



Pyrenees
Shire Council

Agenda

Ordinary Meeting of Council

6:00 pm Tuesday 17 October 2023

Council Chambers

Beaufort Council Offices

5 Lawrence Street, Beaufort

Wadawurrung Country

Members of the public may view the meeting virtually via the livestream

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1. WELCOME

2. STREAMING PREAMBLE

- As the meeting Chair, I give my consent for this Ordinary Council Meeting to be streamed live, recorded and published online. Anyone who is invited to read out a question or make a submission will be recorded and their voice, image, and comments will form part of that livestream and recording.
- The Chair and/or the CEO have the discretion and authority at any time to direct the termination or interruption of livestreaming. Such direction will only be given in exceptional circumstances where deemed appropriate, that may include where the content of debate is considered misleading, defamatory or potentially inappropriate to be published.
- The live stream will stop prior to the closed section of the meeting and will recommence for the conclusion of the meeting.
- The public is able to view this livestream via our website at www.pyrenees.vic.gov.au.
- Should technical issues prevent the continuation of the live stream, the meeting will continue as long as a quorum can be maintained and, where possible, a recording of the meeting will be published on Council's website. Where a quorum cannot be maintained, the meeting will be adjourned until the issue is resolved or the meeting postponed to another time and date in accordance with Council's Governance Rules.

3. OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we ask you to give your blessing to this Council, direct and prosper its deliberations to the advancement of your glory, and the true welfare of the people of the Pyrenees Shire.

Amen

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the people past and present of the Wadawurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung, Eastern Maar and Wotjobaluk tribes, whose land forms the Pyrenees Shire.

We pay our respect to the customs, traditions and stewardship of the land by the elders and people of these tribes, on whose land we meet today.

5. APOLOGIES

6. NOTICE OF DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS

7. CONFIRMATION OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the:

- Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 19 September 2023 as previously circulated to Councillors, be confirmed.

8. BUSINESS ARISING

There was no business arising (items taken on notice) from the previous meeting held 19 September 2023.

9. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public Participation

- Members of the community are encouraged to participate in public Ordinary Council Meetings by asking questions or presenting a submission.
- This can be done by attending in person or by submitting in writing, prior to 12.00 noon on the day of the meeting, online through Council's website, by mail or hand-delivered.
- If a question or submission is submitted in writing, this will be read by the Chair during public participation, stating the person's name and township.
- Question time will be held first, followed by public submissions.
- 30 minutes is allowed for the total period of public participation. Time extensions may be allowed at the discretion of the Chair subject to the provisions of the Governance Rules.
- A person may ask a maximum of two questions at any one meeting.
- The Chair will allocate a maximum of five (5) minutes to each person who wishes to address Council or ask question(s).
- The Chair, Councillor, or Council officer to whom a question is referred may immediately answer the question or take the question on notice for answering at a later date.
- There will be no discussion or debate with public attendees however Councillors may ask questions of the attendee for clarification.

10. ITEMS FOR NOTING

10.1. CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

10.1.1. CUSTOMER ACTION REQUESTS - SEPTEMBER 2023

Presenter: Kathy Bramwell - Director Corporate and Community Services

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Kathy Bramwell – Director Corporate and Community Services

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 16/08/04

PURPOSE

This report provides updates on contacts made by our community through a range of media, including the Customer Action Request System and emails, for September 2023. This report's purpose is to demonstrate ongoing efforts to improve responsiveness to customers and the community over time.

BACKGROUND

Our community contact officers through a range of means, including but not limited to:

- Customer Action Request System (CARS)
- Emails – directly to officers or via the central pyrenees@pyrenees.vic.gov.au email address
- Via telephone or face-to-face with Council's switchboard or front counters
- Complaints
- Requests for information via Freedom of Information (FOI) processes
- Social media

The Council has operated an electronic Customer Action Request System (CARS) for many years enabling residents to lodge service requests. Requests can be lodged in person, via telephone, via Council's website or by using a smart phone "Snap Send Solve" application. Requests input via the "Snap Send Solve" application must be input manually by customer service officers into the CAR (Customer Action Requests) system as this currently does not accept automatic uploads.

Service requests are received for operational issues regarding maintenance, road maintenance, pools, local laws, building maintenance and compliance matters. Complaints are received and managed separately to action requests and monthly checks are made of customer action requests to identify requests that should be managed as complaints.

Requests logged through the customer action requests system form a minority of the contacts received by Council officers monthly, however, remain an important method of identifying where problems exist that need to be addressed.

Council has noted a declining trend in customer satisfaction over the past 10 years and this report will continue to be reformatted in the future to expand information on officer response to community contact to demonstrate efforts made to reverse this trend.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION - CUSTOMER CONTACT

For years, reporting on customer contact has been limited to customer action requests (CARs). This limited report does not provide a proper indication of the number and type of customer contacts received and provides a skewed impression of officers' response to such contact. It is intended, therefore, to expand this monthly report to include other types of contact and, over time, demonstrate where improvements have been made to customer service and responsiveness.

Statistics on direct face-to-face contact will be developed and built upon over the next few months.

Customer contact media	June 2023	July 2023	August 2023	Sept 2023
Emails received by organisation	42,906	94,409	56,093	51,435
External complaints received	0	3	4	2
FOI Requests for information	2	1	4	2
Requests for review of infringements	1	1	2	0
Website page views	25,724	17,970*	17,086	17,242
Website users	5,190	5,472	5,570	6,017
Website contact us page	681	645	614	473
Website customer enquiry form	n/a	54	65	57

*under-reported due to platform changes

Comments:

- Website user numbers continue to grow month-on-month.
- Most website views were focused on employment opportunities and CARs requests. The most time was spent on events & activities, News items, Planning permits on exhibition, and CARs.
- Most online enquiries related to rates.
- Emails remain a growing source of customer contact, taking significant time and resources to manage.
- FOI requests continue to increase. 10 requests were received from one organisation over the past five months, but a small increase has also been seen in requests from other parties.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION - CUSTOMER ACTION REQUESTS

This report will continue with the provision of information relating to customer action requests:

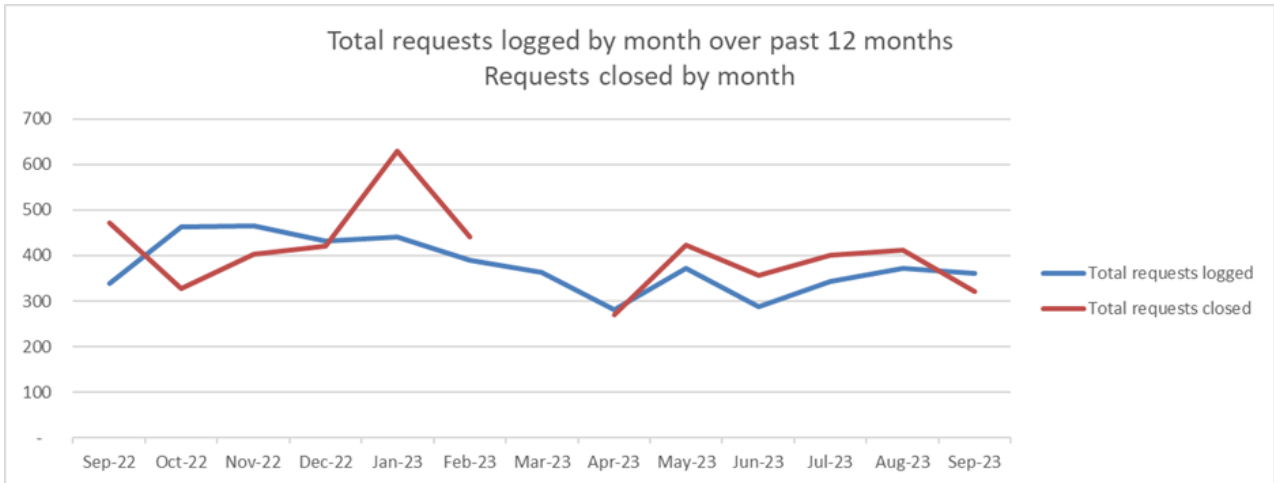
1. Logged and closed requests

361 CARs (Customer Action Requests) were logged in September 2023, 12 less than the previous month. Of these, 179 were related to telephone messages.

321 requests were closed during the month, demonstrating the ongoing effort officers are making to maintain focus on addressing and closing requests.

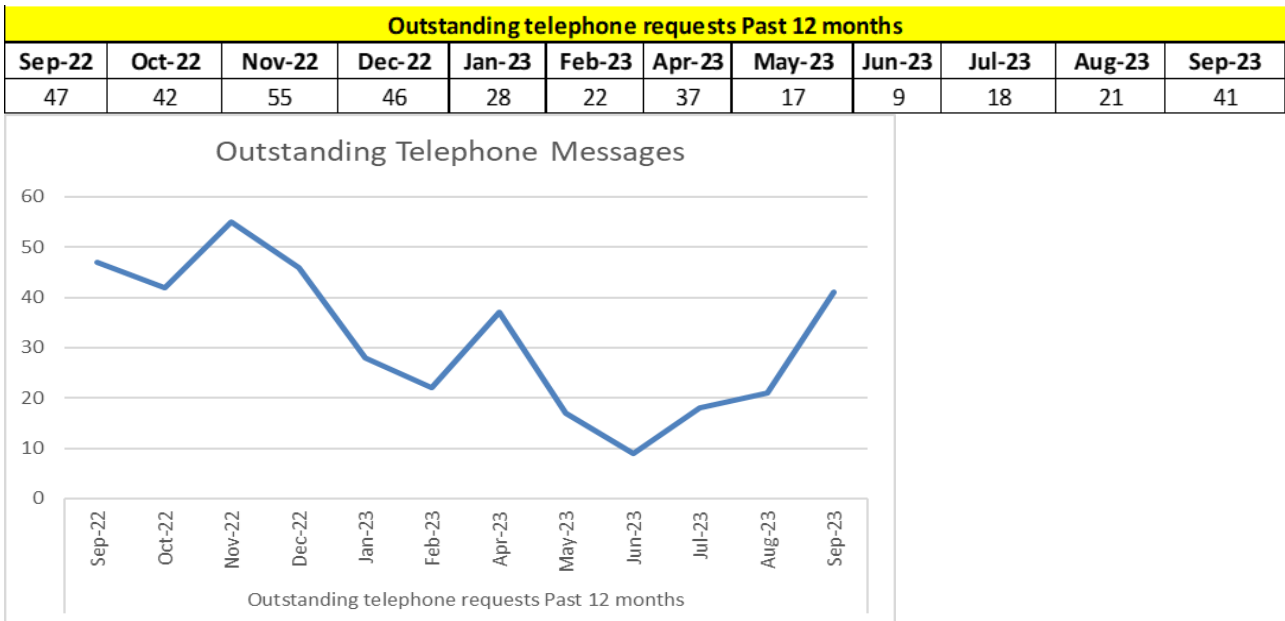
The following charts detail the numbers of requests received over the last 12 months and the number of requests closed each month.

Year	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	% Change
Total requests logged	339	464	466	431	441	390	364	282	372	288	344	373	361	28%
Total requests closed	473	327	403	421	630	440		269	424	356	401	413	321	19%



2. Telephone requests

179 telephone calls were transferred into requests in August 2023, with 41 requests remaining outstanding at the end of the month. The following charts detail the trend in telephone calls remaining outstanding at the end of each month.



3. Open Customer Action Requests

The number of open requests is now reported differently. Some requests that have had initial contact with the customer but are unable to be resolved quickly for some reason, are now being moved to being ‘on-hold’ and some may be referred to budget (e.g., long term drainage issues).

At the end of September 2023, there was a total of 344 active or open requests. These include:

- 162 which are open and assigned for action
- 120 which are on hold awaiting resolution or action scheduling
- 1 referred to budget
- 6 in progress or being managed – meaning that they are longer term case managed issues

On hold – 162 requests were on hold as at the end of August. In general, these relate to matters that have had initial contact and require additional work or case management, or have been put on a schedule for action - e.g.,

- Complex local law matters, mostly relating to shipping containers or dog complaints.
- Road improvement requests.
- Flood impacts / Natural disaster.
- Long term drainage works.

Open requests – the balance of this report will focus on the open requests as previously, but statistics relating to requests marked as on-hold or referred-to-budget have been included in the table.

