



Pyrenees
Shire Council

Minutes

Ordinary Meeting of Council

6:00 pm Monday 19 October 2026

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 Damian Ferrari welcomed all to the meeting.

PRESENT

Mayor: Cr Damian Ferrari

Councillors: Megan Phelan, Simon Tol, Rebecca Wardlaw

Interim Chief Executive Officer: Sally Jones

Director Asset and Development Services: Douglas Gowans

Director of Corporate and Community Services: Jacinta Erdody

EA to CEO and Councillors: Chantelle Sandlant (minutes)

Senior Communications Officer: Fiona Henderson

Communications Officer: Helen D'Costa

2. STREAMING PREAMBLE

Mayor Cr Damian Ferrari read the livestream preamble.

3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Mayor acknowledged the people past and present of the Wadawurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung, Eastern Maar, Wotjabaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk Nations, whose lands and waters the Pyrenees Shire operates on. We pay our respects to their Ancestors and Elders, and recognise and respect their customs, stewardship and continuing connection to Country.

4. APOLOGIES

Cr Tanya Kehoe

5. NOTICE OF DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

6. CONFIRMATION OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

Cr Rebecca Wardlaw / Cr Simon Tol

That the Minutes of the:

- Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 21 September 2026 and
 - Closed Meeting of Council held 21 September 2026,
- as previously circulated to Councillors, be confirmed.

CARRIED

7. BUSINESS ARISING

There was no business arising from the previous meeting held 21st September 2026.

8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Gary Knight of Skipton

Question one:

When will roadside slashing commence?

Question two:

When will the roadside slashing commencing in the southern part of the shire? It's too late in January!

Response:

Mr Gowans thanked Mr Knight for the question and provided the following response:

Council looks at each season with roadside slashing just to make sure we adjust correctly to the season. It has been predicted that this season, the fire season, could come quite early and curing could occur in the northern part of our shire early, it is starting to occur now, therefore we've engaged our contractors to commence the slashing program in the first week of November. We start at the north of the shire and work our way south. I am also aware that our slashing contractor has some additional units this year, they have five slashers in total and will work their way from north to south.

I completely agree on the number two question, it is too late to start in January, absolutely, it is Council's intention to ensure that all slashing is completed prior to Christmas, that is obviously dependent upon conditions. We have had some challenges over the last few seasons, where there has been some late rain in spring and early summer which has had some impact on our slashing program and we are also competing for resources across the whole of Victoria for slashing resources but we believe we've got them locked in and it is absolutely our intention to have the slashing done in a timely manner.

At the time that we do our slashing, it is when we start undertaking some of our fire inspections and inspections will take place starting probably in November this year. We encourage all Pyrenees residents to act early and maintain properties throughout the entire fire season.

9. ITEMS FOR NOTING

9.1. ASSET AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

9.1.1. ANNUAL ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION COUNCIL REPORT 2025-26

Presenter: Douglas Gowans - Director Assets and Development

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

Report Author: Noel McKeegan – Environment and Sustainability Officer

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 an update on the use of public electric vehicle (EV) charging stations located in the Pyrenees Shire during the 2025-26 financial year.

BACKGROUND

At the December 2023 Council meeting, Council resolved for EV charging usage reports to be presented. The most recent report was presented to Council in March 2025.

In the Pyrenees shire region, there are three EV charging stations, located in Beaufort, Avoca, and Amphitheatre. Beaufort has two 50 kW DC chargers, one which was installed by Council with funding and the other from DEECA, hosting 4 parking bays and plug outlets. In Avoca, there is one charging station with two parking bays which contain two 50 kW DC charging outlets installed by Council through funding. In Amphitheatre there is one charging station with two parking bays for two CCS2 40kW DC charging outlets.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

EV charging station usage is monitored through three key metrics – charging time, number of sessions, and capacity.

Charging time

During the 2025-2026 financial year, electric vehicles spent a total of 1,459 hours charging in Beaufort, and 413.47 hours in Avoca (Figure 1).

These figures represent an increase in time spent charging of 50% and 35% for Beaufort and Avoca respectively, compared to the previous financial year (Figures 2 and 3).

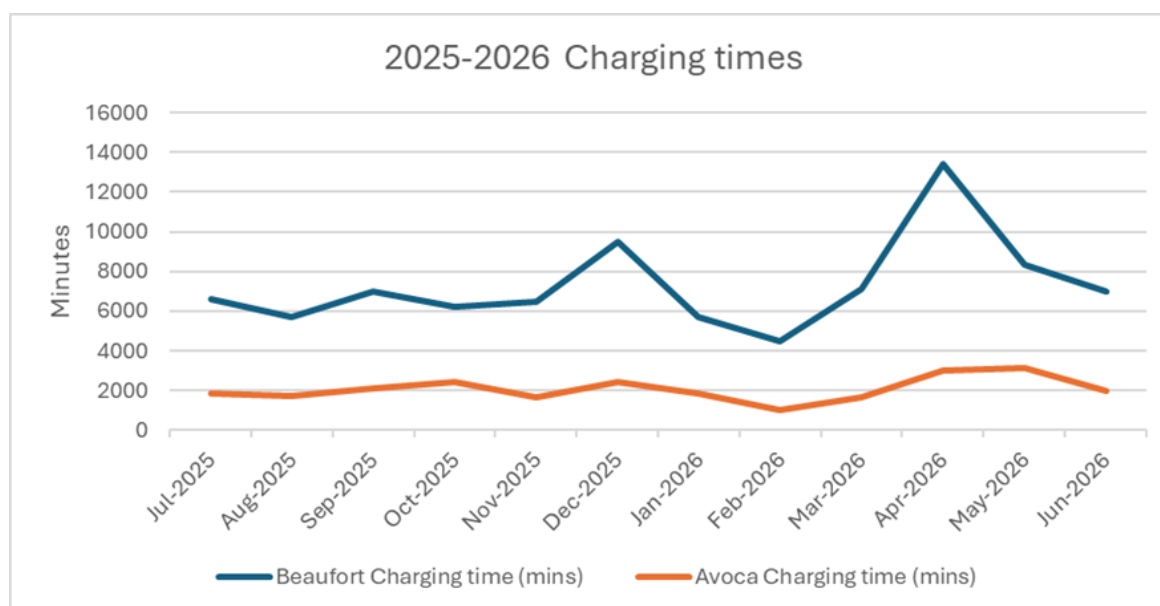
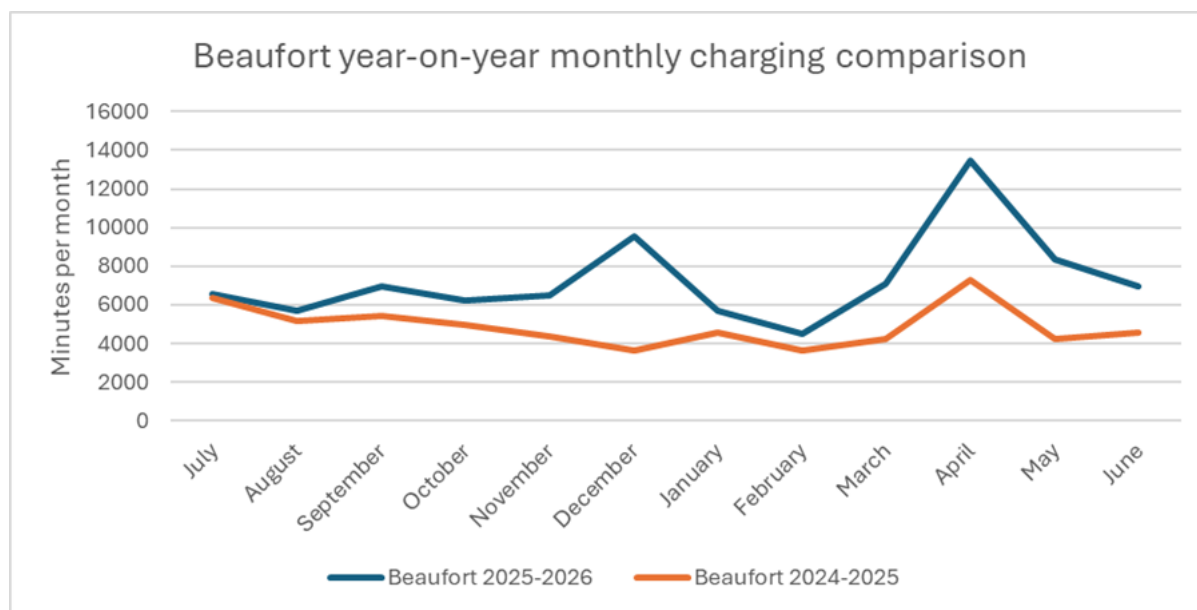
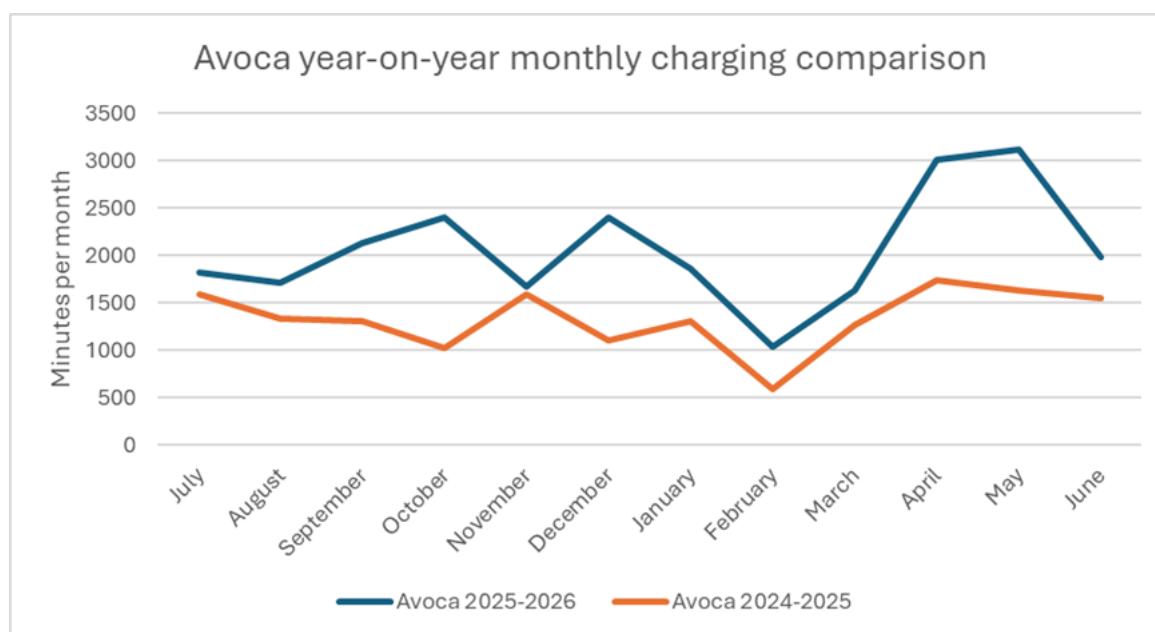


Figure 1: 2025-2026 financial year charging time comparison - Beaufort and Avoca**Figure 2: Beaufort charging times 2024-2025 and 2025-2026****Figure 3: Avoca charging times 2024-2025 and 2025-2026**

Charging sessions

The total time spent charging during the 2025-2026 financial year took place across 2699 individual charging sessions in Beaufort, 749 individual charging sessions in Avoca, and 17 individual charging sessions in Amphitheatre.

