



Pyrenees
Shire Council

Agenda

Ordinary Meeting of Council

6:00 pm Tuesday 19 March 2024

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

Welcome to this meeting of the Pyrenees Shire Council. Councillors will today deliberate and decide on a range of matters relevant to the work of Council in its communities for the welfare of the people of the Pyrenees Shire.

2. STREAMING PREAMBLE

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

3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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

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

4. APOLOGIES

5. NOTICE OF DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS

6. CONFIRMATION OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the:

- Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 20 February 2024 as previously circulated to Councillors, be confirmed.

7. BUSINESS ARISING

There was no business arising (items taken on notice) from the previous meeting held 20 February 2024.

8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public Participation

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

9. ITEMS FOR NOTING

9.1. ASSET AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

9.1.1. LEXTON FLOOD MANAGEMENT TENDER

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: Emma Poyser – Executive Assistant to the Directors

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

File No: C2324-006

PURPOSE

This report aims to provide Council with an update on the implementation of the Lexton Flood Management study and the successful appointment of a consultant to undertake the study.

BACKGROUND

A report presented to Council in December 2022 identified that the flood impacts on the Lexton township are extensive and should be further investigated to implement mitigation actions and reduce impacts.

At this meeting, Council resolved to;

- Prioritise a funding application for a detailed flood study for Lexton.
- Work with the appropriate agencies to investigate and implement flood mitigations actions.

In February 2023, Council officers met with North Central Catchment Authority representatives and external contractors to further discuss the potential flood study for the Lexton township and works pertaining to the clearing of debris in the waterways surrounding Lexton. A range of flood mitigation measures were considered, and the following were implemented and are now complete:

- Slashing and trimming creek edges
- Removal of debris at creek locations
- Slashing and mowing of roadsides, streets, laneways, drains and reserves
- Rubbish removal and clearing of creeks, roadsides, drains, reserves and culverts
- Removal of the pedestrian bridge

In mid 2023, Council was notified that Lexton had been identified as a state priority for direct funding of a flood study as part of a broader state flood initiative. Council officers have been working with the North Central CMA to develop the project specifications to commence the tender process.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

In January 2024, Council officers commenced the tender process and presented a consultancy brief seeking submissions from appropriately qualified and experienced consultants to provide a Lexton Flood Management Plan. Tender advertising via Councils tender portal began on 17 January and tender submissions were accepted up to 2.00pm on 14 February 2024.

There were 157 views of the tender during the advertising period, 26 document downloads by potential tenderers and five (5) tender submissions received.

The evaluation panel comprised of internal Council officers and external expertise was provided by North Central CMA. The information provided by NCCMA during the evaluation was invaluable and provided insights into each of the tenderer's skills and experience.

During the tender evaluation process, consideration is given to the tender schedules, written statements and information provided by the tenderers and scoring is based on the following evaluation criteria with percentages provided for each;

- Financial – 30%
- Proposed methodology and approach – 20%
- Technical skills, qualifications and experience – 20%
- Project timelines and management arrangements – 20%
- Local content – 10%

All tenderers presented submissions within budget and project timelines, experience and quality of information were all considered during the evaluation process. Tender evaluation panel members acknowledged that an extension to early 2025 would be required to provide the subcontractor with adequate time for the peer review process and to allow for a superior and competent flood management result.

The completed Lexton Flood Management Plan will include mapping, modelling and mitigation reports which will be captured in the Pyrenees Shire Council Planning Scheme.

The Lexton Flood Management Study is likely to commence with a community consultation session in April 2024, further details and confirmed dates will be provided in Council's noticeboards and social media platforms.

Although evaluation has been signed off, Council officers are working with the preferred tenderer to finalise the clarifications and departures outlined in their submission. Council officers will advise the community of the company name of the successful consultant through our noticeboard and advertising regarding initial community consultation.

The confidential tender evaluation report is provided to Councillors by separate circulation.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 1 - People

1a. Prepare for emergencies and ensure community safety.

Priority 2 - Place

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

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

It is a requirement of the flood study consultant to accompany Council and North Central CMA to engage and consult with the community. The consultant will provide support in collecting local knowledge and information relating to flooding, collating community views on potential mitigation options and planning scheme controls.

Formal community consultation is to be undertaken at the following stages in project delivery:

1. During the project data review – introduction of the project and initial historical data collection – community survey.
2. At the completion of the scenario modelling – community validation of results and community input into pre-feasibility of mitigation options to be considered.
3. At flood damage completion, pre-feasibility assessment of mitigation options and proposed planning controls (zone and/or overlays) – presentation of outcomes of assessment.

4. At the investigation's completion, presentation of results including flood warning feasibility assessment.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

The Lexton Flood Management Study is fully funded therefore posing no financial risk to Council. Potential future costs of mitigations recommended in the flood study will vary in cost and often require a high percentage of own source funding from Council.

CONCLUSION

The engagement of an experienced and reputable consultant to undertake the Lexton Flood Management Plan will provide invaluable mapping, modelling and mitigation reports which will be captured in the Pyrenees Shire Council Planning Scheme and enhance the resilience of the Lexton township against future flood events.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes this report.

9.2. CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

9.2.1. CUSTOMER ACTION REQUESTS - FEBRUARY 2024

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 February 2024. 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

The following provides data on community contacts with employees, other than that recorded through the customer requests system, providing a more comprehensive view of our customer experience.

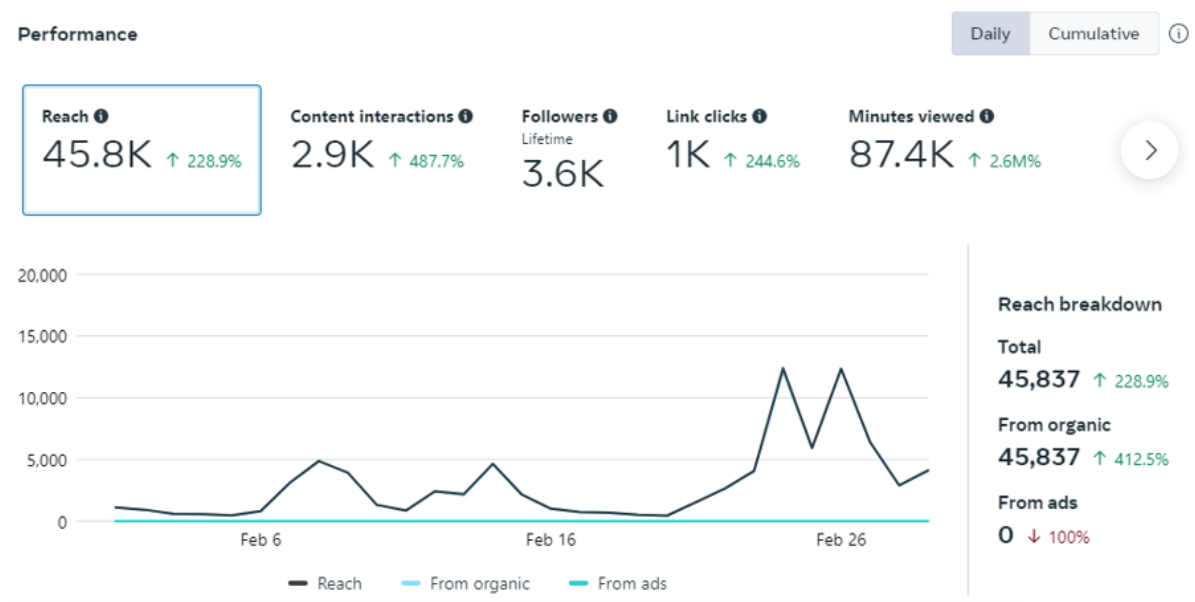
Customer contact media	Jul 2023	Aug 2023	Sept 2023	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Jan 2024	Feb 2024
Legitimate emails received by the organisation*	40,273	37,273	37,439	21,989	24,478	19,055	18,871	30,221#
Emails rejected (cyber protection)	10 0.02%	7,743 17%	14,773 40%	12,613 34%	11,483 32%	8,045 30%	9,669 34%	36,630 55%
Emails sent by organisation (external)	8,349	9,169	9,529	10,138	8,439	7,295	6,485	11,007#
External complaints received	3	4	2	2	4	2	3	6
FOI Requests	1	4	2	10	0	0	0	1
Requests for review of infringements	1	2	0	2	1	6	15	0
Website page views	17,970	17,086	17,242	16,133	15,891	12,638	16,047	20,521
Website users	5,472	5,570	6,017	5,556	5,893	5,000	6,015	8,081
Website contact us page	645	614	473	542	413	354	410	600
Website customer enquiry form	54	65	57	69	60	40	56	50

* Statistics amended to only include those emails not rejected as spam or viruses.

