



STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN

2017/18 TO 2021/22

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

The Strategic Resource Plan (SRP) is the key medium term financial plan produced by Council on a rolling basis that summarises the resourcing forecasts for at least four years. The SRP forms part of the Council Plan.

Resource planning is important for ensuring that a Council remains sustainable in the long term and good practice is to extend forecasting for a ten year period, to take account of long lived assets such as road and drainage infrastructure. Strathbogie Shire Council has prepared a 10 year long term financial plan to enable a longer term perspective of the ongoing financial sustainability of the Council and the impact of financial decisions into the longer term.

In preparing the SRP Council must take into account all other plans and strategies in regards to services and initiatives which commit financial and non-financial resources over the four year period.

Section 125(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act) requires Councils to prepare a SRP and include this in the Council Plan. The SRP outlines the resources required to achieve Council's strategic objectives expressed in the Council Plan. Section 126 of the Act expects that:

- a. The SRP is a plan of the resources to achieve the Council Plan strategic objectives;
- b. The SRP will:
 - i. Include financial statements describing the financial resources in respect of at least the next four financial years;
 - ii. Include statements describing the non-financial resources including the human resources in respect of the next four financial years;
 - iii. Take into account services and initiatives contained in any plan adopted by Council and if the Council proposes to adopt a plan to provide services or take initiatives, the resources required must be consistent with the SRP;
 - iv. Be reviewed during the preparation of the Council Plan; and
 - v. Be adopted no later than 30 June each year and a copy must be available for public inspection at the Council office and on the Council internet website.
- c. In preparing the SRP, Council should comply with the principles of sound financial management as prescribed in the Act, being to:
 - i. Prudently manage financial risks relating to debt, assets and liabilities
 - ii. Provide reasonable stability in the level of rate burden
 - iii. Consider the financial effects of council decisions on future generations
 - iv. Provide full, accurate and timely disclosure of financial information.

Significant changes to this revised SRP 2017/18 are:

- Council will increase municipal rates and municipal charge collections by 2 percent in the 2017/18 financial year. This level allows Council to maintain existing service levels, comply with Rate Capping legislation, fund a number of

new initiatives and continue to allocate sufficient funds to renew the municipality's infrastructure;

- Capital Expenditure is \$ 14.542 million in 2017/18; and
- No new borrowings in 2017/18.

1.2 Purpose of Strategic Resource Plan

The purpose of the Strategic Resource Plan is to:

- Establish a financial framework over the next 4 years to ensure Council's strategic objectives, as expressed in its Council Plan, are achieved;
- Provide an assessment of the resources (financial and non-financial) required to accomplish the objectives and strategies included in the Council Plan;
- Establish a basis to measure Council's adherence to its policies and strategies; and
- Assist Council to comply with sound financial management principles, in accordance with the Act and to plan for the long-term financial sustainability of the municipality.

The diagram below details the key strategic areas covered by the SRP and the integration



required between Council's financial strategies.

Figure 1: Strategic Resource Plan – Key Strategic Areas

1.3 SRP Objectives

The 2017/18 SRP is intended to contribute to the following objectives in the 10-year timeframe:

- Maintain and where possible increase the existing range and level of service provision and improve the understanding of the range and levels of service provided;
- Maintain a viable cash position, ensuring Council remains financially sustainable in the long-term;
- Achieve operating surpluses with the exclusion of all non-operational items such as granted assets and non recurrent capital income within the 10 year timeframe of the long term financial plan;
- Reduce debt to a low to moderate level to allow capacity to fund future infrastructure;
- Continue to pursue recurrent grant funding for strategic capital funds from the State and Federal government; and
- Provide for rate increases that establish a funding level for renewal demand being invested at 100 percent.

1.4 Strategic Financial Direction

A number of strategic challenges remain ahead including renewing existing assets, continuing to provide an appropriate range and level of services to a growing community, maintaining a sound financial position and addressing the need for capital expansion.

The other related issues are the risks and liabilities that Council and the community face if Council does not invest in asset renewal at an adequate rate.

Council, as part of establishing its SRP, revises its borrowing strategy, asset management, capital investment, discretionary and statutory reserves, capital works program, the range and level of services provided and the revenue-raising strategy.

The SRP establishes the strategic financial direction for Council to meet the funding and investment challenges that lie ahead in the next 10-years.

The SRP is prepared in conjunction with the Council Plan to ensure the affordability of activities included in the Council Plan.

A Glossary of Terms is attached in **Appendix A**.

Appendix B details Council's Financial Statements which are an outcome of this SRP.

1.5 Key Strategic Directions

The following table highlights the key strategies of this SRP.

Each section includes detailed analysis to support the strategies.

The key strategies provide direction for the preparation of the 2017/18 Budget.

Section	Strategic Direction
Section 3 Financial Sustainability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Strathbogie Shire Council continues to benchmark with other Victorian Councils and those within the Small Rural category. 2. That Strathbogie Shire Council applies the outcomes of this SRP to the 2017/18 Budget. 3. That Strathbogie Shire Council achieves an operating surplus over the life of this SRP.
Section 4 Service Provision and Planning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Strathbogie Shire Council continue the Service Planning process in 2017/18 via a strategic service planning framework incorporating annual budget, departmental operational plans, capital works evaluation and long term financial plan leading to a determination of the appropriate range and levels of service for the community. 2. That Strathbogie Shire Council, as part of the development of its Service Plans, consults with the community to determine how service levels will be reached including a combination of improved revenue raising, review of existing service levels, asset disposal and composition of the asset portfolio.
Section 5 Capital Works Program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Strathbogie Shire Council increases its capital works commitment at levels that meet or exceed the targets established in this SRP, and develops a 10-year capital works program. 2. That Strathbogie Shire Council initially focuses capital works on maintaining a critical renewal level based on maintaining a minimum service level at levels indicated in Table 7 (Section 6.5 Condition Assessment), with the next priority on renewal, upgrade and expansion. 3. That any bids for expansion, new and upgrade of assets either come from Strategic Planning documents or Service Plans.

Section	Strategic Direction
Section 6 Asset Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Strathbogie Shire Council, having established its critical renewal investment levels, maintains detailed <i>Asset Management Plans</i> (focused on renewal demand) for all classes of Council assets incorporating service level assessments. 2. That Strathbogie Shire Council, as part of the development of its <i>Service Plans</i>, consults with the community to determine how service levels will be reached including a combination of improved revenue raising, review of existing service levels, asset disposal and composition of the asset portfolio. 3. That Strathbogie Shire Council adopts as policy the annual allocation of funds to meet 100 per cent of the community's infrastructure renewal needs before it elects to upgrade or construct new assets.
Section 7 Long-term Strategies	<p style="text-align: center;">Borrowing</p> <p>No borrowings are proposed during the term of this SRP although substantial capacity will be available should it be required.</p>
Section 8 Restricted Assets	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Strathbogie Shire Council builds into its 10 year financial plan the estimated movements in restricted assets and provides for at least \$3 million to \$4 million in working capital to meet day to day needs. 2. That to ensure sufficient funds are available to meet operational needs, Strathbogie Shire Council retains a cash position of at least \$3 million to \$4 million after deducting restricted assets, i.e. cash received but not spent or cash to be spent for specific purposes such as developer contributions (infrastructure), security deposits etc.

Section	Strategic Direction
Section 9 Rating and Other Revenue Strategies	<p>That Strathbogie Shire Council;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. retains capital improved value (CIV) as its valuation base; 2. provides a municipal charge that approaches 10 percent of rate revenue plus the municipal charge to ensure an equitable contribution towards the unavoidable fixed costs of Strathbogie Shire Council; 3. considers future increases in environment charge and waste based on EPA, regulatory and safety requirements and the need to sustain the Council's long term waste operations strategy; 4. in 2017/18, adopts an 2.0 percent increase in total revenue for general rates and municipal charges and a 3.0 percent increase in total revenue for waste collection including funding the cost of disposal of domestic waste, recycling collection and the environment levy; 5. pursues recurrent grant funding and strategic capital funding aligned with Council Plan objectives, including benchmarking of results with other Councils; and 6. undertakes detailed analysis on the level of existing fees and charges and investigates new revenue sources and report recommendations to Council.

Table 1: Key Strategies– 2017/18

2. LINK BETWEEN STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN AND COUNCIL PLAN

2.1 Planning and Reporting Framework

The new *Local Government Performance Reporting Framework* is a key part of the local government planning and accountability reform. The Planning and Reporting Framework details the relationship between the Council Plan, the Strategic Resource Plan and Annual Budget.

Effective reporting by Councils, on the spending of public money to deliver services and infrastructure, is essential for ensuring transparency and accountability to the community and other levels of government.

The following diagram shows the relationship between the key planning and reporting documents that make up the planning and accountability framework for local government.