Beaufort and Avoca charging stations experienced a significant peak during the Easter holidays, with smaller peaks evident during other major holiday periods.

Usage at Amphitheatre remains very low, with 17 sessions recorded during the reporting period.

The average charging session time during the 2025-2026 financial year was 32.5 minutes in Beaufort, 33 minutes in Avoca, and 26 minutes in Amphitheatre, representing a marginal increase on the previous period.

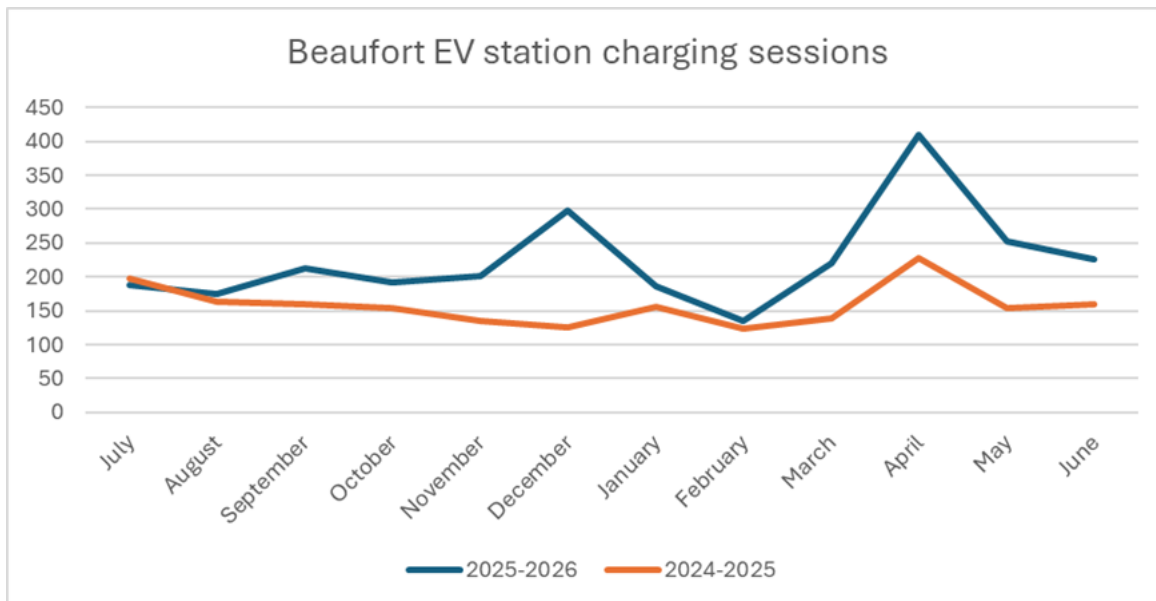


Figure 4: *Beaufort charging sessions 2024-2025 and 2025-2026*

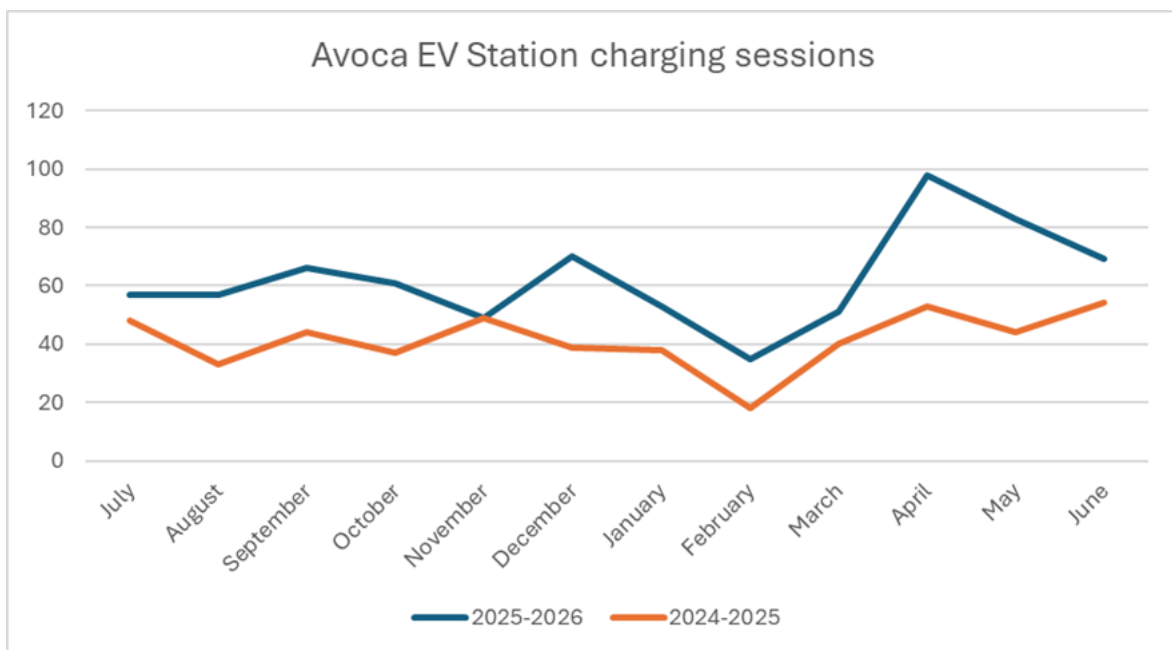


Figure 5: *Avoca charging sessions 2024-2025 and 2025-2026*

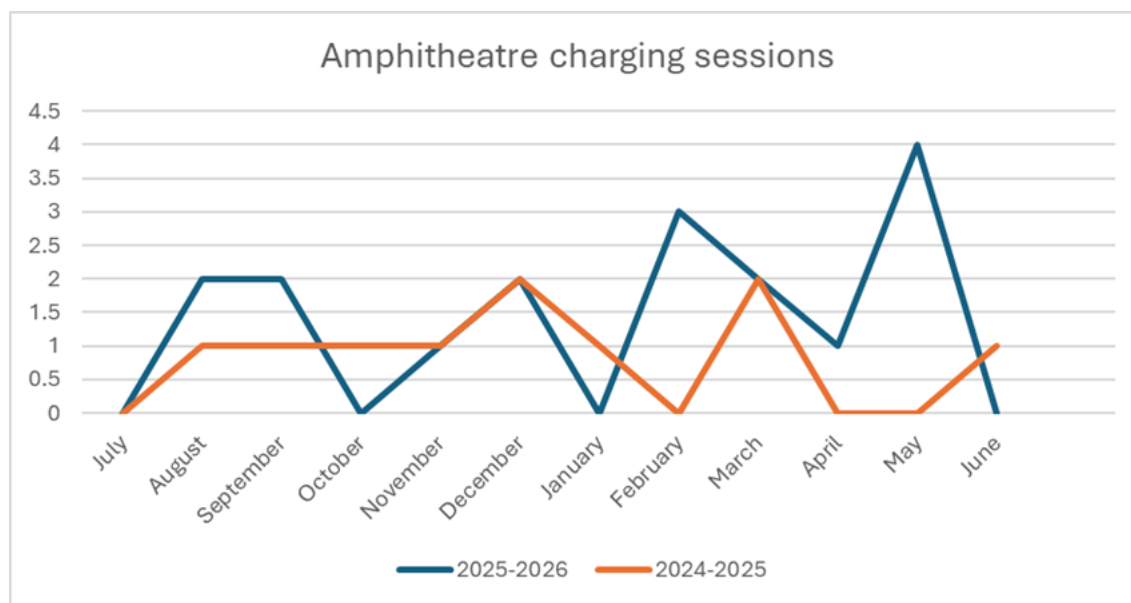


Figure 6: Amphitheatre charging sessions 2024-2025 and 2025-2026

Capacity

During the 2025-26 financial year, the Beaufort charging station averaged a capacity of 4.3% and the Avoca station averaged 2.4% capacity over the same period.

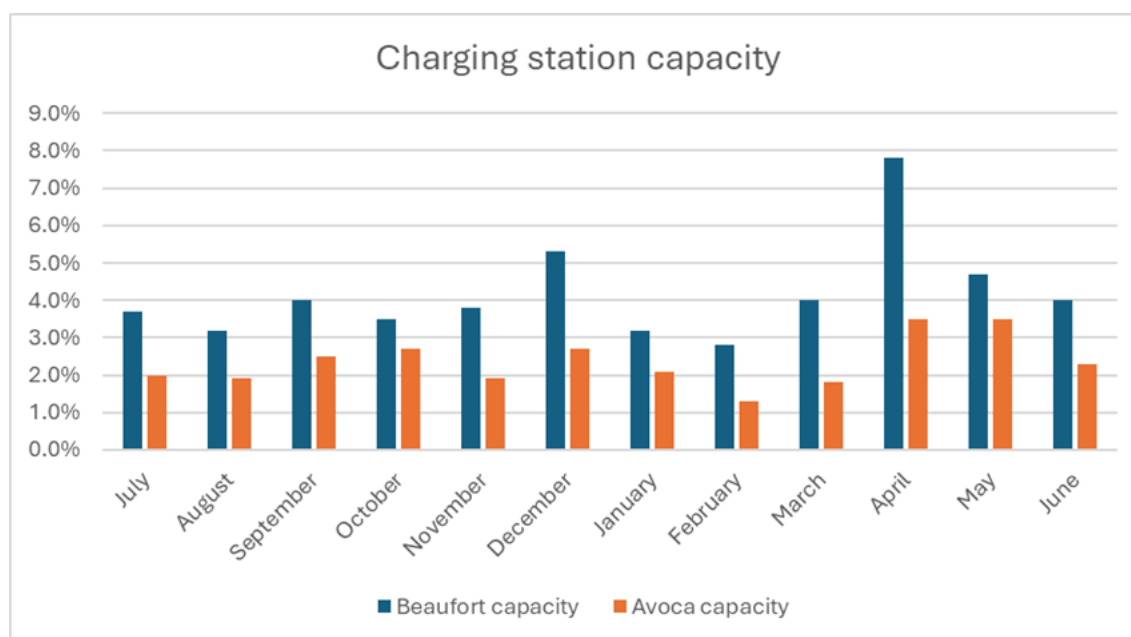


Figure 8: Charging station capacity during the 2025-2026 financial year

Where do EV charging station users come from?