Email traffic impacted by fire response (increase).

Massive upturn in Facebook views driven by communications messaging re the fire emergency.

Facebook snapshot February 2024



Comments:

- Although 6 complaints are recorded, 1 complaint relates to the multiple contacts received from ratepayers regarding the rates overdue reminder notice issued incorrectly, which have been collected and managed together. An investigation was conducted into the rates related complaints with a report being provided to the CEO.
- Improved data received on emails received, allowing for better reporting on legitimate emails managed, excluding those rejected as spam or viruses as part of cyber protection processes.
- Low figures in July 2023 reflect the implementation of a new cyber security system.
- In February 2024, an increase in email traffic resulted from response, relief and recovery activities associated with the Bayindeen Rocky Road bushfires, with an increase in associated cyber-suspect email activity and 55% of all emails received rejected.
- After a gap in FOI requests received over the past three months, one request was received in February related to waste charges.
- Customer website enquiries focused, unsurprisingly, on rates, building/planning, waste and fire preparation.
- Top web pages access focused on the fire emergency.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION - CUSTOMER ACTION REQUESTS

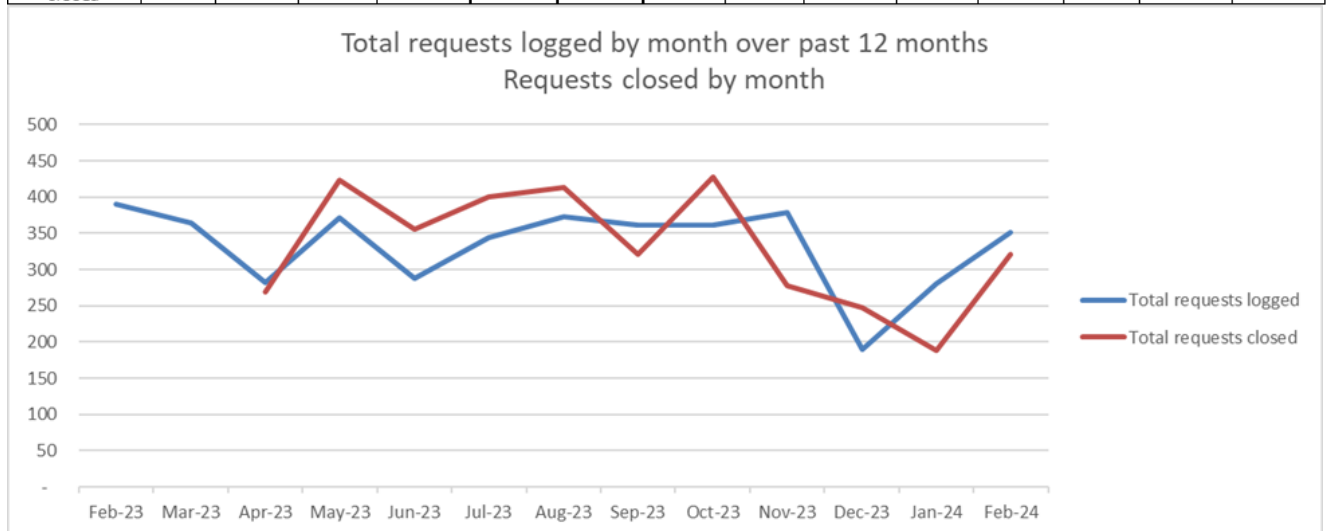
1. Logged and closed requests

351 CARs (Customer Action Requests) were logged during the month, 71 more than the previous month. Of these, 121 related to telephone messages.

321 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.

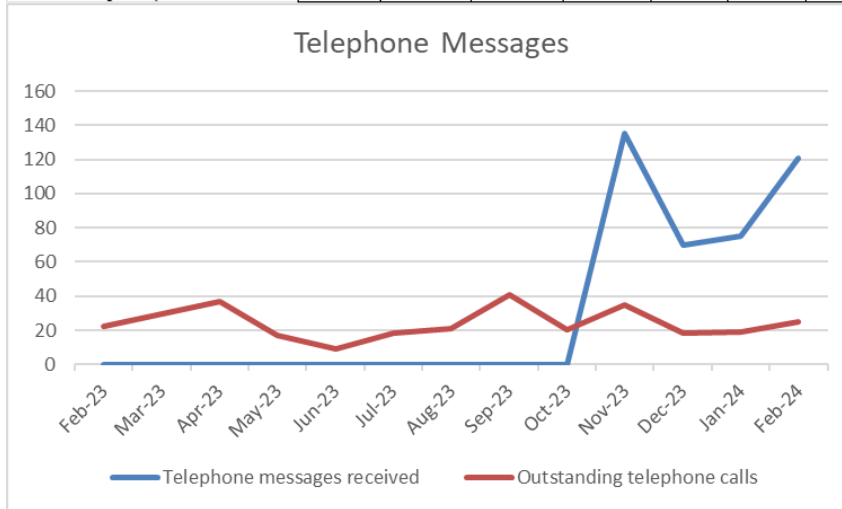
Year	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	% Change
Total requests logged	390	364	282	372	288	344	373	361	361	378	190	280	351	25%
Total requests closed	440		269	424	356	401	413	321	427	278	247	188	321	71%



2. Telephone requests

75 telephone calls were transferred into requests during the month, with 19 requests remaining outstanding at the end of the month. The following charts detail the trend in telephone calls received and remaining outstanding at the end of each month.

	Telephone messages logged over past 12 months											
	Feb-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24
Telephone messages received									135	70	75	121
Outstanding telephone calls	22	37	17	9	18	21	41	20	35	18	19	25



Of the 25 calls remaining open at the end of February, 7 related to planning or permit enquiries and 2 outstanding rates requests were included. The others were a range of enquiries with no topic ranking higher than others.

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 266 active or open requests. These include:

- 134 which are open and assigned for action
- 65 which are on hold awaiting resolution or action scheduling.
- 4 remain referred to budget
- 63 remain in progress or being managed – meaning that they are longer term case managed issues

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.

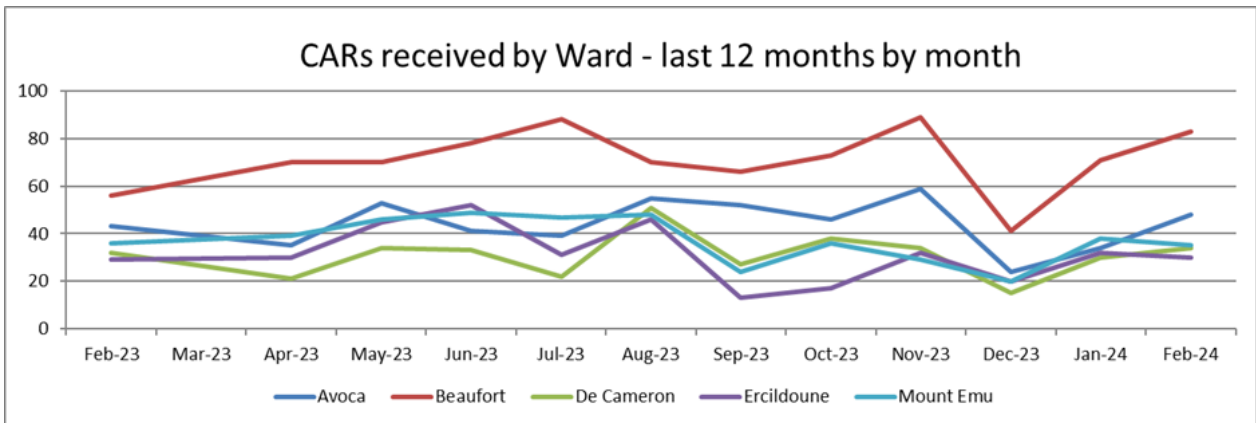
Of the non-telephone call requests received during the month, the following represents those received and still open at the of the last month by Ward:

Request status	Avoca Ward	Beaufort Ward	DeCameron Ward	Ercildoune Ward	Mt Emu Ward
Number of requests received (previous month)	48(34)	83(71)	34(30)	30(32)	35(38)
Requests received and closed in the same month (%)	29(60%)	42(51%)	26(77%)	19(63%)	22(63%)
Requests received remaining open and assigned for action	17	31	7	5	6

Requests received that are on-hold awaiting final works or resolution	0	0	0	0	0
Requests received referred to budget	0	0	0	0	0
Total open (assigned) requests as at the end of the month	20(14)	36(24)	8(10)	8(9)	14(33)

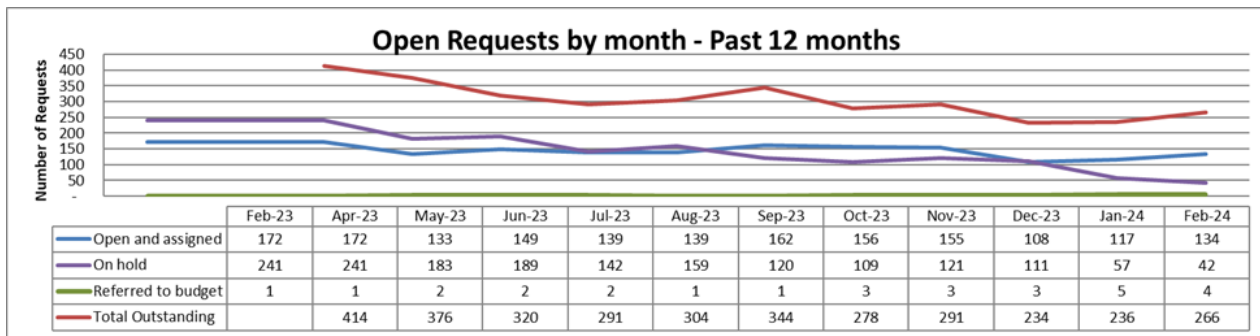
The following charts show the numbers of requests received by Ward per month for the past 12 months.

CARS by Ward received by month Rolling - Past 12 months												
Ward	Feb-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24
Avoca	43	35	53	41	39	55	52	46	59	24	34	48
Beaufort	56	70	70	78	88	70	66	73	89	41	71	83
De Cameron	32	21	34	33	22	51	27	38	34	15	30	34
Ercildoune	29	30	45	52	31	46	13	17	32	20	32	30
Mount Emu	36	39	46	49	47	48	24	36	29	20	38	35
Total by month	196	195	248	253	227	270	182	210	243	120	205	230



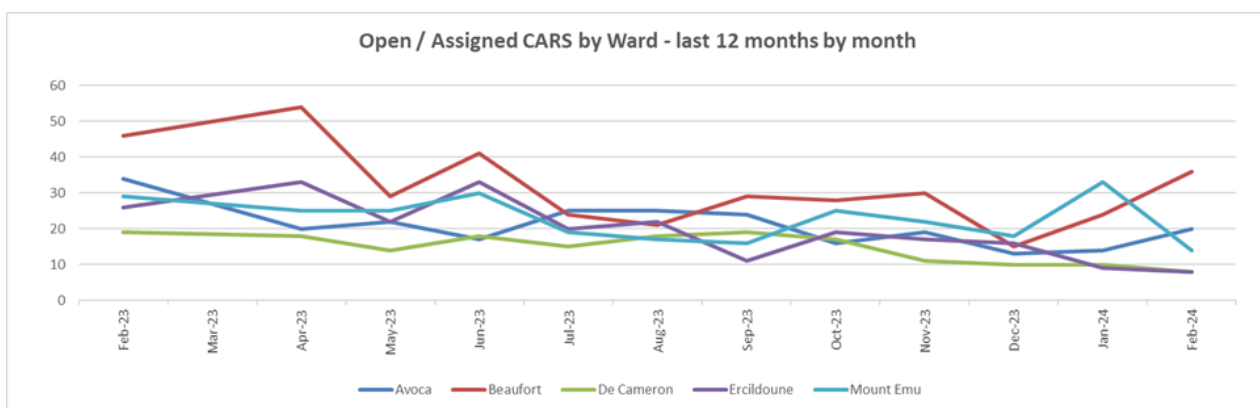
The following charts show the statistics for requests that remained open each month for the past 12 months. These charts now include requests put on hold or referred to budget.

Open requests by age													
Year	Feb-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	% Change
2013	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2020	-	2	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2022	45	19	115	114	19	19	27	29	20	13	7	7	0%
2023	127	164	201	227	119	119	135	127	135	95	43	24	-44%
2024											67	103	54%
Open and assigned	172	185	133	149	139	139	162	156	155	108	117	134	15%
Outstanding but on hold	241	190	183	189	142	0	120	109	121	111	57	42	-26%
In progress - longer term			2	4	4	4	4	9	10	10	33	63	91%
Other outstanding					4	1	3	1	2	2	24	23	-4%
Referred to budget	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	3	3	3	5	4	-20%
Total Closed	#REF!	269	424	356	401	413	321	427	278	247	278	321	15%
Total requests logged	390	282	372	288	344	373	361	361	378	190	280	351	25%
Total outstanding requests		414	376	320	291	304	344	278	291	234	236	266	13%



Open Assigned Requests by Ward - Past 12 months

Ward	Feb-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24
Avoca	34	20	22	17	25	25	24	16	19	13	14	20
Beaufort	46	54	29	41	24	21	29	28	30	15	24	36
De Cameron	19	18	14	18	15	18	19	17	11	10	10	8
Ercildoune	26	33	22	33	20	22	11	19	17	16	9	8
Mount Emu	29	25	25	30	19	17	16	25	22	18	33	14
Total by month	154	150	112	139	103	103	99	105	99	72	90	86

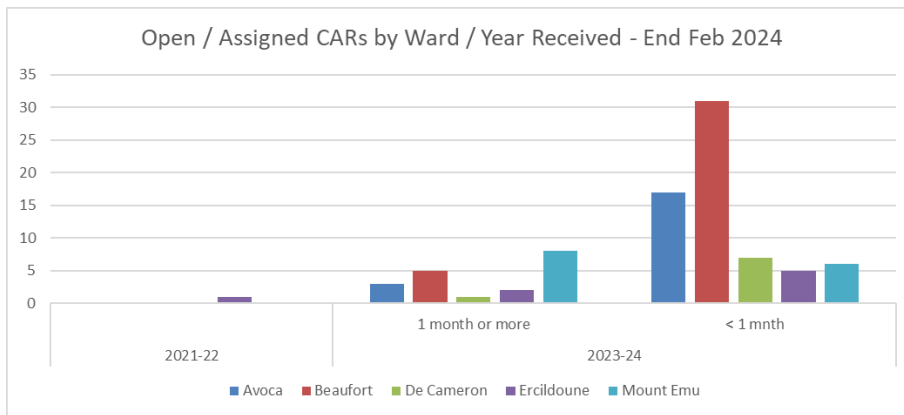


The following chart shows the ageing of open assigned requests by Ward as at the end of the month, excluding those referred-to-budget or on-hold.

There is one open and assigned requested on the list that remains from November 2022 for Ercildoune Ward. This relates to a request for repair to Government Road (near Thomsons Road) in Amphitheatre that was inspected and deemed not to be resulting from flood damage. This request is awaiting repairs to be programmed.

Ageing CARS by Ward - Open/Assigned

Ward	2021-22	2023-24		Total
		1 month or more	< 1 mnth	
Avoca	0	3	17	20
Beaufort	0	5	31	36
De Cameron	0	1	7	8
Ercildoune	1	2	5	8
Mount Emu	0	8	6	14
Total by month	1	19	66	86



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.

