



Pyrenees
Shire Council

Minutes

Ordinary Meeting of Council

6:00 pm Tuesday 12 December 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

Mayor Cr Robert Vance welcomed all to the meeting.

PRESENT

Mayor: Cr Robert Vance

Councillors: Tanya Kehoe, David Clark, Ron Eason, Damian Ferrari

Chief Executive Officer: Jim Nolan

Director Asset and Development Services: Douglas Gowans

Director of Corporate and Community Services: Kathy Bramwell

EA to CEO and Councillors: Chantelle Sandlant (minutes)

Senior Communications Officer: Noel McKeegan

Communications Officer: Rebecca Stewart

2. STREAMING PREAMBLE

Mayor Cr Robert Vance read the livestream preamble.

3. OPENING PRAYER

The Mayor read the Opening Prayer.

The Mayor requested that all remain standing for one minute silence to remember Judy O'Connor who passed away yesterday, Judy is the wife of former Councillor Michael O'Connor.

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Mayor acknowledged 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

There were no apologies.

6. NOTICE OF DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS

Cr Tanya Kehoe declared of conflict of interest (indirect) in relation to confidential item 15.1.1 - Australia Day Awards.

7. CONFIRMATION OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

Cr David Clark / Cr Damian Ferrari

That the Minutes of the:

- Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Tuesday 21 November 2023; and
- Closed Meeting of Council held on Tuesday 21 November 2023,

as previously circulated to Councillors, be confirmed.

CARRIED

8. BUSINESS ARISING

There was no business arising (items taken on notice) from the previous meeting held 21 November 2023.

9. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no questions submitted for public participation question time.

10. ITEMS FOR NOTING

10.1. CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

10.1.1. CUSTOMER ACTION REQUESTS - NOVEMBER 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: 16/24/06

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 November 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

Customer contact media	Jul 2023	Aug 2023	Sept 2023	Oct 2023	Nov 2023
Emails received by organisation	94,409	56,093	51,435	57,315	TBC

External complaints received	3	4	2	2	4
Requests for information**	1	4	2	FOI 5 Non-FOI 5	0
Requests for review of infringements	1	2	0	2	1
Website page views	17,970*	17,086	17,242	16,133	15,891
Website users	5,472	5,570	6,017	5,556	5,893
Website contact us page	645	614	473	542	413
Website customer enquiry form	54	65	57	69	60

*under-reported due to platform changes

**includes requests supplied through FOI and non-FOI means

Comments:

- No FOI requests were received in November.
- Website user numbers remain steady.
- In October, website views focused on waste and transfer stations, recruitment, events and activities, and the Beaufort Linear Master Plan.
- In October, most enquiries received via the online customer enquiry form related to building and planning, waste and recycling, and roads.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION - CUSTOMER ACTION REQUESTS

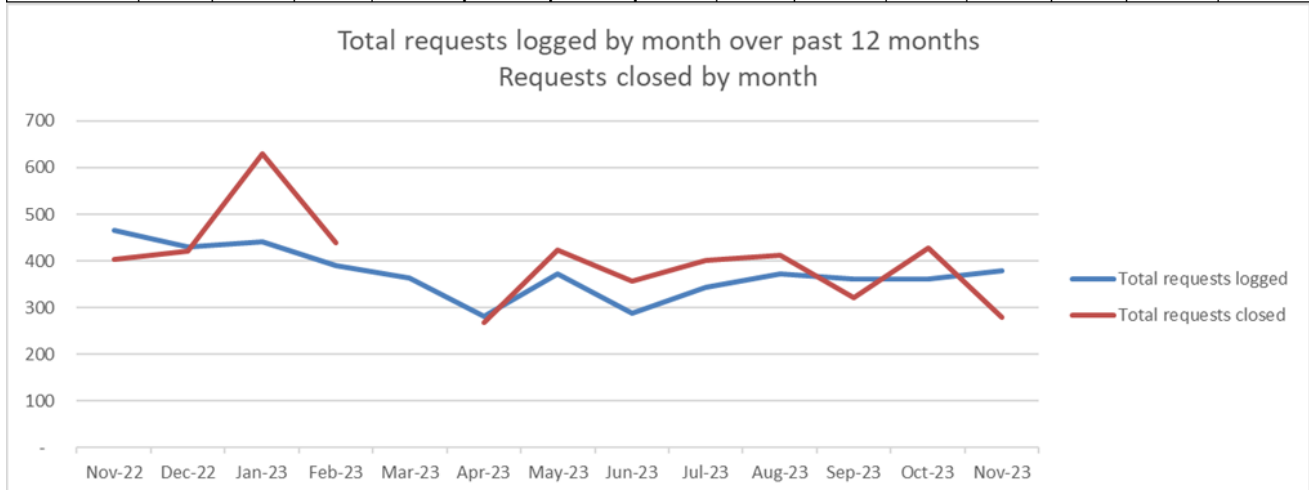
1. **Logged and closed requests**

378 CARs (Customer Action Requests) were logged during the month, 17 more than the previous month. Of these, 135 related to telephone messages.

278 requests were closed during the month.

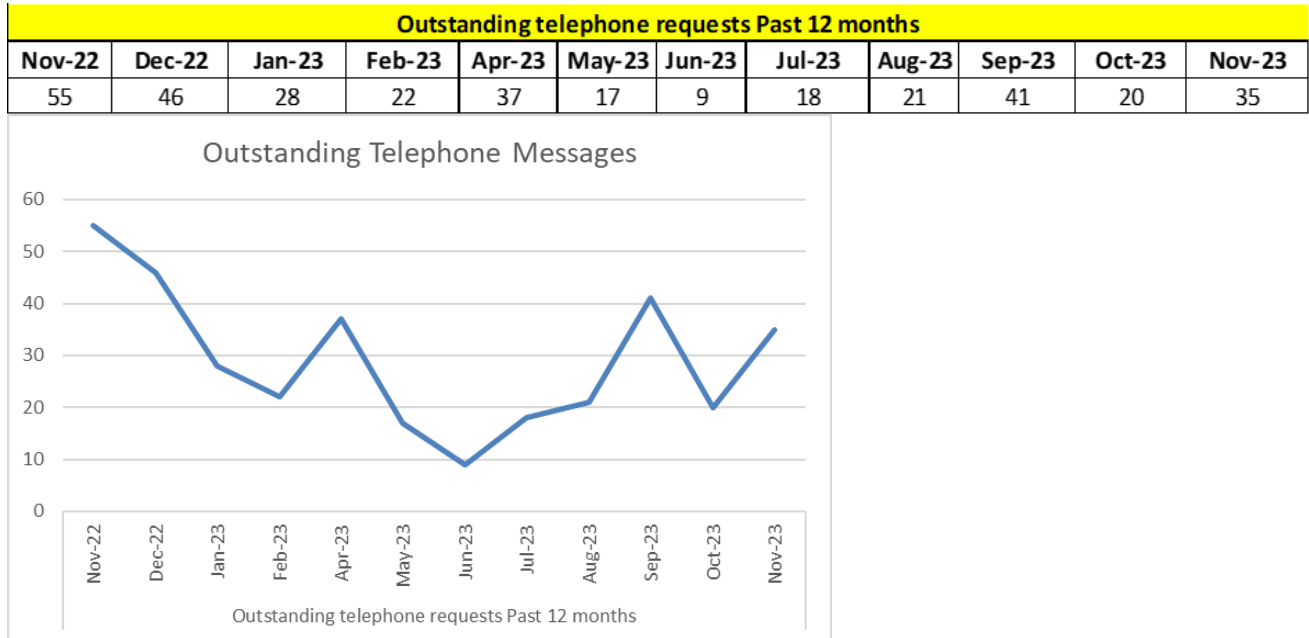
The following charts detail the numbers of requests received over the last 12 months and the number of requests closed each month.

Year	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	% Change
Total requests logged	466	431	441	390	364	282	372	288	344	373	361	361	378	5%
Total requests closed	403	421	630	440		269	424	356	401	413	321	427	278	-35%



2. Telephone requests

151 telephone calls were transferred into requests during the month, with 35 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 the reporting month, there was a total of 291 active or open requests. These include:

- 155 which are open and assigned for action
- 121 which are on hold awaiting resolution or action scheduling
- 3 referred to budget
- 12 in progress or being managed – meaning that they are longer term case managed issues

On hold – 121 requests were on hold as at the end of the month. 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.,

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

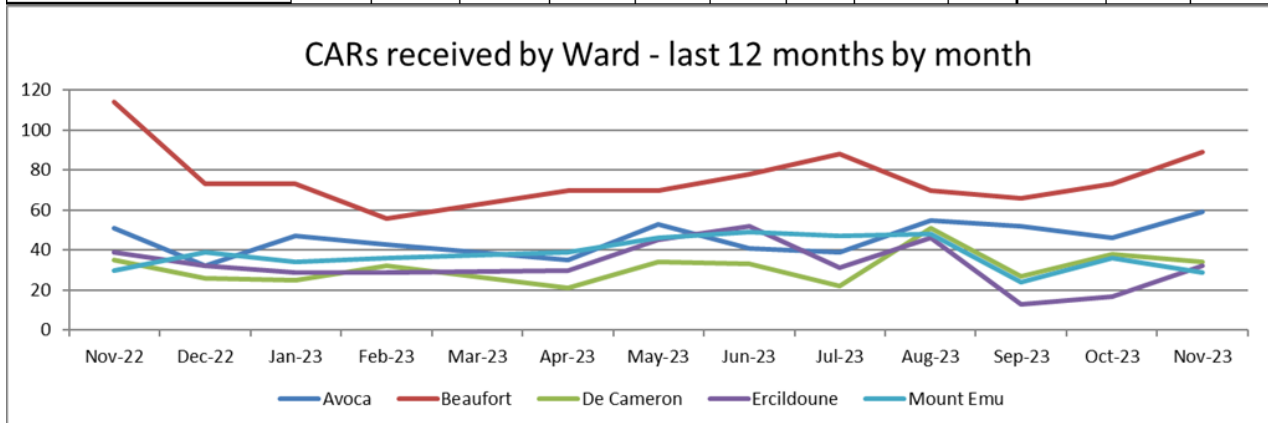
Open requests – the balance of this report will focus on the open requests as previously, but statistics relating to requests marked as on-hold or referred-to-budget have been included in the table.