Available data indicates that approximately 30% of visitors to the Beaufort and Avoca charging stations come from outside Victoria. A significant proportion originate from the Grampians region. The maps below provide an indicative overview of customer origin for the Beaufort and Avoca Stations, with higher numbers of customers originating from areas shaded darker.

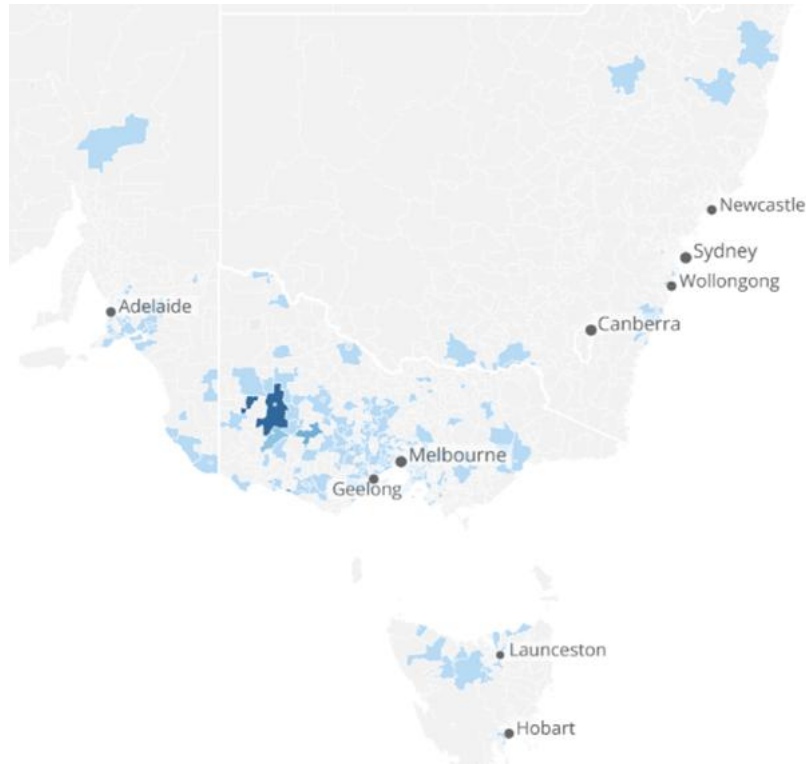


Figure 9: *Beaufort customer origin map*

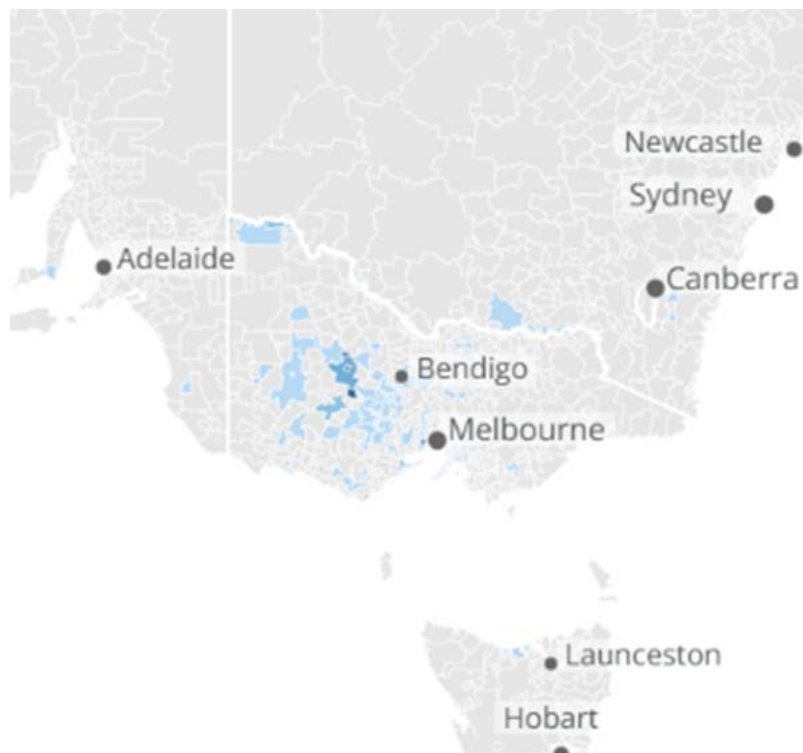


Figure 10 *Avoca customer origin map*

EV uptake is growing rapidly. In August 2026, battery-electric vehicles outsold every other propulsion type for the first time in Australia, making up 24.9 per cent of new car sales. While more than 80% of EV charging happens at home or at work according to the Electric Vehicle Council, it seems inevitable that the demand for public charging infrastructure will increase.

The nature of the EV charging infrastructure is rapidly evolving. Newer chargers can take compatible EVs from 10% to 80% in under 30 minutes, but installing them may require significant energy infrastructure upgrades. Alternative approaches, such as the trial of pole-mounted chargers currently being conducted by Powercor, should also be noted.

While this report shows an increase in usage overall from 2025 to 2026, all sites remain well below capacity. It should, however, be noted that peak demand, rather than overall capacity, is likely to dictate when expansion is needed. Beaufort, with around four times the usage and only twice the chargers, is the most likely site to need expansion in the medium term.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Pillar 2 - Economy

2b. Coordinated and facilitated planning fostering business and tourism growth.

Pillar 3 - Nature Environment

3c. Support local industries and communities in adapting to climate change.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

The capital investment in the current sites has been made possible with government funding. Council has a contractual agreement with Evie (Fast Cities Australia) to manage, operate and maintain charging station sites at Avoca and Beaufort. A similar agreement is in place with Exploren for management of the Amphitheatre site, reducing any potential risks from managing these sites directly. The agreements enable the charging stations to be operated on a cost neutral basis for Council.

Based on this report, no additional capital investment appears warranted in the medium-term given Council's financial constraints and unless external funding becomes available.

CONCLUSION

The EV charging stations at Beaufort and Avoca are operating well, with usage increasing. Usage at Amphitheatre remains low, though it has the capacity to act as an "overflow" site for days when Avoca is in high demand.

The sites bring a significant number of visitors into the townships, with drivers staying an average of around 30 minutes while charging. This time may be spent buying coffee or exploring the townships, which makes the chargers an asset for attracting additional visitors.

Given how quickly the market and technology are changing, Council should continue to monitor broader industry developments as well as usage trends at EV charging stations within the Pyrenees.

Cr Rebecca Wardlaw / Cr Simon Tol

That Council:

1. That Council notes this report.

CARRIED

10. COUNCILLOR ACTIVITY REPORTS**10.1. COUNCILLOR ACTIVITY REPORTS - SEPTEMBER 2026**

Cr Damian Ferrari – Beaufort Ward		
02/09/2026	Langi Kal Kal Community Advisory Committee Meeting	Langi Kal Kal
02-04/09/2026	Rural Councils Victoria Forum	Swan Hill
07/09/2026	Council Briefing	Beaufort
09/09/2026	Beaufort CWA 100 Years Celebration	Beaufort
10/09/2026	ABC Radio – Council Wrap	Virtual
14/09/2026	SWNP Advocacy Launch	Natte Yallock
14/09/2026	Council Briefing	Beaufort
15/09/2026	Carranballac Project Working Group Meeting	Stoneleigh
17/09/2026	CEO Recruitment Meeting	Virtual
21/09/2026	Council Briefing	Beaufort
21/09/2026	Council Meeting	Beaufort
30/09/2026	Burke Street Regional Worker Accommodation Event	Beaufort

Cr Tanya Kehoe – Mount Emu Ward		
07/09/2026	Council Briefing	Virtual
09/09/2026	Beaufort CWA 100 Years Celebration	Beaufort
14/09/2026	CEO Meeting	Beaufort
14/09/2026	Council Briefing	Beaufort
15/09/2026	Carranballac Project Working Group Meeting	Stoneleigh
17/09/2026	Rural Councils Victoria Meeting	Virtual
17/09/2026	CEO Recruitment Meeting	Virtual
21/09/2026	Council Briefing	Virtual
21/09/2026	Council Meeting	Virtual

Cr Simon Tol – Ercildoune Ward		
02/09/2026	Langi Kal Kal Community Advisory Committee Meeting	Langi Kal Kal
03/09/2026	SWNP Campaign Meeting	Moonambel
04/09/2026	Constituent Meeting	Lexton
07/09/2026	Council Briefing	Beaufort
14/09/2026	Council Briefing	Beaufort
17/09/2026	CEO Recruitment Meeting	Virtual
21/09/2026	Council Briefing	Beaufort
21/09/2026	Council Meeting	Beaufort
30/09/2026	Burke Street Regional Worker Accommodation Event	Beaufort

Cr Rebecca Wardlaw – Avoca Ward		
03/09/2026	SWNP Campaign Meeting	Moonambel
07/09/2026	Council Briefing	Beaufort
14/09/2026	Council Briefing	Beaufort
15/09/2026	Audit & Risk Committee Meeting	Beaufort
17/09/2026	CEO Recruitment Meeting	Virtual
18/09/2026	McFarlane Dress Collection Exhibition	Skipton
21/09/2026	Council Briefing	Virtual
21/09/2026	Council Meeting	Virtual
30/09/2026	Loddon Valley Arts Trail - Red Bricks Tour	Serpentine

Cr Rebecca Wardlaw / Cr Simon Tol

That Council notes the Councillor Activity Reports September 2026.