Of the non-telephone call requests received in September, the following represents those received and still open at the of the last month by Ward:

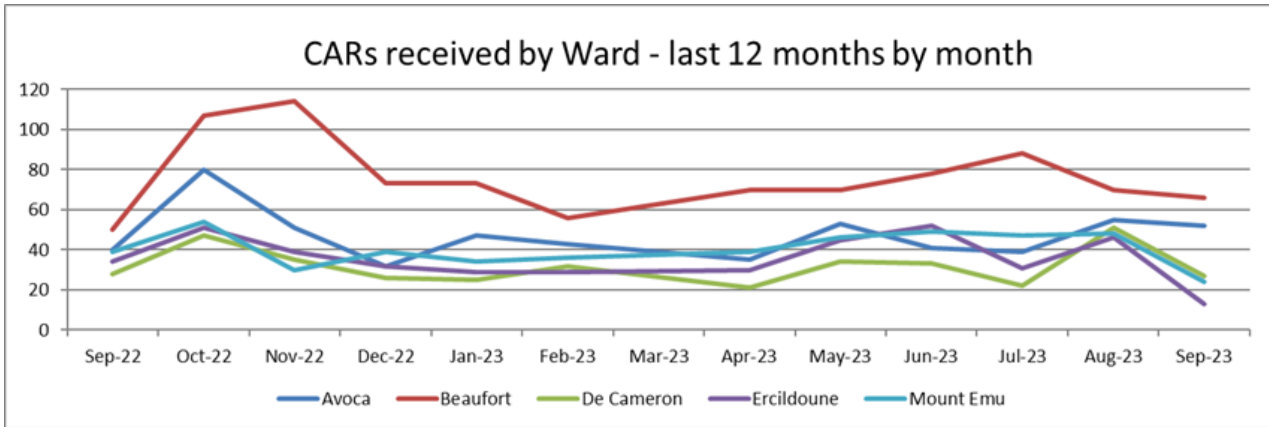
	Avoca Ward	Beaufort Ward	DeCameron Ward	Ercildoune Ward	Mt Emu Ward
Number of requests received in Sept 2023 (previous month)	52(55)	66(70)	27(51)	13(46)	24(48)
Requests received in Sept and closed in the same month (%)	40(77%)	47(71%)	16(59%)	11(85%)	15(63%)
Requests received in Sept remaining open and assigned for action	11	18	10	2	7
Requests received in Sept on-hold awaiting final works or resolution	1	1	1	0	2
Requests received in Sept referred to budget	0	0	0	0	0
Total open (assigned) requests as at the end of Sept 2023	24(25)	29(21)	19(18)	11(22)	16(17)

The following requests from 2022 have been re-opened for action and included in the Open/Assigned statistics:

- Avoca – 1 x Local Laws issue relating to shipping containers.
- DeCameron – 2 x flooding issues that have been opened for review.
 - 1 – Listons Road, Raglan
 - 1 – Bains Road, Navarre

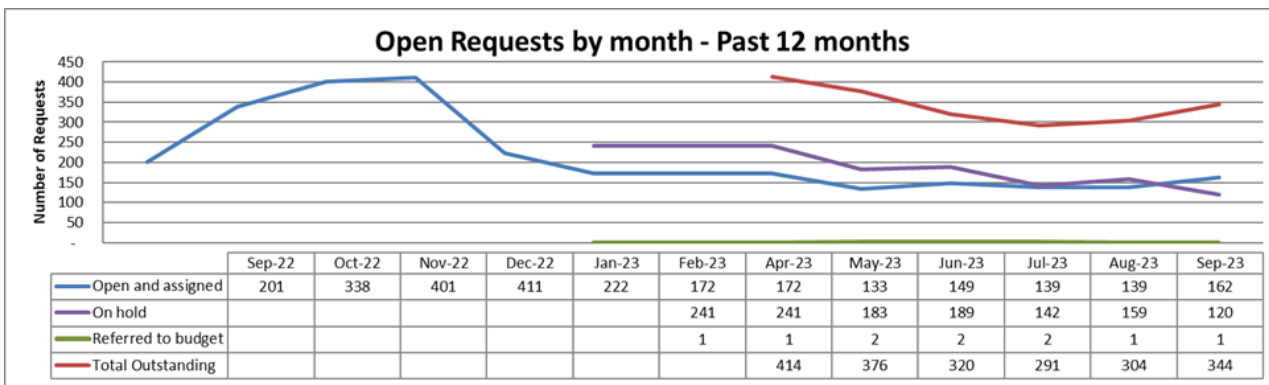
The following charts show the numbers of requests received by Ward per month for the past 12 months.

CARS by Ward received by month Rolling - Past 12 months												
Ward	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23
Avoca	40	80	51	32	47	43	35	53	41	39	55	52
Beaufort	50	107	114	73	73	56	70	70	78	88	70	66
De Cameron	28	47	35	26	25	32	21	34	33	22	51	27
Ercildoune	34	51	39	32	29	29	30	45	52	31	46	13
Mount Emu	39	54	30	39	34	36	39	46	49	47	48	24
Total by month	191	339	269	202	208	196	195	248	253	227	270	182

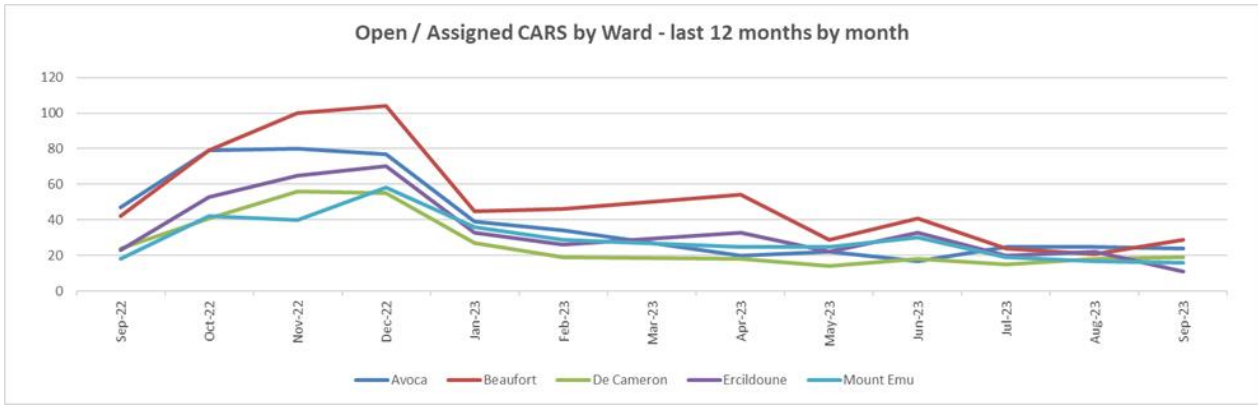


The following charts show the statistics for requests that remained open each month for the past 12 months. These charts now include requests put on hold or referred to budget.

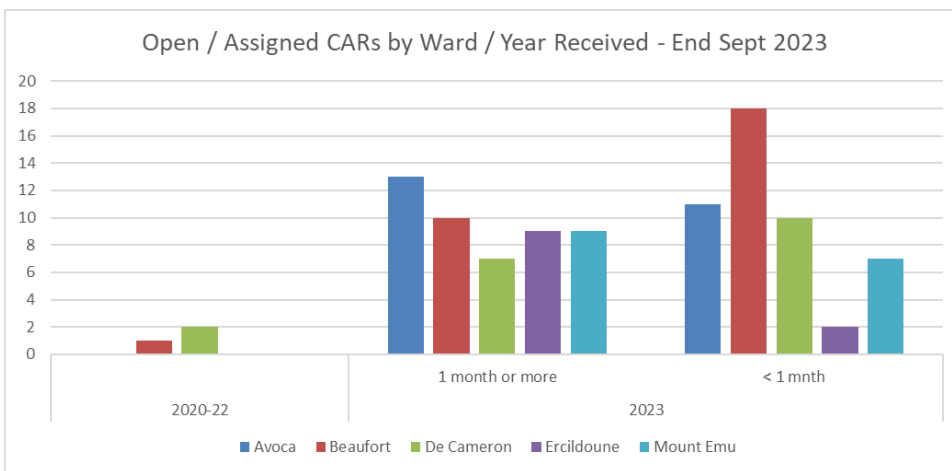
Open requests by age												
Year	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23
2013												
2020	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-
2021	16	15	12	12	-	-	2	4	3	-	-	-
2022	184	322	389	399	131	45	19	115	114	19	19	27
2023	-	-	-	-	91	127	164	201	227	119	119	135
Open and assigned	201	338	401	411	222	172	185	133	149	139	139	162
Outstanding but on hold						241	190	183	189	142	159	120
In progress - longer term								2	4	4	1	4
Other outstanding										4	1	3
Referred to budget						1	1	2	2	2	1	1
Total Closed	473	327	403	421	630	440	269	424	356	401	413	321
Total requests logged	339	464	466	431	441	390	282	372	288	344	373	361
Total outstanding requests							414	376	320	291	304	344



Open Assigned Requests by Ward - Past 12 months												
Ward	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23
Avoca	47	79	80	77	39	34	20	22	17	25	25	24
Beaufort	42	79	100	104	45	46	54	29	41	24	21	29
De Cameron	24	41	56	55	27	19	18	14	18	15	18	19
Ercildoune	23	53	65	70	33	26	33	22	33	20	22	11
Mount Emu	18	42	40	58	36	29	25	25	30	19	17	16
Total by month	154	294	341	364	180	154	150	112	139	103	103	99



The following chart shows the open assigned requests by Ward as at the end of September 2023, excluding those referred-to-budget or on-hold.



The following table provides greater detail of the areas / type where outstanding requests remain, showing the functional areas and numbers of requests still outstanding as at the end of the last month. This data includes those referred-to-budget or on-hold.

Open requests - Type			
	Aug-23	Sep-23	Change
Roads & Rd Maint.	77	75	-2
Streetlights	2	0	-2
Drainage	15	13	-2
Footpaths / Kerb&Channel	3	4	1
Park & Reserves	6	5	-1
Roadside Veg	12	18	6
Environmental Health	3	4	1
Planning	11	1	-10
Bld maint	5	7	2
Local Laws	33	17	-16
Cats	8	2	-6
Dogs	8	13	5
Livestock	2	1	-1
Parking	0	0	0
Fire Hazard	2	3	1
Bld Compliance	2	2	0
Waste Management	0	0	0
Local Government Act	0	0	0
Rates	4	3	-1
Natural Disasters	86	80	-6
Pools	0	0	0
Council cleaning	0	1	1
Litter	0	1	1
Design & Assets	4	2	-2
GIS	0	0	0
Community	0	0	0
Rural Addressing	0	1	1
Road Naming	0	1	1
Telephone messages	21	41	20
Total	304	295	-9

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Enabling Principles

- a. Motivate and inspire community involvement
- b. Provide transparency and accountability
- c. Use resources efficiently and effectively

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

This report did not require any community engagement or consultation, other than that provided via this report.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

All risks are discussed in the body of the report.

CONCLUSION

The customer action request system remains an integral part of Council’s reactive identification of issues that need attention. This report provides an update on customer action requests as at the end of August 2023. Reporting is being expanded over future months to include other media of customer contact officers receive.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes this report.

11. COUNCILLOR ACTIVITY REPORTS**11.1. COUNCILLOR ACTIVITY REPORTS - SEPTEMBER 2023**

Cr Damian Ferrari – Beaufort Ward		
12/09/2023	Councillor Briefing	Beaufort
12/09/2023	Councillor Cuppa & Chat	Brewster
19/09/2023	Councillor Briefing	Beaufort
19/09/2023	Council Meeting	Beaufort
Cr David Clark – Ercildoune Ward		
01/09/2023	MAV Board Meeting	Melbourne
05/09/2023	Australian Local Government Association Strategic Planning	Canberra
06/09/2023	National Roads Congress	Canberra
19/09/2023	Councillor Briefing	Beaufort
19/09/2023	Council Meeting	Beaufort
27/09/2023	Meeting with David Ettershank, Legalise Cannabis Party	Virtual
27/09/2023	Public Meeting – Barengi Gadjin Land Council RSA	Beaufort
Cr Robert Vance – De Cameron Ward		
12/09/2023	Councillor Briefing	Beaufort
12/09/2023	Councillor Cuppa & Chat	Brewster
19/09/2023	Council Meeting	Beaufort
22/09/2023	RCV Committee Meeting	Virtual
26/09/2023	Audit & Risk Committee Meeting	Beaufort
27/09/2023	Public Meeting – Barengi Gadjin Land Council RSA	Beaufort
Cr Ron Eason – Avoca Ward		
08/09/2023	GBAC Launch Event	Creswick
09/09/2023	Legacy Centenary Torch Relay & Civic Reception	Ararat
15/09/2023	Constituent Meeting	Avoca
12/09/2023	Councillor Briefing	Beaufort
12/09/2023	Councillor Cuppa & Chat	Brewster
19/09/2023	Councillor Briefing	Beaufort
19/09/2023	Council Meeting	Beaufort
Cr Tanya Kehoe – Mount Emu Ward		
05/09/2023	MEMPC Meeting	Virtual
12/09/2023	Councillor Briefing	Beaufort
12/09/2023	Councillor Cuppa & Chat	Brewster
19/09/2023	Councillor Briefing	Beaufort
19/09/2023	Council Meeting	Beaufort

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes this report.

12. ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILLORS

12.1. ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILLORS - SEPTEMBER 2023

MEETING INFORMATION			
Meeting Name	Councillor Briefing		
Meeting Date	12 September 2023 commenced at 1.00pm and closed at 4.30pm		
Meeting Location	Council Chamber, Beaufort		
Items Discussed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Martha Haylett MP 2. Navarre Primary School – Library Outreach Program 3. Planning Application – High Street, Beaufort 4. Southern Wimmera and Northeast Pipeline Project 5. Midwest Victoria Destination Management Plan & Local Area Action Plan 6. Membership – Greater Ballarat Alliance of Councils 7. CEO Update 		
ATTENDEES			
Councillors	Mayor Cr Ron Eason Cr Damian Ferrari Cr Tanya Kehoe Cr Robert Vance		
Apologies	Cr David Clark		
Staff	Jim Nolan (Chief Executive Officer) Douglas Gowans (Director Assets and Development Services) Kathy Bramwell (Director Corporate and Community Services) Rachel Blackwell (Manager Planning and Development Services) (item 3) Eoghan McColl (Coordinator Planning Services) (item 3) Ray Davies (Manager Economic Development & Tourism) (item 4)		
Visitors	Albert Stafford, Stafford Strategy (item 5)		
CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES			
Item No:	Councillor making disclosure	Particulars of disclosure	Councillor left meeting
Nil			

MEETING INFORMATION			
Meeting Name	Councillor Briefing		
Meeting Date	19 September 2023 commenced at 12.00pm and closed at 5.30pm		
Meeting Location	Council Chamber, Beaufort		
Items Discussed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Barengi Gadjin Land Council RSA 2. Public Open Space Contribution 3. Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance (CVGA) 4. Tourism Midwest 5. Timber Towns Victoria (TTV) Update 6. Committee for Ballarat Update 7. Implementation of Circular Economy Act 8. CEO Update 		
ATTENDEES			
Councillors	Mayor Cr Ron Eason Cr Damian Ferrari Cr Tanya Kehoe Cr David Clark (virtual)		
Apologies	Cr Robert Vance		
Staff	Jim Nolan (Chief Executive Officer) Douglas Gowans (Director Assets and Development Services) Kathy Bramwell (Director Corporate and Community Services) Rachel Blackwell (Manager Planning and Development Services)		
Visitors	Annika Kearton, CVGA (item 3) John Pandazopolous and Sarah Pilgrim, Tourism Midwest (item 4) Cr Karen Stephens, TTV (item 5) Michael Poulton, Committee for Ballarat (item 6)		
CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES			
Item No:	Councillor making disclosure	Particulars of disclosure	Councillor left meeting
Nil			

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes this report.

13. ITEMS FOR DECISION

13.1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

13.1.1. BEAUFORT LAKE CARAVAN PARK - FEES & CHARGES

Presenter: Jim Nolan - Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Ray Davies – Manager Economic Development and Tourism

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 523046200

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the review of fees and charges proposed for Beaufort Lake Caravan Park.

BACKGROUND

Council received an operational review of the Beaufort Lake Caravan Park at the beginning of 2022.

The review included benchmarking of prices against ten caravan parks within 45 minutes of Beaufort, and Council has taken these benchmarks into consideration when responding to a report on fees to the June Council meeting.

The operational review made the following observations:

“Operators that do not compete solely on a price basis (tariffs) can still be successful by offering excellent quality service, facilities and other value-added products. While not a traditional marketing initiative, price can play a big part in a consumer’s assessment of a holiday accommodation venue. Though it may not be the over-riding factor in the decision as to where to stay, it is certainly a large part of the assessment process. To this end, it is important when setting pricing that the Park’s facilities, competitors, their locations and facilities, and the seasonality of the region are considered.

The establishment of seasons can spread the demand for access to park sites throughout the opening period. Providing several seasons, each charged at a different rate, encourages higher occupancy of the park over a longer period. It is common practice for caravan and camping parks to have up to three seasons—off peak, shoulder and peak.

A balance needs to be found between price and occupancy. When demand is at its highest, pricing should mirror this, with lower pricing applied to the shoulder seasons to encourage patronage at times of lesser demand, or to drive patrons who would normally stay in the peak demand periods to the more cost-effective shoulder seasons. A pricing strategy that takes advantage of demand should be put in place.

It is also often difficult to be able to offer rates on a rolling 12-month basis due to the local government requirement to advertise and adopt rates annually for 12 months at a time. It is now also commonplace that parks do not advertise rates to give them the opportunity to dynamically alter their prices and respond to supply and demand.

An examination of existing yields makes it evident that pricing is not set an effective level, and could be better leveraged to take advantage of higher demand periods (holidays, holiday weekends, Saturday nights, etc.)”

While Council used benchmarking from the June report to make changes to site fees, further consideration was required in relation to differentiation of peak holiday charges. The visitor experience at the Beaufort Lake Caravan Park in relation to fees is commented upon later in this report.

In relation to accommodation facilities at the park and in response to the consultants' recommendations, Council has to date secured funding of \$500,000- from the Victorian Governments Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund and lodged an expression of interest for a \$1M grant to the Commonwealth Governments "Growing Regions Program". These funds together with \$500-K in matching funds from Council are to be used to increase the number of cabins at the site and refurbish the ensuite sites at the park.

The operational review and subsequent masterplan also identified the need for replacement of the amenities block and camp kitchen to increase the number of powered sites, cater for people with disabilities and provide a better visitor experience. The proposed new camp kitchen will be sited to encompass an indoor recreation room overlooking the lake, to cater for all seasons, and thereby increase occupancy rates. Funding opportunities are currently being sought for these facilities separately to the applications mentioned above, and ideally leveraging Councils existing budget commitment for matching funds.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

For benchmarking purposes relating to the park's fees and charges, the operational review provided comparisons to ten parks within 45 minutes of Beaufort. Due to the size and scale of some of the larger parks in Ballarat that were included, these have been discarded for the purpose of like for like comparisons to Beaufort. This is in order to reflect similarities to parks of a similar size and location type.

Of the six parks considered as comparable to Beaufort only one is currently using seasonal differentiation in rates during peak seasons, i.e., charges are higher during Christmas, Easter and other public holiday periods.

While it is worth considering a price differential for the Beaufort Lake Park Caravan Park in due course there are important maintenance considerations which are recommended prior to any further price changes. These are required separately to the instalment of new cabins which funds have been secured for presently.

While it is preferred that the Master plan upgrade work be delivered in full, it is likely to take time before the full funding can be secured and the works delivered. In the meantime, the following is provided for Council's awareness.

The amenities block has not been refurbished for ten years. These facilities have concrete floors and repainting is required as a minimum. Painting, tiling and floor coverings would present these facilities in a better light pending the opportunity to replace them when funds become available to do so.

The internal road network has experienced damage to sealed sections within the main entry and there are recurring potholes where there are unsealed sections of road near the amenities block and powered sites, which does not present the park in a favourable light. Council's engineering team are exploring ways to improve drainage and provide a more robust road network within the park as an interim measure.

Failure to undertake works recommended to the amenities block and roads prior to further fee changes may compromise the parks occupancy rates.

While some basic maintenance work is being arranged, quotes are being obtained to undertake the remedial work necessary prior to further fee changes.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 4 - Economy

4b. Invest in road infrastructure to improve connectivity for commerce and community.

4c. Encourage and invest in assets and infrastructure for commerce and community.

Enabling Principles

b. Provide transparency and accountability

c. Use resources efficiently and effectively

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

There is a risk to Council in applying further fee changes without first having undertaken some upgrades and maintenance to the parks' infrastructure as outlined in this report to provide a desirable customer experience.

Quotes will therefore be obtained for:

- Improvements to the drainage system and internal road network
- Refurbishment of the amenities block including painting, tiling and appropriate floor coverings

While the renovations to the amenities block may be considered to be part of the annual maintenance budget, improvements to drainage and roads will require consideration at either the mid-year budget review or the 2024/25 budget period.

CONCLUSION

While differences in seasonal rates are common to the accommodation sector and should be considered for Beaufort Lake Caravan Park, there is further work required to the park to improve on the customer experience.

Before further consideration can be given by Council to applying seasonal rates, upgrades to the internal road network and amenities block are deemed necessary to meet customer expectations.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Not make any seasonal adjustments to the fees at the Beaufort Caravan Park at this time, but rather consider doing so as part of the 2024/25 budget process.
2. Continues to pursue avenues for funding for the delivery of the full masterplan.
3. Undertakes any necessary remedial maintenance works at the park to maintain customer expectations.
4. Examines solutions to improve the internal road assets as an interim measure until the full masterplan is funded and delivered.
5. Seeks quotations for this further work along with any other works needed to improve the existing amenities block and
6. Gives consideration to funding these further works at the mid-year budget review.

13.1.2. REGIONAL TOURISM UPDATE

Presenter: Jim Nolan - Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Ray Davies – Manager Economic Development and Tourism

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 62/10/04

PURPOSE

To provide an update on Tourism Midwest Victoria as a follow-up to the May report to Council on this new tourism partnership.

BACKGROUND

As reported to Council in February this year a working party established between the Central Highlands Councils has been working towards establishment of the newly formed Tourism Midwest Victoria. TMV is the Visitor Economy Partnership, which resulted from the Victorian Governments review of Regional Tourism Boards across the State. TMV became an incorporated body in April.

At the February council meeting Council resolved that it:

1. Becomes a member of the Visitor Economy Partnership being formed to represent the regions tourism industry
2. Approves the CEO to negotiate the terms and conditions of council's membership and
3. Maintains a provision in the 2023/24 budget of \$40,000- to cover the base level membership and allow some capacity for buy in to programs
4. That a further report be provided to Council as to the allocation of these funds for 2023-24 and the measures that Council will use to assess the work of the Visitor Economy Partnership (VEP).

Since the previous report City of Ballarat Council together with the Shire Councils of Moorabool, Hepburn

Since that time TMV has appointed John Pandazopoulos as the Independent Chair and the inaugural AGM was held on 11 September. The five industry based board members were democratically elected by TMV members at the AGM and the first meeting of the board was held on 21 September.

The transition from Council having a tourism Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Ballarat to becoming a partner of TMV is now complete. The partnership consists of City of Ballarat, Moorabool, Hepburn, Golden Plains and Pyrenees Shire Councils.

TMV have scheduled monthly supply (product, product development and industry development) and demand (attracting visitors to the region) committee meetings since the beginning of July. These meetings are attended by members of Council's Economic Development and Tourism team.

Council's CEO (or delegate) represent Councils interests at TMV board meetings.

Further to these developments TMV issued its first seasonal report for the winter season at the beginning of September, a copy of which is attached to this report.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

Part four of Council's resolution in February in relation to the new Visitor Economy Partnership was: *"That a further report be provided to Council as to the allocation of these funds for 2023-24 and the measures that Council will use to assess the work of the Visitor Economy Partnership (VEP)".*

Following the TMV AGM the Chair and Executive Officer of TMV have been to brief Council about its activities on 19 September.

Aside from establishing the monthly supply and demand workshops mentioned earlier in this report, TMV's first priority has been to establish its strategic direction through the development of a region wide Destination Management Plan and a Local Area Plan specific to each of the Local Government Area's.

The consultants undertaking this work commenced consultation in late August and since that time have conducted a region wide survey, industry workshops around the region (including Avoca) had direct contact with Council officers and attended a Council Briefing on 12 September. Consultation is continuing at the time of drafting this report and the proposed plans are scheduled to be completed by the end of this year.

Although the formalities of appointments to the board were only finalised in September, TMV have provided a report summarising activities throughout the winter season. The report summarises the value of marketing spend Council has been able to leverage as well as industry development opportunities initiated by TMV and undertaken by Pyrenees tourism operators. The details provided in the attached report provide further illustration of the value of the new partnership.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 4 - Economy

4a. Support our local businesses and help to strengthen key industries.

4c. Encourage and invest in assets and infrastructure for commerce and community.

Enabling Principles

b. Provide transparency and accountability

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Tourism industry operators have been engaged in the development of strategic plans through a survey, workshops and one on one consultation.

ATTACHMENTS

1. TMV QUARTERLY REPORT WINTER 2023 compressed [13.1.2.1 - 19 pages]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

Council has committed a sum of \$30,000- in annual membership fees and allowed an additional \$10,000- in the 2023-24 budget for buy ins to marketing and industry development opportunities.

Officer time is also required to attend board meetings and the monthly supply and demand workshops.

CONCLUSION

TMV has now become operational and allows input from partner councils through:

- Representation by the CEO or delegate at board meetings
- Representation by council staff at supply and demand workshops and meetings

Quarterly seasonal reports by TMV on its operations will continue to keep Council informed about the value of its contribution to this partnership.