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

Request status – Nov 2023	Avoca Ward	Beaufort Ward	DeCameron Ward	Ercildoune Ward	Mt Emu Ward
Number of requests received (previous month)	59(46)	89(73)	34(38)	32(17)	29(36)
Requests received and closed in the same month (%)	47(80%)	62(70%)	27(79%)	22(69%)	20(69%)
Requests received remaining open and assigned for action	9	20	4	6	5
Requests received that are on-hold awaiting final works or resolution	3	6	2	4	3
Requests received referred to budget	0	0	0	0	0
Total open (assigned) requests as at the end of the month	19(16)	30(28)	11(17)	17(19)	22(25)

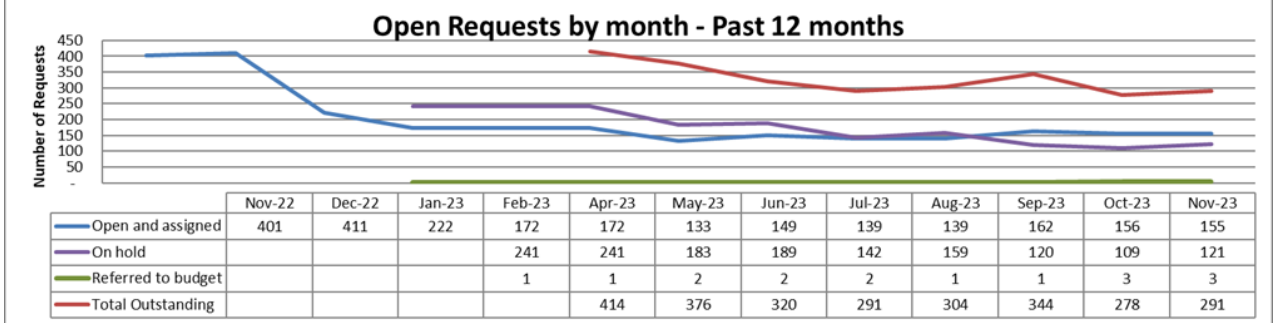
The following charts show the numbers of requests received by Ward per month for the past 12 months.

CARS by Ward received by month Rolling - Past 12 months												
Ward	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23
Avoca	51	32	47	43	35	53	41	39	55	52	46	59
Beaufort	114	73	73	56	70	70	78	88	70	66	73	89
De Cameron	35	26	25	32	21	34	33	22	51	27	38	34
Ercildoune	39	32	29	29	30	45	52	31	46	13	17	32
Mount Emu	30	39	34	36	39	46	49	47	48	24	36	29
Total by month	269	202	208	196	195	248	253	227	270	182	210	243

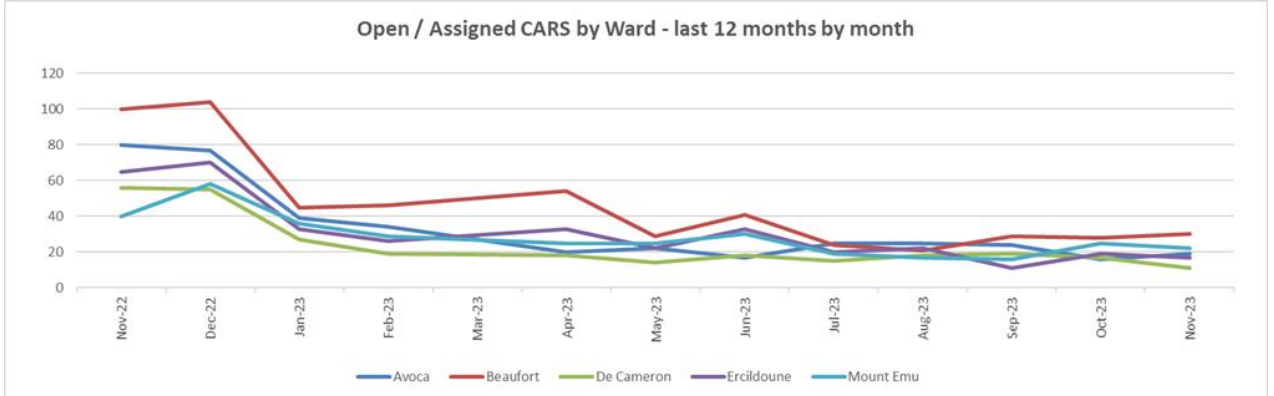


The following charts show the statistics for requests that remained open each month for the past 12 months. These charts now include requests put on hold or referred to budget.

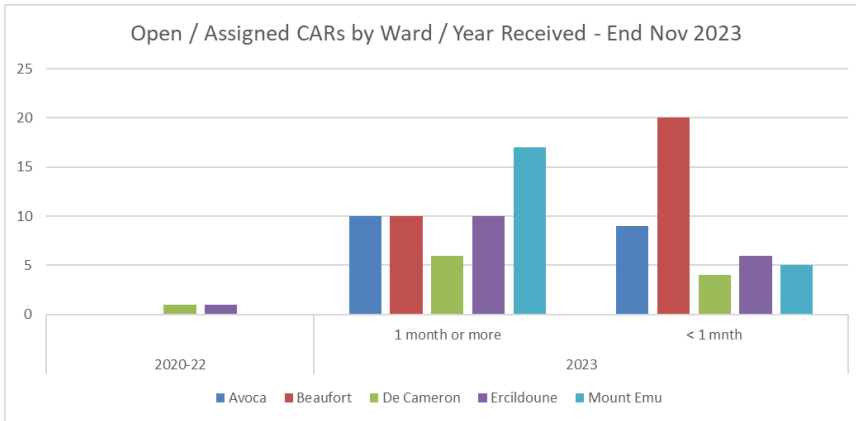
Open requests by age													
Year	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	% Change
2013													
2020	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	
2021	12	12	-	-	2	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	
2022	389	399	131	45	19	115	114	19	19	27	29	20	-31%
2023	-	-	91	127	164	201	227	119	119	135	127	135	6%
Open and assigned	401	411	222	172	185	133	149	139	139	162	156	155	-1%
Outstanding but on hold				241	190	183	189	142	0	120	109	121	11%
In progress - longer term						2	4	4	3	4	9	10	11%
Other outstanding								4	1	3	1	2	100%
Referred to budget				1	1	2	2	2	1	1	3	3	0%
Total Closed	403	421	630	440	269	424	356	401	413	321	427	278	-35%
Total requests logged	466	431	441	390	282	372	288	344	373	361	361	378	5%
Total outstanding requests					414	376	320	291	304	344	278	291	5%



Open Assigned Requests by Ward - Past 12 months													
Ward	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	
Avoca	80	77	39	34	20	22	17	25	25	24	16	19	
Beaufort	100	104	45	46	54	29	41	24	21	29	28	30	
De Cameron	56	55	27	19	18	14	18	15	18	19	17	11	
Ercildoune	65	70	33	26	33	22	33	20	22	11	19	17	
Mount Emu	40	58	36	29	25	25	30	19	17	16	25	22	
Total by month	341	364	180	154	150	112	139	103	103	99	105	99	



The following chart shows the open assigned requests by Ward as at the end of the month, 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.

	Oct-23	Nov-23	Change
Roads & Rd Maint.	83	79	-4
Streetlights	0	0	0
Drainage	14	13	-1
Footpaths / Kerb&Channel	4	8	4
Park & Reserves	9	6	-3
Roadside Veg	29	34	5
Environmental Health	0	2	2
Planning	4	5	1
Bld maint	11	0	-11
Local Laws	13	20	7
Cats	0	7	7
Dogs	7	6	-1
Livestock	1	3	2
Parking	0	0	0
Fire Hazard	4	1	-3
Bld Compliance	0	0	0
Waste Management	0	0	0
Local Government Act	0	0	0
Rates	0	0	0
Natural Disasters	74	61	-13
Pools	0	0	0
Council cleaning	0	0	0
Litter	0	0	0
Design & Assets	2	3	1
GIS	0	0	0
Community	0	0	0
Rural Addressing	2	1	-1
Road Naming	1	2	1
Telephone messages	20	35	15
Total	278	286	8

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 November 2023. Reporting is being expanded over future months to include other media of customer contact received by officers.

Cr Tanya Kehoe / Cr Ron Eason

That Council notes this report.

CARRIED

10.1.2. PROJECT UPDATE DECEMBER 2023

Presenter: Jim Nolan - Chief Executive Officer

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

Report Author: Jerry van Delft – Manager Community Wellbeing and Partnerships

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

File No: 16/21/08

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is for the Council to receive a high-level update on key Council projects.

BACKGROUND

Updates on Council projects have been reported regularly to Council and the community through information reports in quarterly Council meeting agendas, in addition to the project dashboard which has been developed in recent years and is accessible on Council's website.

Major projects are reported through the weekly community noticeboard and as provided in the summary below.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

Project Milestone status is available on the project's dashboard. The dashboard is updated monthly. Below is a summary of the status of a selection of projects underway.

Avoca car park and EV charging station

Construction of the extended car park is complete and the EV charging station is online. The 50kW fast charger can charge two vehicles at a time. The EV bays have been painted blue.

Beaufort asphaltting works

Asphaltting works in Beaufort have started. Acacia Court, Orchid Court and Beggs Street will be asphalted.

Beaufort cricket practice nets.

Construction has been completed on the cricket practice nets and storage facility at the Goldfields Recreation Reserve. This fantastic new community resource is now in use.

Beaufort Lake BBQ Shelter.

Construction of a new multi-purpose BBQ shelter at Beaufort Lake is in its final stages with drainage works and landscaping now underway and is close to completion.

Caramuir Road, Nerring culvert extension.

Works on the Carramuir Road culvert extension are expected to be finished by the end of the year. There may be some disruptions to traffic and pedestrian flow during construction.

Havelock Street toilet redevelopment

The Havelock Street public toilets have been refurbished. External works on the Havelock Street toilets, including painting and verandah works have also been completed.

Neill Street footpath (Motel to Broadbent)

Construction of the new footpath along Neill Street towards Broadbent Court is finished.

Re-sheeting program

Our annual gravel re-sheeting program has finished.

Roadside slashing program.

Our contractors have now finished most of the Shire's roadside.

Rural Water Supply Project meetings.

The PCG for this project meets regularly and the Business Case is well advanced. The Feasibility study component identified that a project estimated at \$160M is feasible. Public meetings were held across the north of Pyrenees Shire, the Northern Grampians and Central Goldfields Shires to update the community on the Southern Wimmera and Northeast Pyrenees Water Supply Project which has strong support from land owners.

Seal works

Seal works as part of our dust suppression program have been completed. As part of our dust suppression program the following roads have been sealed: Clapperton St Lexton (between Sunraysia Hwy and Skene St), Hall St Lexton (from Ararat Lexton road for 425m), York St Avoca, (from the end of the existing seal to Boundary Rd) and Davies St Avoca (from Charles St for 265m).