CARRIED

11. ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILLORS**11.1. ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILLORS - SEPTEMBER 2026**

MEETING INFORMATION			
Meeting Name	Council Briefing		
Meeting Date	7 September 2026 commenced at 5.00pm and closed at 7.00pm		
Meeting Location	Council Chamber, Beaufort		
Items Discussed	1. Raglan Roadside Vegetation Recovery 2. Tender Evaluation Report Motor Grader 3. Domestic Animal Management Plan 4. Council Reporting Cycle 5. Councillor Question Time		
ATTENDEES			
Councillors	Mayor Cr Damian Ferrari Cr Rebecca Wardlaw Cr Tanya Kehoe (virtual) Cr Simon Tol		
Apologies	Cr Megan Phelan		
Staff	Sally Jones (Chief Executive Officer) Douglas Gowans (Director Assets and Development Services) Jacinta Erdody (Director Corporate and Community Services) Glenn Kallio (Manager Finance) item 2 Glenn Deaker (Manager Works) item 2 Rachel Blackwell (Manager Planning & Development Services) item 3		
Visitors	Rob Pelletier – item 1 Kate Blood – item 1		
CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES			
Item No:	Councillor / Officer making disclosure	Particulars of disclosure	Councillor left meeting
Nil.			

MEETING INFORMATION			
Meeting Name	Council Briefing		
Meeting Date	14 September 2026 commenced at 4.00pm and closed at 7.00pm		
Meeting Location	Council Chamber, Beaufort		
Items Discussed	1. Swimming Pool Integrity Reports 2. Jo Armstrong – Nationals Candidate for Ripon 3. Councillor Question Time		
ATTENDEES			
Councillors	Mayor Cr Damian Ferrari Cr Rebecca Wardlaw Cr Tanya Kehoe Cr Simon Tol		
Apologies	Cr Megan Phelan		
Staff	Sally Jones (Chief Executive Officer) Douglas Gowans (Director Assets and Development Services) Jacinta Erdody (Director Corporate and Community Services) Diana Dixon (Manager Community Wellbeing & Partnerships) item 1		
Visitors	Jo Armstrong, Nationals Candidate for Ripon – item 2		
CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES			
Item No:	Councillor / Officer making disclosure	Particulars of disclosure	Councillor left meeting
Nil.			

MEETING INFORMATION			
Meeting Name	Council Briefing		
Meeting Date	21 September 2026 commenced at 4.00pm and closed at 5.45pm		
Meeting Location	Council Chamber, Beaufort		
Items Discussed	1. Burke Street Inspection 2. TMV Support for MAV State Council Motion – Visitor Economy Partnerships 3. Council Meeting Agenda Review 4. Appointment of Executive Recruitment Agency 5. Councillor Question Time		
ATTENDEES			
Councillors	Mayor Cr Damian Ferrari Cr Rebecca Wardlaw (virtual) Cr Tanya Kehoe (virtual) Cr Simon Tol		
Apologies	Cr Megan Phelan		
Staff	Sally Jones (Chief Executive Officer) Douglas Gowans (Director Assets and Development Services) Jacinta Erdody (Director Corporate and Community Services)		
Visitors	Nil.		
CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES			
Item No:	Councillor / Officer making disclosure	Particulars of disclosure	Councillor / Officer left meeting
4	Sally Jones	Indirect interest	5.00pm

Cr Rebecca Wardlaw / Cr Simon Tol

That Council notes the Assembly of Councillors September 2026 report.

CARRIED

12. ITEMS FOR DECISION

12.1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

12.1.1. BEAUFORT LAKE CARAVAN PARK FEES AND CHARGES

Presenter: Sally Jones - **Interim** Chief Executive Officer

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

Report Author: Ray Davies – Manager Economic Development and Tourism

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

File No: 523046200

PURPOSE

To seek Council approval to amend the adopted 2026/27 fees and charges for short-term accommodation and caravan storage at the Beaufort Lake Caravan Park to incorporate merchant transaction costs associated with card and EFTPOS payments following Reserve Bank of Australia reforms to card payment surcharging arrangements from 1 October 2026.

BACKGROUND

On 31 March 2026, the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) announced the outcomes of its Review of Merchant Card Payment Costs and Surcharging. From 1 October 2026, the RBA removed its prohibition on no-surcharge rules for designated card networks. Eftpos, Mastercard and Visa subsequently introduced no-surcharge rules for credit, debit and prepaid card payments from that date. American Express also removed card surcharging from 1 October 2026.

The changes mean that merchants can no longer separately surcharge customers for payments made using these card types. Merchants continue to incur card acceptance costs and may incorporate those costs into their overall prices rather than imposing a separate card surcharge. Council therefore has the option of absorbing these merchant transaction costs within the Caravan Park's existing adopted fees and charges or adjusting the advertised fees so that the costs do not reduce the net operating revenue anticipated from the service.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

Council incurs merchant transaction costs for card and EFTPOS payments. Based on Council's current payment processing arrangements, the average merchant cost used for the purposes of this report is 2.21% of the transaction value.

To avoid these costs reducing the net revenue generated by the Beaufort Lake Caravan Park, it is proposed that the adopted 2026/27 fees for short-term accommodation and caravan storage be adjusted to incorporate the average merchant transaction cost.

For administrative simplicity and ease of communication to customers, the calculated amounts have been rounded to practical whole-dollar fees. Accordingly, the proposed fees will not precisely recover the merchant cost on every individual transaction. The proposed changes are modest and are intended to substantially offset merchant transaction costs and will not generate additional revenue.

The proposed revised fees are outlined in the table below.

Fees for Beaufort Lake Caravan Park 2026 to 2027; short term sites

Site/Cabin Type	Off Peak	Peak	Off Peak Proposed Increase at 2.21%	Peak Proposed Increase at 2.21%
Unpowered Site	\$32	\$45	\$33	\$46
Powered Site	\$42	\$50	\$43	\$52
Ensuite Site	\$50	\$65	\$52	\$67
Budget Cabin	\$98	\$115	\$101	\$118
Standard Cabin	\$125	\$140	\$128	\$143
Studio Cabin	\$125	\$140	\$128	\$143
Deluxe Waterfront Cabin	\$140	\$155	\$143	\$159
Premium Cabin	\$150	\$170	\$154	\$174
Accessible Cabin	\$150	\$170	\$154	\$174
Caravan Storage Minimum 1 Month	\$16 per Week		\$17	
The abovementioned fees are GST inclusive				

The proposed adjustments will substantially mitigate the impact of merchant transaction costs on Caravan Park revenue while providing customers with a clear, all-inclusive advertised price.

Recommendations

This report recommends that Council approve the revised 2026/27 fees and charges for short-term accommodation and caravan storage at the Beaufort Lake Caravan Park, as detailed in this report, and amend Council's adopted 2026/27 Fees and Charges Schedule accordingly.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Pillar 2 - Economy

2b. Coordinated and facilitated planning fostering business and tourism growth.

The proposed amendments respond to the card payment surcharging changes effective from 1 October 2026 following the RBA's revised payments standards and the no-surcharge rules introduced. Australian Consumer Law requirements continue to apply.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

No external community engagement has been undertaken. The proposed amendments are administrative in nature and are intended to offset merchant transaction costs rather than represent a substantive change to the pricing framework for the Caravan Park. Customers will be advised of the revised fees prior to their commencement.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

The proposed fee adjustments are intended to offset merchant transaction costs associated with card and EFTPOS payments at the Beaufort Lake Caravan Park.

If the existing adopted fees remain unchanged, these transaction costs would be absorbed within the Caravan Park operating budget and would reduce net operating revenue. The proposed adjustments are therefore designed to maintain the net revenue forecast when Council adopted its 2026/27 Fees and Charges.

CONCLUSION

Changes to the Beaufort Lake Caravan Park fees and charges are recommended following the removal of card payment surcharging from 1 October 2026. The proposed adjustments will allow Council to incorporate merchant transaction costs into the advertised price and substantially protect the net revenue anticipated from the Caravan Park.

The revised fees should apply to new bookings from the nominated commencement date of 1 November 2026.

Cr Megan Phelan / Cr Simon Tol

That Council:

1. Approves the revised 2026/27 fees and charges for short-term accommodation and caravan storage at the Beaufort Lake Caravan Park, as detailed in this report;
2. Approves the amendment of Council's adopted 2026/27 Fees and Charges Schedule to reflect the revised fees;
3. Determines that the revised fees apply to new bookings from 1 November 2026; and
4. Notes that existing confirmed or prepaid bookings will retain the price quoted at the time of booking, subject to Council's existing booking terms and conditions.

CARRIED

12.2. ASSET AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

12.2.1. PLANNING APPLICATION PA26050 BUTLER STREET, LEXTON

Presenter: Douglas Gowans - Director Assets and Development

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

Report Author: Virginia Mcleod – Senior Planner

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

File No: PA26050

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider planning permit application PA26050 for the use and development of land for a dwelling and outbuildings at Butler Street, Lexton.

BACKGROUND

The application was lodged on 9 June 2026. The application proposes the use and development of the land for a dwelling and outbuildings. (**Attachment 1** – Application documents)

The application was advertised and referred to in accordance with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the Pyrenees Planning Scheme. One objection was received.

The application has been assessed against the relevant provisions of the Pyrenees Planning Scheme. It is recommended that a Notice of Decision to Grant a Planning Permit be issued.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

Subject site

The subject site comprises two lots located to the north-east of the Lexton township, approximately 400 m west of the Sunraysia Highway. The location of the subject site is shown in **Figure 1**.



Figure 1 – location of subject site

The subject site has a total area of 9.26 hectares and is bound by Butler Street to the south, West Street to the north, and an adjoining property to the west.

Properties around the subject site are of similar size with some developed for dwellings and others used for agriculture. Land immediately to the east includes licenced Crown land (unused road) that is heavily vegetated.

The subject site has scattered native trees and patches of native vegetation with two dams and waterway present in the southern part of the site as shown in **Figure 2**. A dwelling has been relocated to the site that is currently the subject of this planning permit application.