	Jan-24	Feb-24	Change
Roads & Rd Maint.	63	46	-17
Streetlights	0	0	0
Drainage	16	20	4
Footpaths / Kerb&Channel	10	11	1
Park & Reserves	7	11	4
Roadside Veg	27	40	13
Environmental Health	2	2	0
Planning	3	7	4
Bld maint	0	4	4
Local Laws	17	11	-6
Cats	6	5	-1
Dogs	15	17	2
Livestock	3	1	-2
Parking	1	2	1
Fire Hazard	1	8	7
Bld Compliance	1	0	-1
Waste Management	0	0	0
Local Government Act	0	0	0
Rates	1	7	6
Natural Disasters	37	33	-4
Pools	0	0	0
Council cleaning	1	2	1
Litter	1	2	1
Design & Assets	4	2	-2
GIS	0	0	0
Community	0	0	0
Rural Addressing	0	0	0
Road Naming	1	0	-1
Telephone messages	19	25	6
Total	236	256	20

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 February 2024. Reporting continues to be expanded to include other media of customer contact received by officers.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes this report.

9.2.2. 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: 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: 16/20/06

PURPOSE

This report provides the Council and Community with an update on progress with operational tasks designed to deliver the strategic goals and priorities identified in the Council Plan 2021-2025 for the financial year 2023/24 as of February 2024.

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.

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

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.

The attached report provides a progress update against the Pyrenees Shire Operational Council Plan 2021-2025 as of February 2024.

Measures have been excluded from the attached report as these are only measured at the end of each financial year.

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. February 2024 Progress Update Operational Council Plan [9.2.2.1 - 35 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 February 2024.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes this report.

9.3. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

10. COUNCILLOR ACTIVITY REPORTS

10.1. COUNCILLOR ACTIVITY REPORTS - FEBRUARY 2024

Cr Damian Ferrari – Beaufort Ward		
13/02/2024	Council Briefing	Beaufort
13/02/2024	Councillor Cuppa & Chat	Beaufort
15/02/2024	Timber Towns General Meeting	Virtual
16/02/2024	MAV Local Government Reform Consultation	Virtual
20/02/2024	Council Briefing	Beaufort
20/02/2024	Council Meeting	Beaufort

Cr David Clark – Ercildoune Ward		
01/02/2024	CVGA	Virtual
08/02/2024	HLLLEN Committee Meeting	Virtual
10/02/2024	Burnbank Rural Fire Brigade Celebrates 80 Years	Burnbank
13/02/2024	Council Briefing	Beaufort
13/02/2024	Councillor Cuppa & Chat	Beaufort
16/02/2024	MAV Local Government Reform Consultation	Virtual
20/02/2024	Council Briefing	Beaufort
20/02/2024	Council Meeting	Beaufort
22/02/2024	CVGA Board Meeting	Virtual
24/02/2024	Community Fire Meeting	Beaufort
27/02/2024	Community Fire Meeting	Avoca

Cr Robert Vance – De Cameron Ward		
02/02/2024	Roundtable with Senator Hon Bridget McKenzie	Hamilton
05/02/2024	Beaufort Cricket Nets Official Opening	Beaufort
11/02/2024	20th Anniversary Service of The Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial	Ballarat
13/02/2024	Council Briefing	Beaufort
13/02/2024	Councillor Cuppa & Chat	Beaufort
15/02/2024	Timber Towns General Meeting	Virtual
16/02/2024	MAV Local Government Reform Consultation	Virtual
16/02/2024	RCV Committee Meeting	Virtual
20/02/2024	Council Briefing	Beaufort
20/02/2024	Council Meeting	Beaufort
23/02/2024	VLGA Meeting	Virtual
24/02/2024	Community Fire Meeting	Beaufort
27/02/2024	Community Fire Meeting	Avoca
27/02/2024	Community Fire Meeting	Beaufort

Cr Ron Eason – Avoca Ward		
13/02/2024	Council Briefing	Beaufort
13/02/2024	Councillor Cuppa & Chat	Beaufort
16/02/2024	MAV Local Government Reform Consultation	Virtual
16/02/2024	Rail Freight Alliance Ordinary Meeting & AGM	Melbourne
24/02/2024	Community Fire Meeting	Beaufort
27/02/2024	Community Fire Meeting	Avoca

Cr Tanya Kehoe – Mount Emu Ward		
13/02/2024	Council Briefing	Beaufort
13/02/2024	Councillor Cuppa & Chat	Beaufort
15/02/2024	Timber Towns General Meeting	Virtual
16/02/2024	MAV Local Government Reform Consultation	Virtual
20/02/2024	Council Briefing	Beaufort
20/02/2024	Council Meeting	Beaufort
24/02/2024	Community Fire Meeting	Beaufort
27/02/2024	Community Fire Meeting	Beaufort

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes this report.

11. ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILLORS**11.1. ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILLORS - FEBRUARY 2024**

MEETING INFORMATION			
Meeting Name	Councillor Briefing		
Meeting Date	13 February 2024 commenced at 1.00pm and closed at 4.45pm		
Meeting Location	Council Chamber, Beaufort		
Items Discussed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CEO Performance Appraisal 2. Local Government Service Rates and Charges – Ministers Good Practice Guidelines 3. Local Government Reform Consultation Paper 4. Council Meeting Prayer 5. Wadawurrung People Native Title Claim 6. Australia Day 2024 Event Review 7. CEO Update 		
ATTENDEES			
Councillors	Mayor Cr Robert Vance Cr Damian Ferrari Cr Tanya Kehoe	Cr David Clark Cr Ron Eason	
Apologies			
Staff	Jim Nolan (Chief Executive Officer) Douglas Gowans (Director Assets and Development Services) Kathy Bramwell (Director Corporate and Community Services)		
Visitors	Philip Shanahan – item 1		
CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES			
Item No:	Councillor making disclosure	Particulars of disclosure	Councillor left meeting
Nil.	Nil.	Nil.	

MEETING INFORMATION			
Meeting Name	Councillor Briefing		
Meeting Date	20 February 2024 commenced at 1.00pm and closed at 5.30pm		
Meeting Location	Council Chamber, Beaufort		
Items Discussed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grant Opportunities 2. TMV DMP and Local Area Action Plan 3. Advocacy Program 4. Tourism Roads 5. Small Second Dwellings 6. Aerospace Proposal 7. Economic Development Update 8. CEO Update 		
ATTENDEES			
Councillors	Mayor Cr Robert Vance Cr Damian Ferrari Cr Tanya Kehoe (arrived at 3pm)		Cr David Clark Cr Ron Eason
Apologies			
Staff	Jim Nolan (Chief Executive Officer) Douglas Gowans (Director Assets and Development Services) Kathy Bramwell (Director Corporate and Community Services) Ray Davies (Manager Economic Development & Tourism) – item 2, 6 and 7 Rachel Blackwell (Manager Planning and Development Services) – item 5 Ella Duniam (Planning Officer) – item 5 Nick Gooding (Building Inspector) – item 5		
Visitors	Darren Whitford (Invest Victoria) – item 6		
CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES			
Item No:	Councillor making disclosure	Particulars of disclosure	Councillor left meeting
Nil.	Nil.	Nil.	

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes this report.

12. ITEMS FOR DECISION

12.1. CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

12.1.1. PROPOSED ROAD NAMES: KNOTT LANE

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: Glenn Kallio – Manager Finance

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

File No: 58/02/08 NP45

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council adoption of a new unique name for Anderson Lane Road in Percydale which is duplicated with a similar road name within a 10km radius – changing the name to Knott Lane.

BACKGROUND

Creating unique road names and addresses is important for accurate identification of properties for public safety and the delivery of goods and services.