Tree removal

Snake Valley tree removal works along Smythesdale – Snake Valley Road are finished, and the road is now open to traffic. Remedial works on the footpath and nature strip are ongoing.

Underground Drainage Works

The underground drainage works at Walker St/Burton St, Beaufort to resolve stormwater flooding issues at the Beaufort Medical Centre have been finished.

V/Line Homebush Rd Avoca pedestrian crossing project.

V/Line has begun work on the railway pedestrian crossing at Homebush Road in Avoca. The council has advocated strongly for this project and appreciates the work by V/Line in prioritising it, and the funding from the Victorian Government.

Walking track works

Work to restore the walking track along Smythesdale-Snake Valley Road near the primary school is underway. A landscape plan is also being developed. Replanting will happen after summer. The council is consulting with the Snake Valley community to develop the landscaping plan.

Avoca Drainage Project

The first of several contracts has been let for this major project comprising a series of open channel and underground drainage infrastructure construction north of the rail line in Avoca which has the aim of improving the peak flow dispersal of water to the Avoca River.

Rural Council Transformation Project RCTP(2)

Central Goldfields Shire Council is the proponent for this project which seeks to implement improved ICT systems at both Central Goldfields and Pyrenees Councils to enable more efficient and effective service delivery. The PCG for the project meets regularly and a consultant expert has been engaged to scope and oversee the procurement and system implementation which is scheduled for mid 2024.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 2 - Place

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

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

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

This reporting on progress of projects is intended to inform Council and the community.

CONCLUSION

This report provides an update on various projects underway within the Pyrenees shire.

Cr David Clark / Cr Damian Ferrari

That Council:

1. That Council notes this report.
2. Continues to provide updates and information to the community about the status of projects across the shire through various communication methods.

CARRIED

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

Cr Damian Ferrari – Beaufort Ward		
11/11/2023	Remembrance Day Memorial Service & Krupps Gun Unveiling	Beaufort
14/11/2023	Councillor Briefing	Beaufort
14/11/2023	Councillor Cuppa & Chat	Evansford
21/11/2023	Councillor Briefing	Avoca
21/11/2023	Council Meeting	Avoca

Cr David Clark – Ercildoune Ward		
03/11/2023	MAV Board Meeting	Melbourne
09/11/2023	CVGA Finance & Audit Committee Meeting	Virtual
14/11/2023	Councillor Briefing	Beaufort
14/11/2023	Councillor Cuppa & Chat	Evansford
16/11/2023	MAV Rural & Regional Forum	Bendigo
21/11/2023	Councillor Briefing	Avoca
21/11/2023	Council Meeting	Avoca
30/11/2023	CVGA AGM	Ballarat
30/11/2023	MAV Board	Melbourne

Cr Robert Vance – De Cameron Ward		
01/11/2023	Beaufort Linear Masterplan Public Meeting	Beaufort
11/11/2023	Remembrance Day Memorial Service & Krupps Gun Unveiling	Beaufort
11/11/2023	Ararat Legacy Club 94 th Anniversary Dinner	Ararat
14/11/2023	Councillor Briefing	Beaufort
14/11/2023	Councillor Cuppa & Chat	Evansford
15/11/2023	Avoca Men's Shed Re-Opening	Avoca
16/11/2023	MAV Rural & Regional Forum	Virtual
17/11/2023	Art Show	Beaufort
19/11/2023	Beaufort Agricultural Show	Beaufort
21/11/2023	Councillor Briefing	Avoca
21/11/2023	Council Meeting	Avoca
24/11/2023	MAV Wimmera Southern Mallee Central Highlands Regional Meeting	Virtual
24/11/2023	VLGA Governance Advisory Network Meeting	Virtual
24/11/2023	RCV Committee Meeting	Virtual
27/11/2023	DTP – Plan for Vic Webinar	Virtual
30/11/2023	ESC Fair Go Rates System Webinar	Virtual

Cr Ron Eason – Avoca Ward		
03/11/2023	Rail Freight Alliance Meeting	Virtual
14/11/2023	Councillor Briefing	Beaufort
14/11/2023	Councillor Cuppa & Chat	Evansford
15/11/2023	Avoca Men's Shed Re-Opening	Avoca
21/11/2023	Councillor Briefing	Avoca
21/11/2023	Council Meeting	Avoca
28/11/2023	Audit & Risk Committee Meeting	Beaufort

Cr Tanya Kehoe – Mount Emu Ward		
13/11/2023	Western Bulldogs Leadership Group Celebration	Beaufort
14/11/2023	Councillor Briefing	Beaufort
19/11/2023	Beaufort Agricultural Show	Beaufort
21/11/2023	Councillor Briefing	Avoca
21/11/2023	Council Meeting	Avoca

Cr David Clark / Cr Ron Eason

That Council notes this report.

CARRIED

12. ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILLORS**12.1. ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILLORS - NOVEMBER 2023**

MEETING INFORMATION			
Meeting Name	Councillor Briefing		
Meeting Date	14 November 2023 commenced at 1.00pm and closed at 4.30pm		
Meeting Location	Council Chamber, Beaufort		
Items Discussed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planning Application – High Street, Beaufort 2. Destination Management Plan 3. Beaufort Linear Master Plan Project 4. Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation 5. Community Grants Program 6. Avoca Pump Park Update 7. CEO Update 		
ATTENDEES			
Councillors	Mayor Cr Robert Vance Cr Damian Ferrari (arrived at 1.15pm) Cr Tanya Kehoe (virtual)		Cr David Clark (arrived at 1.30pm) Cr Ron Eason
Apologies	Nil.		
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 Ella Duniam, Planning Officer (item 1) Ray Davies, Manager Economic Development and Tourism (item 2 & 3) Adam Boyle, Team Leader – Community Development (item 5 & 6) Jerry van Delft, Manager Community Wellbeing and Partnerships (item 5 & 6)		
Visitors	Albert Stafford, Stafford Strategy (item 2) Julia Papahatzis, Stafford Strategy (item 2) Sarah Pilgrim, Tourism Midwest (item 2) Joel Chadwick, Tourism Midwest (item 2) Stephen Read, Emerge Associates (item 3) Liam Murphy, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (item 4)		
CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES			
Item No:	Councillor making disclosure	Particulars of disclosure	Councillor left meeting
Nil.			

MEETING INFORMATION			
Meeting Name	Councillor Briefing		
Meeting Date	21 November 2023 commenced at 1.00pm and closed at 5.30pm		
Meeting Location	RTC, Avoca		
Items Discussed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Australia Day Events beyond 2024 2. Council Meeting Dates & Cuppa Locations (2024) 3. Engagement Plan 2024 4. Creative Strategy 5. Avoca Swimming Pool 6. Avoca Drainage 7. Planning Application – High Street, Beaufort 8. Site Visits 9. CEO Update 		
ATTENDEES			
Councillors	Mayor Cr Robert Vance Cr Ron Eason Cr Damian Ferrari Cr Tanya Kehoe		
Apologies	Cr David Clark		
Staff	Jim Nolan, Chief Executive Officer Douglas Gowans, Director Assets and Development Services Kathy Bramwell, Director Corporate and Community Services Jerry van Delft, Manager Community Wellbeing and Partnerships (item 5) Tim Day, Manager Assets (item 6)		
Visitors	Nil.		
CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES			
Item No:	Councillor making disclosure	Particulars of disclosure	Councillor left meeting
Nil.			

Cr David Clark / Cr Ron Eason

That Council notes this report.

CARRIED

13. ITEMS FOR DECISION

13.1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

13.1.1. BEAUFORT LINEAR MASTERPLAN

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: 30/22/16

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the Draft Beaufort Linear Masterplan to Council following community input to the design of the Masterplan.

BACKGROUND

The Beaufort Linear project evolved through Council's participation in the Central Highlands Integrated Water Management group.

Integrated Water Management is a Victorian Government framework for a collaborative approach to water planning and management that brings together organisations with an interest in all aspects of the water cycle.

Green Blue Infrastructure is the reference used to describe green spaces such as parks, gardens and other recreational areas while blue represents various sources of water from storms, recycled water, drainage etc.

A Green Blue Infrastructure for Small Towns Project was identified in 2018 as a regional priority by the Central Highlands IWM group, to enable guidelines to be established for the benefit of towns with populations of between 100 and 10,000 people. Pyrenees Shire Council was a partner in the development of the GBI Small Towns Guidelines along with Golden Plains (project lead), Moorabool and Central Goldfields Shire Councils and Central Highlands Water.

During the course of the GBI Small Towns project the Beaufort Linear project was identified as a concept to be explored with the Beaufort community and funding was approved by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) in October 2022 to develop a masterplan.

The intent of Beaufort Linear is to create a nature based recreational corridor along the Garibaldi Creek from the Beaufort Lake spillway to the point where the creek joins with Yam Holes Creek north of the railway line. Proposed walking and cycling paths will provide linkages between the Lake and the Beggs St playground area.

The Beaufort Linear Masterplan project's aims are:

- To develop a Master Plan for the Garibaldi Creek from Beaufort Lake to the railway line in the north with scope for an entry statement north of the railway line at the junction of Yam Holes Creek
- Complete an economic assessment, quantifying benefits and costs, using the DEECA adopted Investment Framework for Economics of Water Sensitive Cities tool and
- Create a 10-year action plan for infrastructure provision. In that context technical design for these elements is to accompany concept plans for high priority infrastructure works along with cost estimates (including life cycle costings) based on evidence of community need.

The objectives of the masterplan project include:

- Improving water quality and environmental outcomes for the Garibaldi Creek
- Engaging with the local community and first nations peoples to seek their input to the project such as considerations for interpretive signage and/or extending the Koori Art trail from Beaufort Lake, installation of street furnishings and tree planting
- Encouraging visitors to the Beggs St playground area to explore the town in more detail, thereby lengthening their visits and creating more opportunity for them to visit businesses in town.
- Formalising pedestrian linkages between the lake, schools precinct, RV park, swimming pool and Beggs St playground
- To improve the amenity of the area for visitors camped at the adjacent RV free camp at Audas Lane
- Rejuvenate and landscape the area north of the railway line which is expected to become the town entry in the event of a highway bypass

An application for funding of the masterplan phase of the project was approved in October 2022, with a project budget of \$110,000- comprising a DEECA contribution of \$85,000- and Council providing a sum of \$25,000-.

The construction of elements identified in the masterplan will be dependent on external funding to allow different phases of the project to be constructed over time as funding opportunities arise.

