



Pyrenees
Shire Council

Community Newsletter

Summer 2026



Cr Damian Ferrari elected 2025-2026 Mayor

Cr Damian Ferrari was elected Pyrenees Shire Council's new mayor for 2025/26 while Cr Rebecca Wardlaw was voted in as the municipality's first Deputy Mayor.

It is the second time Cr Ferrari has carried out the role after serving as Mayor in 2020/21. He was first elected as the Beaufort Ward Councillor in August 2018 following a by-election.

Cr Wardlaw was elected as the Avoca Ward Councillor at the November 2024 local government election.

Cr Ferrari says one of his aspirations is to continue the strong advocacy work currently being carried out by Pyrenees Shire Council, particularly around the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund levy.

He says he is also looking forward to the expanded role of Cr Wardlaw as a big support to the Mayor, Councillors and Council staff.

Cr Ferrari was presented with the mayoral gavel by outgoing Mayor Cr Tanya Kehoe who he said had put in a lot of extremely hard work and hours over the past 12 months.

Cr Ferrari said he took the honour of being Mayor very seriously. "I thank the Councillors for having the confidence to elect me for the next 12 months," he said.

"It's an honour to serve as a Councillor and an even bigger honour to serve as Mayor. It's not a position I take lightly."

For more information on the Councillors, go to pyrenees.vic.gov.au/Councillors.



Pyrenees Shire Council at the 2025 Statutory Meeting. From left: Cr Megan Phelan, Mayor Cr Damian Ferrari, Cr Simon Tol, Deputy Mayor Cr Rebecca Wardlaw and Cr Tanya Kehoe.



2025-2026 Mayor Cr Damian Ferrari.

CONTACT YOUR COUNCILLORS

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Council Plan Initiatives

Pyrenees Shire Council adopted its Council Plan 2025-2029 in June which sets the Council's strategic direction over its four-year term.

Now Council has also adopted 36 initiatives which will underpin the work required to successfully deliver the plan.

Some of these initiatives include:

- An Economic Development Strategy
- Transport improvements across the Shire
- Water management and drought resilience projects
- An Asset Management Plan inclusive of annual Capital Works Programs
- A Pyrenees Digital Communications Strategy
- A Customer Service Charter
- An updated Recreation Strategy
- Delivering the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Supporting our business community through the Local Business Support Program, the Small Business Friendly Program, the Business Friendly Charter and a business concierge program
- An updated Roadside Management Plan
- An updated Waste and Recycling Strategy inclusive of food and organics waste (FOGO)
- Advocating for a fairer emergency recovery reimbursement process
- A Resilient Agriculture Report

Quarterly reports will be provided to the community on Council's progress towards delivering these outcomes.

For more information on the Council Plan and other strategic plans, go to pyrenees.vic.gov.au/About-Pyrenees-Shire-Council/About-the-organisation/Policies-and-Publications/Strategic-plans.

Economic Development Strategy

Pyrenees Shire Council is developing an Economic Development and Investment Attraction Strategy to guide the growth of jobs, business, and investment across the Shire over the next five years.

The strategy will identify opportunities to grow the local economy, focusing on – but not limited to – agriculture, construction, manufacturing (wine), tourism, and emerging industries. It will also include an action plan outlining priority initiatives for Council to deliver.

As part of the strategy's development, Council has also formed an Economic Task Force (ETF) from business leaders following an Expression of Interest process. The ETF will provide guidance and help identify priority economic development actions.

Open meetings and drop-in sessions have also been held across the Shire to gather community input and feedback.

A draft Economic Development and Investment Attraction Strategy is expected to be developed by early this year which will be presented to Council and then put out for public submissions.

The Economic Development and Investment Attraction Strategy will be posted on Council's website at pyrenees.vic.gov.au.



Council is developing an Economic Development and Investment Attraction Strategy to guide the Shire's jobs, business, and investment growth over the next five years.

WELCOME TO YOUR *Community Newsletter*

Hello and welcome to Pyrenees Shire Council's Community Newsletter, published January 2026.

This newsletter is produced by the Council's Communications Department and is distributed to all Pyrenees Shire households through Australia Post.

Feedback on this newsletter is welcome. You can contact us on phone 1300 PYRENEES (797 363) or email pyrenees@pyrenees.vic.gov.au

Community Funding Program

Pyrenees Shire Council has awarded nearly \$107,000 in funding to 33 organisations through its 2025–2026 Community Funding Program.