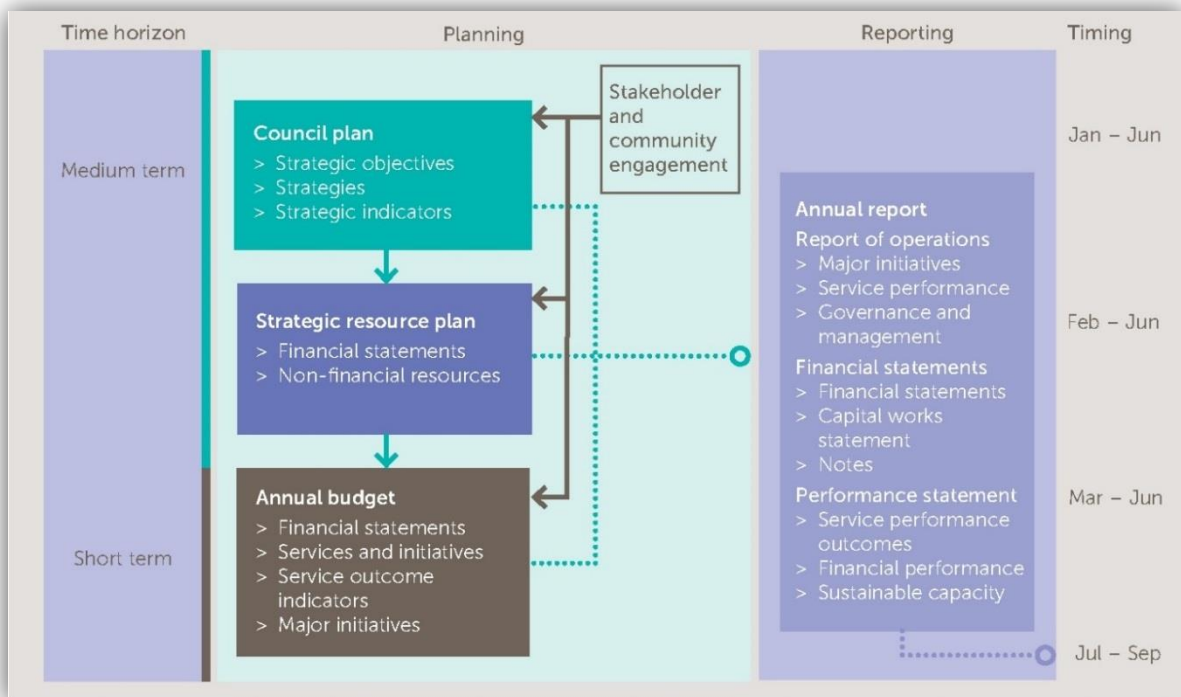


Figure 2: Planning and Reporting Framework

It also shows that there are opportunities for community and stakeholder input and feedback at each stage of the planning and reporting cycle.

This is important to ensure accountability to residents and ratepayers.

3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

3.1 Background

Financial sustainability as defined by The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) is worth noting:

“A Council’s long-term financial performance and position is sustainable where planned long term service and infrastructure levels and standards are met without unplanned increases in rates or disruptive cuts to services.”

It is against this definition that the sustainability of **Strathbogie Shire Council** can be assessed.

The precise financial strategy which supports financial sustainability and which balances community expectations with the capacity to pay, challenges Councils.

As part of this process strategies, services and investment in infrastructure must be developed that meets the community’s needs whilst simultaneously remaining affordable.

The question of what is ‘financial sustainability’ and the appropriate strategy to support this position will be answered differently by every Council.

However, there are some common questions that should be asked by Councils in the strategic development process. These include:

- the range and level of Council services that are to be offered;
- the affordability of new assets;
- the utilisation of existing assets;
- the quantum of the renewal investment compared to the renewal demand;
- the suitability of borrowings;
- whether rate and charge increases are sustainable within the rate capping requirements; and
- if the community is willing to pay for services and infrastructure.

One mechanism Councils use to support their financial strategic development is to benchmark their financial performance to like sized Councils or their neighbours.

How Councils compare and why they are different are interesting questions that assist Councils to make ultimate decisions about these complex questions.

This report contains a summary of relevant benchmarking data for Council to enable this comparative analysis to occur.

3.2 Financial Comparisons - Benchmarking

Council Annual Reports generally contain standard and consistent financial data.

These Reports have been reviewed to produce the data used for benchmarking purposes in this SRP.

The number of Councils in each category is shown in the table below.

Category Description	Councils within Category
Inner Metropolitan	22
Interface Metropolitan	9
Regional Cities	10
Large Shires	20
Small Shires	18
TOTAL	79

Table 2: Number of Councils in each Category– 2017/18

These key performance indicators are detailed within the relevant chapters of the SRP, and assist Council to compare its position to other Small Rural Councils.

3.3 Analysis of Council's Financial Sustainability

3.3.1 Financial Sustainability

The concepts most people use in their personal and business lives are basically the same as those that should be applied to local government; however, those concepts need some modification.

Councils are perpetual corporations that manage intergenerational community services and assets.

Councils provide the legal framework by which communities own infrastructure and assets collectively.

Underlying Operating Position (Surplus/Deficit)

The underlying operating result as defined by the *Institute of Chartered Accountants (2009)* is a measure of the financial sustainability of a Council.

Continuous underlying operating deficits lead to a loss in equity, reduction in asset base, drop in service standards over time and a deferral of costs to future generations.

The underlying operating result is the operational result (balanced, surplus or deficit) less gifted assets, developer contributions, asset revaluations, and write offs and impacts of asset sales. Non recurrent capital income is also excluded on the grounds it represents an "unmatched" income (expenditure is not included) and it is a non-recurring income source.

One of Strathbogie Shire Council's long-term financial goals is to achieve an operational surplus without the inclusion of any capital income (against which there is no matching expenditure in the operating statement) and abnormal items such as granted assets.

Council's position compares favourably within the Small Rural category at \$.43 million for underlying operating surplus at June 30 2016.

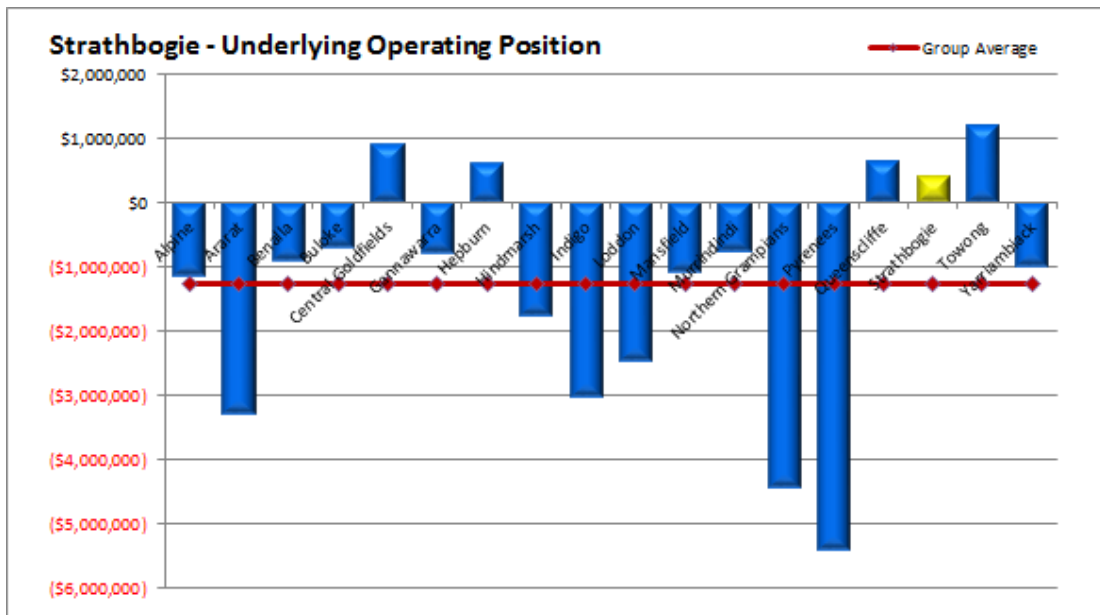


Chart 1: Underlying Operating Position – 2015/16

Liquidity

The MAV assessment asserts a working capital ratio of 100 percent is generally considered desirable. The analysis considers that Councils with working capital above 150 percent may have the capacity to reduce long-term debt and preparedness to meet day to day obligations.

Council’s working capital ratio of 203 percent indicates Council’s liquidity is in excess of the 150% benchmark and is expected to remain stable over vthe period of the SRP.

Rate effort

The ability to increase rate revenue is a significant factor in determining whether Council is potentially at risk.

Rate effort is now constrained by the State Government’s introduction of rate capping legislation in the form of its “Fair Go” Rates system. THE FGRS or rate capping introduces an annual rate cap set by the Minister for Local Government which controls general rate increases for all Councils during that financial year.

The Minister for Local Government has advised that an annual rate increase of 2.0 per cent will apply for the 2017/18 financial year. Councils can seek approval for an increase above this figure through a variation with the *Essential Service Commission* (ESC).

Council’s rating effort has been satisfactory and when benchmarked was slightly above the average effort of the Small Rural group.

Cost and efficiency

Council is statistically a “mid cost” council.

For 2015/16 Adjusted Total Expenses per capita are slightly above the Small Rural average of \$2,609 at \$2,855 while Council’s employee cost as a percentage of adjusted total expenditure is 31.53% percent, compared to Small Rural average of 38.72 percent. These figures are expected to have improved over 2016/17 and 2017/18.