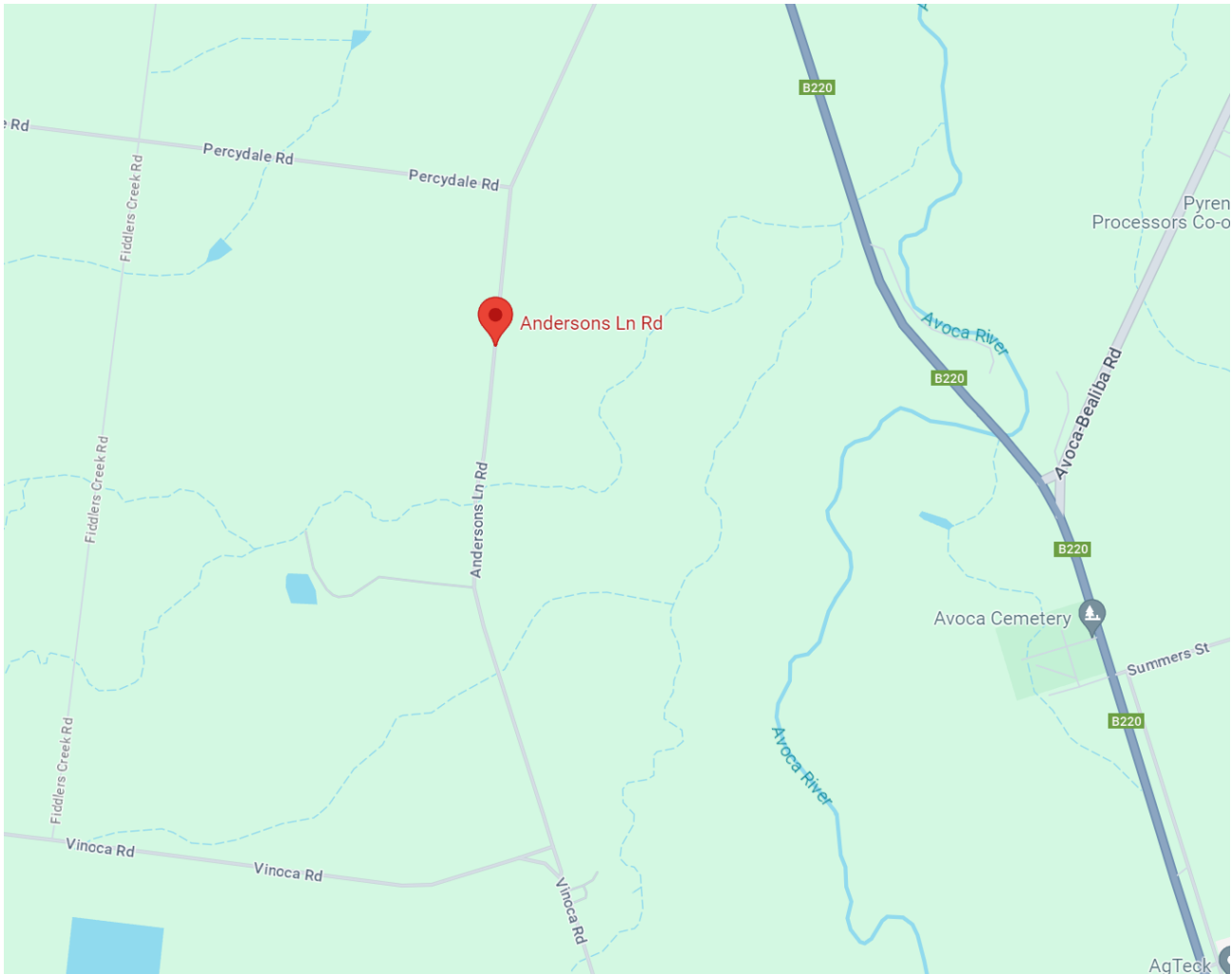
Unique road names are also required for the municipal road register to clearly identify roads needing maintenance or improvement and to reduce the risk of workers attending the wrong location.

The road detailed below is named Anderson Lane Road, Percydale and is duplicated with a similar name (Andersons Road, Amphitheatre) within a 10km radius.

Once adopted, Council officers submit the name to Geographic Names for formal consideration and approval. Only after that approval can Council formally place signage, change addresses, and use the new name.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

The road shown below is named Anderson Lane Road, Percydale, and connects the eastern end of Percydale Road with Vinoca Road.



This road name is duplicated very closely with Andersons Lane in Amphitheatre, which is less than 10km to the west.

With two similarly named roads within a short distance, an assessment of which road should be renamed was required. Anderson Lane Road, Percydale is rural farmland serving no residential properties. The similarly named Andersons Road in Amphitheatre is used as primary access to three properties, two of which are residential and the other Crown land. The road in Percydale was therefore chosen for renaming as it has less impact on residents.

Potential alternate names were sourced from a mid-century parish plan of the area, with just one name not already duplicated – that of ‘Knott’ - which has therefore been chosen as the alternate name for this road. This section of road is rural farmland and connects two other more significant roads, therefore the road type will be ‘lane’.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 1 - People

1a. Prepare for emergencies and ensure community safety.

Priority 4 - Economy

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

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Five properties (6 landholders) were advised in writing that Council proposed renaming their road, requesting that they respond within the required 30-day timeframe if they do not support the proposed road name.

The Council received no objections or other responses within the required timeframe.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

Risks identified in not naming the roads according to the principles.

1. Increased possibility of emergency service vehicles not locating a property
2. Increased difficulty clearly identifying road assets.

Costs to Council after adoption by Geographic Names

1. Administration to change property addresses, requiring letters to landholders, editing Council systems, and editing Vicmap Address
2. Purchase and installation of two street blades to go on existing poles at T intersections with Percydale Road and Vinoca Road.

CONCLUSION

The duplication of similar road names within a 10km radius – Anderson Lane Road, Percydale and Andersons Lane, Amphitheatre – could cause confusion with emergency services resulting in a risk to public safety. The renaming of one of the roads is recommended to ensure addressing clarity.

Anderson Lane Road in Percydale was chosen to be renamed as it serves no residential properties, minimising the impact on our community.

The alternate name of 'Knott Lane' was taken from a mid-century parish register and was the only name on that register not already used for road naming. Council received no objections to the changing of the road name.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts 'Knott Lane' as the road name for the road currently named Anderson Lane, Percydale, which connects Percydale Road and Vinoca Road.

12.1.2. GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

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: 16/20/40

PURPOSE

This report provides a progress update to the Council and the Gender Equality Commission on the implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP).

BACKGROUND

Pyrenees Shire Council is identified in the Gender Equality Act 2020 as a “defined entity”.

Defined entities have obligations under the Act, and are required to:

- develop and implement a Gender Equality Action Plan, which includes:
 - results of a workplace gender audit
 - strategies for achieving workplace gender equality
- publicly report on their progress in relation to workplace gender equality
- promote gender equality in policies, programs and services that impact the public
- complete gender impact assessments

Pyrenees Shire Council understands its pivotal leadership role to advance gender equality within the organisation and within the community, and in the design and delivery of Council’s services and programs. Council recognises that improving gender equality for women is an important issue and endorsed the development of Council’s first Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP), which is guiding actions over the 2021-2025 period.

The Pyrenees Shire Council GEAP was submitted to the Commissioner for Gender Equality on 31 March 2022 in accordance with the Gender Equality Act 2020 (The Act), requiring Council to achieve its objectives through promoting, auditing, and delivering on action plans, conducting gender (diversity and inclusion) impact assessments, and reporting to the Gender Equality Commission every two years.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

Council’s first Diversity and Inclusion Progress Report, required every two years under the Gender Equality Act 2020, was submitted to the Gender Equality Commission on 13 February 2024.

In the reporting period, three gender (diversity and inclusion) impact assessments were completed:

1. To inform the development of a masterplan for the Beaufort Linear Park Project. This assessment identified the need to:
 - consider the needs of traditional owners – possibly showcasing indigenous culture and complementing the Koori Arts Trail (around the Beaufort Lake) with interpretative signage,
 - incorporate design features that consider people with disabilities,
 - consider the safety of school children who walk or ride between school, their homes, and the public pool, and
 - consider the safety of people generally.

2. To inform a significant planned redevelopment of the Beaufort Caravan Park, pending funding from Council and government. This assessment identified the need to engage with traditional owners in relation to the potential impact of the redevelopment on the nearby lake, and considered the following intersectionalities:
 - Gender – in relation to accommodation, toilets and showers.
 - Abilities – in relation to accommodation, toilets and showers.
 - Age – in relation to accommodation, toilets and showers.
 - Sexual orientation – in relation to accommodation, toilets and showers.

Council also considered the impact of potential referral for homeless people and those impacted by domestic violence.

3. To support future budgets and funding program decision-making in considering investment into (a) Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, (b) Accessibility Strategy, and to ensure that a future review of Council's Governance Rules considers diversity, inclusion and accessibility. A significant proportion of the population has a disability which warrants consideration of funding for improved accessibility at public facilities.

In addition to reporting on gender (diversity and inclusion) impact assessments completed, the report provided progress updates against three key areas:

1. Strategies and measures progress – the report detailed updates against 15 strategies included within the Gender Equality Action Plan. Of the 15, it was reported that 11 (73%) are ongoing, meaning that implementation has started and will become part of business-as-usual; 3 (20%) are in progress, and 1 has not yet started (at the time of reporting). The strategy reported as not yet started was for Council to encourage women in the community to stand for election and preparation for this is underway.

