05/12/2025

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.

Resolution:

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.

Moved Cr Zanker

Seconded Cr Heintze

That the recommendation be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

Date	Item Number and Title	Decision
10 December 2025	Item 4.1 Donald Mineral Sands Project Proposed Council Road Works	<p>Resolution:</p> <p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Approves internal Council delivery of the approximate 15 km Minyip Rich Avon Road shoulder upgrade at an estimated cost of \$1.21 million (ex GST), to be fully funded by Donald Mineral Sands; b) Approves internal Council delivery of the R Funckes Road 1.5 km gravel resheet from Burrum Lawler Road to Mine Site Farmhouse at an estimated cost of \$250,000 (ex GST) to be fully funded by Donald Mineral Sands; c) Endorse that the Roads are to be maintained under the existing ratings in Council's Road Hierarchy, RA5 for R Funckes Road and RC1 for Minyip Rich Avon Road and maintained using guidance from the Council's Road Management Plan; d) Endorse that any supplementary road maintenance required be undertaken at the expense of Donald Mineral Sands, so as not to impose further demands on Council resources or finances. This arrangement shall remain in effect for the duration of the mine's operations; and e) Authorise for the Chief Executive Officer, or their delegate, to complete operational arrangements with Donald Mineral Sands when funds are secured. Please note that roadworks will only begin once Donald Mineral Sands confirms funding availability and agrees to pay 50% of the costs upfront before the Council proceeds.

		Moved Cr Kirk Seconded Cr Zanker That the recommendation be adopted. <u>Carried Unanimously</u>
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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

Unscheduled Closed Meeting of Council – Wednesday 11 February 2025 - To consider the Tender Contract being Awarded for C368-2026 - Hopetoun Swimming Pool Major Repairs

Ordinary Meeting of Council - Wednesday 25 February 2026.

21 CLOSED

Council will close the Ordinary Meeting of Council.

Resolution:

That the Ordinary Meeting of Council is now closed at 10.41am.

Noting, that there is no scheduled Closed (Confidential) Council meeting to follow.

Moved Cr Zanker Seconded Cr Kirk

That the recommendation be adopted.

Carried Unanimously