Rates affordability

Australian Taxation Office (ATO) income data for wage and salary earners (PAYE) can be used to give some indication of rates affordability.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) produces a set of socio-economic indices for areas known as SEIFA. The four indices in the set, which are based on census data, reflect the level of social and economic wellbeing in local government areas. SEIFA includes the following indices:

Advantage/Disadvantage(IRSAD) : The proportion of families with high/low incomes, people with/without a tertiary education and employees in skilled/unskilled occupations. Low values indicate areas of disadvantage;

Disadvantage(IRSD): Derived from attributes such as income, educational attainment and skill level;

Economic Resources (IER): Derived from attributes relating income and wealth; and

Education and Occupation (IEO): reflect the educational and occupational levels of communities. The first three indicators have been used to reflect on the socio-economic status of local areas and therefore ability to bear significant increases in rates. The other issue Strathbogie Shire has to contend with, and which does distort these benchmarks, is that the census understates both number of residents and annual household income due to the impact of non-resident ratepayers.

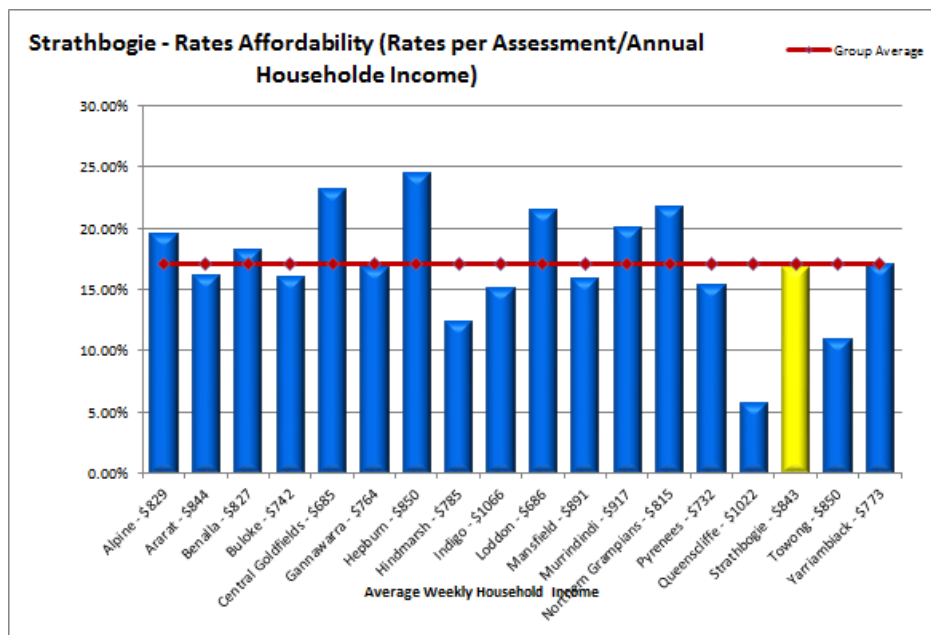


Chart 2: Rates Affordability Small Rural – 2015/16

3.3.2 Victoria Auditor General

The Victoria Auditor General’s Office (VAGO) in late 2007 prepared a report on Local Government which outlines for the first time a detailed analysis on the financial sustainability of Councils and Regional Library Corporations.

The 2015/16 result compared to the five (5) year average for VAGO’s indicators of Council viability are:







Indicator	Calculation	Description	Results 2015/16	Five (5) Year Ave	Actual Trend
Net result	Net result/ total revenue	A positive result indicates a surplus, and the larger the percentage, the stronger the result. A negative result indicates a deficit. Operating deficits cannot be sustained in the long-term.	-1.22%	9.13%	
Liquidity	Current Assets/ Current Liabilities	This measures the ability to pay existing liabilities in the next 12 months. A ratio one or more means there is more cash and liquid assets than short-term liabilities	2.04%	1.96%	
Indebtedness	Non-current liabilities/ own sourced revenue	Comparison of non-current liabilities (mainly comprised of borrowings) to own-sourced revenue. The higher the percentage, the less able to cover non-current liabilities from the revenues they generate themselves. Own-sourced revenue is used (rather than total revenue) because it does not include capital grants, which are usually tied to specific projects.	14.01%	18.10%	
Internal financing	Net Operating cash flow/ Net capital expenditure	Measures the ability of an entity to finance capital works from generated cash flow. The higher the percentage, the greater the ability for the entity to finance capital works from their own funds.	99%	121%	
Capital Replacement	Cash outflows from property, infrastructure, plant and equipment / Depreciation	Comparison of the rate of spending on infrastructure with its depreciation. Ratios higher than 1:1 indicate that spending is faster than the depreciating rate. This is a long-term indicator, as capital expenditure can be deferred in the short-term if there are insufficient funds available from operations, and borrowing is not an option.	1.43	1.48	
Renewal gap	Renewal and upgrade expenditure / Depreciation	Comparison of the rate of spending on existing assets through renewing, restoring, and replacing existing assets with depreciation. Ratios higher than 1:1 indicate that spending on existing assets is faster than the depreciating rate. Similar to the capital replacement, this is a long-term indicator, as capital expenditure can be deferred in the short term if there are insufficient funds available from operations, and borrowing is not an option.	1.35	1.29	

Table 3: Strathbogie Shire Council VAGO Indicators of Council Viability

3.4 Benchmarking

In most instances Council compares favourably with its neighbours and other Small Rural Councils. When benchmarked to other Small Rural's and neighbours Strathbogie Shire Council is characterised by:

- Underlying operating surplus;
- Close to average overall operational costs in comparison to Councils in the category;
- Slightly higher rating effort;
- Low debt ratios; and
- Capital works program with sufficient priorities given to asset renewal.

Strategic Direction

1. That Strathbogie Shire Council continues to benchmark with other Victorian Councils and those within the Small Rural category.
2. That Strathbogie Shire Council applies the outcomes of this SRP to the 2017/18 Budget.
3. That Strathbogie Shire Council achieves an operating surplus over the life of this SRP.

4. SERVICE PROVISION AND PLANNING

4.1 Introduction

The range and level of services a Council should, or is capable of, or wants to provide is a complex question to consider.

It is critical that an overall understanding of the Service Planning Framework be considered within the context of the key service drivers including:

- Community expectations: Ever changing and balanced against willingness to pay;
- Legislative requirements: e.g. Health and environmental standards and regulations;
- Organisational: Strategic Mission and Goals; and
- Resources: Availability of resources and funding, particularly within a rate capped environment.

This section includes:

- Local Government Service Planning
- Introducing a Service Planning approach
- Service Planning approach and the six key steps
- Conclusion

4.2 Local Government Service Planning

4.2.1 *Service Delivery challenges*

Strathbogie Shire Council is grappling with these questions as it seeks to achieve a balance between capital investment, renewal and service delivery. What is the correct range of services, what level should they be provided at and are they sustainable within a rate capped environment for the majority of ratepayers?

- What range of services does Council provide and do these align to the Council Plan and service strategies?
- What level of service does Council want to provide within the capacity of the community to pay?
- What assets are required to underpin the required level of service and are these fit for purpose?
- Is the current mix of capital investment ensuring assets underpinning services are safe and serviceable – is Council's renewal investment adequate?
- Are the services (range and level) sustainable over a ten year timeframe against the Council's long term financial plan?

In 2015/16, Council began a six phase Service Planning project to facilitate answers to these questions. Council's long term financial sustainability is critically linked to answering these fundamental questions.

4.2.2 What is Service Planning

Service Plans define programs and projects which need to be undertaken to deliver the service and include specific information on service levels, the service provider, service cost, service targets, performance Indicators and the reporting framework.

Service Plans identify assets (upgrades or new) required to support those services and reviews the outcomes of Asset Management Plans to ensure existing assets are appropriate for the delivery of services required.

Actions are specific, based on a 10 year horizon. Having detailed Service Plans with costed levels of service allows comparative choice decisions to be made in a transparent manner when budget adjustments are required.

The service outputs should be achievable and defined within service plans which are fully funded and resourced within the Council’s 10 year Long Term Financial Plan. Through this sustainable service delivery model Council has the capacity to deliver on its promises. Council must remain financially sustainable to continue to provide services to its community into the future.

Having detailed Service Plans with costed levels of service will allow Council to make comparative choice decisions in a transparent manner if and when service and budget adjustments are required.

Service Plans provide a clear point of reference to manage and monitor progress towards achievement of strategic outcomes as well as forming the basis of reporting to the community and State Government.

The Council acknowledges that there will always be many competing interests for scarce Council resources. Adopting a *service planning* approach throughout the organisation will address many of the service delivery priorities and in turn community perceptions of Council performance.

The process will ensure that Council remains committed to providing service levels to the community that are of acceptable standard and delivered in the most efficient and appropriate manner.