Access to the property currently exists along the eastern site boundary (on West Street). The land slopes east towards West Street.



Figure 2 - Subject site looking north

Zoning and Overlays

The subject site and surrounding properties are Farming Zone (**Figure 3** – Zoning map).

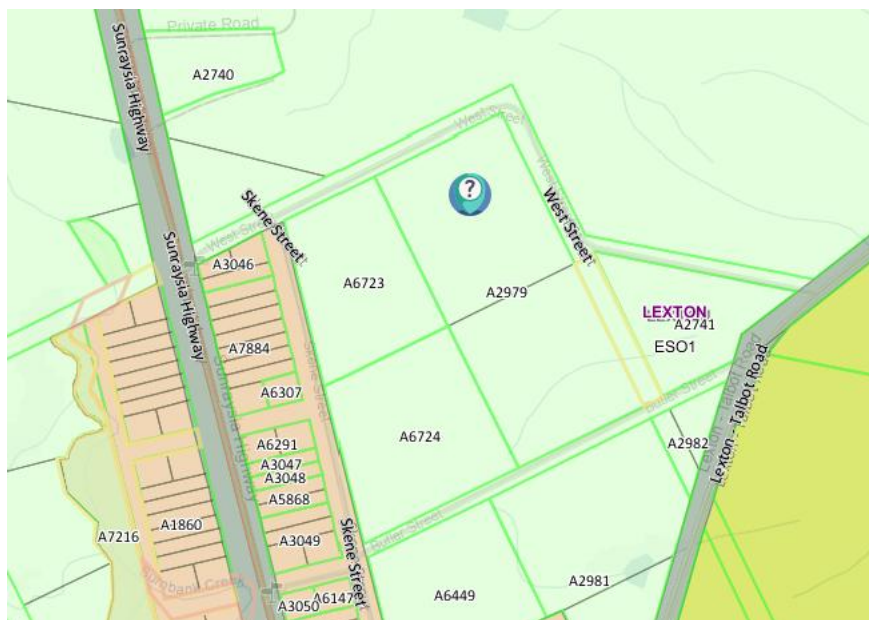


Figure 3 – Zoning map

The subject site is also affected by the Restructure Overlay – Schedule 17 (RO17 - Lexton Township Environs) and the Environmental Significance Overlay – Schedule 1 (ESO1 – Designated Water Supply Areas).

The subject site is within a Bushfire Prone Area.

The Proposal

The application seeks a planning permit for the use and development of the land for a dwelling and outbuildings (**Attachment 1** – Application documents)

The proposed dwelling is located to the south of the site with new access via Butler Street and is set back from all boundaries a minimum of 35 metres as shown in **Figure 4**.



PLAN HOUSE REV. 4. 16.6.2026

Figure 4 – proposed dwelling location

The dwelling comprises a single-storey built form with timber exterior cladding and a sheet metal pitched roof. The dwelling contains three bedrooms, open plan living and a theatre room. The dwelling includes a perimeter verandah, with an overall building height of 5.7 metres.

A shed with floor area of 450 square metres is proposed to be located towards the centre of the site, accessed via the existing access from West Street. Two additional sheds are located close to the dwelling, both with floor areas of 54 square metres to be accessed via Butler Street.

The application was supported by a Land/Farm Management Plan (NR Links, dated 28/7/2026). This plan proposes outcomes for the site divided into areas including a conservation zone with revegetation, managing existing erosion along waterways and dams, and areas where grazing is suitable.

Response to Notice of Application

The application was required to be advertised pursuant to Section 52 of *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

The following forms of advertising were undertaken:

- Notices sent to owners and occupiers of adjoining land
- Notice placed on the site.

One objection was received. The objection related to the location of the dwelling and the impact of this location on existing views. (**Attachment 2** - Objection)

Policy and Legislative Context

Municipal Planning Strategy and Planning Policy Framework

The following clauses are considered relevant to this permit application:

Clause 02 Municipal Planning Strategy

Clause 02.02 Vision

Clause 02.03-1 Settlement:

- seeks to facilitate compatible relationship between residential and non-residential uses, including the maintenance of appropriate environmental buffers.
- encourage consolidation of larger land holding to minimise rural land fragmentation.
- specific policies for Lexton encourage residential development within the township boundary.

Clause 02.03 -2 Environmental risks and amenity:

Bushfire

- Ensuring that fire risks are carefully considered throughout the planning and development process

Clause 02.03 -3 Natural Resource Management

Agriculture

- Protecting agricultural land from fragmentation and encouraging sustainable agriculture.
- Consolidating inappropriately subdivided rural land.

Water

- Restricting subdivision, land use, and development within water supply catchments.

Clause 11 Settlement

Clause 11.01-1R/L:

- Preserving and protecting features of rural land and natural resources and features to enhance their contribution to settlements and landscapes.
- Support rural use and restructuring of obsolete and defunct Crown Townships, fragmented rural land, and environmentally hazardous hilly land.

Clause 13 Environmental risks and amenity

Clause 13.02 Bushfire

- Give priority to the protection of human life by reducing the vulnerability of communities to bushfire through the consideration of bushfire risk in decision making at all stages of the planning process.
- Identify bushfire hazard and undertake appropriate risk assessment.

Clause 13.07-1S Land Use Compatibility

seeks to protect amenity and ensure that use and development is compatible with adjoining uses and avoid location uses in areas that may be affected to off-site impacts

Clause 14 Natural resource management

Clause 14.01 Agriculture

- aims to protect the state's agricultural base by preserving productive farmland
- Specific policy for Pyrenees Shire includes to encourage the effective restructuring of inappropriate subdivisions.

Clause 14.02 Water

- Protection proclaimed water supply catchment areas through restrictions on subdivision, land use, and development.

Clause 16 Housing

Clause 16.01-3S Residential Development – Rural residential development

- seeks to manage development in rural areas to protect agriculture and avoid inappropriate rural residential development.

Zoning

The subject land is in the Farming Zone (FZ).

A permit is required for the use of the land for a dwelling on a lot less than 40 hectares in size. A planning permit is also required for the development of the dwelling.

The decision to grant a permit, or not, requires consideration of the relevant policies of the Municipal Planning Strategy, Planning Policy Framework and the purpose and decision guidelines of the Farming Zone.

Overlays

The subject land is affected by the Environmental Significance Overlay – Schedule 1 (ESO1). The purpose of ESO1 is to identify areas in Special Water Supply Catchments and other related area and ensure land in these areas is used in a manner that protects water quality and quantity.

A permit is required for buildings and works that generate wastewater and will not be connected to reticulated sewerage. The purpose and decision guidelines for ESO1 are considered in the assessment of this application.

The subject site is also affected by the Restructure Overlay – Schedule 17. The purpose of the Restructure Overlay includes to identify old and inappropriate subdivisions which are to be restructured, and to reduce the environmental impacts of dwellings.

A permit is required to construct or extend a dwelling and for buildings and works. The purpose and decision guidelines for Restructure Overlay are considered in the assessment of this application.

Clause 65 Decision Guidelines

Council must decide whether the proposal will provide an acceptable outcome in terms of the purpose and decision guidelines of the zone and overlay, and the direction outlined in the MPS and PPF.

Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006

Under section 46 of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, a mandatory cultural heritage management plan is required for a proposed activity if the regulations require the preparation of the plan for that activity.

If required, an approved cultural heritage management plan (CHMP) must be submitted to Council before deciding on a planning permit application.

The *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018* stipulate that unless an activity is specified as being an exempt activity, a cultural heritage management plan is required if:

- a) all or part of the activity area for the activity is an area of cultural heritage sensitivity; and
- b) all or part of the activity is a high impact activity.

The subject land (activity area) is not in an area of cultural heritage sensitivity, and the construction of a single dwelling is not specified as a high impact activity in the regulations. Therefore, a CHMP is not required for the proposed development.

Planning Scheme Amendment C52pyrn

Council is in the process of implementing Planning Scheme Amendment C52pyrn to introduce new flood-related controls into the Planning Scheme. This property is not affected by the proposed changes to the Pyrenees Planning Scheme.

Assessment

The assessment of the planning permit application will consider how the proposal responds to the purpose and decision guidelines of the Farming Zone, Environmental Significance Overlay – Schedule 1, Restructure Overlay – Schedule 17, relevant particular provisions and the strategic and policy direction outlined within Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.

Restructure Overlay

The provisions of the Lexton Environs Restructure Plan No 17 must be considered in assessment of this application. The objectives of this Plan include:

- To encourage the subdivisional restructuring of multiple-lot landholdings
- To prevent inappropriate development in the environs of Burnbank Creek.

Requirements for the development of land include:

- Not more than one dwelling may be constructed on or caused to exist on each Restructure Parcel except in the following circumstances...
- If the number of lots in a Restructure Parcel exceed the number of dwellings which may be constructed (including existing dwellings) then before any new dwelling is constructed one of the following actions must be taken:
 - lots which have no dwelling entitlement must be consolidated with another lot or lots for which a dwelling entitlement exists; or
 - an agreement is entered into under Section 173 of the Act which stipulates that such land may not have a dwelling;

The two lots that form the subject site are within Restructure Overlay Parcel as shown in **Figure 5**.



Figure 5 – Restructure Overlay Parcel

The construction of a dwelling on the subject site is an outcome that is not prohibited by the Restructure Overlay. However, the decision to allow a dwelling must be subject to conditions that require the two lots to be consolidated (through subdivision) into one lot that is consistent with the boundaries of the Restructure Overlay Parcel. This will permanently prevent the future development of the second lot for a dwelling.

The Land/Farm Management Plan propose outcomes consistent with those sought by the Decision Guidelines of the Restructure Overlay including the protection of the environmental values demonstrated through revegetation, erosion management, and retention of remnant native vegetation.

Farming Zone

The purpose of the Farming Zone is to provide land for agricultural uses, retain productive agricultural land and ensure that non-agricultural uses such as dwellings do not adversely affect farming activities.

The application must be considered against the purpose and decision guidelines of the zone. The following comments are made with regards to the decision guidelines:

- The proposal will result in a change of land use and permanently remove areas from agricultural production. The area removed from agricultural production is small as there are areas of native vegetation and a waterway on site that are unsuitable for this use.
- The subject site and properties to the immediate south, east and west are more closely aligned to rural-residential land use outcomes due to smaller lot sizes from the historical pattern of subdivision and location on the edge of the Lexton township.
- The Land/Farm Management Plan submitted with the application includes a mix of small-scale agricultural activities combined with improvement of the environmental values of the site.