Strategic Context

The **Council Plan** (2021) guides planning for council's major strategies and plans. Objectives relevant for the Beaufort Linear Park project are;

- Sustain and enhance the unique character of our communities,
- Enhance the liveability and resilience of our communities,
- Continue being an environmentally progressive organisation,
- Foster a climate change resilient community,
- Encourage community care of biodiversity and natural values.

The Council plan is informed by and responds to the **Community Vision**:

"Our Vision is for inclusive, happy and healthy connected communities that create sustainable and welcoming townships, natural environments and rural areas.

We attract diversity through promoting innovation, growth and partnerships while addressing climate and community needs such as reliable and responsive infrastructure, affordable services and housing whilst protecting our natural environments."

- The **Beaufort Lake Action Plan** (2016) outlines key actions for the future protection and enhancement of Beaufort Lake for water quality and recreation purposes.
- The **Beaufort Walkability Plan** (2016) outlines an approach to strategically adding footpaths, wayfinding and connections between existing routes. The plan is being implemented by Council opportunistically.
- The **Recreation Strategy** (2017) guides strategic action around sport and recreation for the shire. The strategy recommends one or more off road recreational trails for large towns. Beaufort Linear Park provides an opportunity to deliver this direction for Beaufort.
- Part of the **Lake Beaufort Foreshore** was redesigned in 2020 and recently delivered. The redesign includes new landscaping, picnic areas and play spaces. The linear park

masterplan has the opportunity to link to the path which runs around the periphery of the lake and on to the foreshore.

- A **Masterplan for Goldfields Recreation Reserve** adjacent to the lake has recently been under development to understand community needs and identify future upgrades. The recreation reserve is an important community asset which can be better served by the linear park site in terms of access and interaction with Beaufort town centre.

The project also aligns with strategic objectives within;

- **Council Plan**, where benefits of this project align with each of the four pillars within the plan of People, Place, Environment and Economy
- **Beaufort Walkability Strategy**, where a range of community wellbeing benefits are identified by creating walking paths to increase participation in physical activity
- **Pyrenees Shire Councils Recreation Strategy** which references the social, health, environmental and economic benefits of recreation and open space
- **Economic Development Strategy**, where the objectives of Beaufort Linear include encouraging visitors to spend longer in Beaufort to generate economic activity, to improve township amenity and thereby standard of living for local residents and to make Beaufort a more attractive proposition to potential new residents and investors.

The project aligns with six of the seven priority outcomes for the Victorian Governments IWM framework as follows:

- Objective 1 - Safe Secure and affordable water supplies in an uncertain future
- Objective 3 - Avoided or minimised existing and future flooding
- Objective 4 - Healthy and valued waterways, wetlands and water bodies
- Objective 5 - Healthy and valued landscapes
- Objective 6 - Community values reflected in place-based planning
- Objective 7 - Jobs, economic benefits and innovation
- The Beaufort community have been provided with various options to provide input to the plan over a three-month period which has informed the development of the masterplan.

The project Control Group for this project has included representation by individuals from the following organisations:

- Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation
- Beaufort Friends of the Pool
- Beaufort Apex Club
- Beaufort Croquet Club
- Beaufort Primary School and Secondary College
- DEECA
- Glenelg Hopkins CMA

A broad range of community engagement activities has been undertaken during the development of the masterplan.

These activities included:

- A survey of the community between 24 August and 24 September 2023, which was made available on-line and via hard copy at council offices and the Beaufort Community Resource Centre.
- Community workshop held at the Beaufort Community Bank Complex on 5 September
- Site walk with Beaufort Walkability Group and a pop-up session at Beaufort skate park 6 September
- Street surveys at Beaufort IGA and individual businesses in the retail precinct 7 September
- Site walk with traditional custodians 18 September

- Meeting with Beaufort Rotary members 18 September
- Business for Beaufort presentation 3 October
- Visits by council officers to resident's whose properties are directly adjacent to the water course on 4 October
- Classroom activity and site walk with Beaufort Secondary College year 10 students on 11 October. A meeting was held with the two school principals later that day.
- Meeting with Beaufort Apex club on 12 October
- Public meeting on the evening of Wednesday 1 November where the draft masterplan was presented to Beaufort residents for feedback
- Two council briefings
- The draft masterplan was placed on public exhibit from 15/11 to 30/11 2023 to allow residents a final opportunity to provide feedback. During this time emails were issued to service clubs and community groups represented on the PCG to invite feedback on the plan.

During the public exhibit in November there were 536 page views with 305 unique visitors to the portal and six residents who provided feedback on the plan.

One resident raised concerns about flood mitigation which are being actioned as commented later in this report. The other submissions received all related to facilities at the Beggs St playground, skate park and the potential for a pump park to be installed in the area identified in the Masterplan as Zone 2. Councils Community Wellbeing Department are planning to undertake investigations into youth activities including proposals for the playground facilities at Beggs St in early 2024.

Glenelg Hopkins CMA has confirmed its support for the project and an interest in understanding any implications for changes to the function of the watercourse.

Further investigations are to be undertaken to understand the implications of the project on future flood events, noting that one of the projects aims was to mitigate these.

In this regard hydrological investigations are being pursued at the time of developing this report. These investigations will be undertaken within the original project budget for the Masterplan.

The activities that have occurred throughout the project have been promoted by Council through:

- Paid newspaper advertisements and inclusion in Councils public notices
- Media releases
- Facebook posts
- Information on the Council website
- Direct contact by telephone and email to community groups, particularly those represented on the project control group where their facilities abut the project area of interest
- Door to door visits to residents

During the public exhibition phase of the masterplan throughout November, Council received submissions from Beaufort Primary School and Secondary College, Glenelg Hopkins CMA and Council officers. A final version of the masterplan and an economic assessment will become available once hydrological investigations have been finalised.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

Financial costs to council

Capital Costs

The draft masterplan issued for public comment indicated an overall capital cost of approximately \$3M to be delivered as follows:

- Short term projects (1-3 years) \$460-470K
- Medium term projects (4-6 years) \$520-530K
- Long Term Projects (7-10 years) \$1.3M (this includes development of the section of land north of the railway line referred to in the plan as Zone 1, which will become the new town entry post highway bypass).
- Total for regeneration over ten years \$740K

Detailed breakdowns of these costings are provided in the draft masterplan attached to this report and which was placed on public exhibit in November.

The masterplan and costings are to be updated following recommended changes to ensure the infrastructure being installed is durable, easily maintained and at an acceptable cost, and has a low risk of being impacted by flood events.

The project is proposed to be delivered over an estimated timeframe of ten years as external funding sources (public and private) become available. Council may also consider allocating some of its existing budget for Beaufort Walkability towards this project, for example where matching funds for grants may be required to obtain grants.

These timeframes are also subject to:

- Timing for when ownership of the former Beaufort Primary School oval might be transferred to council.
- Developing agreements with other landholders such as Dep't of Education, Victrack and DEECA who each own parcels of land along the Garibaldi Creek. These organisations have been included in consultation throughout development of the masterplan.
- Availability of external funding sources.

Operation and Maintenance Costs

To minimise ongoing operational costs the Linear Project has been designed to establish grasses and plants that require minimal maintenance. A majority of the Linear Project with the exception of the Beggs St precinct will be "renatured" with native grasses and trees from the local area. Most areas along the creek other than at Beggs St will not be lawn type environments but designed for seasonal slashing rather than regular mowing. There will also be wetland components in Zone 4 nearest the lake and schools precinct that will not be mowed.

A preference for concrete paths with estimated life spans of eighty years has been proposed to the consultants rather than building gravel paths which would incur additional maintenance on an as needs basis and include remediation following flood events.

Street furniture and playground equipment is to be constructed of durable materials and have an estimated lifespan of 25 years.

Final calculations for capital expenditure, operational and maintenance costs are to be finalised upon completion of hydrological investigations commented upon earlier in this report.

Economic Assessment

An economic assessment of this project will be undertaken using the Victorian Governments "Investment Framework for Economics of Water Sensitive Cities" or INFFEWS tool which includes calculation of a cost benefit ratio.

This will be undertaken upon completion of the investigations outlined earlier in this report.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 1 - People

- 1c. Improve accessibility and inclusivity.
- 1d. Promote health, wellbeing, engagement and connection.
- 1e. Improve social outcomes.

Priority 2 - Place

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

Priority 3 - Environment

- 3a. Continue being an environmentally progressive organisation.
- 3b. Foster a climate change resilient community.
- 3c. Encourage community care of biodiversity and natural values.

Priority 4 - Economy

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

Enabling Principles

- a. Motivate and inspire community involvement

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Broad consultation has occurred as outlined earlier in this report.

Further investigations are currently being negotiated to understand the positive and/or negative impacts of the proposed masterplan with input from the Glenelg Hopkins CMA.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Beaufort Linear Park Master Plan Concept DRAFT v 2 15 Nov 2023 [13.1.1.1 - 31 pages]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

The project budget for the masterplan is \$110,000- with Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Change contributing \$85,000- and Council a sum of \$25,000-.

The draft masterplan for Beaufort Linear has been completed well within this budget and further input from the consultants to incorporate hydrological studies is being sought within the original budget parameters to bring elements of the masterplan to a shovel ready stage and to develop an advocacy document to support funding submissions.

Upon completion of the above assessments of capital expenditure, operational costs and an economic assessment will be completed.

CONCLUSION

The masterplan has been developed using co-design principals whereby the local community have provided input to the design of the plan throughout this phase of the project.

While the final costs of the project to build and maintain over time will be finalised upon completion of further hydrological investigations the preliminary construction costings of around \$3M are expected to increase with councils' preference for concrete rather than granite and gravel pathways. While concrete paths have higher construction costs, they are less prone to flood events and have a much longer life expectancy before remediation is required.

The masterplan is to be used to guide investment as funds permit over an estimated timeframe of ten years.

The objectives of the masterplan align with multiple priority outcomes of:

- The Victorian Governments Integrated Water Management Framework
- Council Plan
- Beaufort Walkability Plan
- Councils Recreation Strategy

Outstanding works at the time of developing this report include:

- An economic assessment to provide further detail on the anticipated capital expenditure, annual maintenance costs and Benefit Cost Ratio of the project and
- Hydrological studies to understand:
 1. What impact the changes may have during a one year in one hundred year flood
 2. To enable the final design to incorporate solutions for one in twenty year flood events and
 3. Any additional risks or detrimental impacts that may require further detailed engineering design work.

Cr Damian Ferrari / Cr David Clark

That Council:

1. Provides in principal support for the Draft Beaufort Linear Masterplan pending completion of final amendments to the plan and the economic assessment outlined in this report.