The Strategic Service Framework fits within the broader context of Council operations as illustrated below:

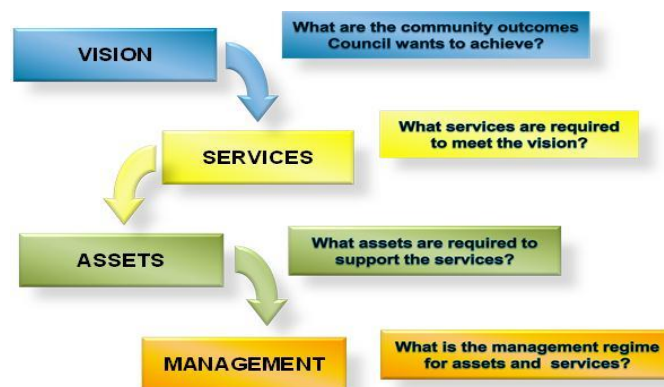


Figure 3: Strategic Service Framework

4.3 Introducing a Service Planning Approach

4.3.1 Understanding Levels of Service

Understanding the *Levels of Service* approach within a Council context is important because it facilitates:

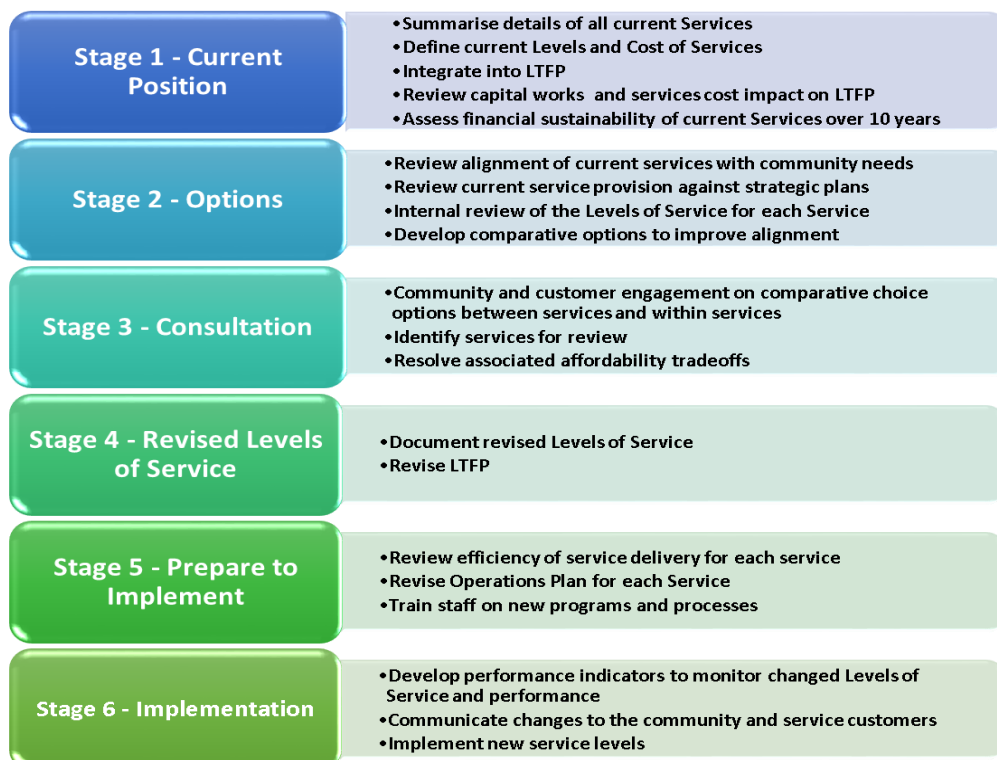
- Support for the sustainability of current services;
- Increasing satisfaction levels: minimizing the gap between what is provided and what the community needs;
- Transparent decision making for good governance; and
- A robust relationship between Levels of service and funding.

The objective for the level of service process is to enable Council to engage in community consultation efforts that focus on *Community Levels of Service*.

4.4 Service Plan Process: 6 Key Steps

The Service Planning process needs to be comprehensive and cover the entire organisation.

All services need to be included in the process (including internal services) as the Council needs to be in a position to be able to make informed comparative choice decisions.



Council proposes that the service review process be undertaken in six stages.

Figure 4: Service Plan Process - 6 Key Steps

4.4.1 Stage 1 – Current Practices Sustainability Assessment

This first stage takes a holistic approach and prepares a 10 year *Service Profile* and a *Service Cost Evaluation* for all services to assess the long term sustainability of the Council’s range of services.

At the end of **stage 1** Council will have a detailed understanding of the:

- Range of Services it provides to the community;
- Levels of Service for each Service;
- Projected cost of each service over the forward 10 year period;
- Life cycle cost impacts of capital works associated with the service delivery;
- Long term financial sustainability of Council’s current service model; and
- Framework under which Council can make informed choices around resource allocation to specific service areas.

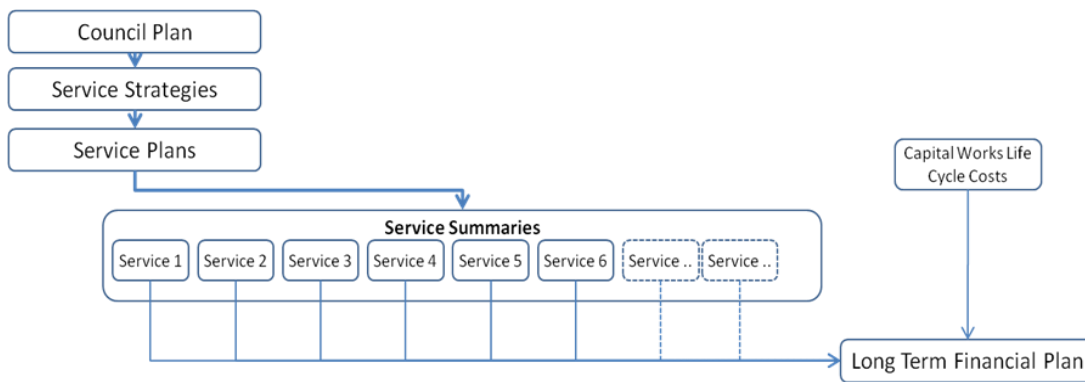


Figure 5: Current Practices Sustainability Assessment

These Plans also provide a direct linkage to *Service Plans* and to implementing program and projects defined in the *Service Plans* with specific actions and budgets generally for years 1 and into year 2.

Stage 1 is largely complete but there is a need to review data following recent restructure and the 2017/18 Budget before proceeding with Stage 2.

4.4.2 Council Budget

Council’s operation includes provision of building, planning, economic development services, community services, infrastructure planning, operations and corporate support services including finance, information technology, asset management and organisation development.

Council’s operating costs and revenues for 2017/18 are \$26.8 million and \$26.6 million respectively with forecasts for the next 10 years contained in **Appendix B**.

The Capital Works Program is explained in more detail in Section 5.

4.4.3 Human Resource Needs

Council’s Human Resources are integral to the delivery of Council’s services. Council’s overall operating expenses per assessment (excluding depreciation) in the graph below show Councils total operating costs benchmarked to like sized Councils.

Council’s operating costs per assessment are higher than average and Council’s employee costs are below the average. Employee costs are one element of these costs. Councils use employees or contractors to deliver services. Council’s employee costs as a percentage of total operating expenses have been benchmarked to similar sized Councils in Victoria are also detailed hereunder:

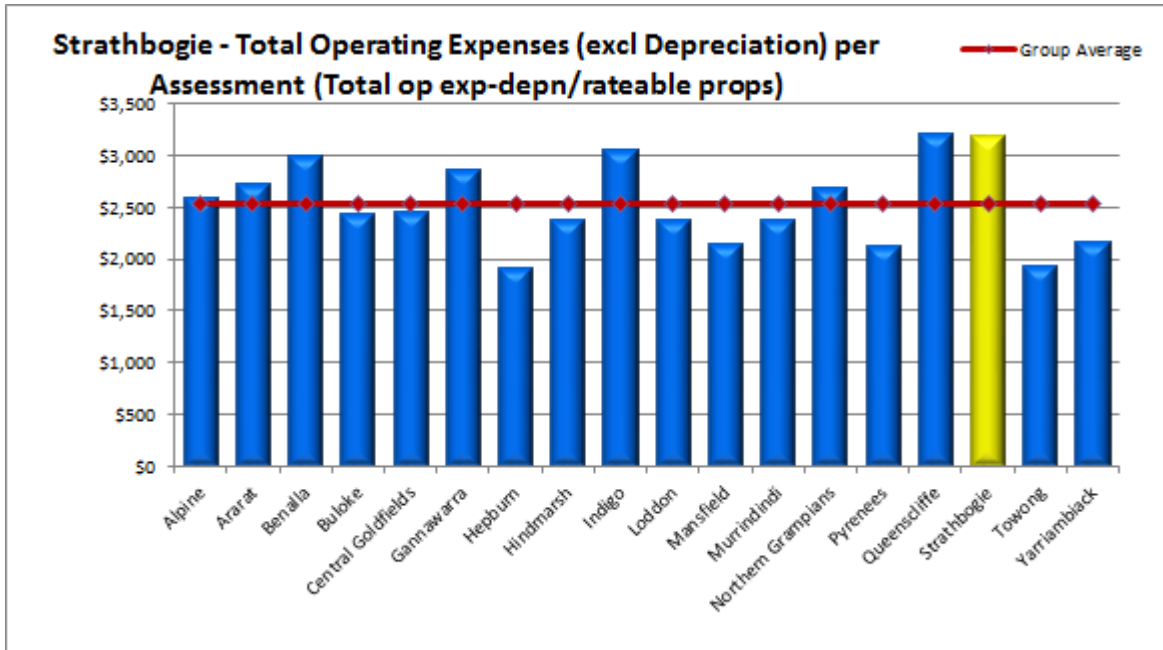


Chart 3 - Total Operating Expenses per Assessment 2015/16

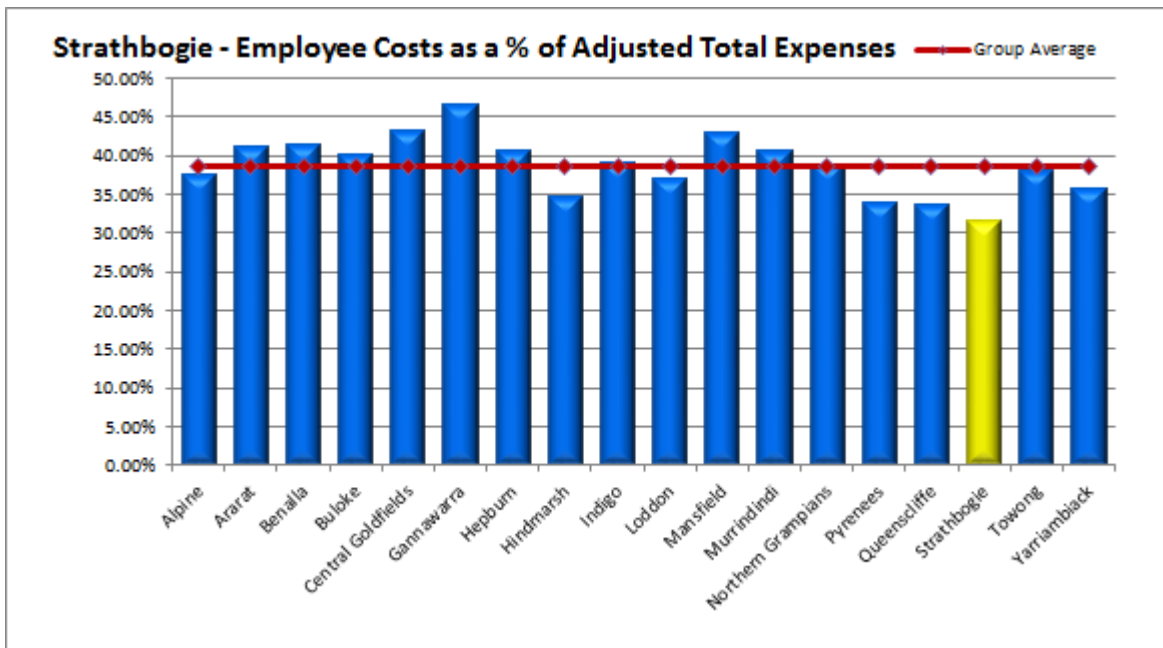


Chart 4 - Employee Costs % Adjusted Total Operating Expenses 2015/16

The table below details the *Statement of Human Resources* for the oncoming four years:

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Staff Expenditure					
Employee Costs	8,794	8,839	9,041	9,288	9,508
	EFT	EFT	EFT	EFT	
Staff numbers					
Employees	96	96	96	96	96
Total staff numbers	96	96	96	96	96

Table 4 - Statement of Human Resources - For the four years ended 30 June 2021

The above statement of human resources should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes. Estimated employee costs for 2016/17 include redundancies that are not predicted in future years.

4.5 Conclusion

Managing financial sustainability and the range and level of services provided will remain an ongoing challenge, particularly in a now rate capped environment.

This work continues in the context of improving financial sustainability, linking infrastructure planning to service planning and resource constraints.

Council will demonstrate clear and transparent decision making in allocating scarce resources whilst delivering the best service outcomes from amongst the many alternatives demanded by the community, a critical outcome of the proposed service planning framework.

Strategic Direction

1. That Strathbogie Shire Council continue the Service Planning process in 2017/18 via a strategic service planning framework incorporating annual budget, departmental operational plans, capital works evaluation and long term financial plan leading to a determination of the appropriate range and levels of service for the community.
2. That Strathbogie Shire Council, as part of the development of its Service Plans, consults with the community to determine how service levels will be reached including a combination of improved revenue raising, review of existing service levels, asset disposal and composition of the asset portfolio.

5. CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM

5.1 Introduction

The previous section discusses the long-term issues with respect to *Service Planning*.

It should be noted that 85 per cent of the capital expenditure is on renewal and upgrade type projects in the draft capital works program for 2017/18. The total capital program of \$14.542 million is composed of \$1.954 million in new and expanded assets and \$12.588 million in renewal and upgrade.

The proposed program for 2017/18 comprises \$10.337 million in renewal and \$2.25 million in upgrade.

This section includes:

- Level and nature of capital works;
- 2017/18 Capital Investment levels
- Capital funding sources; and
- Capital Works Evaluation process

The benchmark for 2015/16 capital expenditure levels by Small Rural's is illustrated below:

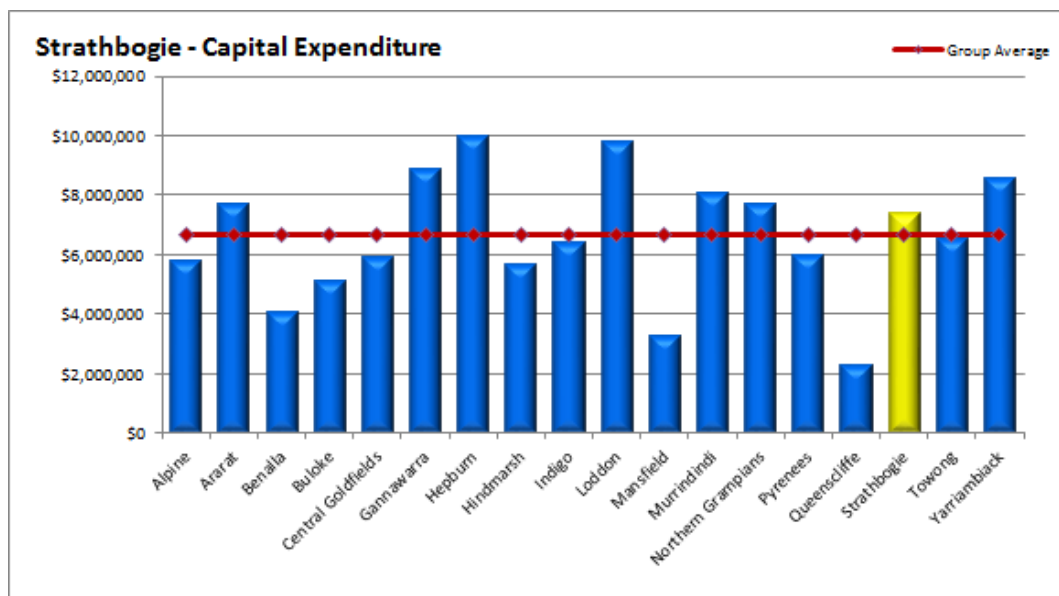


Chart 5: Capital Expenditure per Capital Works Statement – 2015/16

Capital expenditure per assessment is higher than average in 2015/16 at \$1,009 per assessment as compared to \$932 for the average Small Rurals.

5.2 Level and Nature of Capital Works

It is important that the *Asset Management* issues raised in the next section inform the decisions taken in determining the capital works program.

Four key outcomes from the long-term financial plan will be:

- To maintain the annual critical renewal investment – section 6;
- To maintain agreed service levels as determined in Council's *Service Plans*-section 4;
- Maintain average condition where desired; and
- Invest in new and upgraded assets subject to principles espoused in section 4.

5.2.1 Capital works 2017/18 - 2026/27 – Parameters

The following are the parameters against which the 2017/18 capital works program has been developed:

- Alignment to *Strategic Resource Plan* financial growth assumptions with respect to expenditure and revenue;
- Meeting agreed levels of service; and
- Priority provision for critical renewal investment, then capital renewal, capital upgrade with capital expansion and new, the most discretionary.

In terms of the longer term program to 2026/27 the following parameters/assumptions apply:

- Large one-off projects flagged in subsequent years require accurate costing to be undertaken and their timing and priority finalised;
- Continue priority on renewal, followed by upgrade with expansion and new, the most discretionary;
- Provide for expenditure growth required to a level of sustainable renewal to meet the community's service level requirements and to provide for upgrade where funding is available
- Income assumptions to remain conservative given they are less predictable; and

5.3 2017/18 Capital Investment Levels

The 2017/18 capital works program by expenditure type is detailed hereunder, noting that the renewal percentage is lower than it would normally be due to a decision to upgrade certain classes of roads and receipt of a significant grant to upgrade a critical intersection:

Capital Expenditure Type	2017/18 \$	2017/18 %
Renewal	10.337m	71%
Upgrade	2.251m	15%
New	1.734m	12%
Expansion	.220m	2%
TOTAL	14.542m	100%

Table 5: Capital Works Summary – 2017/18

5.4 Capital Funding Sources

The development of a 10-year capital works program will enable a precise cash flow budget to be developed.

This program will be refined during the 2017/18 financial year by Council's Assets department.

External capital funding services include capital grants, developer contributions and special charges schemes.

Internal capital funding sources include land sales, asset sales, special charge schemes and general rates. The SRP forecasts capital funding sources conservatively.

5.5 Capital Works Evaluation Process

5.5.1 Business Case

The Council's *Capital Works Evaluation Tool* subjected all proposed capital works to an objective business case analysis so that the costs of the priority projects could be scored and the cost implications assessed.

If a project was required due to statutory obligations or had been approved by a Strathbogie Shire Council resolution it is automatically assigned the highest priority. If a project did not meet Strathbogie Shire Council objectives it is automatically assigned the lowest priority.