- The dwelling is unlikely to impact or be impacted by near-by agricultural operations. The nearest agricultural property is to the north and east of the subject site, minimum 400 metres away, and buffered by the heavily vegetated road reserve.
- The land capability assessment submitted with the application demonstrates that wastewater generated by the use can be managed on site without harming waterways or existing values.

The proposed use and development is therefore considered generally consistent with the purposes of the Farming Zone and, through planning permit conditions, can be appropriately managed.

Environmental Significant Overlay – Schedule 1 (ESO1)

The purpose of ESO1 is to manage areas within water supply catchments and the environs of town supply water bores in a responsible manner to protect water quality and quantity.

The application has been considered against the Decision Guidelines of ESO1. The application is responsive to the matters raised by the Decision Guidelines. The land capability assessment provided with the application demonstrates wastewater can be treated on-site and meets the relevant setback to waterways.

The application was referred to the responsible water authority, Central Highlands Water, and North Central Catchment Management Authority in accordance with Clause 66 of the Pyrenees Planning Scheme. No objections were received from these authorities.

Consideration of objection

One objection was received. The objection related to the location of the dwelling and subsequent impact on a view. Protection of personal views are not a relevant planning consideration. State and local policy requires consideration of the impact of the proposed buildings and works on key views and rural vistas. This has been assessed through the application. The dwelling is single storey-built form with modest building height and footprint and is considered consistent with the relevant policy.

Bushfire Prone Area

The responsible authority must assess any application for a dwelling within a Bushfire Prone Area for compliance against siting, defendable space, access, and water supply measures. This was introduced into all planning scheme in Victoria in May 2026.

The application has considered the bushfire hazard presented by the landscape and within 150 m of the subject site. The dwelling is sited within a cleared area and can continued to be managed to provide appropriate defendable space.

Subject to planning permit conditions, the application demonstrates an appropriate response to the Bushfire Prone Area conditions.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Pillar 4 - Infrastructure

4a. Plan, build, and maintain essential infrastructure.

4c. Support and facilitate appropriate land use.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

The application was required to be advertised pursuant to Section 52 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1 - application documents [12.2.1.1 - 234 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - Objection [12.2.1.2 - 3 pages]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

The council's assessment of the application and management of the planning permit process has been partially met by the fees paid pursuant to the Planning and Environment Act 1987. There are no significant risks associated with the issue of a notice of decision to grant a planning permit for this proposal.

CONCLUSION

The proposed application for the use and development of a dwelling and outbuildings demonstrates a high level of compliance with the purposes and outcomes sought by the Pyrenees Planning Scheme, including though the consideration of the objection received.

Subject to conditions being included on any Notice to Grant a Planning Permit granted, the proposed use and development is considered an acceptable outcome.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

Having caused notice of Planning Application PA26050 to be given under Section 52 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and having considered all the matters required under Section 60 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, decides to issue a **Notice of Decision to Grant a Planning Permit** under the provisions of the Pyrenees Planning Scheme in respect of the land known and described as Crown Allotment 1 Township of Lexton and Crown Allotment 3 Township of Lexton, Butler Street, Lexton for the use and development of the land for a dwelling and outbuildings subject to the following conditions:

Compliance with Documents Approved under this Permit

1. At all times what the permit allows must be carried out in accordance with the requirements of any document approved under this permit to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

Approved and Endorsed Plans – Changes Required

2. Before the development starts, plans must be approved and endorsed by the responsible authority. The plans must:

- a) be prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority
- b) be drawn to scale with dimensions
- c) submitted in electronic form
- d) be generally in accordance with the plans that form part of the application but modified to show:

- Butler Street crossover location relocated 20 – 25 metres south-west.
- Provision of static water supply in accordance with Clause 53.02 of the Pyrenees Planning Scheme.
- Notation on the site plan that the static water supply will have CFA approved fittings in accordance with Clause 53.02 of the Pyrenees Planning Scheme.
- Schedule of colours and finishes for the dwelling.
- Dwelling plans to have a minimum BAL 12.5.
- Setbacks from the dwelling and Butler Street of the two sheds nearest to the dwelling.

Layout Not Altered

3. The layout of the development must not be altered from the layout on the approved and endorsed plans without the written consent of the responsible authority.

Consolidation

4. Prior to the issue of certificate of occupancy for the dwelling, the following lots must be

consolidated under the *Subdivision Act 1988* to the satisfaction of the responsible authority:

- a. Crown Allotment 1 on TP834307J
- b. Crown Allotment 3 on TP834307J

Agreements under Section 173 of the Act

5. Before the development starts, the owner of the land must enter into an agreement with the responsible authority under section 173 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The agreement must provide the following:

- a) The development and continued use of a dwelling in the Farming Zone has been permitted on the basis that the dwelling is reasonably required for the sustainable management of the land in accordance with an endorsed Land/Farm Management Plan, and the dwelling will only be used on that basis.
- b) The farming initiatives as stated in the approved Land/Farm Management Plan must be demonstrably commenced prior to the initial occupation of the dwelling and thereafter carried out on an on-going basis to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.
- c) The dwelling must not be subdivided from the lot in the future, and the lot must not be subdivided to increase the number of lots, by excision or otherwise.
- d) The farming initiatives as stated in the approved Land/Farm Management Plan must be demonstrably commenced prior to the initial occupation of the dwelling and thereafter carried out on an on-going basis to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

Prior to Certificate of Occupancy being issued an application must be made to the Register of Titles to register the Section 173 agreement on the title to the land under section 181 of the Act.

The Responsible Authority may release the owner from these obligations and/or vary the requirements upon the written request of the owner. The Responsible Authority must be satisfied that the release and/or variation to the agreement will result in a better planning outcome or that the agreement is no longer required.

The owner of the land must pay all of the responsible authority's reasonable legal costs and expenses of this agreement, including preparation, execution, and registration on title.

Engineering

6. Prior to the commencement of works, vehicle access to the property is to be constructed or upgraded in accordance with Pyrenees Shire Council's IDM Standard drawing SD255, plans and specifications set under an approved Road Excavation Permit (including vehicle crossing) to the satisfaction of the Pyrenees Shire Council's Engineering Department.

7. Any redundant vehicle crossings must be removed, and the nature strip reinstated to the satisfaction of the Pyrenees Shire Council's Engineering Department.

Environmental Health

8. Before the development is occupied, all sewage from the proposed development must be discharged into a new, EPA approved, on-site wastewater treatment system as described in the Land Capability Assessment Report prepared by Michael Shelly of MES Wastewater, file number: 2026-D-0028 dated 16 April 2026 to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

9. Before the development is occupied, all sewage and sullage wastewater from the proposed development must be retained within the property boundaries of the subject land to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

Use

10. The use must be managed to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority so that the amenity of the area is not detrimentally affected including through the:

- a) transportation of materials, goods, or commodities to or from the land.
- b) appearance of any building works or materials.
- c) emission of noise, artificial light, smell, fumes, smoke, vapour, steam, soot, ash, dust, water, waste products, grit, or oil.
- d) presence of vermin

Habitation of sheds prohibited

11. No habitation of the outbuildings/sheds approved under this permit is allowed without the further written consent of the Responsible Authority.

Watercourse crossings

12. Where an accessway crosses a watercourse a piped crossing or other suitable bridging structure must be constructed to the satisfaction of the responsible authority

Expiry – Development

13. This permit as it relates to use development (buildings and works) will expire if one of the following circumstances applies:

- a) The development is not started within 2 years of the issued date of this permit.
- b) The development is not completed within 4 years of the issued date of this permit.
- c) The use is not started within 2 years of the issue date of this permit.

In accordance with Section 69 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, an application may be submitted to the responsible authority for an extension of the periods referred to in this condition.

Notes

Bushfire Prone Area

This site is located within a designated Bush Fire Prone Area. Compliance with AS3959 is required.

Building Approvals

This permit does not constitute any authority to carry out any building works or occupy the building or part of the building unless all relevant building permits are obtained. The works hereby approved must accord with the requirements of the Building Act 1993, Building Regulations 2006, and Building Code of Australia 2014.

N-HLTH05 Installation of On-Site Sewerage Disposal System

Approval to install or alter an onsite wastewater treatment system must also be obtained from Council's Health Department.

Road Excavation Permit

A Road Excavation Permit is required to complete any works within the road reserve including the construction or upgrade of the vehicle crossing prior to the commencement of the works associated with the planning permit.

Cr Rebecca Wardlaw / Cr Megan Phelan

That Council defer consideration of Planning Application PA26050 in respect of the land known and described as Crown Allotment 1 Township of Lexton and Crown Allotment 3 Township of Lexton, Butler Street, Lexton for the use and development of the land for a dwelling and outbuildings until further discussion can take place between Council officers and the applicants.

CARRIED

12.2.2. DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Presenter: Douglas Gowans - Director Assets and Development

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

Report Author: Dennis Nikoltsis – Community Safety and Amenity Officer

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

File No: -

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council adoption of the Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) 2026–2029.

BACKGROUND

Council is required to prepare and review a Domestic Animal Management Plan every four years in accordance with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

The DAMP provides a framework for Council to:

- Manage domestic animals, particularly dogs and cats;
- Promote responsible pet ownership;
- Support community safety; and
- Enhance animal welfare outcomes.

The Pyrenees Shire DAMP 2026–2029 has been developed to meet this requirement and must be submitted to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) by December 2026.

On the 18 May 2026, Council endorsed the draft DAMP 2026-2029 to be published for public exhibition and community consultation.

In the 6 weeks between 1 June 2026 and 21 July 2026, Council received one submission to the draft DAMP. A survey was also undertaken with the community.

The submission and survey recommendations have been summarised with updated objectives incorporated into the DAMP where suitable.

A copy of the adopted Pyrenees Shire DAMP 2026-2029 will be submitted to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) as required by the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

A final DAMP for 2026–2029 has been prepared and is attached to this report (**Attachment 1**).

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

All actions within the 2022–2025 DAMP have been reviewed.

The Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026–2029 has been prepared following a review of the current 2022–2025 DAMP.

The review assessed all existing actions and identified those completed, ongoing, in progress, or not achievable within current resource constraints. The DAMP retains relevant and achievable actions and removes those that are not feasible, with justification provided for transparency.