CARRIED

13.2. ASSET AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

13.2.1. AVOCA PRIMARY SCHOOL - RECYCLE BIN REQUEST

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: 24/06/02

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider support for a purpose specific bin to collect Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) eligible drink containers in a prominent location within High Street Avoca to enable a funding opportunity for the Avoca Primary School.

BACKGROUND

A letter signed by 17 Avoca Primary School Students requesting a recycling bin to be set up in the main street of the Avoca was presented to Council at the November Council meeting. At this meeting Council resolved to:

1. Receive the joint letter by the Avoca Primary School Students
2. Refer the matter to the Director Assets and Development Services and seek a further report to be prepared on the matter contained in the joint letter for consideration at the December 2023 Council Meeting.

Correspondence was then sent to the Avoca Primary School to both inform them of the Council resolution and to advise of other CDS fundraising options available to the school.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

The placement of a purpose specific bin in the main street of Avoca requires some consideration regarding the amenity of the streetscape. In order to maintain the amenity, ideally a bin should have a bin surround in keeping with the adopted practice.

Currently Council has a surplus of one purpose specific bin surround that could be adapted with some minor alterations, to make the bin fit for purpose. Some cost options are included in this report for Council's consideration.

Option One – New Bin Surround:

Item	Cost
Rubber flap alteration	\$50.00
Bin surround	\$2300.00
Bin surround installation	\$200.00
Signage	\$80.00
240 Ltr Bin Supply	\$50.00
Total	\$2680.00

Option Two – Repurpose Existing Bin Surround:

Item	Cost
Rubber flap alteration	\$50.00
240 Ltr Bin Supply	\$50.00
Bin surround installation	\$200.00
Signage	\$80.00
Total	\$380.00

As outlined in Option One, the total cost to supply a new bin surround would be \$2,680.00. Option two shows the total cost of \$380.00 should Council opt to repurpose an existing bin surround.

The timeframe for installation of each of the above options is approximately 2 weeks.

Ultimately Council needs to consider whether these costs should be borne by the primary school as part of their initiative or whether costs could be borne by Council as this initiative may assist Council's objectives of reducing recyclable materials going to landfill.

Council officers have investigated an appropriate location in High Street Avoca and recommend that the ideal location would be next to the existing waste bin at the shelter near the playground.

The letter that was sent to the school provided an alternate option to receive funds from CDS directly. This involves the Primary School registering as a community group on the CDS website and gives anyone depositing CDS eligible containers the ability to directly donate their refund to the school.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 3 - Environment

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

Enabling Principles

a. Motivate and inspire community involvement

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

This request has come directly from the Avoca Primary School. It is possible that other groups or clubs may also seek to make similar requests in future.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

There are risks in having recycling bins in the main street of Avoca as past practice has resulted in large amounts of contamination. However, many Councils are moving towards reinstating recycling bins in public areas due to higher level of community information. If the Avoca Primary School takes full responsibility for the bin, they will also need to take responsibility to remove any contamination from the eligible containers.

CONCLUSION

The installation of a dedicated recycle bin in Avoca would provide a fundraising opportunity for the Avoca Primary School.

Cr Ron Eason / Cr Tanya Kehoe

That Council:

1. Supports the installation of a dedicated recycle bin in High Street Avoca on a 6-month trial basis.
2. Requests a future report to be presented to Council following the trial period.

CARRIED

13.2.2. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION USAGE REPORT

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: 30/18/06

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the usage data on the recently installed Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations.

BACKGROUND

After successfully receiving funding from the federal government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program, Council installed electric vehicle recharging stations in Beaufort and Avoca.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

Usage reports for the period from August to October 2023 show that the EV charging stations located in Beaufort and Avoca have seen significant usage.

The usage report provided by Evie Networks includes information such as the number of sessions for each month and the charging time and kilowatts provided, with data broken down for each location. The Evie Networks report contains the Co2 emissions saved due to the replacing of Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles and the Co2 emissions saved using GreenPower, along with a comparison of the energy usage and Co2 emissions saved.

The following graphs taken from this report show the sessions per month for each EV charging station location.

Beaufort EV Charging Station	
Month	Sessions
August	88
September	75
October	82
Total	245

The Beaufort EV charging station is averaging just over 80 sessions per month. The below session figures for the Avoca EV charging station clearly show an increase in the number of sessions per month, this figure is expected to rise as the location of this charging station becomes more known and as tourism in the region increases over the summer period.

Avoca EV Charging Station	
Month	Sessions
August	9
September	12
October	20
Total	41

Comprehensive reports for both the Avoca and Beaufort EV sites can be found in the attachments of this report.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 3 - Environment

3a. Continue being an environmentally progressive organisation.

Priority 4 - Economy

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

Enabling Principles

c. Use resources efficiently and effectively

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

The community engagement that contributed to developing the council plan put a strong emphasis on environmental protection and action on climate change resilience. The community were consulted on the proposed locations of the EV Charging sites in Avoca and Beaufort via Council's online Engagement Hub.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Site Usage Report - Avoca - Aug- Oct 23 [**13.2.2.1** - 1 page]
2. Site Usage Report - Beaufort - Aug- Oct [**13.2.2.2** - 1 page]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

By installing EV charging stations Council is providing a renewable source of energy to power vehicles. This in turn addresses climate change impacts produced from the use of fossil fuels.

Council has an agreement with Evie (Fast Cities Australia) to manage, operate & maintain both charging stations reducing any potential risks if sites were managed directly. Power bills are from a renewable source and are paid for by Evie. Council receives a small percentage of the revenue collected by Evie which is in lieu of a site fee.

CONCLUSION

Both sites have been operating well and have exceeded expectations in terms of usage given that they have only recently been installed. Their usage will only increase as EV's become more popular. Having these sites available will increase patronage to local business as charging takes on average around 30 minutes.

Cr Ron Eason / Cr David Clark

That Council:

1. Notes this report.
2. Seeks further reports on EV charging usage being presented as data is collected.

CARRIED

13.3. CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

13.3.1. COUNCIL PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE

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: 16/20/06

PURPOSE

This report provides the Council with an end of year progress report on actions planned to deliver the strategic goals and priorities identified in the Council Plan 2021-2025 for the financial year 2023/24.

BACKGROUND

In accordance with section 90 of the Local Government Act 2020, the Council adopted the Council Plan 2021-2025 at its Ordinary Meeting on 19 October 2021. The Council Plan outlines how the Council will work toward implementing the 10-year Community Vision.

The Council Plan 2021-2025 is framed around four strategic priorities, plus enabling principles:

1. People
2. Place
3. Environment
4. Economy

In February 2022, the Council approved the operational projects and priorities for the next two years, designed to support the implementation of the Council Plan.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

Work continues to progress implementing the multi-year operational initiatives designed to support the delivery of the Council Plan 2021-2025, ensuring that delivery of the Council Plan remains foremost in the minds of all officers and business units.

Following the end of financial year report, actions completed in previous years have been removed from the report to ensure continued focus on current or future activities.

The attached report provides a progress update against the Pyrenees Shire Operational Council Plan 2021-2025 as of November 2023.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Enabling Principles

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

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

This report serves as part of the Council's regular communications to communities on the implementation of the Council Plan 2021-2025, which is closely aligned with the Community Vision 2021-2031.

ATTACHMENTS

1. November 2023 Progress Update Operational Council Plan [**13.3.1.1** - 34 pages]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

Any risk implications are discussed in the attached report.

CONCLUSION

The Council adopted the Council Plan 2021-2025 in October 2022 and approved the operational activities that support its delivery in February 2022. This report provides a progress update on those activities as of November 2023.

Cr Ron Eason / Cr Damian Ferrari

That Council notes this report.

CARRIED

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 with an update of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting M010 held on 28 November 2023.

BACKGROUND

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

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

A copy of the Draft Minutes from the Meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on 28 November 2023 is attached for Council information.

A brief overview of the issues considered by the Committee is provided below:

- The CEO provided an overview of topical issues faced by the council.
- Governance, risk and compliance matters including staffing statistics, policies and procedures, complaints and public requests for access to information.
- A report was provided on a recent internal audit review conducted on Cyber Security controls.
- The Annual Report was presented to the Committee.
- The 2024 Committee Work Plan and Meeting Schedule was discussed.
- A finance update as of 31 October was provided, with some questions taken on notice.
- An update against the current review of Council's fraud & corruption control framework was provided.
- The Committee Chair provided notes on a VAGO Audit Committee Forum attended in November.

At the start of the meeting, Committee members and the internal auditor met in a closed session for a discussion without Council officers. Discussion focused on the proposal to meet four times per year from 2024, staff turnover, and any issues arising for the internal auditors.

A copy of an industry update on reports and publications of interest to Councils was tabled and a copy of this report is also attached for Council information.

Internal Audit Program Update

An update against the Internal Audit Program was provided and a copy of this is attached for Council information. In line with requests made by the Committee at the last meeting, the planned review of HR (Human Resources) Recruitment and Selection was brought forward to September 2024.

Internal Audit Review – Cyber Security

An internal audit review was conducted in October 2023 to ensure the Pyrenees Shire Council has identified and assessed cyber threats and created appropriate mitigation and monitoring to reduce cyber security risks to an appropriate level. It was appropriate for this to be the first review of the new program as this is one of the highest strategic risks faced by the organisation.

The review found that a reasonable Cyber Security Framework for identifying and assessing cyber threats was in place.

Several process strengths were identified, including:

- Cyber security risks are captured and monitored via the Strategic and Information Security Risk Registers.
- Digital backups are performed and replicated off-site, and server rooms are secured to minimise the risk of data loss.
- Email filtering and firewalls restrict the potential for cyber security threats.

Notwithstanding the strengths observed, opportunities were identified to improve cyber security:

- Plan for coverage of the ICT Manager to ensure continuity of cyber security monitoring during periods of leave.
- Perform regular penetration testing of the ICT environment to identify vulnerabilities and enhancement opportunities.
- Develop an action plan to address weaknesses and areas of opportunity identified as part of the maturity assessment against the Australian Cyber Security Centre Essential Eight.
- Implement formal cyber security training for staff and councillors to enable a proactive workforce within the organisation.

A copy of the final report is attached for information.

Audit & Risk Committee Charter

The Audit & Risk Committee Charter is subject to review every two years, with the next review formerly scheduled for early 2024.

Examination of independent member tenure terms identified a risk to committee stability with member terms ending within six months of each other. A review of the Charter was, therefore, brought forward to allow for a change in tenure terms to one-, two- or three-year appointments.