Council has been given the opportunity for input into the strategic planning being undertaken by TMV. This is well progressed and due for completion by the end of this year.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes this update report on the activities of Tourism Midwest Victoria
2. Looks to share the draft Destination Management Plan once prepared and available for release by TMV with Pyrenees tourism operators and the general community for their information and comment.

13.1.3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Presenter: Jim Nolan - Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Ray Davies – Manager Economic Development and Tourism

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 62/10/04

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform Councillors on the performance of the rural economy and the activities undertaken by the Economic Development and Tourism team over the past quarter.

BACKGROUND

The importance of the agriculture industry as a Key Propulsive Sector for Pyrenees Shire has been well understood by Council for many years. Recent economic data indicates it currently accounts for approximately thirty percent of jobs across the Shire (651) and a similar proportion of output (value of goods and services sold of \$229.3M).

The 2020 Economic Development Strategy identified the following priorities to support the agriculture sector:

- *Continue to invest sufficient funds from Council's annual budget (including access to funds from other levels of government) to improve and maintain the road network to facilitate safe and efficient freight of goods to and from farms.*
- *Maintain a focus on key infrastructure projects including reliable water and energy supplies for this industry and communities in general.*
- *Explore opportunities for improved telecommunications to support the adoption of innovation in agriculture, tourism, and to meet community needs.*

Hence the importance Council has placed on investing in its road network for the productivity of the sector in transporting inputs and commodities to and from farm properties over a long period of time.

Council received a detailed "Heavy Vehicle Approved Roads" report in September about the progress the Assets and Development Unit are making on roads, bridges and culverts.

Furthermore, Council has been active in partnering with neighbouring local government areas, water authorities and other agencies to secure more reliable water supplies and telecommunications coverage.

Council has also amended its rate differentials prior to adopting the 2023/24 budget in response to the various challenges faced by the agriculture sector, and the variations in land valuations.

This report provides a brief update on factors currently impacting the farm sector including market trends and the seasonal outlook for this industry and summarises the activities of the economic Development and Tourism Unit for the past quarter.

Commodity prices for sheep, lambs and wool have experienced a significant downwards adjustment as indicated in the graphs later in this report.

Dry seasonal conditions are beginning to impact on production and ABARE's predicts a 34% reduction in crop yields with an overall 14% fall in farm production in 2023/24.

Other predictions by ABARE's include:

"Australian canola prices are expected to fall along with the Canadian canola price (ABARES' world indicator price) which is forecast to fall by 12%, to an average US\$575 per tonne in 2023–24.

... Global consumption is forecast to outpace production. Demand for Australian grain to stay strong. Above average production, strong export demand and high global prices will provide a continued positive outlook for cropping”.

Export grain prices quoted by the Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fishing (DAFF) as at 28/9/23 are:

- APW milling wheat, Port Adelaide SA \$492- per tonne (annual change -14%).
- Feed Barley, Port Adelaide SA \$408- per tonne (annual change -10%).
- Canola – Kwinana WA \$820- per tonne (annual change -21%).

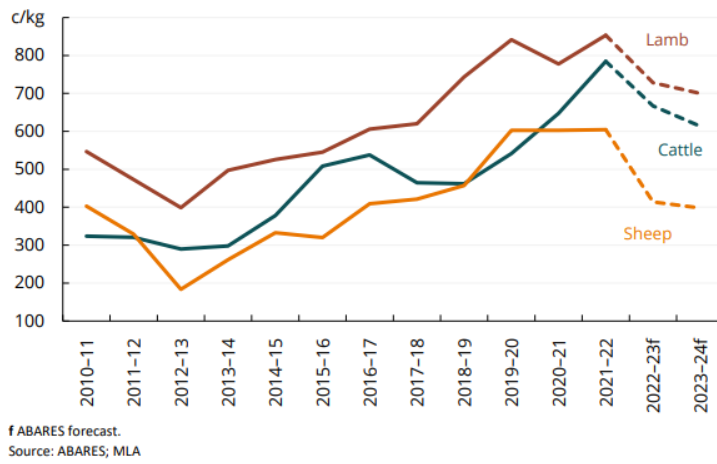
Wool



Source <https://tradingeconomics.com/commodity/wool>

Sheep, Lamb & Cattle

Livestock average annual saleyards prices



Wheat



Source: <https://tradingeconomics.com/commodity/wheat>

Livestock Farm Monitor Project

The LFMP estimates the economic performance of surveyed sheep and cattle farms by collecting detailed physical and financial farm information.

The objective and timely data generated through this project is relied on by industry and government decision-makers. The project has been funded by Agriculture Victoria for more than 50 years.

Financial parameter bars:	Northern Victoria 10-yr average	21–22 Northern Victoria	South West Victoria 10-yr average	21–22 South West Victoria
Gross farm income (\$/ha)	\$750	\$1,125	\$1,064	\$1,473
Variable costs (\$/ha)	\$276	\$348	\$406	\$552
Overhead costs (\$/ha)	\$320	\$397	\$313	\$379
Earnings before interest and tax (EBIT) (\$/ha)	\$154	\$380	\$345	\$542
Return on assets (%)	1.9%	2.2%	3.6%	3.0%
Return on equity (%)	1.3%	3.0%	4.4%	3.8%
Physical parameter bars:				
Effective area (ha)	920	765	1,163	1,449
Stocking rate (DSE/ha)	7.4	12.6	12.3	17.1
Sheep (head)	3,488	2,444	6,751	8,001
Cattle (head)	376	386	280	329

Key points from the 2021/22 Farm Monitor Report

- *“Strong red meat prices and improved wool prices resulted in the highest average farm incomes in 18 years for each region.*
- *Reduced rates of fertiliser application on pasture partially offset the high cost of fertiliser.*
- *Earnings before interest and tax in each region was above the ten year average with Northern Victoria and South West Victoria regions recording their highest in 18 years.*
- *The continued rise in farmland value strengthened business equity levels and constrained return on assets.*
- *More than two-thirds of participants used the high farm cashflows, and other incentives, to invest in plant and equipment.*
- *Larger farm businesses tended to have a higher return on assets than smaller farms”*

Source: Agriculture Victoria

With a climate outlook for El Nino pointing towards drier conditions combined with the decline in commodity prices for sheep, cattle and wool the buoyant recent returns for livestock industry are unlikely to be experienced over the next twelve months while this years’ grain crop is nearing the critical harvest period.

Timber Industry

An announcement was made by the Victorian Government on 23 May 2023 that native timber harvesting is due to cease in Victoria on 1 January 2024, having been brought forward from 2030.

The decision has a direct influence on timber industry operators nearby to Beaufort.

The government have announced an additional \$200M in support for workers and their families to transition away from native timber logging which brings the total government support for the sector to \$875M.

A copy of the Forestry Transition Program May 2023 update is attached for further information and includes:

- Support for workers
- Training, employment and mental health support to native timber workers and supply chain workers and their families
- Transition packages for mills
- Support for harvest and haulage workers

While a \$36M Forestry Transition Fund to support timber industry communities has also been announced and was opened for applications in August 2023, the Pyrenees Shire falls outside of the locations eligible for funding.

The Fund was announced to support actions to grow businesses and generate economic activity that will create or retain jobs in towns and communities affected by the transition away from native timber harvesting.

Recent Economic Development Activities

Since the Council update in March 2023 Economic Development activities have included:

- Southern Wimmera and Northeast Pyrenees Water Supply Project
- Beaufort Linear Masterplan
- Beaufort Lake Caravan Park Development
- Digital Marketing Project
- Shop Façade Program
- Tourism Midwest Vic Destination Management Plan and Local Area Plan

Southern Wimmera and Northeast Pyrenees Water Supply Project

Following a positive landholder response to calls for expressions of interest for water connections and completion of technical assessments the feasibility study for this project was completed at the end of July and found the project to be viable.

Concept plans for a reticulated water network were developed in the feasibility study and consultants have now been engaged to undertake a business case and associated investigations in order to progress the project to shovel ready status.

These investigations are anticipated to be concluded by mid 2024.

A series of public events have been scheduled across the Northern Grampians, Central Goldfields and Pyrenees Shires throughout October to bring the community up to date on project progress.

The Pyrenees events included a public meeting at Natte Yallock Recreation Reserve on 4 October.

One hour drop in sessions have been scheduled for 18 October at:

- Natte Yallock Recreation Reserve from 12.00 p.m.
- Moonambel Hall from 2.00 p.m.
- Amphitheatre Recreation Reserve from 4.00 p.m.

Once the feasibility and business case stage is completed, there will be a need for advocacy to secure the necessary funding to build the pipeline infrastructure valued at approximately \$160 million.

Beaufort Linear Masterplan

The Project Control Group for this project includes stakeholder representatives of the Beaufort Primary School and Secondary College, Apex and Croquet Clubs, Friends of the Beaufort Pool, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation, Central Highlands Water, Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority and Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).

Consultants for the project were engaged in July and since that time community engagement activities held throughout September have included:

- A public workshop at the Beaufort Community Bank Complex at Goldfields Recreation Reserve,
- A survey which was made available via Councils Engage Hub, Beaufort Community Resource Centre and through consultants directly engaging with the public via a pop-up session at the Beaufort IGA, and visiting businesses along Neill Street. The survey closed on 24 September with 67 submissions being received,
- Separate site walks with members of the project control group, Beaufort Walkability Group, Friends of the Beaufort Pool and representatives of the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation,
- Meetings with stakeholder organisations including Rotary, Business for Beaufort, and Apex.

At the time of developing this report another community event is being scheduled for the first week of November. This will be held in the evening to allow residents who work during the day to provide input.

A draft Masterplan is due to be completed by 23 October and due to be finalised by the end of November.

Beaufort Lake Caravan Park Development

Council lodged an expression of interest to the Commonwealth Governments "Growing Regions Program" for a grant of \$1M at the beginning of August.

The outcome of the expression of interest is scheduled to be announced in the first week of November. Should Council's EOI be successful then Council will be invited to submit a full application at that time.

In the interim a business case has been developed to support any applications to external funding bodies. Procurement of consultants to undertake support with regulatory approvals is currently being undertaken.

DEECA owns a portion of the western side of the caravan park and the Department has issued its written consent (subject to regulatory approvals) for the implementation of the works identified in the masterplan.

Digital Marketing Project

Council undertook a project during August and September to provide one on one assistance to local businesses with their digital marketing. Eleven businesses participated and positive feedback has been received on this initiative by a number of the participants who have valued the fact the support provided through this program was made available at their own premises and at a time that was convenient for them.

Council provided a fifty percent subsidy to businesses taking up this initiative, with an overall cost to Council of \$1,650- (ex GST). These funds were available within the 2023/24 Economic Development budget allocations.

Shop Façade Program

To date there have been seven Shop Façade applications approved in round one and ten applications in round two amounting to a combined sum of \$68,642- from the original budget allocation of \$90,000-. One of the applicants has withdrawn their application amounting to \$3,750- meaning a residual pool of \$25,108- remains from the initial budget allocation.

Round three of this program is currently open which is anticipated to expend the remainder of Council's funding dedicated to this program.

Events

The spring summer period is a busy time for events and this year is no exception.

A number of organisations who had their events washed out last spring are looking forward to resuming activities again this spring and being able to rebuild their financial positions. Some of the larger events that were impacted include Lake Goldsmith Steam Rally, Avoca Cup and the Beaufort Agricultural Show.

The following events are scheduled in coming months:

- Beaufort Walkfest was held Oct 7-8
- Rotundone Road Wine and Music Festival 14 October
- Avoca Cup 21 October
- Sallys Paddock Blending workshop 22 October
- Blue Pyrenees Estate host the Bishop Brothers 22 October
- Open day tours at Mrs Bakers still House 28 October
- Pyrenees Connection at Lexton Recreation Reserve 28 October
- Beaufort Historical Day Open Day 28 October
- Lake Goldsmith steam Rally 4-5 November
- Beaufort Agricultural show 19 November

Tourism

Tourism activities since June have included:

- Tourism Midwest Victoria became operational from 1 July and industry board representatives appointed at the inaugural AGM in September. Operational meetings for marketing, product and industry development are under way.
- Consultants to TMV are undertaking research and consultation to develop a seven year Destination Management Plan for the region together with Local Area plans for each council. Regional consultation has occurred throughout September and October with the plans due for completion of these strategies by the end of November.
- The Spring and Summer marketing campaign “Unplug and Unwind” has been launched to encourage visitors to come to the Pyrenees .
- An update to the Pyrenees Visitor Guide is in progress. The guide is distributed to Visitor Information Centres throughout the state and amongst accommodation providers across the Shire.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

Southern Wimmera and Northeast Pyrenees Pipeline

The Southern Wimmera and Northeast Pyrenees Water Supply project is entering the business case phase after the feasibility study concluding the project as technically feasible to deliver and with strong landholder interest shown through the number of expressions of interest received to date.