Funding was provided across four categories: community programs, minor capital and equipment, tourism event sponsorship, and community event support.

The Community Funding Program supports local groups to deliver projects, events and services that strengthen community life in the Pyrenees.

For more information about which projects and organisations were awarded grants, go to pyrenees.vic.gov.au/funding.



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OBPS update

Work on the Old Beaufort Primary School Master Plan is moving ahead, following fantastic support from the community for turning the site into a new community hub.

Over the past few months, locals have shared their ideas through surveys and face-to-face sessions, helping to shape a vision for the much-loved site – once home to the 60th school opened in Victoria.

The next step will be to design the early works, which are expected to start early this year. These works will focus on protecting the heritage buildings and removing some of the structures that are no longer needed.

The Victorian Government asked Council in 2024 to develop a master plan for the site, and Council has now agreed to begin discussions with the government about taking on management of the site and the future community hub.

This is an exciting step toward bringing new life to a historic part of Beaufort and creating a place for the whole community to enjoy.

To view the draft OBPS Master Plan, go to pyrenees.vic.gov.au/Community/Old-Beaufort-Primary-School.



The former Old Beaufort Primary School.

Fire season preparedness

Pyrenees Shire Council has undertaken essential fire prevention works due to the predicted above-average fire danger period.

Roadside slashing has taken place across the Shire, along with grass cutting at the 10 Neighbourhood Safe Places, which act as places of last resort during bushfires.

Council officers have inspected properties throughout the shire and issued fire prevention notices as required. Follow up inspections have been done.

Residents are encouraged to reduce fire risk on their properties by:

- Keeping grass under 100mm during the Fire Danger Period.
- Removing leaf litter, grass clippings and fallen branches from around homes.
- Cleaning gutters of leaves and debris.
- Appropriate disposal of old car bodies and other fire hazards.
- Moving wood piles and flammable items away from buildings.
- Ensuring adequate water supply and storage for firefighting purposes.
- Have a fire plan

For more information on preparing for fire, visit pyrenees.vic.gov.au/Emergencies or cfa.vic.gov.au.



WHAT'S ON IN THE PYRENEES

Pyrenees Cellar Door Meet the Maker

January 30, 4pm–9pm
George Hotel
visitpyrenees.com.au

Pyrenees Cellar Door Meet the Maker

February 6, 4pm–9pm
George Hotel
visitpyrenees.com.au

Australia Day Awards 2026

January 26
Beaufort Community Bank Complex,
39 Park Rd, hosted by the Waterloo
Community Group
pyrenees.vic.gov.au

For the latest event details visit
visitpyrenees.com.au/whats-on

Waubra Recreation Reserve

Pyrenees Shire Council has adopted a long-term vision for the Waubra Recreation Reserve, creating a roadmap for future programs, infrastructure upgrades, and community activities.

The Waubra Recreation Reserve Master Plan includes directions for:

- Upgraded netball facilities with new changerooms and spectator seating
- Youth and community spaces with accessible play equipment, nature play, and walking and cycling paths
- Improved vehicle and pedestrian access
- Extra spectator seating and reserve lighting
- Future sports surface upgrades
- Exploration of new social and recreational activity programming for activity suggestions like card and game nights, dance classes, knitting and sewing groups, chair aerobics, and indoor bowls

These improvements will help the reserve further develop as a safe, welcoming hub for sport, leisure, and community events.

Council has also supported project planning, feasibility and design development of these initiatives through future Council budgets or external funding opportunities.

For more information on Council's park and recreational facilities, go to pyrenees.vic.gov.au/Council/parks.



The Waubra Recreation Reserve Master Plan is the blueprint for the development of the valuable community asset.

WRL Submission

Pyrenees Shire Council has made a primary submission to the *Western Renewables Link (WRL) Environmental Effects Statement (EES)*. After hearing from residents at three community drop-in sessions and reviewing the EES technical reports, Council submitted a more detailed follow-up submission in September. Council has also taken part in the Joint Inquiry and Advisory Committee (IAC) hearings to ensure the views of our community are well represented.

We acknowledge the people past and present of the Wadawurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung, Eastern Maar, Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk Nations, whose land and waters the Pyrenees Shire operates on.

We pay our respects to their Ancestors and Elders, recognise and respect their customs, stewardship and continuing connection to Country.