Projects that meet Strathbogie Shire Council objectives but are not required to meet statutory obligations or have not been approved by a council resolution are assigned a prioritisation score based on the results of four equally weighted criteria:

- Financial,
- Council Plan objectives,
- Risk/Criticality ;and
- Community Benefit.

Responsibility for the capital works Business Case Analysis Process is vested in the Council Infrastructure Directorate but scoring is overseen by the cross functional Reference Group with membership and terms of references endorsed by Council.

The results of the *Business Case Analysis* are contained in Council's Capital Works Evaluation Model.

5.5.2 Whole of Life Costing

Where critical to the Long Term Financial Plan proposals for new and upgrade have the full whole of life costs calculated and disclosed as part of the evaluation process and that the operating and maintenance are calculated and placed in the long term financial year for the life of the asset.

5.6 Conclusion

Council's capital works program underpins the needs and priorities as determined by Council's capital evaluation process.

It is the Council's challenge to develop *Service Plans* and *Asset Management Plans* that ensure the community's levels of service are met through the delivery of efficient and effective services.

Strategic Direction

1. That Strathbogie Shire Council increases its capital works commitment at levels that meet or exceed the targets established in this SRP, and develops a 10-year capital works program.
2. That Strathbogie Shire Council initially focuses capital works on maintaining a critical renewal level based on maintaining a minimum service level at levels indicated in Table 7 (Section 6.5 Condition Assessment), with the next priority on renewal, upgrade and expansion.
3. That any bids for expansion, new and upgrade of assets either come from Strategic Planning documents or Service Plans.

6. ASSET MANAGEMENT

6.1 Introduction

Linking asset management to Council's strategic financial direction is fundamental to achieving the goal of long-term financial sustainability.

This section includes:

- Council's asset portfolio at 30 June 2016;
- Key questions to determine service level/investment;
- Asset investment;
- Condition assessments;
- Management Systems; and
- Strategic asset management.

6.2 Council's Asset Portfolio - 30 June 2016

6.2.1 Current Assets

Accounting for an asset requires the recognition of all costs associated with asset ownership including creation/acquisition, operations, maintenance, rehabilitation, renewal, depreciation and disposal.

This "life cycle" approach needs to be recorded at an individual asset level so all the costs of owning and operating assets are known and understood.

For accounting purposes assets are grouped into current and non-current assets. Current assets are cash or those assets that are considered to be readily convertible to cash.

This asset grouping includes cash at bank, investment funds, stock on hand, debtors and land held for resale. Current assets held by Strathbogie Shire Council at 30 June 2016 were \$14.26 million.

Non-current assets consist of Council's debtor accounts not expected to be collected in the coming 12 months and Council's fixed assets.

Fixed assets consist of land, buildings, plant, furniture, roads, drains, playgrounds and other similar infrastructure assets.

The total value of fixed assets at 30 June 2016 was \$274.45 million. The balance of this section will focus on the fixed assets and the management strategies that Council is pursuing.

6.2.2 Non-Current Fixed Assets

Councils all over Australia are facing the problem of ageing assets in need of renewal.

Many of these assets were not initially funded by councils, but came by State and Federal government grants, developer contributions, or from a shift of responsibilities for State owned assets to Local Government.

Council's fixed assets and land held for resale at 30 June 2016 totalled \$276.18 million.

6.2.3 Depreciation Expense

Depreciation expenses, useful lives and the rate at which the economic benefits or the service potential of the asset are consumed is reassessed following condition assessments and when asset valuations are undertaken.

All changes to depreciation expenses have been reviewed by Council's external auditor and reported to Council's *Audit Committee* prior to being adopted by Council.

Council's depreciation expenses as a percentage of its total assets are benchmarked and depicted in the following graph:

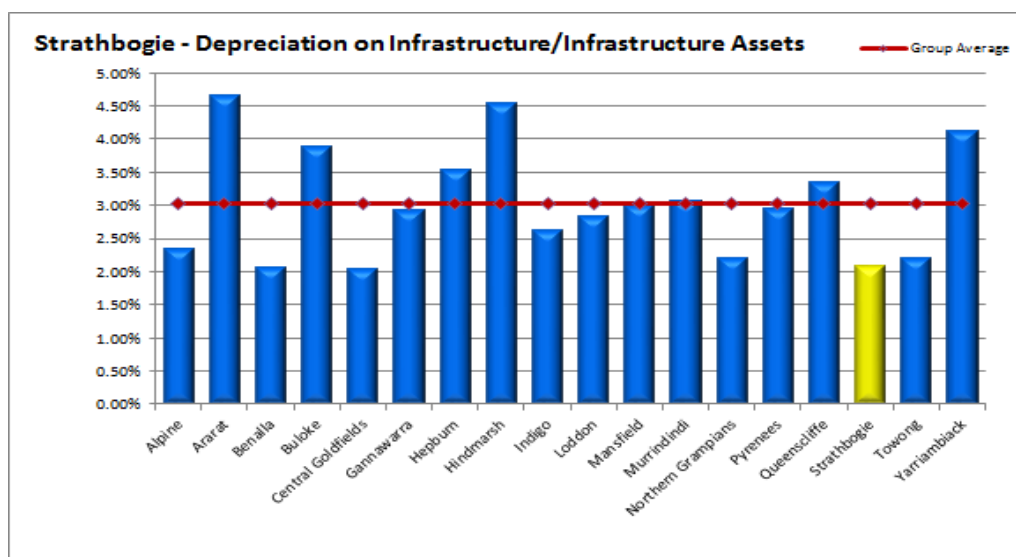


Chart 6: Depreciation on Infrastructure/Infrastructure Assets – 2015/16

6.3 Key Questions to Determine Service Level/Investment

The key questions with respect to infrastructure investment are detailed below:

1. How much does it cost ratepayers to retain the current infrastructure portfolio, that is, what is the long-term average cost of renewal plus maintenance?
2. What assets support services and therefore should be renewed and retained as opposed to assets that are surplus and should be rationalised?
3. How much will need to be spent in the short term (next 10 years) relative to the renewal expenditure invested in the recent past?
4. How much more management effort (financial and operational) will be required of Council as its assets age?
5. What assets are at the "at risk" phase (intervention level) of their life cycle and will ultimately result in their being unserviceable and unsafe?
6. What outcomes would the community and Council like to achieve with respect to asset upgrades? For example, would Council like to see an extension to the sealed road network, or playground network?
7. Are the Council assets providing the level of service expected by the community?
8. What assets should the community "manage for decline" – public halls, buildings, bridges, roads?

6.4 Asset Investment

Asset investment can be made in the following ways:

Type of Expenditure	Definition	Purpose/Example
Maintenance	Expenditure on an asset that maintains the asset in use, but does not increase its service potential or life.	Maintaining asset serviceability by repair eg repairing a single pipe in a drainage network, or a pot hole in a road.
New asset expenditure	Means expenditure that creates a new asset that provides a service that does not currently exist. New asset expenditure does not have any element of renewal, expansion or upgrade of existing assets. New capital expenditure may or may not result in additional revenue for council and will result in an additional burden for future operation, maintenance and capital renewal.	Retains an existing service level, e.g. Re-sheeting a road reseals, resurfacing an oval.
Asset renewal expenditure	Means expenditure on an existing asset or on replacing an existing asset, that returns the service capability of the asset to its original capability. It has no impact on revenue, but may reduce future operating and maintenance expenditure if completed at the optimum time.	Increases the quality of service provided to ratepayers or provides new services, eg. Widening the pavement of a sealed area of an existing road.
Asset expansion expenditure	Means expenditure that extends the capacity of an existing asset to provide benefits to new users at the same standard as is provided to existing beneficiaries.. It is discretionary expenditure which increases future operating and maintenance costs, because it increases council's asset base, but may be associated with additional revenue from the new user group.	Extends services to newly developing areas of the Council where there are new ratepayers, eg. Extending a road or drainage network, new pre-school.
Asset upgrade expenditure	Means expenditure that enhances an existing asset to provide a higher level of service or that will increase the life of the asset beyond its original life. Asset upgrade expenditure is discretionary and often does not result in additional revenue unless direct user charges apply. It will increase operating and maintenance expenditure in the future because of the increase in the council's asset base.	Provides new assets for services that do not currently exist

Table 6: Expenditure Definitions – Asset Management – 2017/18

It is important Council records its expenditure correctly as the impacts of capital investment differ between these categories – for example whole of life costs for new assets as opposed to renewal.

6.5 Condition Assessment

Monitoring asset condition and performance relates to the ability of the asset to meet targeted levels of service. Asset condition reflects the physical state of the asset and the functional level of service it is capable of providing.

Monitoring asset condition and performance throughout the asset life cycle is important in order to identify underperforming assets or those which are about to fail. Council has

developed its *Asset Management System* to readily monitor asset condition and performance and to:

- Identify those assets which are under performing;
- Predict when asset failure to deliver the required level of service is likely to occur;
- Ascertain the reasons for performance deficiencies; and
- Determine what corrective action is required and when (maintenance, rehabilitation, renewal).

6.6 Management Systems

Council has determined that no asset's condition will be allowed to go below its predetermined intervention levels as the cost of renewal significantly increases and the asset's functionality, safety and ability to provide its intended service level is compromised.