The project is estimated to cost \$160M to deliver and covers an area of around 354,000 hectares.

Local government partners issued letters to over 2,500 landowners in February.

The business case will be developed using the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments investment framework so as to align to funding opportunities.

The project will provide a broad range of economic, social and environmental benefits.

Beaufort Lake Caravan Park

Redevelopment of the Beaufort Lake Caravan Park is estimated to inject a further \$2M per year into the local economy and create 20 new jobs both during construction and two ongoing jobs.

The business case reflects a cost benefit ratio of 1.53, demonstrating a good return on investment for the community long term and worthy of additional investment to complete the full works at the site.

Council will be advised whether the outcome of an Expression of interest for a \$1M from the Commonwealth Governments "Growing Regions Program" is due to progress to full application at the beginning of November. Dollar for dollar matching funds are required for this fund and will comprise the \$500,000- from the Victorian governments Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund and Councils own commitment of \$500,000-.

The \$1M secured to date will see installation of a two-bedroom DDA compliant cabin, A duplex cabin (two units) and motel block of four studio type rooms.

The Commonwealth funding (if successful) will be used to purchase a further three two-bedroom cabins and refurbish the parks ensuite sites.

Further funding opportunities are currently being sought to replace the current amenities block and camp kitchen with DDA compliant facilities that cater for people with disabilities as recommended in the operational review and masterplan received in early 2022. The new camp kitchen will be DDA compliant, encompass an indoor recreation room to cater for visitors during cooler months and improve visitor experiences by catering for group activities.

Funds are also required to implement the revised park layout to encompass an increased number of powered sites and create a southern entry. The aforementioned elements plus the addition of two extra two-bedroom cabins in this third stage of development are estimated to cost an additional \$1.9 million. With an additional allowance of 10% for cost escalations and a 15% contingency allowance, this third phase of the project may cost \$2.4 million.

Beaufort Linear Masterplan

The masterplan proposal to develop a recreational link along the course of the Garibaldi Creek Beaufort is progressing both within timeframes and well below budget.

The intent of the masterplan is to provide council a plan for future investment in infrastructure identified in the plan over a ten-year period and be able inform applications for funding to deliver the project in stages as external funds become available.

As expenditure on the masterplan is well below budget, consideration is currently being given to broadening the scope of the project to advance one or more elements of the masterplan to a shovel ready stage.

The scope of the masterplan also includes completion of an economic assessment using a framework developed by DEECA specifically for Integrated Water Management projects.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 4 - Economy

4a. Support our local businesses and help to strengthen key industries.

4c. Encourage and invest in assets and infrastructure for commerce and community.

Enabling Principles

b. Provide transparency and accountability

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

The community have been widely consulted for the Beaufort Linear Masterplan and the Southern Wimmera and Northeast Pyrenees Pipeline projects as outlined throughout this report.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Forestry Transition Program May 2023 [13.1.3.1 - 2 pages]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

No further financial commitments for Council nor additional risks arise from this update.

CONCLUSION

This report is an update to Council on current Economic Development Activities.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the report
2. Continues to invest in infrastructure projects that support the productivity of the farm sector and provide broader community benefits
3. Receives a further report on the Beaufort Linear Masterplan at the December Council Meeting.

13.2. ASSET AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

13.2.1. BRIDGE LOAD LIMIT SIGNAGE

Presenter: Douglas Gowans - Director Asset and Development Services

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Daniel Potter – Manager Engineering

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 58/08/04

PURPOSE

This report seeks the Council’s support for the installation of bridge load limit signage on selected Council bridges. This signage will help inform the travelling public of the current bridge load limits to protect these bridges from failure.

BACKGROUND

Bridges are currently tested, designed, and built to the Australian Standard “AS5100 - Bridge Design” series. The bridge design Australian Standard series includes a process on how to evaluate existing bridges to determine their capacity and determine if a bridge load limit is theoretically required. This structural assessment process has been completed on 10-20 bridges over the past 3-5 years within Pyrenees Shire Council by independent structural engineering consultants. Along with these structural assessments, regular level 2 bridge condition assessments are completed every 4 years and routine yearly level 1 inspections are completed. These assessments have helped determine the current load limited bridges within the Shire.

There are about 150 road bridges within the Shire and 100 of these are over 50 years old. The older bridges were designed to the MS18 bridge design loading (about 33t semi-truck) and the current bridge design loading is the SM1600 set of design loadings which includes loading of over 145t.

The SM1600 design loading is calculated with an extreme potential load and currently is one of the highest in the world, with most of the Victorian road/bridge network limited to 68.5t, which is a PBS 2A B-Double vehicle classification. There are some arterial roads that are approved for larger A-Double and B-triple Heavy Vehicles which are up to 90.5t.

All the new bridges and culverts that are installed and constructed within Pyrenees Shire Council are designed to this new SM1600 design loadings with some older existing bridges upgraded depending on a ‘cost benefit’ assessment and might only achieve 60-90% of this SM1600 design loading. For reference, 70% of the SM1600 design loading could be equivalent to an A-Double truck.

Below are figures of the general bridge design loadings over the past 70 years:

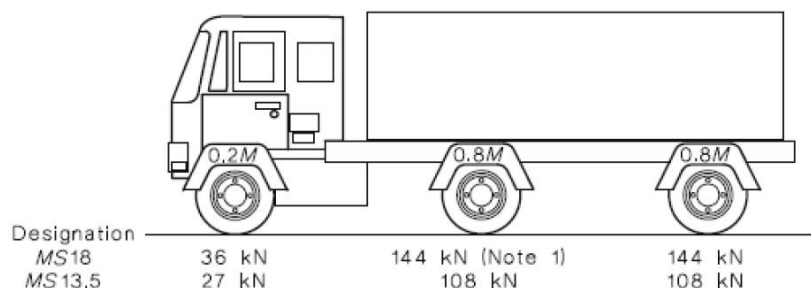


Figure 1: MS18 or metric H20-S16-44 (between 1948 to 1976) - About a 33t Semi

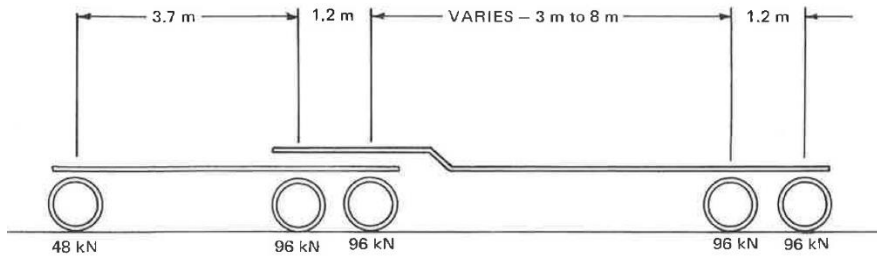


Figure 2: T44 loading (between 1976 to 2004 with some variations from 1990’s) - About 47t Semi

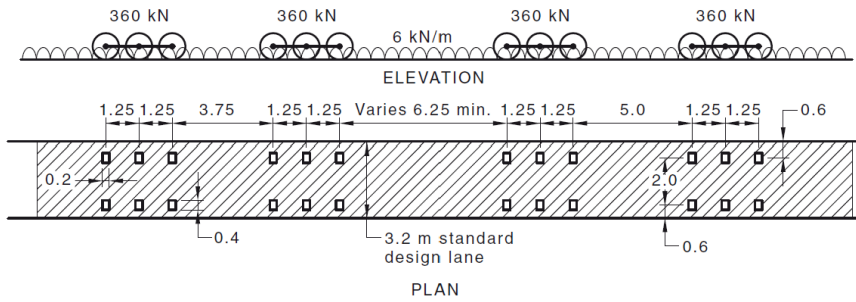


Figure 3: SM1600 (2004 plus) (M1600 shown) - About 2 x 75t Semi’s nose to tail

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

A list of the bridges and a map including the bridges locations that this report seeks Council’s support to include new load limit signage is attached to this report.

These bridges have been assessed using the principles included within ‘AS5100.7 - Bridge Assessment’ and the bridge load limits are currently in place, but many are without signage. The bridge load limits have been determined by Council’s authorized road management officers within the Assets & Development Department while reviewing independent consultant advice.

There are several bridges that require additional assessment to determine if a load limit is required and these have currently not been identified as requiring load limit signage at this stage. Once a detailed assessment is completed and if the structure requires a load limit, this will be updated on the VicRoads network maps and signage installed at the bridge. The main bridges that this assessment will be completed on include BR5 on Avoca-Bealiba Rd, BR 12 on Beaufort-Cargnham Rd, BR 95 on Landsborough Rd and Bridge 166 on Waubra Talbot Rd.

The proposed signage at each of the load limited bridges will include a load limit sign on each side of the bridge like the below sign (figure 4) and may include advanced or intersection signs to warn drivers of the upcoming bridge load limit. The advanced warning signs will be limited to the Council’s higher classified hierarchy roads to limit the amount of sign congestion.



R6-3

Figure 4: Proposed Bridge Load Limit Sign

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 4 - Economy

4b. Invest in road infrastructure to improve connectivity for commerce and community.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Community notification will be communicated if Council supports the installation of these signs. This community notification may include social media and newspaper media, etc.

Likely feedback is expected after the load limit signage is installed and is anticipated from existing heavy vehicle users that are not aware of the current bridge load limits with no signage.

ATTACHMENTS

1. List of Load Limit Bridges [**13.2.1.1** - 1 page]
2. Load Limit 2023 [**13.2.1.2** - 1 page]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

The installation of the bridge load limit signs will be funded out of the 23/24 Financial years bridge capital works program or the bridge maintenance budget. It is currently estimated to cost around \$20,000 to install signage on 25-30 bridges.

Installing these signs will reduce the risk of heavy vehicles travelling over bridges which are not suited to heavier vehicles due to their design or current condition. It will also help protect these bridges from premature failure, which is good asset management practice to ensure the full value of each bridge is utilized.

Bridge load limits are continually reviewed by the Assets & Development Services Department and adjustments to load limits are made as required to reduce risks of bridge failure and issues etc.

CONCLUSION

Bridges are a key component within Pyrenees Shire Council's Road network and provide access to key industries and businesses. The installation of bridge load limit signage will inform the public of travel/load limit requirements and help protect these bridges to ensure that the failure or additional condition degradation is mitigated.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Supports the installation of Bridge Load Limit Signage on Council's current load limited bridges.
2. Supports the Authorised Council Road Managers within the Assets and Development Services Department to make future changes to the bridge load limits including signage as required.
3. Continues to seek avenues for funding for necessary bridge upgrades.
4. Continues to engage with key industries and business on the matter to assist in with transport access needs.

13.2.2. CIRCULAR ECONOMY ACT IMPLICATIONS

Presenter: Douglas Gowans - Director Asset and Development Services

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Douglas Gowans – Director Assets and Development

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 68/08/02

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the Circular Economy Act 2021 and Council's obligations to meet the requirements of this Act.

BACKGROUND

Local Government has the responsibility to support the recycling and resource recovery targets introduced by the Victorian Government in 2019 as part of the State's circular economy policy.

In a report presented at the August 2023 Council meeting, Council was advised of the Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021 (CE Act) now being in place. The Act provides for stronger regulation of the state's waste and recycling sector for more and better recycling, less waste and landfill. The Act provides for Victoria's transition to a sustainable circular economy, including enabling laws for the new container deposit scheme and state-wide four-stream household waste and recycling system with mandatory provisions for local government.

The Act also established the new Recycling Victoria entity, a dedicated government business unit to oversee and provide strategic leadership for the waste and recycling sector. Recycling Victoria (RV) will deliver state-wide stewardship, planning, regulatory and market oversight functions. RV's plan includes the development of regulations and service standards that will determine how services are to be delivered by councils.

The provisions that are in development are likely to influence future service standards including for the food and organic waste stream which has the potential to impact on the cost of service for residents within the Pyrenees.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

Led by the City of Ballarat, Council is working with a regional group of Councils including Central Goldfields Shire, Golden Plains Shire, Hepburn Shire, Moorabool Shire, Northern Grampians Shire and Central Highlands Water to form the Ballarat Region Circular Economy Materials Procurement Group. The Procurement Group is seeking circular economy focused solutions for the material streams they manage including the processing of organics and recyclables and the processing of residual waste.

The Victorian State Government has set broad targets that include:

- Divert 80% of waste from landfill by 2030, and an interim target of 72% by 2025;
- Cut total waste generation by 15% per capita by 2030;
- Phase out problematic and unnecessary plastics by 2025;
- Ensure every Victorian household has access to separate food and garden organic waste recycling services or local composting by 2030.

Council has entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), along with the collaboration and commitment from project participants the key objectives of the MOU are to provide:

- An opportunity to progress discussions in relation to waste and resource recovery ambitions and the role that identified solutions can play in achieving those ambitions.