A copy of the strategies and measures progress report is attached for information.

2. Resourcing your GEAP – a key expectation is that Council will sufficiently resource the implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan. It was reported that the GEAP is implemented by the Executive Leadership Team, Senior Leadership Team and other officers. In the short-term Council provided specific budget as follows:
 - 2022-2023 \$20,000 used on staff training by an external training provider
 - 2023-2024 \$10,000
 - 2024-2025 \$10,000 subject to budget approval
3. Workplace gender equality indicators – reporting of progress or improvement against a set of seven specific indicators:
 - Gender composition of all levels of the workforce – in the reporting period, this improved to be more balanced and is now 50% men / 50% women within the workforce (compared to 2021 where the measure was 61% women and 39% men). Although Council tries to be mindful to have a balanced gender composition in its workforce, some socially entrenched barriers exist which limit council's ability to change this wider social dynamic in the short term – i.e., customer service (traditionally low-paid female workforce) and depots (traditional male dominated workforce).

- Gender composition of governing bodies – in the reporting period there was no change as no council elections had been held. The political nature of local government renders it difficult for the CEO to encourage specific cohorts to stand for election and this is better promoted by the State government and the peak industry bodies including the MAV and VLGA. At best, Council can influence gender composition of candidates, but is unable to control the outcome.
- Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender – in the reporting period, this improved as the workforce data showed the gender pay gap decreased from 8% to 6.4%. The small size of the organisation makes it difficult to achieve statistically significant progress because of the small sample size. The gender pay gap at Council is not attributable to women being paid less than men for doing the same job, it relates to the fact that most of the occupations traditionally held by women are at lower pay levels. Furthermore, the average hours worked by women are less than men, with women have greater representation in part-time roles.
- Sexual harassment in the workplace – in the reporting period this has improved with less workers reporting sexual harassment behaviour at work within the People Matter Survey (women dropped from 6% to 3%, and men dropped from 11% to 4%). It should be noted that no sexual harassment complaints or reports have been made within council's incident reporting or grievance processes. Sexual harassment behaviour can range from inappropriate jokes or comments, enquiries or comments of a personal or intrusive nature, through to inappropriate sexual behaviour. It is believed that training in workplace behaviour has resulted in better outcomes.
- Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace – progress has been made through awareness-raising training in unconscious bias. Job interview panels are generally balanced, female-only career development workshops were delivered, secondment and higher duties options have been taken up by female staff, and female employees are encouraged to participate in leadership programs designed for women. A recent mentoring program, whilst offered to all staff, was predominantly taken up by female employees.
- Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to family violence leave, flexible working arrangements, and working arrangements supporting employees with family or caring responsibilities – Council's recently negotiated enterprise bargaining agreement (2023) contains general provisions to enable carers and parents to take leave and includes generous leave provisions for employees affected by family violence. Family violence leave, as well as flexible work arrangements and working from home agreements are in place and well-subscribed by employees.
- Gendered segregation within the workplace – no progress has been made under this measure. We are aware of gender segregated workplaces within our organisation and, while small changes have been made, overall, there is no significant progress. Council has the opportunity soon to improve female-friendly working conditions within the Avoca depot that may encourage greater female employment in that male-dominated area.

In the longer term, it is likely that implementation of the GEAP will be resourced through existing budgetary allocations, including existing salaries of relevant officers.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 1 - People

1c. Improve accessibility and inclusivity.

1e. Improve social outcomes.

Enabling Principles

b. Provide transparency and accountability

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

This report provides an update to the Council and its community on progress made against mandatory obligations imposed through the Gender Equality Act 2020.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment Diversity and Inclusion Progress Report February 2024 [**12.1.2.1** - 45 pages]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

It is expected that implementing the GEAP, conducting gender impact assessments, and reporting obligations imposed by the Gender Equality Act will be adequately resourced through budget allocations. As a small rural council, we do not have the financial resources to employ additional staff to do these tasks. This is an additional impost that will be funded from existing salaries – in effect, this means that resources must be diverted from other important council responsibilities. At present, the exact cost quantification of fulfilling these obligations is difficult, although considered significant.

CONCLUSION

The Gender Equality Act 2020 requires each council to address its obligations to promote gender equality in the workplace, consider gender equality when developing policies and programs and delivering services to the public. Council's obligations in this regard include reporting every two years on progress made against commitments made in its Gender Equality Action Plan. The first report to the Commission was submitted in February 2024 and this report summarises this.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the information contained within the report submitted in February 2024 to the Gender Equality Commission, and
2. Continues to support the implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan through appropriate budget allocations.

12.1.3. REPORT FROM CHAIR OF THE 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

This report provides Council with the biennial report on the performance of the Council's Audit & Risk Committee, prepared by the Chair of that advisory committee.

BACKGROUND

Section 54 (5) of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the Audit & Risk Committee Charter require the Chair of Council's Audit & Risk Committee to report to Council twice each year on the performance and activities of the committee.

The Audit & Risk Committee provides an integral function to monitor the Council's efforts to maintain integrity, accountability, and transparency in its operations.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

The Chair of Council's Audit & Risk Committee provided the first report for 2024, covering the latter part of the 2023 calendar year.

During the reporting period, a face-to-face meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee was held on 28 November 2023.

In the report, the Committee Chair reported on the outcomes of letters written on behalf of the Committee regarding the increasing volume of FOI (freedom of information) requests and the resulting impact on Council resources.

The Committee Chair ends her tenure in March 2024 having served nine-years on the Pyrenees Shire Council's Audit & Risk Committee.

Overall, the Committee Chair reported that the Committee has undertaken its duties in a responsible and effective manner and acknowledged the contributions of members of the Audit & Risk Committee and Council officers during the reporting period. The report included comment on the following areas:

1. Committee Charter and Workplan

The Audit & Risk Committee Charter was updated and endorsed. The Annual Committee Work Plan for 2023 was completed and a Work Plan for 2024 was considered and endorsed.

A change in meeting frequency was agreed in November, with the Committee moving to four meetings per year instead of the former three.

2. CEO (Chief Executive Officer) Reports

Throughout the year, the CEO provided reports keeping the Committee apprised on what is happening in the Pyrenees Shire and particularly about matters of management and governance. At the November meeting the CEO provided information about road funding, renewable energy infrastructure, a Beaufort Bypass update, and Council land development plans.

3. Internal Audit Services and Program

AFS & Associates Pty Ltd presented a report following an internal review of the Council's Cyber Security arrangements. The report found that the Council has a reasonably Cyber Security Framework for identifying and assessing cyber threats.

A copy of the Strategic Internal Audit Program was provided and accepted by management and the Committee.

4. Performance and Governance Monitoring and reporting

The Annual Report was presented and reported as a publication that is easy to read and understand. Statutory reporting and publishing deadlines were met. Reports and responses to questions have given the Committee confidence that the PSC is operating in a stable and sustainable manner.

The Committee receives a governance, risk and compliance report at each meeting, detailing a range of activities, and the Committee is satisfied that the items included are being managed appropriately.

5. Financial Monitoring

A financial report to September 2023 was presented and reported no significant income issues. Comprehensive budget and financial reports continue to be prepared in a timely and professional manner. Explanations are given and additional information requested is always provided.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Enabling Principles

b. Provide transparency and accountability

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

The Community is kept informed of the functions and activities of the Council's advisory Audit & Risk Committee by reporting at Ordinary Council Meetings.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Report by Chair - March 24 [12.1.3.1 - 5 pages]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

Councils must maintain the highest standards of integrity, service quality, and financial performance in providing essential services to their communities and managing public monies and infrastructure. An effective Audit & Risk Committee is an integral part of monitoring performance and internal controls that minimise risk, in particular the risks of fraud and public mismanagement.

CONCLUSION

This report provides the Council with the first report of 2024 from the Chair of Council's Audit & Risk Committee on the performance and operations of that Committee.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the information provided in this report, and
2. Formally acknowledges and thanks Wendy Honeyman for her contribution during the nine-year tenure as a member of its advisory Audit and Risk Committee, including a period as Committee Chair.