Council has largely collected condition data for all of its major asset categories and is now in a position to commence detailed *Service Plans* and *Asset Management Plans*.

The benefits of knowing the current condition and performance (level of service) an asset provides are:

- Ability to plan for and manage the delivery of the required level of service;
- Avoidance of premature asset failure, leaving open the option of cost-effective renewal;
- Managing risk associated with asset failures;
- Accurate prediction of future expenditure requirements; and
- Refinement of maintenance and rehabilitation strategies.

The Asset Management System should not only records asset condition and asset defects/inspection details; it should also provide financial management and year-end accounting and valuation data.

Priority is on funding the annual renewal annuity based on predetermined service levels generally described as intervention levels- the maximum level an asset can deteriorate to prior to renewal investment is 3%.

The intervention level is theoretically where the assets service life has expired and renewal investment is required to restore service potential - eg. Road needs resheeting to be useable.

Council, as asset managers, need to be able to assess the relative merits of rehabilitation / renewal / replacement options and identify the optimum long-term solution through a decision related to levels of service. Council needs to strategically determine an affordable level of service to manage the emerging condition profile.

The benefit of that knowledge now is the management process can commence across the entire asset portfolio.

Asset Group Name	Asset Set Description	Retreat. Intervention Condition
Urban Roads Group	Pavement (High Traffic) Urban	7.50
Urban Roads Group	Pavement (Low Traffic) Urban	8.00
Urban Roads Group	Asphalt Seal (High Traffic) Urban	8.00
Urban Roads Group	Asphalt Seal (Low Traffic) Urban	8.00
Urban Roads Group	Spray Seal (High Traffic) Urban	7.50
Urban Roads Group	Spray Seal (Low Traffic) Urban	7.50
Urban Roads Group	All Kerbs	8.00
Rural Roads Group	Pavement (High Traffic) Rural	7.50
Rural Roads Group	Pavement (Low Traffic) Rural	8.00
Rural Roads Group	Spray Seals (High Traffic) Rural	7.00
Rural Roads Group	Spray Seals (Low Traffic) Rural	7.00
Rural Roads Group	Shoulder Pavement (High Traffic or Narrow Seal)	8.50
Rural Roads Group	Shoulder Pavement (Low Traffic)	
Unseal Road Group	Pavement (High Traffic) Unsealed	8.00
Unseal Road Group	Pavement (Low Traffic) Unsealed	6.00
Carparks	Carpark Pavements	
Carparks	Carpark Seal	
Pathway Group	Concrete Pathways & areas	7.00
Pathway Group	Brick Paved Pathways & areas	7.00
Pathway Group	Sealed Pathways	7.00
Pathway Group	All other Pathways	7.00
Bridges Group	Long Life Bridges	8.00
Bridges Group	Short Life Bridges	8.00
Storm Water Group	Pits	8.00
Storm Water Group	Pipes	8.00
Buildings Group	Structure Long Life	8.00
Buildings Group	Structure Short Life	8.00
Buildings Group	Roof Structure	8.00
Buildings Group	Mechanical Services	8.00
Buildings Group	Building Fit Out	8.00
Recreation Group	Street & Park Furniture	8.00
Recreation Group	Active Reserves (Footy Ovals etc)	8.00
Recreation Group	Manicured Turf (Bowling Greens etc)	8.00
Recreation Group	Play Equipment	8.00
Recreation Group	Reticulation	8.00
Recreation Group	Streetscapes	
Recreation Group	All Lighting	
Other Group	Waste Management	
Other Group	Aerodromes	

Table 7: Intervention Levels by Service Area – Asset Set – 2017/18

Council needs to improve its knowledge with respect to its open space structures, information technology and recreation assets.

6.7 Strategic Asset Management

Council reviews its *Asset Management Policy* reviewed on a triennial basis.

Other major elements are the *Asset Management Strategy* which details specific actions to be undertaken by Council to improve asset management capability and achieve specific strategic objectives.

Asset Management Plans are subsequent components where long-term plans (10-years and beyond) outline renewal requirements for each asset category.

The table below explains the objectives and typical contents of these documents:

Asset Management Strategy	Asset Management Plans
Specific actions to be undertaken by Council in order to improve or enhance asset management capability and achieve specific strategic objectives.	Long-term plans (usually 20 years or more for infrastructure assets) that outline the asset activities for each service area.
<i>Develops a structured set of actions aimed at enabling improved asset management by Council.</i>	<i>Outlines actions and resources to provide a defined level of service in the most cost effective way.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of the current status of asset management practices (processes, asset data and information systems). • Organisation's future vision of asset management. • A description of the required status of asset management practices to achieve the future vision. • Identification of the gap between the current status and the future vision (a "gap analysis"). • Identification of strategies and actions required to close the gaps, including resource requirements and timeframes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary of Council's strategic goals and key asset management policies. • Definition of levels of service and performance standards. • Demand forecasts and management techniques. • Description of the asset portfolio. • A broad description of the lifecycle management activities for operating, maintaining, renewing, developing and disposing of assets. • A cashflow forecast. • Key asset management improvement actions including resources/timeframes.

Table 8: Asset Management Plan Objectives & Document Content

Council has reached the point where it has identified and funded its critical renewal – a maximum of 3% of assets will be allowed to have its condition go beyond that shown in Table 7 (Section 6.6 Management Systems).

Council is now in a position to analyse its condition profile and determine and understand the cost of a predetermined service level.

Alternatively Council may allow some assets to degrade in condition, freeing up funds to improve the level of service for other assets.

6.7.1 Community Consultation

Council aims to ensure its assets are relevant to the community, as retention of unused assets places a financial burden on the community. Council's *Strategic Resource Plan* is presently focused on funding a "service level" that prioritises critical renewal and maintains average condition to meet community expectation.

The challenge ahead is to understand the community's expectations and provide service level and funding options to accommodate these.

The target for Council in 2017/18 will be to engage Council and the community in discussions about levels of service to provide the opportunity for differing service levels to be costed and reviewed.

Sound Asset Management is:

- Knowing what assets we own (Asset Register);
- Understanding the condition and expected lives of our assets;
- Knowing what 'levels of service' customers want- service planning;
- Having processes in place to establish priorities and allocate funds;
- Knowing the long-term funding requirements associated with our assets; and

- Having documented *Asset Management Plans* detailing levels of service will be a challenge during 2017/18.
- What services, including their performance levels, are required to meet the community outcomes?
- Finally what infrastructure or assets are required to support the service level?

Too often Council starts focusing on the asset rather than on the outcome/service level it requires. A review of this nature may result in assets no longer being required to support community outcomes.

6.7.2 Asset Management Working Group

The *Asset Management Working Group (AMWG)* is a cross-functional professional team with representatives from all Council departments.

The purpose of the AMWG is to oversee the decision-making process with respect to the direction of asset management and to ensure the Council continues to develop total asset management across the organisation.

The Asset Management Working Group’s Terms of Reference include:

- Guiding Council’s overall Asset Management Program;
- Facilitating the implementation of appropriate asset management systems and asset management plan development; and
- Reviewing asset management resource requirements.

There is still a deal of work to be done on recording and developing *Service Plans* and *Asset Management Plans*.

6.7.3 Renewal Demand

The following details the impact of Council’s investment in renewal and the consequential impact on the percentage of assets outside intervention.

Council has recently increased its renewal investment but has not had the opportunity to model the improvements since its last review.

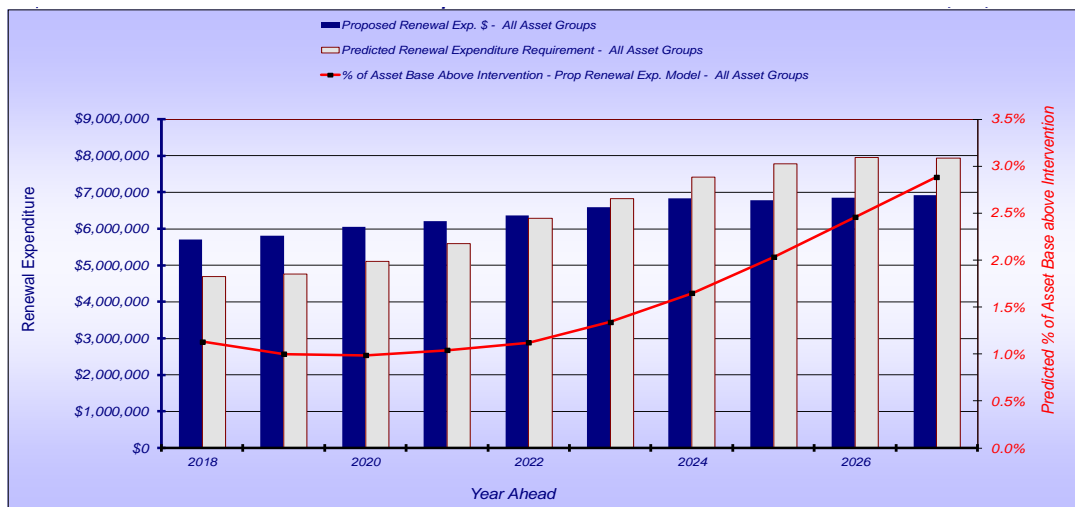


Chart 7: Proposed and Predicted Renewal Expenditure Chart– 2015/16

The following graph depicts the predicted level of renewal expenditure required across all asset categories for Council until 2032.