- Provide industry with a level of confidence that participants are committed to exploring emerging circular economy waste processing solutions.

One of the issues that Pyrenees Shire Council will need to balance is the transport costs associated with regional processing to provide a best value outcome for the Pyrenees Community. Council may need to consider processing green and organic waste locally. Council officers are closely monitoring neighbouring councils who have introduced anerobic or aerobic methodologies for managing FOGO – Food Organics Green Organics.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 3 - Environment

3a. Continue being an environmentally progressive organisation.

3d. Improve waste management to reduce landfill and reduce harm to the environment.

Compliance with the Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021 (CE Act)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

The implications of any waste processing change will need a deliberative engagement process to inform the community and seek community views on metho options.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Fully Signed Ballarat Region Circular Economy Materials Request for Proposal MOU 2023- Copy [13.2.2.1 - 17 pages]
2. Circular Economy Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2021 [13.2.2.2 - 180 pages]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

Any change to resource recovery to recycling and FOGO will have a likely cost increase that will need to be borne by residents.

CONCLUSION

Waste and recycling are key activities that Council has responsibility for in the collection and appropriate processing of materials in order to reduce the amount of materials taken to landfill. This is best done through collaboration with other LGA’s and through market solutions.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Continues to collaborate with regional partners to explore market options for recycling and waste options.
2. Undertake information and deliberative engagement activities to inform residents of future changes to waste and recycling streams that will have a likely increase in cost to current charges.

13.2.3. PREFERRED SUPPLIER. GRASS SLASHING & WEED CONTROL

Presenter: Douglas Gowans - Director Asset and Development Services

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Philip Diprose – Waste/Contracts Officer

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: C2223-015

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide information to Council on the tenders received for Contract C2223/015 Preferred Supplier - Grass Slashing and Weed Control and seeks Council’s endorsement for these tenders to be included onto the Preferred Supplier Panel.

BACKGROUND

Council Officers sought tenders via a public open tender for contractors to become a preferred supplier at Pyrenees Shire Council for Grass Slashing and Weed Control.

The works within ‘C2223/015 Preferred Supplier - Grass Slashing and Weed Control’ may include grass slashing of road reserves, recreation reserves, private property, and any areas requested by the principal located in the area mapping.

The Request for Tender for Preferred Supplier Grass Slashing and Weed Control was released to the market through Councils Tender Platform on the 3rd of August 2023 and advertised until the 30th of August 2023. The tender was viewed 73 times online with 18 companies downloading the tender documents. There were 7 companies that provided a submission.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

All successful preferred supplier contractors will be required to participate in regular reviews of performance and comply with Councils Contractor Management System that will maintain certificates, registration, and licenses for preferred suppliers.

A review of the submissions provided by the tenderers showed all 7 are compliant with the tender requirements.

The submissions for the Grass Slashing and Weed Control services are:

Contractor	Service
Berne Flemming Civil Pty Ltd	Grass slashing
G S Plantation Services Pty Ltd	Grass slashing and weed control
Jones Co Excavation Pty Ltd	Grass slashing, mulching & weed control
Scotty's Fencing & Earthworks	Grass slashing
Small Plant Hire	Grass slashing & mulching
Tanbet Pty Ltd	Grass slashing
Wazza Co Pty Ltd	Grass slashing & weed control

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 1 - People

1a. Prepare for emergencies and ensure community safety.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Public open tender notices were included within the local newspapers and online as Council’s Procurement Policy. No additional community engagement or consultation required.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

The open public tender process to establish a panel of Contractors minimizes the procurement and financial risk to Council by ensuring that suppliers are engaged in accordance with the Council's Procurement Policy.

CONCLUSION

The Preferred Supplier Panel will provide Council market competitive rates for the required services.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Receives the preferred supplier report for Contract C2223/015 - preferred suppliers for Grass Slashing and Weed Control shown in the table.
2. Resolves to appoint the tenderers detailed in the table as preferred supplier for Grass Slashing and Weed Control Services under Contract C2223/015

13.2.4. PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Presenter: Douglas Gowans - Director Asset and Development Services

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Rachel Blackwell – Manager Planning and Development

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 66/02/02

PURPOSE

This report has been prepared to provide the Council with a summary of activities within the Planning and Development department, for July, August, and September 2023.

The Planning and Development team is responsible for administering a range of regulatory functions identified within the following Acts, Regulations, Codes and Standards:

- Local Government Act 2020
- Planning and Environment Act 1987
- Planning and Environment Regulations 2015
- Building Act 1993
- Building Regulations 2018
- National Construction Codes
- Environment Protection Act 2017
- Water Act 1989
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Food Act 1984
- Tobacco Act 1987
- Domestic Animals Act 1994
- Domestic Animals Regulations 2015
- Country Fire Act 1958
- Impounding of Livestock Act 1994
- Road Safety Act 1986
- Protection of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986
- General Local Law 2019

PART A: PLANNING

PLANNING PERMIT DATA	July	August	September	Financial YTD
Permit applications received	10	6	8	24
Permits Granted (90.91% of applications decided within statutory timeframe)	2	9	12	23
Permits Refused	0	0	0	0
Time extensions granted	2	1	1	4
Secondary consents approved	1	2	2	5
Estimated cost of works	\$5,030,000	\$518,000	\$2,427,916	\$7,975,916

Planning Enquiries July -September 2023

The planning department received 330 calls for the July to September Quarter. Of these calls 122 related to current planning permit applications or existing planning permit enquiries. 208 calls related to pre-purchase or pre-application enquiries.

Planning Team Resourcing

The planning team has seen several staff movements within the quarter with the departure of a planning officer and the manager of planning and development. Rachel Blackwell has recently moved into the Managers Position.

Recruitment was undertaken in August for a planning officer commencing with the Team on the 9 October 2023. The Principal Planning Officer position was not filled, and a Senior Planning Officer position is currently being advertised.

As a result, the planning team are at capacity and are dealing with planning permit applications and enquiries and pressing strategic matters. The strategic program will be progressed when there is a complete team.

VCAT

In September 2023 both Planning and Engineering officers attended a VCAT Compulsory Conference relating to planning permit application PA23004 Lot 4 Racecourse Road Beaufort for the use and development of the land for an emergency services facility (CFA). The permit applicant had appealed several planning permit conditions which related to engineering requirements, namely upgrades to the service road at the High Street frontage of the site. The compulsory conference was successful. The parties agreed that the permit applicant provide a monetary contribution to council to undertake the works required. This was secured by a condition or approval requiring a Section 173 agreement to facilitate this. An amended permit has been issued at the direction of the Tribunal. The hearing scheduled for November 2023 has been vacated.

Public Open Space Contributions

At the September 19, 2023, briefing Council officers provided a presentation on Public Open Space Contributions as required under Clause 53.01 of the Pyrenees Planning Scheme and legislated under Section 18 of the Subdivision Act.

Contributions are used to pay for the provision of new or improved public open space infrastructure needed by future communities that result from subdivided land. Clause 53.01 requires a public open space contribution of 5 per cent.

Council can specify a different contribution amount in their planning scheme via a schedule to Clause 53.01. In the absence of an amendment to the planning scheme an adopted council policy can provide officers with delegation to vary the public open space requirement in accordance with the policy.

As we consider more development within the shire the planning team will be requiring public open space contributions on subdivision permits in accordance with the Pyrenees Planning Scheme, Planning and Environment and Subdivision Acts.

It is therefore recommended that Council adopts its own policy for consideration of variation to public open space to deal with future variation requests in a transparent and consistent manner.

Strategic Planning Program

The 2023-24 strategic planning program includes:

- Amendment C47Pyrn, which proposes to incorporate the Snake Valley, Waubra, and Lexton framework plans into the Pyrenees Planning Scheme. This amendment has been progressed to the point of getting Council to consider requesting formal exhibition of the amendment from the Department of Transport and Planning.
- Council has undertaken a review of the Pyrenees Planning Scheme to ensure it contemporariness and satisfaction against Councils legislative requirement under S12B of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The next step is to receive comments from Councillors to the draft review before it is finalised for adoption at a future council meeting. It is noted that we are yet to receive feedback from Councillors. Officers can organise a workshop with Councilors to progress the review if required.
- Council officers are preparing an amendment to incorporate a number of completed flood studies into the Pyrenees Planning Scheme. The project is on hold until a resolution of flood mapping requirements has been addressed.
- Progressing the development of a strategy to inform an approach to rural land use and development. This project is on hold until resources are sufficient to enable this longer-term project to be progressed.
- Identifying opportunities to support growth and development throughout the shire. This project is on hold until resources are sufficient to enable this longer-term project to be progressed.
- The Statagic Planning Team are also involved in technical reference and consultation groups relating to state renewables projects such as the western renewables link, wind farms etc.

PART B – BUILDING

BUILDING ACTIVITY	July	August	September	Financial YTD
Private Building Permits	14	11	15	40
'Property Info Cert' issued	20	19	15	54
Building Notice/Order issued	3	1	3	7
Building Inspections	8	4	8	20

Swimming Pool Compliance

Pyrenees Shire is approaching full compliance on Required swimming pool / spa barrier inspections that were due by the 1 June 2023.

Legal action is in process relating to one outstanding non-lodgement of required safety barrier certificates (Form 23's).

PART C – ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

	July	August	September
Wastewater			
Application to Install or Alter system	2	5	3
Permit to Install or Alter issued	3	3	4
Approval to Use issued	0	3	2
Wastewater inspections	3	8	10
Domestic Wastewater Management Plan inspections	1	5	29
Domestic Wastewater Service Agent reports	12	2	6
Wastewater related complaints	0	0	0
Fees Paid	\$1312.80	\$3716.40	\$2229.90
Public Health			
New Premises or Transfers	1	5	1
Registration Renewals	0	1	0
Premises Closures	3	1	0
Routine and Follow Up Inspections	16	13	24
Complaints about Registered Premises	2	0	0
Food Recalls	7	6	4
Mobile/Temporary Food Applications	6	3	4
Mobile/Temporary Food Inspections	0	0	1
Mobile/Temporary Food Statements of Trade	9	9	12
Fees Paid	\$541.50	\$541.50	\$357.00

Tobacco Test Purchasing

The first round of tobacco test purchasing for the 2023/24 financial year was completed on the 28th of September. Test purchasing was conducted at eight tobacco retailers, with one retailer selling cigarettes to a minor. As this was the retailers first offence, an official warning was issued and retesting to occur during the next round.

Routine Inspections

A substantial number of required statutory inspections were completed during this quarter, with only 27 food, 4 prescribed accommodation and 2 caravan park inspections remaining for the year. These are planned to be completed by no later than the end of November in time for renewals.

During this quarter there was one major non-compliance at a food business for cleanliness, which was followed up and the non-compliances were addressed.

Complaints

One food complaint was received and found not to be enforceable by Council and was therefore referred to Primesafe for their investigation.

A complaint was also made to Council regarding a prescribed accommodation premises with a variety of concerns from food safety, overcrowding and room sizes, maintenance, hot water supply and wastewater concerns. Investigation is ongoing.

DWMP Inspections

A total of 25 DWMP inspections were completed this quarter with another 10 attempted but officers were unable to access the properties. There is still a poor response rate from property owners from letters, phone calls or calling cards to allow access to their properties for inspections.

PART D – COMMUNITY SAFETY AND AMENITY

ACTIVITY - Animals

	July	August	September	Total FYTD
Cats Registered	507	515	521	-
Dogs registered	2202	2219	2225	-
Cats impounded	3	17	110	130
Cats reclaimed	1	1	0	2
Cats Euthanised	2	16	97	115
Dogs impounded	2	8	3	13
Dogs Reclaimed	1	7	3	11
Dogs Euthanised/surrendered	0	0	0	0
Stock impounded	0	3	18	21

ACTIVITY – Infringements

Infringement Type	July	August	September	Total FYTD
Domestic Animals Act	6	8	12	26
Local Laws	7	2	2	11
Road Safety Act	0	1	3	4
Environment Protection Act	0	0	0	0
Impounding of Livestock Act	0	0	0	0
CFA Act	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0
Total Infringements Issued	13	11	17	41
Prosecutions	2	4	2	8

Redbank Cats

A couple in Redbank selling their property contacted Council in September advising they had approx. 60 cats they wished to surrender as they were moving from the shire.

We expect that approx. 135 cats will have been taken from the property once trapping is completed. The cats were all inbred from the one family and not suitable for rehoming except for a dozen or so. After further investigating the matter, it was established the couple came to the shire from an adjoining shire approx. 6 years ago and that the shire and the RSPCA took over 200 cats from the property when it sold.

This matter has been resource intensive for the Local Laws Team particularly the officer managing this case. The couple were issued with fines totalling \$5,774.00.