The DAMP adopts a practical and resource-conscious approach, with a focus on:

- Responsible pet ownership
- Public safety and nuisance reduction
- Animal welfare outcomes
- Effective compliance and enforcement

Ongoing and Carried Forward Actions

Actions have been carried forward into the DAMP where they:

- Remain relevant;
- Require ongoing delivery; or
- Are achievable within the next plan period.

Removed Actions

Actions deemed not achievable within current or anticipated resourcing have been removed.

These actions are documented in the DAMP to ensure transparency and provide context to the community.

Key Challenges

Some of the key challenges identified in the plan include:

- Declining registration numbers
- Feral and semi-owned cat population
- Dog attacks on livestock and animals
- Nuisance complaints (barking dogs, roaming animals)

Key Actions/Strategic Priorities

Key actions and priorities to address these challenges include:

- Increase registration and identification compliance
- Reduce overpopulation (especially cats) by increasing desexing and microchipping initiatives
- Minimise dog attacks and nuisance behaviour with improved management of complaints and enhancement of dog attack prevention and investigation processes
- Improve education and responsible pet ownership campaigns
- Strengthen enforcement and compliance activities including a review and update local laws and Orders (off-leash areas, cat curfew)
- Strengthen training and capability of authorised officers

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Consultation

Consultation for the Draft DAMP 2026–2029 was undertaken via public exhibition in June and July 2026.

This approach generated meaningful feedback and engagement with the Pyrenees Shire community.

The following consultation activities were undertaken:

- Website page – Plan and Survey (219 page views and 73 survey responses)
- Media release
- Drop-in sessions – Pyrenees Resource Centres - Beaufort/Avoca - June/July 2026
- Community Opportunity – Pyrenees markets – Beaufort/Avoca – June/ July 2026
- Social media posts
- Public notices

The community survey identified several positive findings regarding the management of dogs and cats, while also highlighting opportunities for Council to continue improving community education and responsible pet ownership.

- **Education and responsible pet ownership** emerged as the strongest area of community response, with 63 per cent of respondents identifying this as a priority. This reinforces the importance of continuing Council's education and awareness initiatives to promote responsible pet ownership and compliance with relevant requirements.
- **Cat curfew:** Sixty per cent of respondents support a 24-hour cat curfew, while a further 35 per cent supported the continuation of the current cat curfew. This represents strong community support for cat management measures. Council will continue to implement the current cat curfew and consider whether an extension of the curfew is appropriate during the next four years.
- **Awareness of local laws:** Seventy-eight per cent of respondents reported being very or somewhat familiar with Council's local laws, indicating a high level of community awareness. Only 3 per cent reported being unfamiliar with local laws. The forthcoming Local Laws Review provides an opportunity to further strengthen community awareness and understanding of Council's local laws and associated requirements.
- **Management of dogs and cats:** Seventy-four per cent of respondents rated Council's management of dogs and cats as good or very good. Only 3 per cent rated Council's performance as poor or very poor, demonstrating a strong level of community satisfaction with Council's current approach to animal management.
- **Key community concerns:** Roaming cats were identified as the most significant animal management issue, with 27 per cent of respondents identifying this as a concern. Roaming dogs were identified by 17 per cent, while dog attacks or aggressive dogs were identified by 16 per cent. Fourteen per cent of respondents reported having no major concerns.
- **Dog off-leash and on-leash requirements:** Seven per cent of respondents supported or strongly supported on-leash dog requirements. This feedback will be considered alongside broader community views and relevant regulatory and animal management considerations when reviewing Council's approach to dog management.

Submission – Mount Cole - Pyrenees Nature Group

The submission advocates for the 24-hour containment of cats indoors or within secure outdoor cat enclosures to promote responsible pet ownership, enhance cat welfare and safety, and minimise impacts on native wildlife.

The submitter encourages Council to become a *Safe Cat*, *Safe Wildlife* supporter and to undertake a responsible pet ownership awareness campaign promoting 24-hour cat containment. The submission acknowledges Council's existing requirement for cats to be confined at night within townships in the Pyrenees and emphasises the importance of further community education and awareness regarding the benefits of 24-hour cat containment.

All submissions received were considered, with minor changes made to the exhibited Draft DAMP. A copy of the Submission is provided as **Attachment 2**.

Subject to Council adoption, a copy of the DAMP will be provided to DEECA as required under the Domestic Animals Act 1994, and officers will write to submitters, advising them of the online location of the DAMP.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Pillar 1 - People

1b. Community safety and wellbeing.

Pillar 5 - Community-Centric

5b. Work constructively and in partnership to solve issues early and deliver outcomes building trust.

5c. Ensure timely, clear, and consistent communication underpinned by transparency.

5d. Deliver high-quality services with continuous improvement focus.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Community Engagement has occurred as outlined in the report.

FINANCIAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS

Delivery of actions within the DAMP are subject to financial constraints that will be assessed and monitored throughout the period of the plan.

The DAMP proactively seeks to manage and mitigate risks associated with dog and cat ownership in the Shire to ensure the safety of the community, welfare of animals, and protection of the environment.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 2026-2029- Pyrenees DAM P- FINAL Oct 2026 [12.2.2.1 - 37 pages]
2. Mt Cole Pyrenees Nature Group Submission [12.2.2.2 - 4 pages]

Cr Megan Phelan / Cr Simon Tol

That Council:

1. Adopt the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029.

CARRIED

12.3. CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

12.3.1. CHRISTMAS CLOSURE PERIOD

Presenter: Jacinta Erdody - Director Corporate and Community Services

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

Report Author: Jacinta Erdody – 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

The purpose of this report is to request the Council's endorsement of the proposed closure of the Pyrenees Shire Council offices and other arrangements during the 2026/27 Christmas and New Year holiday period.

BACKGROUND

It has been the practice of the Pyrenees Shire Council to close during the Christmas / New Year holiday period. The holiday period closure enables staff to have time away from the workplace with little impact on service delivery and at the same time provides the opportunity for staff to reduce outstanding leave balances.

There is limited demand for municipal services over this period and the closure is generally accepted by the community. Where mutually convenient, staff will also be encouraged to take additional annual leave around the official office closures.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

The following closures or service amendments are proposed:

End of year staff break-up function

Each year the Pyrenees Shire Council holds an end of year break up function to thank all staff for their contribution to the organisation over the past 12 months. To facilitate this celebration, all Council facilities and services will close at 12pm on that date.

Council Facility Holiday Period Hours

Date	Council Offices	Municipal Depots	Information/ Resource Centres	Emergency Management
Fri 18 Dec 26	Closed from 12pm for end of year staff function			
Thur 24 Dec 26	9am – 3pm	Minimum staff coverage*	10am - 3pm	In accordance with Municipal Emergency Management procedures.
Fri 25 Dec 26	Christmas Day – Public Holiday			
Sat 26 Dec 26	Boxing Day – Public Holiday			
Sun 27 Dec 26	Closed	Closed	10am - 1pm	
Mon 28 Dec 26	Boxing Day – Public Holiday in lieu		10am – 1pm (due to PH in lieu)	Council will have a roster for emergency response over the holiday period closure.
Tue 29 Dec 26	Closed – Staff Leave	Minimum staff coverage*	10am - 5pm**	
Wed 30 Dec 26	Closed – Staff Leave	Minimum staff coverage*	10am - 5pm**	
Thur 31 Dec 26	Closed – Staff Leave	Minimum staff coverage*	10am - 5pm**	
Fri 1 Jan 27	New Years Day – Public Holiday			
Sat 2 Jan 27	Closed	Closed	10am - 1pm	

Sun 3 Jan 27	Closed	Closed	10am - 1pm	
Mon 4 Jan 27	Back to normal operational hours			

*2 staff at each depot to support safe work environment

**subject to staff availability, may be reduced hours

Notification of any other service charges over this period (Eg Waste and Recycling) will be published within our weekly media and on our social media.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Pillar 1 - People

1a. Inclusivity and accessibility.

Pillar 5 - Community-Centric

5a. Foster values driven inclusive culture, which is responsive, accountable and aligned to priority.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

All changes to Council facilities and services will be published within our weekly media page and on our social media pages.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

CONCLUSION

Closure of Council facilities during the holiday period is well accepted by our community and provides a great opportunity for our staff to take a step back and enjoy a break. Essential service delivery and appropriate resourcing for emergency response will be maintained during the holiday period.

Cr Rebecca Wardlaw / Cr Megan Phelan

That Council endorses the closure of Council facilities and other arrangements outlined in the below table during the 2026/27 Christmas / New Year holiday period.

Date	Council Offices	Municipal Depots	Information/ Resource Centres	Emergency Management
Fri 18 Dec 26	Closed from 12pm for end of year staff function			
Thur 24 Dec 26	9am – 3pm	Minimum staff coverage*	10am - 3pm	In accordance with Municipal Emergency Management procedures.
Fri 25 Dec 26	Christmas Day – Public Holiday			
Sat 26 Dec 26	Boxing Day – Public Holiday			
Sun 27 Dec 26	Closed	Closed	10am - 1pm	
Mon 28 Dec 26	Boxing Day – Public Holiday in lieu		10am – 1pm (due to PH in lieu)	Council will have a roster for emergency response over the holiday period closure.
Tue 29 Dec 26	Closed – Staff Leave	Minimum staff coverage*	10am - 5pm**	
Wed 30 Dec 26	Closed – Staff Leave	Minimum staff coverage*	10am - 5pm**	
Thur 31 Dec 26	Closed – Staff Leave	Minimum staff coverage*	10am - 5pm**	

Fri 1 Jan 27	New Years Day – Public Holiday			
Sat 2 Jan 27	Closed	Closed	10am - 1pm	
Sun 3 Jan 27	Closed	Closed	10am - 1pm	
Mon 4 Jan 27	Back to normal operational hours			
*2 staff at each depot to support safe work environment				
**subject to staff availability, may be reduced hours				

CARRIED

12.3.2. AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE - SEPTEMBER 2026

Presenter: Jacinta Erdody - Director Corporate and Community Services

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

Report Author: Jacinta Erdody – 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 the Council with an update of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting M021 held on 15 September 2026.