Committee members endorsed the changes via email exchange and the revised Charter was adopted by the Council in October 2023. The next review is scheduled for May 2025.

Independent Members

The tenure for independent committee member Mr Brian Keane ended in November 2023. In accordance with normal practice and following discussion with Mr Keane, the CEO reviewed the performance of the committee and offered a one-year extension of Mr Keane's tenure, which was accepted.

In 2024, the tenure of independent committee member Mr Rod Poxon is scheduled to expire in May 2024 and a review will be undertaken in advance of that date.

In 2024, the tenure of independent committee member and Committee Chair, Ms Wendy Honeyman, will expire in April 2024. This marks the end of nine years on the Pyrenees Shire Council's Audit & Risk Committee for Ms Honeyman and under the requirements of the Charter cannot be extended further. Ms Honeyman's last meeting will be in March 2024 and recruitment for a replacement member will be conducted early in 2024.

Audit & Risk Committee 2024 Annual Workplan and Meeting Schedule

Discussion on the gap between meetings in November and May each year took place on several occasions in 2023, indicating that this is a potential inhibitor to good committee governance and the performance of its duties. To resolve this issue, the committee agreed to move to a 4-meeting annual schedule in 2024.

The following dates were agreed by the Committee:

- M011 – Tuesday 26 March 2024 – 3.00pm to 4.30pm
- M012 – Tuesday 18 June 2024 – 3.00pm to 4.30pm
- M013 – Tuesday 24 September 2024 – 3.00pm to 4.30pm
- M014 – Wednesday 27 November 2025 – 3.00pm to 4.30pm

These dates will allow for key reporting to be brought to the Committee in a timely manner and will enable the spread of reports across the year to reduce time pressures for individual meetings.

A draft annual work plan for 2024 was approved by the Committee and a copy is provided for Council endorsement.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Enabling Principles

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

ATTACHMENTS

1. ARC Workplan 2024 Final [**13.3.2.1** - 2 pages]
2. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - 2137112 1-2023-05 Cyber Security FINAL R [**13.3.2.2** - 18 pages]
3. 2131028 3- Industry Update 28.11.23 [**13.3.2.3** - 9 pages]
4. Internal Audit Program Status Update 28.11.23 [**13.3.2.4** - 5 pages]
5. 2023 11 28 Draft Minutes Audit Risk Committee Meeting 28 November 2023 [**13.3.2.5** - 30 pages]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

All financial and risk matters are addressed in the body of the report.

CONCLUSION

A meeting of the Council's Audit & Risk Committee was held on 28 November 2023. This report provides an overview of discussions at that meeting and provides a copy of the annual workplan for 2024 for endorsement by Council.

Cr Damian Ferrari / Cr Ron Eason

That Council:

1. Notes the information provided in this report and attachments, and
2. Endorses the Audit & Risk Committee Workplan and amended meeting dates schedule for 2024.

CARRIED

13.3.3. RISK MANAGEMENT

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: 16/24/06

PURPOSE

This report is provided to the Council as part of its bi-annual reporting obligations on risk management. Council is requested to note the information provided on global risk trends and VBI updates; and accept the emerging risks to be input into the Strategic Risk Register.

BACKGROUND

Effective risk identification and management is an integral part of business management and good governance. Risk management comprises of several elements, including enterprise risk management, OHS (Occupational Health and Safety), business continuity and prevention of fraud & corruption.

The Council maintains two risk registers:

- The Strategic Risk Register, monitored by Council and reviewed as a minimum every 12 months, and
- The Enterprise Risk Register detailing operational risks across the organisation.

Under the Local Government performance Reporting Framework, risk management reports must be provided to the Council at least every six months including the monitoring and update of the Strategic Risks faced by the organisation. The last report to the Council on risk management was provided in July 2023.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

Strategic Risk Register – updates

Treatment plan updates include:

Risk: Financial sustainability - Council may become unsustainable financially and unable to achieve objectives and maintain services		
	Treatment plan: Planning for reduction in costs of \$400k per year over the next 10 years to keep at a surplus EOFY result.	Status: Planning complete and transferred to current control - 'Ongoing activity to find cost reductions to maintain surplus EOFY result.'
	Treatment plan: Community engagement as part of 2023/4 budget development to identify the level of support for future rate cap variations, and feedback on potential future service cuts / closures.	Status: Removed as a treatment as this will be done as part of obligated deliberative engagement if consideration for a rate cap variation is required.
	Treatment plan: Increased advocacy at Federal and State level on the funding support needs of small rural councils.	Status: Transferred to current control. Advocacy is well-advanced by local CEOs and central bodies, e.g., Rural Councils Victoria and MAV.
Risk: Cyber and Data Insecurity		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Failure to protect against cybercrime and technology disruption. - Failure to implement ICT innovation. 		
	Treatment plan: Implement project to combine focus on information management.	Status: Transferred to current control - 'Amalgamated teams to form Information Management Team to increase capacity to upskill team members.'

	Treatment plan: Convene ICT Steering Committee to steer ICT direction and develop new ICT Strategy.	Status: Completed and transferred to current controls.
	New Treatment Plan input:	Implement recommendations from Cyber Security Internal Audit Review.
Risk: Customer Experience - Failure to reverse downward trend in community satisfaction.		
	Treatment plan: 2023 Customer Satisfaction survey to commence in Jan 2023.	Status: Completed and removed.

A review of the Strategic Risk Register will be conducted in early 2024.

Emerging Financial Risk - Cashflow

Two factors are impacting, or likely to impact, cashflow over the next 2 years:

1. Impact of flood recovery works with payments being made in advance of cash advances or claims reimbursements being made. Officers requested an advance against reimbursement claims of \$3 million, with \$1.5 million being received. Critical infrastructure rehabilitation works are already above \$2 million thereby impacting cash reserves. A further advance request is being prepared.
2. Cost of living crisis is impacting shire residents and rates payments are often the last to be paid when a ratepayer is under financial stress. In addition, expected legislative change removing the ability of councils to impose debt collection measures to collect overdue rates for two years will impact Council's ability to gain repayment within a timely period. It is considered that this will be our biggest financial challenge over the next two years and officers are working on strategies to mitigate the risk.

Emerging Risk – insuring non-Council assets

As discussed recently with Councillors, officers commissioned a series of engagements with community groups and a report on the viability of continuing the practice of including DEECA (Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action) owned community facilities within the Council's annual property insurance program. This conversation was commissioned as part of cost minimisation efforts on behalf of the organisation.

It was expected that this project would clarify Council's position on whether to continue providing insurance coverage for these non-Council owned or managed assets or transition a transfer of insurance coverage responsibility to the DEECA Committees of Management concerned.

Unfortunately, the report did not provide such clarity, rather highlighting a state-wide issue with more complex ramifications and associated risk. A copy of the report has been provided to Councillors under separate cover for information.

Although the report recommended that insurance costs should be transferred to Committees of Management, it also highlighted the lack of support such committees received from DEECA and the potential for the costs to make some committees financially unsustainable.

The report and subsequent internal discussions between officers have highlighted some of the risks raised in this matter:

- The cost adds to Council's financial sustainability risks. In 2024/25 the cost of insurance for non-Council owned / managed assets was \$63,052 plus GST, representing 38.34% of the total property insurance premium. This covers approximately 167 Crown assets across 29 sites including playgrounds, public halls and public amenities, pavilions, sheds, kiosks, workshops, shelters and

BBQs, light towers, scoreboards, fencing and gates, sports courts and playing surfaces, water tanks and fixtures, and contents.

- The risk that an insurer will deny an insurance claim due to insufficient evidence of proactive maintenance. This has happened previously on one occasion with such an asset. Although evidence could be sought by Council from committees of management, it is questioned whether committee members would have the capability of carrying out maintenance inspections or have the financial wherewithal to proactively carry out preventative maintenance. Council officers do not have the capacity to include these assets within maintenance operations.
- DEECA have not conducted asset valuations for some years and does not communicate on such matters with Council. Council does not have a comprehensive valuation program in place that addresses inflationary costs of materials, supply chain logistics and contractor shortages in relation to the replacement and content loss costs of Crown assets. As such, the assets are highly likely to be under-insured, placing an exposure on Council – as ‘owner’ of the insurance if not the asset – to be responsible for carrying the full cost of replacement if necessary.
- As Council were instrumental in facilitating the funding and construction of many DEECA facilities, the community will likely hold Council responsible for long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction of an asset no matter what the outcome of an insurance claim may be. Without appropriate maintenance regimes, the lifecycle of such facilities is likely to be less than if Council owned or managed the assets.
- The question of community support equity could be raised if the Council reduces its support to communities served by DEECA committees of management yet maintains its support to communities served by Council committees of management. The report highlights the vast difference in support currently provided by Council to its committees, compared to that provided by DEECA, something that is raised frequently by the community at Councillor Cuppas.

At this point, it is not suggested that any decision be taken on required action. This information is provided for Councillor information and further work will be conducted in 2024 to determine potential solutions.

Risk trends

Globally, Australia rates quite low on a 10-point scale of risk – showing on Control Risk’s RiskMap 2024 [www.riskmap.com] as a rating of 4 – low-increasing: Risks to business are low and increasing. The business environment remains generally benign but political, security, operational, and/or integrity issues pose some challenges that require risk management.

Officers have perused a range of global risk reports identifying risk trends that could impact on Council operations in 2024 or beyond.

1. Cyber Risk / Digital Integrity and Disruption

This is likely to remain one of the top risks in coming years as ransomware or cyber integrity attacks continue to grow – malicious actions aimed at compromising the accuracy, reliability of authenticity of data or information within a system or network.

The need for investment in data and technology is essential to drive productivity growth. Good quality data management is foundational for advanced analytical techniques and AI-based solutions form part of that mix.

In 2024, safeguarding the integrity of technology and data from emerging threats will be more challenging than ever, with adverse outcomes not only costly from a monetary perspective, but also from a loss of

trust. Gartner Inc (a US technology research and consulting firm) forecasts global security and risk management spending to grow 14% in 2024.

Cyber criminals or 'threat actors' (as they are sometimes called) are leveraging the increasing use of AI to increase their capability to increase the pace and scale of attacks. This, alongside large-scale disinformation campaigns using deepfake content, is likely to further challenge public trust in online content.

The investment in and deployment of AI systems is likely to proliferate in 2024. This is receiving a lot of public attention, however some risk futurists believe that this is a short-term perception. Peter Giger, Group Risk Officer at Zurich Insurance Group recently stated that "People overestimate the short-term impact and underestimate the long-term impact. Ten years from now, we will have adapted our world and AI will be an integral part of it and it will just feel natural. For the next six months, I don't think so."