Gorse Blitz

A blitz on Gorse, a declared noxious weed has been undertaken over the last few months with several properties with large infestations on their land being issued Fire Prevention Notices under the CFA Act. Properties around the Carngham and Snake Valley area have been our focus with many property owners responding well by mulching and spraying the weed. The blitz will continue over the next six months.

Lexton - Dog Establishment

A dog establishment outside of Lexton has a long history of complaints and enforcement action with the shire. The owners have an old planning permit to keep up to 35 dogs on the property. Council officers inspected the property after a complaint was received identifying a high number of dogs on the property that were not registered. Multiple fines were issued. No welfare issues were observed.

Upcoming Fire Season

With Victoria expecting to see an earlier start to the fire season the team have kicked off its media campaign earlier than usual with comms being released on social media, newsletters, and other platforms. Approx 600 Pre-Season Advisory letters were also sent out to properties that received notices last year.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 1 - People

1e. Improve social outcomes.

Priority 2 - Place

2a. Sustain and enhance unique character of our communities.

2b. Enhance the liveability and resilience of our communities.

2c. Promote responsible development.

Priority 3 - Environment

3a. Continue being an environmentally progressive organisation.

3c. Encourage community care of biodiversity and natural values.

Enabling Principles

b. Provide transparency and accountability

c. Use resources efficiently and effectively

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council notes the contents of this report.
2. That Council officers prepare a policy relating to public open space contributions for future Council consideration.

13.3. CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

13.3.1. ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Presenter: Kathy Bramwell - Director Corporate and Community Services

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Kathy Bramwell – Director Corporate and Community Services

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 16/20/04

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present to the Council the Annual Report for 2023.

BACKGROUND

The 2023 Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with section 98 of the Local Government Act 2020 and details the operational and financial activities and outcomes of the Pyrenees Shire Council throughout the 2022/23 financial year.

An Annual Report must contain a range of matters, including:

- A report of the operations of the Council
- An audited performance statement
- Audited financial statements
- A copy of the auditor's report on the performance and financial statements, and
- Any other matters proscribed by the regulations

The Annual Report must be prepared as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and section 100 of the Local Government Act requires that, *"...the Mayor must report on the implementation of the Council Plan by presenting the annual report at a Council meeting open to the public ... within 4 months of the end of the financial year."*

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

The Annual Report 2023 provides an insight into Council's operations and fulfils its statutory obligations in this regard.

This year's report includes information on projects, the organisation, and continuing last year's focus on sharing images and stories from staff. The report assists in increasing the visibility of the Council, its officers and its work, and aims to improve transparency and understanding of what the organisation does and the services it delivers to the community.

The Council delivers more than 150 services, from family and children's services, open space, waste management, and community facilities; to matters concerning business support and development, planning for appropriate development, and ensuring accountability for Council's budget and financial sustainability.

This broad range of community services and infrastructure for residents support the wellbeing and prosperity of our community. Council's vision, strategic objectives, and strategies to further improve services and facilities are described in the Council Plan 2021-2025 and associated budgets.

The delivery of services, facilities, support, and advocacy to achieve those strategic objectives is measured by a set of service performance indicators and measures, which are reported against in the Annual Report.

The year saw some economic challenges arising from the significant and widespread flood event in late 2022, with recovery works still underway and likely to continue for at least another year. The floods had widespread impact across the shire – on our people and townships, businesses, infrastructure, events, tourism, and the economy in general.

Council delivered a large program of major capital works including a new community facility in Lexton, recreation upgrades in Beaufort with the installation of new cricket nets, and many infrastructure upgrades including bridges, roads, footpaths, and drainage works.

The year identified some ongoing challenges: improving our community’s satisfaction with Council performance and long-term financial sustainability pressures, as well as managing the morale of the organisation with a large proportion of staff sadly leaving us following the exit from direct delivery of home-based care services. COVID remained an ongoing presence with positive cases within the workforce being experienced regularly throughout the year.

The financial year ended with a positive financial result and an unqualified financial audit.

A digital proof copy of the draft Annual Report is provided to Councillors by separate circulation. Final copies will be provided when printed. The report will be made available on the Council website and printed copies at front counters or available upon request.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Enabling Principles

b. Provide transparency and accountability

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

The Annual Report forms a key part of the Council’s engagement with its community under the Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework, providing an overview of activities and performance over the year.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

No financial or other risks are attached to this report.

CONCLUSION

The Pyrenees Shire Council Annual Report for 2023 has been prepared and is now presented to the Council.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Receives the formal presentation of the Pyrenees Shire Council Annual Report 2023, and
2. Requires officers to make the report available on Council’s website and, when available, in hard copy to the community upon request.

13.3.2. AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

Presenter: Kathy Bramwell - Director Corporate and Community Services

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Kathy Bramwell – Director Corporate and Community Services

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 32/04/04

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council and Community with an update on the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting M009 held on Tuesday, 26 September 2023, and to seek approval of a revised Audit & Risk Committee Charter and a new Internal Audit Program for 2023-2026 as recommended by the Committee.

BACKGROUND

Section 54 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires the Council to establish and maintain an Audit & Risk Committee as an advisory committee to the Council. The Council re-established its Audit & Risk Committee and approved the Audit & Risk Committee Charter under these provisions at its meeting in June 2020.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

A meeting of the Council's Audit & Risk advisory committee was held on Tuesday, 26 September 2023. Discussions at the meeting included:

- End of Financial Year Financial Statements and Performance Statement with the VAGO appointed External Auditor providing an overview of the audit outcomes culminating in an unqualified audit.
- Governance, risk and compliance updates.
- Provision of the final 2023/24 budget.
- Two Internal Audit reports relating to reviews conducted since the last committee meeting:
 - Operational review of Statutory Planning
 - Asset Management – Infrastructure Assets
- Consideration of a new Internal Audit Program for 2023 to 2026.
- An overview of the recently tabled Sandon Report – a report on an investigation into allegations of corrupt conduct involving councillors and property developers in the City of Casey.
- Governance updates on compliance framework reviews conducted on Fraud & Corruption Prevention and Quality (Policy) Control.

An update on the annual committee workplan was also provided.

Following the meeting, arrangements were made for the EOFY financial statements and other documents to be signed as agreed by Council at their meeting in September 2023.

Minutes of the 26 September Audit and Risk Committee meeting have been circulated to members of the committee.

Committee Chair Biannual Report

The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee has submitted their biannual report for Council information and a copy of this is attached to this report.

Internal Audit Program 2023-2026

AFS & Associates were re-appointed as the Council's internal audit provider with effect from 1 July 2023. The former internal audit program was successfully concluded in early 2023 and as part of their contractual

requirements, AFS collaboratively developed a new program for the next three years, which was discussed at the recent meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee.

Committee members requested an additional audit be included in the program regarding business continuity and disaster recovery planning.

The draft internal audit program has been attached to this report for the Council's consideration. The Council's adoption of this program, with the addition of an additional review of business continuity and disaster recovery planning, is now requested. The additional review will take place in 2024.

Audit & Risk Committee Charter

At the September meeting, committee members identified a weakness in the Audit & Risk Committee Charter relating to the non-flexibility of tenure terms for independent members. A review of the Charter was requested and approved by committee members, after the meeting.

The tenure of independent committee members is currently restricted to three-year terms, with a maximum of nine consecutive years in service. It was requested that this be retained as preference but an option for less than a three-year term to be considered upon request.

The initial term of a new independent committee member was mandated at three years.

The Council is now requested to adopt the revised Charter as recommended by the Committee.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Enabling Principles

- b. Provide transparency and accountability
- c. Use resources efficiently and effectively

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

This report provides part of the Council's regular reporting to the community on Council business affairs and decision-making through public availability of Council meeting agendas and minutes.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 2023-04 Proposed IA Program [**13.3.2.1** - 13 pages]
2. DRAFT PSC Audit and Risk Committee Charter 2023 25 [**13.3.2.2** - 11 pages]
3. Audit & Risk Committee Chair Biannual Report [**13.3.2.3** - 5 pages]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

Any financial or risk implications arising from this report have been discussed within the body of the report or attachments.

CONCLUSION

A meeting of the Council's Audit & Risk advisory committee was held in September 2023. This report provides an overview of discussions and seeks approval / adoption of two items recommended by the Committee.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the information provided on matters discussed at the recent meeting of the Council's Audit & Risk Advisory Committee.
2. Receives the biannual report from the Committee Chair.
3. Accepts the recommendations of the Audit & Risk Committee to:
 - a. Adopt the draft Internal Audit Program for 2023-2026 with the inclusion of an additional review on business continuity and disaster recovery planning in 2024, and
 - b. Adopt the revised Audit & Risk Committee Charter 2023-25.

13.3.3. DELEGATIONS

Presenter: Kathy Bramwell - Director Corporate and Community Services

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Kathy Bramwell – Director Corporate and Community Services

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 16/20/08

PURPOSE

This report is provided for the Council to adopt revised Delegations to Council Officers.

BACKGROUND

Section 11 (1) of the Local Government Act 2020 provides the Council with the power to delegate to members of Council Staff and Officers, via Instrument of Delegation, any power, duty, or function of a council under the Act other than one prohibited by section 11 (2).

A range of other legislation also allows the Council to delegate powers, duties, and functions under those Acts or regulations.

It is the Council's practice to review its delegations regularly and specifically when officer changes occur.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

Council operates its Environmental Health operations through a contract arrangement with Kernow, which provides the organisation and its community with a consistent approach to mandatory environmental health services and public health protections without interruption. To maintain this service, new officers occasionally work for the Council requiring Instruments of Delegation & Authorisation to be updated to allow full operations.

Zoe Borghouts is now assigned to the Pyrenees Shire Council as Environmental Health Officer and requires the appropriate delegations and authorisations from the Council to operate fully in this role on behalf of the Council.

A relevant Instrument of Delegation & Authorisation is attached for the Council's consideration and adoption. Following adoption, the document will be sealed with the Council Seal.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 1 - People

1a. Prepare for emergencies and ensure community safety.

Enabling Principles

b. Provide transparency and accountability

c. Use resources efficiently and effectively

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Management and review of Instruments of Delegation is a matter of compliance and does not require community engagement.

ATTACHMENTS

1. S11 Instrument of Appointment Authorisation EHO Zoe Borghouts [**13.3.3.1** - 3 pages]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

It is a requirement under the Local Government Act 2020 and other legislation to accurately record any delegations of powers, duties, or functions to officers to allow for proper and lawful administration of Council's functions and operations, without which all functions and operations would require daily resolution of the Council.

CONCLUSION

Lawful operation of Council administration requires delegations of authority to be authorised by Council. The new assignment of environmental health officer to the Council requires an update of delegations and authorisations to allow for full operation within that function. The Instrument of Delegation & Authorisation, once approved by the Council, will remain in force until further reviews are conducted in the future.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. In the exercise of the powers conferred by section 11 of the Local Government Act 2020 and other legislation referenced in the attached Instrument, resolves that the officer referenced in the S11 and S11A Instrument of Delegation and Authorisation attached, be appointed and authorised as set out in the Instruments, and
2. The Instruments come into force immediately the Common Seal of Council is affixed to the Instrument and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it.

13.4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

13.4.1. MEMBERSHIP - CENTRAL VICTORIAN GREENHOUSE ALLIANCE (CVGA)

Presenter: Jim Nolan - Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Jim Nolan – Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 30/14/14

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider whether to continue membership with the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance (CVGA).

BACKGROUND

The CVGA works across Central and Northern Victoria to support local government with climate change mitigation and adaptation activities. CVGA represents 13 councils and helps them to develop and implement innovative regional initiatives to benefit their local communities and the economy.

Since their launch in 2001, the Alliance has facilitated numerous large-scale projects, and these continue to have a positive impact in the community. Over the past five years, the Alliance has led projects worth over \$50m worth in our region. CVGA advocates on behalf of member councils to ensure the voice of local government is heard strongly in state and federal policy settings.

CVGA members have access to networking opportunities and practices through regular events, working groups, newsletters and an annual conference. The CVGA is one of the Local Government Alliances in Victoria representing 75 of the state's 79 Councils.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

At the September Briefing, CVGA CEO, Ms Annika Kearton provided an update to Councillors on CVGA activities.

Some of the key activities of CVGA, many of which have seen benefits flow to Pyrenees shire include:

- Victorian Energy Collaboration – Power Purchase Agreement – collectively saving 172k tones of CO₂, and \$2M savings in power.
- Business Rewards Buying Group (pilot)
- Lighting the Regions – facilitating replacement of around 9000 streetlights with energy efficient lights.
- MASH Solar Bulk Buy project facilitating rooftop home solar including 18 within Pyrenees Shire.
- Small Business Energy Saver project
- Advocacy on renewable energy, transmission and distribution, smart meters, storage etc.
- Research into battery storage, microgrids, EV charging and benefit sharing
- Facilitation of data gathering and monitoring of energy consumption to support members
- Cool it Project and others to support climate resilience

Many of the projects have resulted in improved environmental benefits as well as financial benefits ongoing for members.