12.1.4. PROJECT UPDATE - MARCH 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:** 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.

It is noted that the Bayindeen Bushfire has and will continue to impact the progress of several Council projects.

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 drainage maintenance

Avoca drainage maintenance work is well advanced. Extensive kerb and channel in residential streets is completed as well as in High Street service lane. Open drainage paths have been improved in the High Street median. Pound Lane will be closed for a few days for the installation of two culverts. This package of drainage work in the northern part of Avoca valued at approximately \$900,000 will continue for several months. The purpose of this work is to provide improved long-term flood mitigation to property and roads.

Roadworks Beaufort-Carranballac Road

Construction is practically complete on the Beaufort-Carranballac Road (1.5km to 2.3km south of Meadows Lane).

Roadworks Smythesdale-Snake Valley Rd

Construction work is practically complete on Smythesdale-Snake Valley Road (Hopes Lane to 150m south of Canico Lane).

Caramuir Road, Nerring culvert works

Upgrade work on the Caramuir Road culvert is underway. Works include the extension of the existing culvert, road reinstatement, and installation of guard railing.

Waterloo- Trawalla Road

Reconstruction work is scheduled to be undertaken here over the coming months.

Re-sheeting program

The annual gravel re-sheeting program has finished.

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).

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.

Beaufort Caravan Park Upgrade

Funding has been secured for stage 1 of this project, and an application has been made to the Growing Regions Fund for stage 2 works.

Planning and design is well advanced.

Goldfields Recreation Reserve lights

New light posts have been installed at Goldfields Recreation Reserve. Our electrical contractor is continuing to work with Powercor to get the lights connected to the grid.

Beaufort Lake jetty

A boating and fishing jetty is being installed at Beaufort Lake. The floating platform has been installed. An access ramp needs to be installed before the jetty is operational. The ramp is being built offsite.

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 practically complete, and open for public use.

Neill Street footpath (Motel to Broadbent)

Construction of the new footpath along Neill Street towards Broadbent Court is finished. An application for funding is being prepared for the completion to Olinda Street.

Tree removal

Snake Valley tree removal works along Smythesdale – Snake Valley Road is complete.

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 completed 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.

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, which is scheduled for mid 2024, with implementation and training in the second half of the year.

Avoca Recreation Reserve Risk and Resilience Project

Funding has been secured for Council to investigate options to mitigate the impact of flooding on the reserve. This project has not yet commenced.

Burke Street Residential Land Development

An application has been made under the Worker Accommodation Fund for funding for stage 1 of this project.

Planning and investigation work is progressing.

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.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

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.

12.2. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

12.2.1. BAYINDEEN ROCKY ROAD FIRE UPDATE

Presenter: Jim Nolan - Chief Executive Officer

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

Report Author: Jim Nolan – Chief Executive Officer

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

File No: 28/14/50

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Bayindeen Rocky Road Fire.

BACKGROUND

On Thursday 22 February 2024 there was a fire on Bayindeen Rocky Road. An Incident Control Centre (ICC) in Ballarat was activated, and Council was requested to setup a Relief Centre. A Relief Centre was established at the Goldfields Recreation Reserve. Spot fires were occurring 10km ahead of the fire which resulted in an evacuation notice being issued for Beaufort. The Relief Centre was relocated to Ballarat. Subsequently Relief Centres were opened at Maryborough and Ararat.

Significant ground and air equipment and personnel were deployed to control the fire which continued to burn for several days. It was deemed safe for some residents to return to their homes days later, while other areas near the fireground remained unsafe due to fire risk or dangerous trees. Numerous state local roads remained closed for several days.

An extreme fire danger day and total fire ban was issued for Wednesday 28 February, and residents in a significantly expanded warning area issued with warnings to leave the area due to the potential for the fire to break control lines. Most council facilities were closed, and services limited. The main risk was averted due to the extensive effort and resources assigned to the fire.

The February 2024 Victorian Storms and Bushfires were declared a Natural Disaster enabling impacted individuals and businesses to access financial support through emergency relief payments through Victoria's Department of Fairness, Families and Housing (DFFH).

Council received notification on 29 February that the Commonwealth had issued an Australian Government Reference Number (AGRN) 1108 to activate the event under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

On 1 March, the Commonwealth announced Federal Disaster Recovery Payments had been extended to include Raglan in the Pyrenees Shire. (A subsequent request has been made to clarify other communities in the affected area).

At the time of preparing this report, the event is still under the control of the ICC. Preliminary impact information is reported below.

Importantly no lives were lost in this event.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

The February 2024 Bayindeen Rocky Road Fire event has had significant impacts across the Pyrenees Shire Council. As the full picture starts to emerge of the devastation, Council is actively engaging with Commonwealth, State and other Local Government agencies to garner the full range of support needed.

Rapid Impact Assessment (RIA) data from the Incident Control Centre (ICC) has been provided however emergency services are still in the process of blackening out the fire and further RIAs may come in once these areas become accessible. Secondary impact Assessments (SIA) are due to commence in the next week or so with Council staff currently being briefed and trained. At present a total of **36 properties** will be subject to SIAs.

Further issues have presented in the request for specific data from the Department of Fairness, Families and Housing (DFFH) in relation to Relief Payments.

Thousands of community members were evacuated during the height of the event with most businesses closed including Council Offices. Agriculture Victoria has undertaken assessments on affected private farmland, and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) has completed most of their assessment of impact on the public land values within the Mount Cole and Mount Buangor state parks including built assets, biodiversity, catchment and water, cultural heritage, forestry, tourism and economy.

The Communities of the municipality were well into active recovery fifteen months on from the significant October- November 2022 Flood events, to be further devastated by the Bayindeen Rocky Roady Fire event. The compounding nature of emergencies experienced has quite significantly set most people in the community and workforce backwards. Pyrenees Shire has a small population of 7,613 across a vast geographic area of 3,435 kilometre with 35.9% of the population over 60 years of age. This presents Council with a further challenge to adequately fund services and maintain and renew community assets.

At an EFT of 87 staff, Council has had an estimated 80-90% of staff directly impacted by the fire, severely hampering our overall capacity to operate and provide response, relief and planning for recovery activities. Council has engaged specialist trauma psychological services for staff impacted.

Agriculture and Tourism (particularly nature-based tourism) are critical contributors to the economy of the municipality – both have been disrupted to an unprecedented level. A comprehensive Impact Assessment of the visitor economy will be necessary to understand the full impact on tourism.

The following is a high-level Snapshot of known impacts up until **13 March 2024**. Council has received RIA data and are commencing SIAs however the full impact of the fire continues to emerge.

Communications throughout the event was a major focus for Council staff to ensure staff, Councillors and the community were appropriately informed.

Ensuring a roster of staff to fill the Emergency Liaison Officer (EMLO) role in the ICC for the duration was essential to ensure appropriate information flow.

Current Situation

While the fire has been deemed under control there are crews are continuing to blacken areas on the fire ground, there have been several spot fires and assessments of hazard trees continues. Community Information Advice – Stay Informed have been issued to 25 communities impacted by the Bayindeen-Rocky Road fire.

Access is prohibited to all areas of Mount Cole/Beeripmo and Mount Lonarch/Berumgower State Forest until 30 April. Mt Buangor State Park is closed until further notice, this includes Middle Creek, Ferntree and Bailes Camping areas and all walking tracks.

Transition to recovery

With the fireground still active Council is not in a position to officially transition into recovery through the sign off process however the following work has been undertaken in preparation:

- Completion of transition to Recovery Action Plan detailing tasks and actions
- Development of Draft Recovery team structure and position descriptions

DFFH Relief Payments

- As at 5:00pm on 12 March DFFH have processed 246 Relief Payments.

Relief Centres establishment/shut down: (All closed)

- Maryborough was opened on 22/2/2024 and closed on 1/3/2024 (9 days)
- Ararat was opened on 22/2/2024 and closed on 1/3/2024 (9 days)
- Ballarat was opened on 22/2/24 and closed on 24/2/2024 and reopened on 28/2/2024 and closed on 1/3/2024 (6 days)

The Beaufort and Avoca Resource and Information Centers were also used as places for residents to seek relief, support and information during the weeks of the event.