A blurring of clarity around the ownership and responsibility for technology and digital infrastructure will challenge the ability to respond to cyber and digital incidents in the future. The growth of infrastructure-as-a-service and AI-as-a-service will mean a greater reliance on complex digital supply chains and identifying ownership and responsibility for the integrity and resilience of digital infrastructure will become increasingly important.

2. Climate Change Disruption

Year after year, the climate crisis tops global risk reports. This is not likely to change and remains the biggest risk facing humanity.

The coming year is likely to bring increasingly frequent and severe weather events intensified by climate change and other significant, even if unrelated, natural phenomena, notable El Nino. According to the UN, the past eight years were the warmest ever recorded globally and evidence suggests that 2024 will be no different.

Associated impacts for Council are not limited to the direct impacts of natural disasters, although significant. Exposure to regular natural disasters may impact economics to a point where insurance companies may no longer be able to offer coverage, or the premium will be such that it is no longer viable.

3. Supply Chain and Vendor Risk

Supply chain fragility is likely to be further exposed in 2024. Disruptions are occurring not only with goods but also with services, across regions and industries, impacted to varying degrees by climate-related events, social and geopolitical disruptions. It is expected that companies will continue to face persistent supply shortages, delays, and rising commodity costs.

Global supply chains may be further impacted / disrupted by uncertainty and potential re-orientation of supply alliances because of US and Chinese political uncertainties.

4. Regulatory Risk

Regulators add complexity into the mix of forecast risk vulnerabilities in 2024.

- (a) Climate Change – despite attempts to harmonise requirements around climate disclosure or decarbonisation, architecture remains flawed and inconsistent. EU led increasingly stringent ESG (Environmental Social and Governance) regulation is likely to be a hot topic in the 2024 US election campaign and similar regulation is starting to be introduced in Australia:
 - Climate Change and Energy Legislation Amendment (Renewable Energy and Storage Targets) Bill 2023 [Vic] – to bring forward long term emissions reduction targets for net zero greenhouse gas emissions to 2045, increases renewable energy targets for 2030 (65%) and a new target for

2035 (95%), requires preparation and amendment of planning schemes to take climate change into consideration, and introduces energy storage targets and offshore wind energy targets.

- Energy and Resources Legislation Amendment (Transition Away from Coal) Bill 2023 [Vic] - to prohibit the authorisation of thermal coal activity, increase renewal energy targets for Victoria, and prohibit the exploration for or mining of coal.
- Climate Change Action Bill (Commonwealth).

(b) Cyber / Data Protection – regulators are likely to define national and regional frameworks to control this environment. Governments across the world are strengthening, or are drafting, privacy regulations that impact the processing of personal data, including the deployment of AI technologies or the infrastructure enabling their existence. Gartner Inc (a US technology research and consulting firm) predicts that by 2025, 75% of the world's population will have its personal data covered by modern privacy regulations.

5. Complex risk landscape

It is often said that 'change is the only constant'. This is certainly true for local government which has faced unprecedented change in recent years – emergence of Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) risk scrutiny, the impact of COVID-19 shifting the way we work and how we interact, rapid technological change, increased digitisation and advanced analytics, the shifting geopolitical environment, and many regulatory changes.

Events in the past year have underscored the growing volatility of the economic, social, and political landscape. As the world grows more interconnected, so does corporate risk – the global COVID-19 pandemic led to major disruptions of global supply chains in addition to taking a severe toll on humanity, ransomware attacks have brought businesses to a halt and damaged reputations.

In addition to the risks detailed above, the Council and its officers continue to manage other strategic risks, including financial sustainability, costs of living impacts, natural disaster recovery and preparation, ongoing pandemic impacts on staff wellbeing and changing workplace expectations, and ongoing customer dissatisfaction. Managing the complex 'polycrisis' environment can be challenging and increasingly the focus of a risk management program is that of ensuring adequate preparation for, and resilience to, the risk landscape.

In 2024, the risk management framework will be reviewed to build a more holistic, cross-functional, and integrated risk approach – with core processes being built from the requirements of the business and policies simplified and linked into core business processes.

However, the message clearly coming through the many reports is not what the next tranche of risks are, but how well we are prepared for, and resilient against, any and all of the big risks of the next 2 to 10 years. This will be discussed further in the next review of the Strategic Risk Register in 2024.

In summary, major themes for the next 12 months continue to identify a high level of uncertainty, with cyber security and climate change, and associated supply chain vulnerabilities and increased regulatory change likelihood, the key focus of attention.

Local Authorities Superannuation Fund Defined Benefit Plan – Vested Benefit Index (VBI) Update

Under the superannuation prudential standards, VBIs (Vested Benefit Index) must generally be kept above a fund's nominated shortfall threshold, currently 97%. When an actuarial review/investigation is in progress, a fund's VBI must be at least 100%.

In the event the VBI falls below the shortfall threshold, the fund's Trustee is required under the superannuation prudential standards (SPS 160) to formulate a restoration plan to restore the VBI to 100% within three years.

1. **EOFY Update 30 June 2023:** The 30 June 2023 VBI results were finalised as follows:

As at	30 Jun 2021 (actual)	30 Jun 2022 (actual)	30 Sep 2022 (est.)	31 Dec 2022 (est.)	31 Mar 2023 (est.)	30 Jun 2023 (est.)
LASF DB	109.7%	102.2%	101.5%	101.7%	104.2%	104.1%

The 30 June 2023 VBI remained largely static compared to that on 31 March 2023. This was due to:

- Positive investment returns for the quarter which have increased the asset pool supporting the defined benefit liabilities of the sub-plan.
- Salary increases advised to Vision Super during the quarter and pension indexation which have increased the value of the active member benefit liabilities and have largely offset the positive investment returns.

There were changes to the actuarial assumptions used for the 30 June 2023 VBI calculations, however, these changes had minimal impact on the movement of the VBI.

2. **Update 30 August 2023:** Whilst the market conditions are volatile, the VBI calculations are estimated and monitored more frequently. The latest estimate for August 2023 was:

Month	Estimated monthly VBI ⁽¹⁾
23 August 2023	103.9%

(1) Please note that the methodology for calculating the monthly VBIs is less rigorous than the methodologies used for the quarter-end estimates or the actual annual VBIs. If an actual VBI was calculated at the relevant date, the actual VBI is expected to vary from the monthly/quarterly estimates.

The estimated VBI of 103.9% as of 30 August 2023 continues to satisfy APRA's Superannuation Prudential Standard 160 (SPS 160)

The next VBI review is scheduled as of 30 September 2023, with results expected to be distributed shortly. At this stage, no action is required by Council.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 1 - People

- 1a. Prepare for emergencies and ensure community safety.
- 1d. Promote health, wellbeing, engagement, and connection.

Priority 2 - Place

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

Enabling Principles

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

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

All risk implications are discussed in the body of the report.

CONCLUSION

This report provides Council with an update on strategic risk treatment plan completions and changes, emerging risks associated with property insurance, global and local risk trends and a recent update again the Vision Super Vested Benefit Index (VBI) of the defined benefits superannuation scheme.

Cr Ron Eason / Cr David Clark

That Council:

1. Notes the information provided on global risk trends and the VBI updates;
2. Receives the emerging risk information which will be included within the 2024 Strategic Risk Register review, and
3. Accepts the changes made to the treatment plans against the Strategic Risk Register.

CARRIED

13.4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

13.4.1. 2024 COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

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: 16/17/02

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is for Council to decide on the meeting schedule for Council meetings and briefing sessions for 2024.

BACKGROUND

A 2024 schedule of meetings has been prepared in consultation with Councillors and is detailed in this report.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

The schedule contains dates for Ordinary Council meetings held monthly as well as Assemblies of Councillors (Briefing Sessions), Special Meetings, Community Cuppas and the annual Statutory Meeting.

The schedule also contains locations for the meetings to be held across the municipality to enable Councillors to engage with the various communities.

January			
23rd	Briefing	1.00pm	Beaufort
23rd	Council Meeting	6.00pm	Beaufort
February			
13th	Briefing	1.00pm	Beaufort
13th	Cuppa	5.00pm	Beaufort Beeripmo
20th	Briefing	1.00pm	Beaufort
20th	Council Meeting	6.00pm	Beaufort
March			
12th	Briefing	1.00pm	Avoca
12th	Cuppa	5.00pm	Redbank Hall
19th	Briefing	1.00pm	Beaufort
19th	Council Meeting	6.00pm	Beaufort
April			
9th	Briefing	1.00pm	Beaufort
9th	Cuppa	5.00pm	Landsborough Hall
16th	Briefing	1.00pm	Avoca
16th	Council Meeting	6.00pm	Avoca
May			
14th	Briefing	1.00pm	Beaufort
14th	Cuppa	5.00pm	Stoneleigh CFA Shed
21st	Briefing	1.00pm	Beaufort
21st	Council Meeting	6.00pm	Beaufort

June			
11th	Briefing	1.00pm	Avoca
11th	Cuppa	5.00pm	Avoca Gunga Hub
25th	Briefing	1.00pm	Beaufort
25th	Council Meeting	6.00pm	Beaufort
July			
9th	Briefing	1.00pm	Beaufort
9th	Cuppa	5.00pm	Waubra Recreation Reserve
16th	Briefing	1.00pm	Beaufort
16th	Council Meeting	6.00pm	Beaufort
August			
13th	Briefing	1.00pm	Lexton Community Hub
13th	Cuppa	5.00pm	Lexton Community Hub
20th	Briefing	1.00pm	Beaufort
20th	Council Meeting	6.00pm	Beaufort
September			
10th	Briefing	1.00pm	Beaufort
10th	Cuppa	5.00pm	Natte Yallock Rec Res
17th	Briefing	1.00pm	Beaufort
17th	Council Meeting	6.00pm	Beaufort
October			
ELECTION PERIOD – 24 September to 26 October 2024			
November			
19th	Briefing	1.00pm	Beaufort
19th	Statutory Meeting	6.00pm	Beaufort
19th	Council Meeting	7.00pm	Beaufort
26th	Councillor Induction & Planning Day	9.30am	TBC
December			
3rd	Briefing	1.00pm	Beaufort
3rd	Cuppa	5.00pm	Snake Valley Hall
10th	Briefing	1.00pm	Beaufort
10th	Council Meeting	6.00pm	Beaufort

Notice of meeting dates is available on Council's website and is published in Council's Noticeboard available in the Pyrenees Advocate and Maryborough Advertiser each week.