BACKGROUND

The *Local Government Act 2020* Section 54 requires Council to establish an Audit and Risk Committee. The existing committee has three independent members, and the Charter was most recently reviewed and adopted at the March 2025 meeting.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

A copy of the minutes from September 2026 is attached for Council information. An overview of the meeting included:

- A report from the Interim CEO which covered topics such as transition into Pyrenees, Bushfire recovery and Carranballac Recreation Reserve insurance, recent flooding, election advocacy, community funding program and an update to the Burke Street Housing project;
- Regular reports and updates were received from Council's External and Internal Auditors;
- Financial, Compliance and Governance reports were provided, including an update on outstanding audit actions;
- A biannual report was received from the Chairperson (a copy is attached);
- An updated Workplan of reports to future meetings and progress towards previously identified reporting; and
- An overview of progress made towards delivering against the Council Plan 2025-2029.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Pillar 5 - Community-Centric

5c. Ensure timely, clear and consistent communication underpinned by transparency.

5d. Deliver high quality services with continuous improvement focus.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 2026.09.15 - M021 - MINUTES - Audit and Risk Committee Meeting - 15 September 2026 [12.3.2.1 - 21 pages]
2. Chairperson report ARC Sep 26 [12.3.2.2 - 3 pages]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

All financial and risk matters were addressed within reports presented to the Audit and Risk Committee.

CONCLUSION

Council continues to hold the Audit and Risk Committee meetings in accordance with our legislative obligations and approved Charter. This report provides an overview of the topics discussed at the September 2026 meeting. Any queries relating to the meeting may be directed to the designated Councillor representatives.

Cr Simon Tol / Cr Megan Phelan

That Council:

1. Acknowledges and thanks the Chairperson, Mr Tori for his September 2026 biannual report as attached; and
2. Receives and notes the Audit and Risk Committee September 2026 minutes as attached.

CARRIED

12.3.3. ANNUAL REPORT 2026

Presenter: Jacinta Erdody - Director Corporate and Community Services

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

Report Author: Jacinta Erdody – Director Corporate and Community Services

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

File No: 16/17/02

PURPOSE

On behalf of the Pyrenees Shire Mayor, this report presents the 2026 Pyrenees Shire Council Annual Report.

BACKGROUND

The *Local Government Act 2020*, Section 100, requires Council to have a Council meeting to consider the Annual Report. This Section requires the Mayor to report on the implementation of the Council Plan by presenting the Annual Report at a Council meeting open to the public within four months of the end of the financial year.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

The Annual Report 2026 has been prepared in accordance with Section 98 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and contains outcomes against various matters as defined for the 2025/26 financial year:

- Operations of the Council which must contain:
 - A statement of progress on implementation of the Council Plan including strategic indicators;
 - A statement of progress in relation to the major initiatives identified within the budget or revised budget;
 - The prescribed indicators of service performance for services provided by Council and funded in the budget during the financial year;
- An audited performance statement which must contain:
 - Prescribed indicators of service, financial performance and sustainable capacity performance for the services provided by Council and funded within the financial year;
- Audited financial statements which must contain:
 - Any other information prescribed by the regulations including preparation in accordance with the regulations;
- A copy of the auditors report on the performance and financial statements; and
- Any other matters prescribed by regulations.

The annual report provides a factual overview of the 2025/26 financial year, including statistical performance and financial information, information on the capital projects started and completed, and any information related to the economic status of the shire.

The Council administration delivers a range of 'community facing' services, including:

- Advocacy and Communications;
- Economic Development and Tourism;
- Child and Family services;
- Recreation and Community Development;
- Financial sustainability through responsible budgeting;
- Emergency Recovery support and leadership;
- Library and Resource Centres;
- Waste Management;
- Local roads maintenance and reconstruction;
- Asset and infrastructure management for Council owned and managed facilities;
- Planning, environmental health and development;

- Community safety and public health; and
- Environmental sustainability.

Council dedicates significant resources to meeting its legislative obligations and delivering a broad range of community services and infrastructure that support the wellbeing and prosperity of our community. Performance is assessed against service performance indicators and measures, with results presented in the Annual Report.

Pyrenees Shire Council continues to experience economic and operational challenges across the community with continuing inflationary cost pressures within a rate capped environment. These pressures have been compounded by broader economic conditions, including increased fuel and energy costs, which directly impact the delivery of council services and capital works programs. The growing frequency and severity of natural disasters also place considerable financial and operational demands on local government, requiring significant investment in emergency response, recovery and resilience measures. While state and federal disaster funding programs provide important support, the complexity of claim processes and limitations on eligible expenditure can delay reimbursement and leave councils exposed to substantial unfunded costs.

The Annual Report continues to provide transparency and visibility of Council operations, services and financial management outcomes for the community. A digital copy of the draft Annual Report will be tabled at the October Ordinary Meeting of Council and a final version will be made available when printed.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Pillar 5 - Community-Centric

5c. Ensure timely, clear and consistent communication underpinned by transparency.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Presentation of our 2026 Annual Report will be provided to our community once final versions of the report are available in hard copy and digital version.

ATTACHMENTS

1. PSC Annual Report 2025-26 with Performance and Financials [**12.3.3.1** - 164 pages]
2026 Pyrenees Shire Annual Report to be circulated separately ahead of the meeting.

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

All financial and risk implications have been discussed in the report and in further detail within the Annual Report itself.

CONCLUSION

The 2026 Annual Report of the Pyrenees Shire Council has been prepared in accordance with the legislative and regulatory requirements, allowing the Mayor to present the report to the community.

Cr Megan Phelan / Cr Simon Tol

That Council:

1. Receives and notes the Pyrenees Shire Annual Report 2026 as presented by the Mayor; and
2. Approves the Director Corporate and Community Services to authorise minor editorial, formatting and typographical amendments identified during final proofreading of the designed Annual Report 2026, provided these do not alter its substantive content.

CARRIED

13. COUNCILLOR REPORTS AND GENERAL BUSINESS

Cr Ferrari provided an overview of Cr Kehoe's activities

- Attended the Beaufort CWA 100-Year Celebration, a fantastic milestone event, despite the very cold weather on the day.
- Attended ongoing Carranballac Project Working Group meetings, which are now held bi-monthly as required.
- Attended a Rural Councils Victoria meeting.
- Participated in CEO recruitment meetings.
- Attended Council briefings and Council meetings.

Cr Tol

- Council and community activities have continued as usual, with some events and meetings unable to be attended due to other commitments.
- Noted the positive signs of confidence in the local hotel and hospitality industry, with the opening of the Elmhurst Hotel, the Lexton Hotel, the Waubra Hotel and the recent change of ownership of the Learmonth Hotel.
- Raised ongoing concerns regarding the poor condition of roads and the prevalence of potholes, which continue to cause problems for motorists, including damage to tyres. Emphasised the need to continue advocating for repairs. Traffic lights are now on the main highway in Waubra due to pot holes.
- Welcomed the early commencement of roadside slashing in preparation for the upcoming fire season, noting the importance of getting this work underway given the season is expected to arrive quickly.

Cr Wardlaw

- Attended lots of engagements around the Shire.
- Attended the McFarlane dress collection exhibition in Skipton, which was an enjoyable and engaging evening.
- Attended the Loddon Valley Arts Trail Red Bricks tour at Serpentine, featuring an impressive display created by an artist who has previously exhibited work in the shire. The display used images printed from vinyl prints to tell the story of the family who built the shearing shed, a fabulous display.
- Attended Just a Farmer at Moonambel with Cr Phelan. The event was well-presented and well attended, providing an opportunity for community connection and discussion around a challenging topic.
- Advised that the Avoca Dressage scheduled for this weekend has been cancelled. Partly due to low numbers and the condition of local roads affecting travel for horses and participants.
- Provided an update on plans to have the flagpole at the Avoca Post Office reinstated, with a flag in place for Remembrance Day on 11 November.

Cr Phelan

- Reported on a recent overseas trip to Georgia, describing it as a fabulous country and a memorable experience.
- Attended the Pyrenees Group CFA brigade members' gathering at Barkly on Sunday, featuring a demonstration by a Black Hawk helicopter. Gained an insight into how the helicopters are used in firefighting operations. The helicopter demonstrated had previously served in Korea before being transported to Toowoomba for decommissioning and refitting for firefighting duties.
- Attended the Just a Farmer event, which was a moving and powerful experience, particularly given the presence of community members personally affected by the loss of loved ones to suicide.

Cr Ferrari

- Attended the Langi Kal Kal Community Advisory Group meeting alongside Councillor Tol and the CEO. Discussions included the Landmate program, which undertakes community-based projects. Further meetings are planned to identify opportunities to utilise the program to deliver local community improvements.
- Attended the Rural Councils Victoria Forum in Swan Hill, noting the strong commitment to advocacy on behalf of rural councils. The forum provided a valuable opportunity to share experiences and discuss common challenges with councils of different sizes and demographics, while recognising the unique issues facing the Pyrenees Shire.
- Attended the Beaufort CWA 100-Year Celebration, acknowledging the significant contribution of the CWA to local communities. Reflected on the organisation's longstanding community support, its work during challenging times and the many initiatives undertaken behind the scenes.
- Participated in ABC radio interviews, providing opportunity to discuss local government matters and promote Council's work.
- Attended the advocacy launch for the pipeline project in Natte Yallock and reaffirmed support for ongoing advocacy to secure improved water infrastructure. Highlighted the importance of water security for northern communities and the need to continue engaging with government representatives.
- Continuing work on CEO Recruitment
- Continuing attendance at Carranballac Project Working group meetings. Cr Fer
- Celebrated progress on the Beaufort Regional Worker Accommodation project with Martha Haylett. The 10 houses are expected to be ready for occupancy in the near future and will help address the shortage of worker accommodation across the municipality.

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.

Cr Megan Phelan / Cr Simon Tol

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:

14.1 - MW2632 Tender – Burke St Footpath and associated civil works

14.2 - Tender – C2627-002 Guardrail Replacement & Associated Works (Incl. AGRN 1108)

CARRIED

The live streaming of Ordinary Meeting of Council - 19 October 2026 stopped at 6:34pm to consider confidential items.

The live stream re-commenced at 6.51pm and the Mayor chose to report on confidential items discussed in closed Council.

15. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Ordinary Meeting of Council - 19 October 2026 closed at 6.52pm.

Minutes of the Meeting confirmed _____

Mayor Cr Damian Ferrari