Communities Impacted including:

- Amphitheatre
- Avoca
- Bayindeen
- Beaufort
- Buangor and Buangor East
- Elmhurst
- Raglan
- Mount Cole
- Lexton

Community Meetings

- 5 Community Meetings held to date, and others planned.

General

- RIA data indicated that approximately 228 properties have been affected.
- Preliminary RIA data indicates significant damage to 36 of the 228 properties.

Private Residence:

- 7 houses were confirmed as destroyed.

Agriculture:

AS AT 9 MARCH

Local Government Areas (LGA): GRAMPIANS REGION			
	Ararat	Pyrenees	TOTAL
Total farm area affected (ha)	1137	3366	4503
Livestock			
Total animal deaths	54	228	282

Total bee hives lost	1	537	538
Infrastructure			
Total fencing impacted (km)	346	464	810
Machinery, woolsheds and haysheds lost	0	49	49
Irrigation pumps lost	0	2	2
Vehicles and machinery lost	0	17	17
Crops/Pastures/Grain/Fodder			
Total field crop (standing) lost (ha)	0	20	20
Total stored grain lost (t)	0	0	0
Total hay/silage lost (t)	18	170	188
Total grazing pasture lost (ha)	767	2,272	3,039
Horticulture			
Summer fruit lost (ha)	0	0.1	0.1
Wine grapes lost (ha)	10	0	10
Other fruit lost (ha)	0	14.9	14.9

For the agriculture sector, the impact on lost assets and productivity is yet to be analysed in detail and resources are required to do so.

BlazeAid has established a base camp at Buangor from which to facilitate volunteers and farm fencing replacement.

Tourism and Economic:

Mt Cole State Forest comprising the Beeripmo Trail and many campgrounds has been significantly impacted – major attraction for hikers, campers and day visitors and is the primary centre for activities for Cave Hill Creek.

The following events have been cancelled:

- Jump out event for 20 trainers, 50 support staff and 120 horses Avoca Turf Club.
- Both town markets at Beaufort and Avoca.
- Avoca by the River.

No data is available on business and the value of economic impact however it is anticipated this will emerge over the coming weeks. TMV have met with Grampians Tourism and a joint approach is being made to access funding for consultants to undertake a financial assessment of the impact. There are four tourism properties directly impacted and with the significant amount of damage to nature based tourism, we expect Mt Buangor State Park, Mount Cole, and Mount Lonarch will remain closed for quite some time

This will have a significant impact on others nearby who rely on nature based experiences as well as those directly impacted.

Public Facilities:

- Elmhurst Cemetery – impacted by fire retardant which needs to be cleaned before public access.

Immediate Concerns for Council:

- Community having difficulties accessing relief services.
- Welfare of community members affected
- Maintaining contact with affected residents and ensuring residents have access to services and support.
- Maintaining up to date relevant and appropriate communications across a range of formats for various purposes.
- waste management and clean up services
- Supporting farmers with coordination of agencies and activities relating to farm fencing, fodder and animal management issues.
- Assisting in the replenishment of water supplies taken from private property as part of the fire response.
- Fire damage to water tanks and troughs for rural residential and farming properties
- Assisting to facilitate water tank cleaning
- Assessment of damaged road assets and progressively opening local roads as they are made safe and maintenance of traffic management.
- Initial Assessment and management of dangerous roadside trees and coordination with relevant agencies over the removal and management of timber.
- Undertaking Secondary Impact Assessments by Council staff and contractors over the coming weeks.
- Financial implications on Council to provide services and support to community
- Financial implications on Council to adequately support the workforce in terms of psychological wellbeing.
- Staff fatigue
- Impact on Councils Business-as-Usual services
- Councils' ability to fund staff for immediate and long-term recovery support and services.
- State agency assessing information and requiring Council assistance placing further strain on resources eg, property details and contact information for over 100 properties with short turn-around.
- Flood Recovery Team has been assisting but funding is insufficient to maintain full time services in the long term for flood as well as the fire event.
- Environmental impact, particularly if and when rain occurs causing run off issues.
- Advocacy to government for support and financial assistance.
- Council's limited resource capacity in relation to support from the State in context to Council being unable to meet its legislated responsibilities under *the Emergency Management Act (2013)* and *Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act (2018)*. (EM Roles are added to BAU for employees in Local Government without any resourcing provided aside from limited MERP funding).

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 1 - People

1a. Prepare for emergencies and ensure community safety.

Enabling Principles

c. Use resources efficiently and effectively

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Significant community communication effort and community meetings undertaken as reported above.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

Council high-level estimates indicate that about \$150,000.00 has been spent by Council on direct response activities not including staffing costs, plant and equipment. We are collating this information presently, but many staff are still providing immediate relief support or responding to other agency requests.

While some costs incurred will be claimable through DRFA, many will not, and this will necessitate significant financial support from the Victorian Government to ensure that Pyrenees Shire Council is not unreasonably impacted financially.

CONCLUSION

The Bayindeen Fire has had a devastating impact on Pyrenees communities despite a large resource being deployed to respond and control the fire.

While the full impact has not yet been assessed, recovery from the event will be ongoing for months and years.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Continues to use Council resources to respond to the needs of our communities through this phase of the emergency to the extent that it is possible in collaboration with relevant agencies.
2. Acknowledges that some ordinary council services have and will continue to be affected due to staff needing to respond to the emergency activities.
3. Continues to advocate to government for appropriate level of funding to ensure council and the community is not unreasonably impacted.
4. Prepares a Recovery Plan which sets out the resourcing needed to deliver necessary activities to ensure appropriate level of recovery and that the plan be reported to a future meeting of Council.
5. Acknowledges the effort by all people and agencies involved in the response to the Bayindeen Fire, and formally thanks all involved.

12.2.2. VICTORIAN GOLDFIELDS WORLD HERITAGE BID

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: 62/12/10

PURPOSE

This report seeks Council support for financial contribution to the Victorian Goldfields World Heritage project in 2024/25 and 2025/26 Budgets.

BACKGROUND

The Central Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid is a collaborative project involving the thirteen local government areas that comprise the 1850's Central Victorian goldrush area. The project has been evolving for many years and is being led by City of Ballarat, Greater City of Bendigo and the Victorian Goldfields Tourism Executive.

The intention of the project is to seek a UNESCO World Heritage listing of the Central Victorian Goldfields region to generate a transformative impact on tourism, jobs, public and private investment.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

A letter has been received from the World Heritage Project Leads (City of Ballarat and City of Greater Bendigo) seeking further contributions from the fifteen supporting Councils for the two budget periods 2024/25 and 2025/26.

To date and since 2019:

- Thirteen partner Councils have contributed a total of \$4,000 each
- Ballarat and Greater Bendigo have contributed an estimated total of \$600,000 in dedicated staffing and funding
- The Victorian Goldfields Tourism Executive has contributed more than \$200,000.
- All this regional funding has leveraged \$2,550,000 from the state government, a ratio of 3:1.

Over the next 2.5 years Ballarat and Greater Bendigo have committed an estimated \$700,000 in cash and dedicated staffing to the project. It is proposed that the thirteen Councils commit a total of \$8,000 each in two equal instalments over the next two budgets. The first instalment will be a direct contribution to Stream 2 of the Enabling Tourism Fund application which will go towards leveraging up to \$500,000 from the Victorian Government to implement key elements of the Masterplan.

The focus of the application is on:

- Activating cross-regional World Heritage Journeys
- Interpretation of the entire Victorian Goldfields, and
- The elevation of visitor servicing needs to match World Heritage Listing
- To transform Victoria's tourism economy at the macro level, which embraces all 15 municipalities and six regional tourism boards/VEPs.

The second instalment will be dedicated towards funding applications in 2025/26 with the plan to leverage further state government funding.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 4 - Economy

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

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

It is proposed that financial contributions to the Goldfields World Heritage Project be included in the 2024/25 and 2025/26 budgets.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Support a total contribution of \$8,000 to the Goldfields World Heritage Project over two instalments in the 2024/25 and 2025/26 budgets.

13. COUNCILLOR REPORTS AND GENERAL BUSINESS

14. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

CLOSURE OF MEETING TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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

RECOMMENDATION

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

15.1 - CEO Performance Review 2023

15. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Ordinary Meeting of Council closed at

Minutes of the meeting confirmed

2024

Mayor Cr Robert Vance