The Ordinary Council and Statutory meetings are livestreamed providing the community, who are unable to attend in person, the ability to view the meetings in real time, provide an awareness of how Council meetings are conducted and to reach a wider audience.

Council Elections are being held in 2024 and the election period is from 24 September 2024 to Election Day on 26 October 2023 (subject to confirmation by the Minister for Local Government). In line with Council's Election Period Policy 2023 during this period, Council will be deemed to be in election period mode and is

prohibited from making major policy decision or publishing / distributing election material. There has not been a Council meeting scheduled for October 2024 during the Election period.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 1 - People

1c. Improve accessibility and inclusivity.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

Council has made provisions in its 2023-2024 budget to meet the costs associated with the meetings.

CONCLUSION

Subject to Council's agreement to the meeting schedule, it is proposed that public notice be given in accordance with Council Policy – Governance Rules 2020.

Cr David Clark / Cr Tanya Kehoe

That Council:

1. Adopts the meeting schedule for 2024, as detailed in this report; and
2. Gives public notice, in accordance with Council Policy – Governance Rules 2022, of the proposed meeting dates.

CARRIED

13.4.2. ENGAGEMENT PLAN 2024

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: 16/24/18

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement for the Annual Engagement Plan.

BACKGROUND

In July 2022, Council considered and adopted a revised Engagement Policy and Strategy 2022-2025.

The Strategy provides for an annual Engagement Plan to be prepared identifying the specific activities for engagement over the next year.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

An annual plan has been prepared with specific engagement activities listed for the next year and beyond.

This is a dynamic document which will need to be amended in response to changing circumstances. In particular, the draft has included the October flood event and the extensive engagement that has been necessary initially and over the coming two years.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Enabling Principles

- a. Motivate and inspire community involvement
- b. Provide transparency and accountability

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Enter community engagement / consultation activities (community cuppas, engagement hub activities etc.)

ATTACHMENTS

1. PSC Engagement Plan 2024 [13.4.2.1 - 12 pages]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

It is important to ensure council undertakes an appropriate level of engagement as outlined in the Council Plan and in order to meet community expectations.

CONCLUSION

A draft annual plan of engagement activities has been prepared for Council consideration.

Cr Tanya Kehoe / Cr Ron Eason

That Council:

1. Endorses the Community Engagement Plan and its activities as presented.

CARRIED

14. COUNCILLOR REPORTS AND GENERAL BUSINESS

Cr Kehoe

- I was privileged to attend the Western Bulldogs Leadership Group graduation at the start of last month and what an impressive group of young leaders we have across the shire and great representation across the shire. It was incredibly good to already be seeing the benefits of this program and today with three of the participants engaging with Council at our briefing time and I am very excited about working with these young leaders to bring about effective engagement possibilities for the youth in our shire, it is very exciting.
- I attended the Beaufort Ag show and congratulations to the many members of the committee and also to all of the volunteers both local and partnering Ag shows that work together to create such a wonderful day out. An added note is that the show even made it onto a YouTube blog of an Irish backpacker. It is also gaining international fame as well as local fame, it is a great little show.
- Last week I attended the Snake Valley Campus Woody Yallock Primary School end of year assembly and was honoured to award to one of the graduating year six students, Abbie Scofield the Pyrenees Shire award and pen. It was such a lovely event showcasing what such a great little school Snake Valley has and also how it connects the community so strongly, there is a beautiful bunch of students there and the teachers are very committed to the work that they do, it was a very beautiful morning.
- I am looking forward to a great community event that is coming up in Snake Valley and that is the community carols. It is being held and sponsored by the Carngham Uniting Church this Saturday. The carols will be on from 4pm to 6pm in the church and then there is a community BBQ from 6pm to 8pm, there is also going to be a fancy dress parade and food trucks and all sorts of activities that are open to the whole community to come to. It will be a wonderful evening and I am very much looking forward to it.
- Wishing everyone a very safe and happy Christmas and holiday period as we move into that time of the year which has come ever so quickly this year.

Cr Ferrari

- I attended the Councillor briefing and cuppa and chat. We had a cuppa and chat at Evansford and the most recent at Snake Valley. Especially at Evansford, there was a very significant turn up of people, about 15-20 so that is really good to see that they are wanting to come and speak with the council.
- Attended the Audit and Risk Committee meeting with Cr Eason.
- Attended Beaufort Secondary College presentation day yesterday and it was fantastic to see all of those students get such good awards. We've got some very talented people in our communities across a lot of different activities, not just education but sports, music and arts. We've got some very talented young people about which is fantastic.
- A reminder that we will be providing the Christmas dinner at the Beaufort RSL for all those across the community that would like to come and have dinner with the group and not be alone on Christmas day. You can register at the Beaufort Community House which is at the library and online. It is not just a Beaufort thing, we do have people that come across from Avoca and Moonambel, the invitation for Christmas day dinner at the RSL is extended across the municipality and would be more than happy to cook you up a lovely meal. It would be remiss of me not to mention that this event was started by the late Michael O'Connor and his wife Judy who passed away yesterday. I would like to pass on my sincere condolences to Judy's family.
- I would like to take this opportunity to wish all in the community a very merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous new year. That extends to my fellow councillors and all of the council staff.

Cr Eason

- I attended the rail freight alliance meeting discussing all things rail, trying to get transports off the road and not having a great deal of luck. We seem to be getting more and more large vehicles traversing our highways and not much going on rail.
- The cuppa at Evansford was a pleasure with that many people coming along to discuss issues that related to themselves and it makes for a very pleasant evening when you can sit down around the table and listen to peoples problems and hopefully come up with a solution or two.
- Attended with the Mayor the re-opening of the Avoca Men's Shed and it was very well catered for and it is great to see that operating again, they have a wonderful little complex there and they work it very hard.
- It's a pleasure to see a couple of roads in Avoca had a gatt seal placed on them, it increases the dust suppression around the town and improves the town immeasurably.
- Minister Dimopoulos came to have a look at the Avoca Recreation Reserve, the flood mitigation's, the flood damage and the work done and it was a pleasure to see the Minister there having a look around. He also went to the golf club to have a look at some work that was done there and he was genuinely interested in how things were done and how things happened, we showed him the measures on the inside of one of the shed doors as to where the floods were in 2010/11 and where they were recently and it shows that they are interested in where the money is going and what it is doing.
- I would like to wish everybody a Merry Christmas, please be safe out there travelling around, it is not necessarily the best time to be driving but those that have to travel, please do it safely.

Cr Clark

- I attended the presentation of the grade 6 Pyrenees cluster at Lexton which was really lovely to see the six of the schools come together. What a beautiful group of young people they are that are graduating. I also had the chance to present for the Waubra primary school last week which is also a bit nostalgic as that ends our 15 years at Waubra Primary School as parents at the same time, as our littlest one is off to high school next year.
- Attended CVGA AGM last month, it was very well attended.
- Highlands LLEN meets later this week.
- MAV activity has been very planning focused, I was able to attend the regional forum in Bendigo with a number of other rural and regional councils a few weeks ago, that was really good and we are starting to see the Victorian Government roll out the Plan for Victoria workshops and I am attending one of those this week.
- The announcement of the doubling of roads to recovery funding in the last couple of weeks has been terrific and I wrote about it last week in my councillor column. It is a terrific boost for a small rural council's such as us and really helps us. It was on the back of the Grattan Institute independent report that said that council is about \$1billion short and this gets us about halfway towards that.
- Attended community cuppas and they have been really good. In terms of the Evansford one, there were a number of issues raised about road speed limits, I am working with those community members to focus on a couple of specific roads at the moment and things being well I will hopefully have something to council officers to consider maybe in January around those areas.
- To all our constituents, to a staff and fellow Councillors, i wish you all a safe and happy Christmas.

Cr Vance

- Attended Beaufort Linear Masterplan public meeting in Beaufort at the start of November, there were about 15 people in attendance, it was an interesting evening, we had a small group that back onto the

proposed area around below the high school and they were a little bit concerned about traffic being increased in an area where they usually just only use it as a rear entrance to their property.

- On Remembrance Day I attended the service in Beaufort where the ladies unveiled the krupps gun, there were about 7 ladies there from the local charity group and they had donated about \$50,000 to the restoration of the krupps gun so that was fantastic, they were well and truly recognised by Dan Tehan for their wonderful effort.
- I attended the legacy change over dinner in Ararat which was a very pleasant evening.
- Attended the Evansford cuppa which was interesting, it's nice to have 15 people turn up and put different views forward.
- I attended the opening of the mens shed in Avoca and I would like to pay tribute to Jane who put such a great effort in to assist the Avoca community in getting their club rooms and all of the insurance and everything organised, well done Jane Bowker.
- Attended the regional forum for the MAV virtually.
- I attended the art show on the Friday night prior to the Ag show and declared the evening open. On the Sunday I attended the show and spent a lot of time watching the shearing, but I did get around to all other events.
- I virtually attended a MAV southern Wimmera Mallee Central Highlands Regional meeting.
- I attended an RCV committee meeting.
- I, along with Cr Eason attended the Avoca session with Minister Dimopoulos, he was amazed to think that volunteers run the whole centre at Avoca. It was good for him to see and when he went around the golf course he saw another bunch of volunteers that run the golf club so that was great.
- Along with the CEO I attended a GBAC meeting last Friday which was an interesting session. There was some discussion about investment in housing and projects like we have up in Burke Street. There will be lobbying to the government, the government has committed \$1billion in regional Victoria for housing and that is certainly well worth following up.
- Attended the pen awards at Lexton.
- I also would like wish everyone a wonderful stress-free Christmas and stay safe.

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.

Cr Ron Eason / Cr Tanya Kehoe

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 - Australia Day Awards 2024

15.2 - Avoca Land Development

15.3 - C2223-008 – Cleaning of Municipal Buildings and Amenities – Beaufort Area

15.4 - C2223-007 – Cleaning of Municipal Buildings and Amenities – Avoca Area

CARRIED

The live streaming of Ordinary Meeting of Council 12 December 2023 stopped at 7.09pm to consider confidential items.

The live stream re-commenced at 7:48 pm and the Mayor chose to report on confidential items discussed in closed Council which are noted below.

- Council determined the recipients of the 2024 Australia Day Awards.
- Council discussed a land matter.
- Council awarded two contracts for cleaning of municipal buildings and amenities in Avoca and Beaufort.

16. CLOSE OF MEETING

Ordinary Meeting of Council 12 December 2023 closed at 7:49 pm.

Minutes of the meeting confirmed

2023

Mayor Cr Robert Vance