A copy of the CVGA Strategic Plan is attached to this report which sets out a range of ambitious projects and opportunities.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 1 - People

1d. Promote health, wellbeing, engagement and connection.

Enabling Principles

b. Provide transparency and accountability

c. Use resources efficiently and effectively

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

The Pyrenees Councillor Delegate for CVGA is Cr David Clark.

ATTACHMENTS

1. CVGA - Strategic Plan - 2022 - 2027 [13.4.1.1 - 13 pages]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

The annual membership fee with CVGA for Pyrenees is approximately \$9,500.

CONCLUSION

Given the substantial environmental and financial benefits obtained from CVGA initialed projects which outweigh the annual membership fees and given the challenges for small rural councils to meet future emissions targets, and to build climate resilience, the following recommendation is made.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorses ongoing participation with the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance.

13.4.2. MEMBERSHIP - COMMITTEE FOR BALLARAT

Presenter: Jim Nolan - Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Jim Nolan – Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 22/16/27

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider whether to continue membership with Committee for Ballarat (CfB).

BACKGROUND

Committee for Ballarat (CfB) is a visionary membership body that provides progressive and innovative leadership with a strategic, long-term focus. Committee for Ballarat's work covers Ballarat and the western region, extending north to include Hepburn Shire, south to include Golden Plains Shire and west to include Pyrenees Shire.

Committee for Ballarat works across all three tiers of government and their message is – Ballarat and the region is a dynamic regional centre that provides attractive lifestyle opportunities, sound connectivity, strong employment and investment prospects, and has a focus on innovation and sustainability.

The committee is currently reviewing its Strategic Plan. A copy of the Strategic Action Plan 2020-22 can be found here: portal2.docassembler.com.au/FileDownload/ViewAttachment/?attachmentId=6f33f0ff-1563-ee11-9955-002248964906

Membership of the Committee includes Ballarat, Hepburn, Moorabool, Golden Plains, Pyrenees Councils.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

Committee for Ballarat membership benefits include:

- Regional Strategic Planning,
- Board Membership opportunity,
- Influence and Advocacy,
- Projects,
- Collaboration,
- Support and Networking,
- Recognition,
- Member-to-Member Promotion,
- Round Table Dinners,
- Chairs Lunch,
- Member Events and Briefings,
- Event Sponsorship and Connect Networking.
- Advocacy to government

Significant issues and projects that CfB has actively pursued in support of its members include:

- Housing
- Transport
- Employment
- Energy
- Population Growth

At the September Briefing, Committee for Ballarat CEO, Mr Michael Poulton provided an update to Councillors on Committee for Ballarat activities, and the benefits of membership.

Further information on the Committee can be found here:

[Who We Are | Committee for Ballarat](#)

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 1 - People

1d. Promote health, wellbeing, engagement and connection.

Enabling Principles

b. Provide transparency and accountability

c. Use resources efficiently and effectively

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

The Pyrenees Councillor Delegate for GBAC is Cr Ron Eason.

ATTACHMENTS

1. CF B- Strategic- Action- Plan- Shaping-our- Future-20-22- Final [13.4.2.1 - 6 pages]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

The annual membership fee with Committee for Ballarat for Pyrenees is approximately \$4,300.

CONCLUSION

There are a number of benefits of membership with the Committee for Ballarat for Council to consider as listed in this report and as presented by the CfB CEO recently.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorses the participation with Committee for Ballarat.

13.4.3. MEMBERSHIP - SUNRAYSIA HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE (SHIC)

Presenter: Jim Nolan - Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Jim Nolan – Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 64/10/10

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider whether to continue membership with the Sunraysia Highway Improvement Committee (SHIC).

BACKGROUND

The Sunraysia Highway Improvement Committee (SHIC) has been established to advocate for the Sunraysia Highway that extends from Ballarat to south of Ouyen.

The Committee involves six municipalities and has been active for approximately ten years.

Participation involves approximately 3 or 4 meetings per year.

The secretariat is currently a contracted function.

Approximately 50% of the membership fee is used to fund the secretariat, and 50% towards projects.

As the road is a state responsibility, the primary role of the committee is one of advocacy.

Recent advocacy has in part contributed to investment commitment for completed works including:

- 8km of widening and edge treatment generally between Lillicur and Lamplough
- Resurfacing works

As well as planning for priority projects including:

- Intersection treatments such as the Avoca-Bealiba Road intersection and
- Overtaking lanes between Avoca and St Arnaud and south of Lexton

In 2020/21 an announcement of \$10M commitment was made by the Federal government for works on the Sunraysia Highway.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

While not all highways within the Pyrenees have a dedicated advocacy committee attached to them, the Sunraysia is a significant transport route through the Pyrenees Shire and warrants advocacy by Council to ensure the ongoing service standard meets the community needs.

Whether the funding commitments above were influenced by the SHIC or not is uncertain, however Department of Transport and Planning staff attend SHIC meetings and provide an excellent avenue for information exchange and advocacy by member Councils.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 1 - People

1d. Promote health, wellbeing, engagement and connection.

Enabling Principles

b. Provide transparency and accountability

c. Use resources efficiently and effectively

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

The Pyrenees Councillor Delegate for SHIC is Cr Ron Eason.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Sunraysia Highway Improvement Committee Media Summary 3 November Draft [13.4.3.1 - 1 page]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

The annual membership fee with SHIC for Pyrenees is approximately \$2,000.

CONCLUSION

While there are benefits to Council to be part of a collective advocacy group when advocating to government, there is a significant cost associated with the SHIC membership that Council may wish to consider before committing to ongoing membership. Given that the other councils are likely to be impacted by Pyrenees' decision to participate (or not) in SHIC ongoing, the following recommendation is made.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council seeks the Sunraysia Highway Improvement Committee to consider the costs and benefits of its advocacy activity to determine whether it should continue in its current form given the growing constraints on member funds.

13.4.4. MEMBERSHIP - TIMBER TOWNS VICTORIA (TTV)

Presenter: Jim Nolan - Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Jim Nolan – Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 22/16/22

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider whether to continue membership with Timber Towns Victoria (TTV).

BACKGROUND

Timber Towns Victoria (TTV) is an incorporated Local Government Association formed in the early 1980s, representing the interests of municipal councils in relation to forestry on both public and private land. The Association's primary function is to provide a forum for local government to address the management of forests and forest industries and their impact on local communities.

With significant native and plantation forests within the shire, Pyrenees has seen a benefit to membership with TTV since it commenced. The key reasons for Pyrenees involvement have related to:

- Impact of timber haulage on the road network
- Other impacts of forestry practice and support for members regarding the implementation of the Code of Practice.
- Support and advocacy associated with employment within the sector important to rural and regional communities.
- Advocacy to government on relevant matters impacting Councils and communities.
- Research and provision of information for members on forestry related matters.

TTV are an active Committee holding regular meetings in person and virtually.

The Strategic Plan 2022-2025 for TTV is attached to this report.

Further information on TTV can be found on their website here: [Home - Timber Towns Victoria](#) Membership also provides access to the TTV portal which has a range of other research and resources.

TTV President, Ms Karen Stephens provided an update to Councillors on TTV at the September Briefing.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

A key strategic priority for Timber Towns Victoria is the TIRES report (Timber Industry Road Evaluation Study) which aims to identify and quantify upgrades needed to the road network that supports the timber industry across Victoria. The study provides a detailed assessment of the projected works and costs for road infrastructure required to serve the needs of the timber industry.

The TIRES report has recently been reviewed and the 2023-27 TIRES Report is attached to this report.

The TIRES report is divided into the four regions – Northeast, Gippsland, Central Victoria and South West Victoria – with the overall outcome being a prioritised plan for upgrades required to the road network for the next five years. It places these works in a statewide economic context, with the report examining the economic benefits of the forest industry in Victoria to the State Government, local governments, industry, and the community.

Council's advocacy for road funding has in the past been supported by evidence from the TIRES research, and in particular in relation to the Raglan –Elmhurst Road which has progressively been upgraded over approximately 15-year period.

The recent TIRES review however has not identified and local roads in Pyrenees in need of upgrade in the immediate future.

The Victorian Government's decision to end logging in native forests has impacted business and employment in Pyrenees shire as reported previously to Council, and currently there is a transition underway. While the impact in Pyrenees has been somewhat less than in other Councils such as Wellington Southern and East Gippsland Shires, TTV have provided strong leadership in support of its member Councils on this matter. TTV has prepared a position statement which has been circulated to Councillors and have established a Transition Committee to monitor the process and impacts of the state's decision.

Cr Vance is the Pyrenees representative on the Committee and regularly attends meetings of TTV, while officer involvement in recent years has been limited due to the need to manage workload.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 1 - People

1d. Promote health, wellbeing, engagement and connection.

Enabling Principles

b. Provide transparency and accountability

c. Use resources efficiently and effectively

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

The Pyrenees Councillor Delegate for TTV is Cr Robert Vance.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 2023-2027 TIRES Report [13.4.4.1 - 16 pages]
2. Strategic- Plan-2022-2025- [13.4.4.2 - 2 pages]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

The annual membership fee with TTV for Pyrenees is approximately \$2,750.

CONCLUSION

Pyrenees Shire Council has been a member of TTV for many years and the benefits of membership have been presented to Councillors to consider whether it should continue in the context of continuing financial constraints.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council continues its membership with the Timber Towns Victoria.

13.4.5. MEMBERSHIP - VICTORIAN LOCAL GOVERNANCE ASSOCIATION (VLGA)

Presenter: Jim Nolan - Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Jim Nolan – Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 44/06/14

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider whether to continue membership with the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA).

BACKGROUND

The VLGA's vision for local government is to support a diverse and growing network of community leaders elected to local government who are more connected, informed and capable of providing good governance for the communities they serve.

The VLGA's overriding value is to strengthen and support good governance in local government that will enable, promote and facilitate trust and confidence in the sector.

VLGA is one of the three peak bodies for the sector as part of the Victorian State Local Government Agreement.

The purpose and key priorities as detailed in the VLGA Constitution are:

- to be a peak body for Councils;
- to protect, advance and advocate for the importance of the role of effective local government;
- to support and assist Councillors to do their job well;
- to provide resources, information, and education, and undertake projects to support good governance and leadership; and
- to be a sustainable, focused and values driven organisation

The VLGA Strategic Plan can be found here:

[Strategic Plan 2023-2027 | VLGA | Victorian Local Governance Association](#)

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

The President, Cr Denis Massoud, Board member Cr Josh Fergeus and VLGA CEO, Ms Kathryn Arndt provided an update to Councillors on VLGA at the Briefing on 10 October. The benefits of membership highlighted in the presentation are outlined in the letter attached to this report from the Chief Executive.

In summary, these benefits include:

- Sector leadership and advocacy
- Services and Programs on specific activities to support member councils
- Online resources including VLGA Connect [Victorian Local Governance Association - YouTube](#)
- Local Government News Round-up
- Governance Update
- Candidate support
- Leadership and support for Mayors and Councillors
- Confidential Governance Advisory Service
- CEO Forum
- Submissions to Government
- Project work including:

- Victorian Local Government Women's Charter
- Encouraging Young People
- Linkage Project
- Stakeholder Engagement and policy
- Building Council and Community Capacity to minimise harm from gambling

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 1 - People

1d. Promote health, wellbeing, engagement and connection.

Enabling Principles

- b. Provide transparency and accountability
- c. Use resources efficiently and effectively

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Council does not have a nominated Councillor or staff Delegate for VLGA. The programs and activities are accessible to Councillors and staff.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 20230904 Letter to Pyrenees Shire Council regarding VLGA membership [13.4.5.1 - 8 pages]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

The annual membership fee with VLGA for Pyrenees is \$3,280. Services offered to members are generally offered at discount rates.

CONCLUSION

Given the range of services offered by VLGA to Council, Councillors and the CEO, and the value of those services when compared with the cost for non-members, there is a strong argument for retaining membership with VLGA particularly in the context of the 2024 Council election.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorses participation with the Victorian Local Governance Association.

14. COUNCILLOR REPORTS AND GENERAL BUSINESS

15. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

CLOSURE OF MEETING TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

That, pursuant to the provisions of Section 4.1.1(c) of Council's Governance Rules, and Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2020, the meeting be closed to the public in order to consider confidential items.

RECOMMENDATION

That the meeting be closed to members of the public in accordance with Section 4.1.1(c) of Council's Governance Rules, and Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2020, in order to discuss the confidential reports listed below:

15.1 - Land Matter

RE-OPENING OF MEETING TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

RECOMMENDATION

That Council, having considered the confidential items, re-opens the meeting to members of the public.

16. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Ordinary Meeting of Council closed at

Minutes of the meeting confirmed

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2023

Mayor Cr Ron Eason