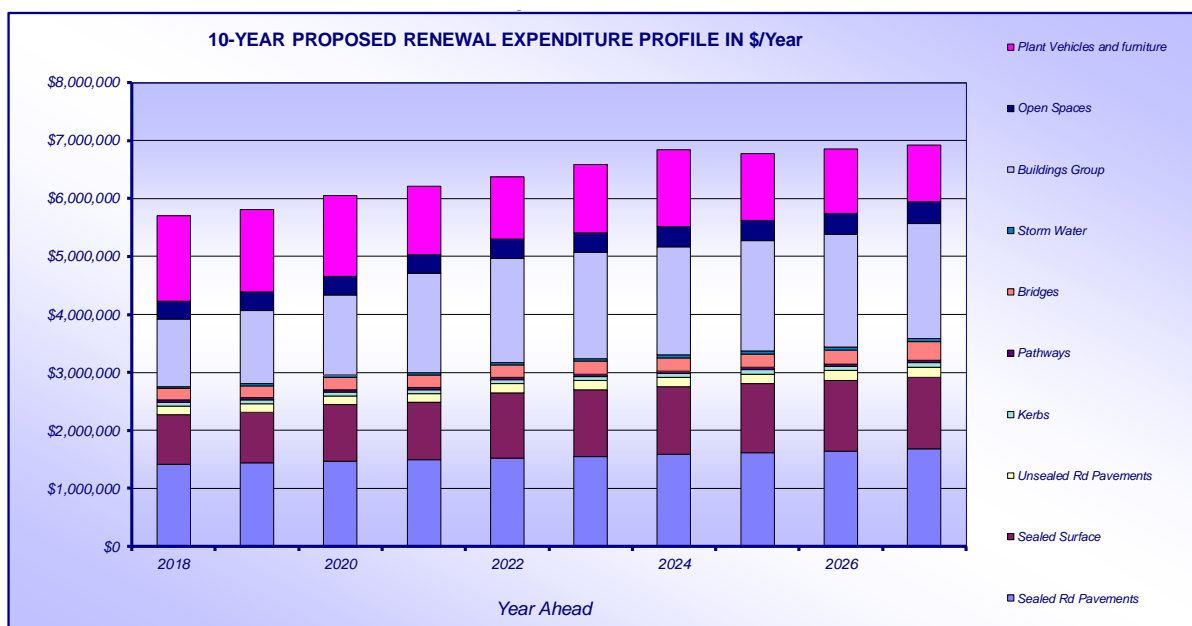


Chart 8: Proposed Renewal Expenditure Profiles Chart – 2017/18

Council will aim to ensure that its assets are relevant to the community, as retention of unused assets places a financial burden on the community.

Council's *Strategic Resource Plan* is transitioning to focus on funding a "service level" that prioritises critical renewal and maintains average condition to meet community expectation.

To facilitate this process, Council will engage in consultation with key stakeholders including discussions on the key questions with respect to infrastructure investment and service levels, as detailed in Section 5.

6.8 Conclusion

Council's priorities for the 2017/18 financial year as regards Asset Management are:

- **Asset Management Plans:** Develop tactics to manage renewal demand/gap post the completion of Stage 1 of the service planning process.
- **Review Levels of service:** In conjunction with stage 1 of the service planning process.
- **Review of Asset hierarchies:** Determine if current categories and service levels are appropriate.
- **Field test condition data:** Review useful life left versus condition rating based on a field analysis to ensure quality and interpretation of condition is accurate.
- **Revaluation of Assets:** Develop a schedule for the revaluation of assets and ensure condition assessments are done concurrently to facilitate review of useful lives etc.
- **Appropriate renewal investment:** Continue investment in renewal to ensure the future safety and serviceability of assets.
- **Continue participation in National Asset Management Assessment Framework (NAMAF):** Recommence in the NAMAF program and recalibrate assessment in line with current objectives and practices.
- **Improved data:** Improve component data for recreation assets and buildings.

Strategic Direction

1. That Strathbogie Shire Council, having established its critical renewal investment levels, maintains detailed *Asset Management Plans* (focused on renewal demand) for all classes of Council assets incorporating service level assessments.
2. That Strathbogie Shire Council, as part of the development of its *Service Plans*, consults with the community to determine how service levels will be reached including a combination of improved revenue raising, review of existing service levels, asset disposal and composition of the asset portfolio.
3. That Strathbogie Shire Council adopts as policy the annual allocation of funds to meet 100 per cent of the community's infrastructure renewal needs before it elects to upgrade or construct new assets.

7. BORROWING STRATEGIES

This section includes:

- Measuring what level of debt is appropriate;
- Borrowing Assessment Policy;
- What do financial indicators mean;
- What is a prudent level of debt; and
- Future Loan Program.

7.1 Measuring Which Level of Debt is Appropriate

Each Council is different and the level of debt that is appropriate for Council may not be adequate for another Council.

The following factors are seen as important issues for deliberation by Council:

- level of debt servicing as a proportion of rate revenue;
- ability to raise revenue in addition to rates;
- level of realisable assets to support the indebtedness;
- achieving the right mix of capital works and debt commitments;
- growth rate of municipality; and
- community growth needs.

The table below highlights the relative debt levels of Councils within the Small Rural grouping at 30 June 2016. Council's relative debt level is also shown. By comparing a number of different debt ratios within the Council grouping, Strathbogie Shire Council can begin to consider what level of debt is appropriate.

The table below confirms that Strathbogie Shire Council is currently better than average and better than the median across all of the debt indicators within the Small Rural grouping.

In terms of total debt levels, Council is below average with the Small Rural grouping, refer to Chart 9.

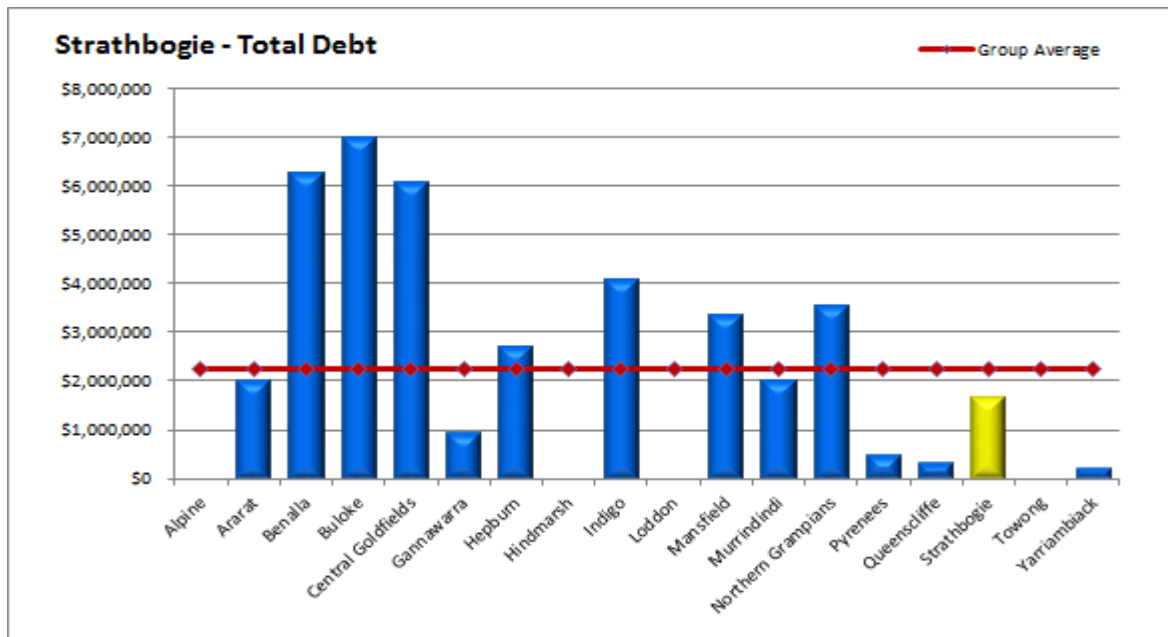


Chart 9: Comparison of Total Debt Levels within Small Rural Group 2015/16

Council	Debt Servicing / Adj. Total Revenue	Debt Commitment / Rates	Total Liabilities / Realisable Assets	Debt Commitment / Source Revenue	Total Debt / Own Source Revenue	Total Debt / Rate Revenue
Alpine	0.09%	5.82%	0.00%	4.91%	0.00%	0.00%
Ararat	0.36%	1.02%	6.94%	0.89%	11.44%	13.10%
Benalla	1.14%	9.51%	17.20%	7.38%	31.50%	40.60%
Buloke	1.38%	4.11%	55.40%	3.73%	52.39%	57.64%
Central Goldfields	0.76%	4.59%	28.99%	3.34%	33.91%	46.59%
Gannawarra	0.30%	3.54%	5.23%	2.64%	6.01%	8.06%
Hepburn	0.57%	3.23%	4.63%	2.70%	12.72%	15.20%
Hindmarsh	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Indigo	0.76%	5.34%	16.81%	3.91%	20.21%	27.63%
Loddon	0.02%	1.41%	0.00%	1.04%	0.00%	0.00%
Mansfield	1.29%	6.81%	15.99%	6.10%	24.76%	27.63%
Murrindindi	0.74%	5.49%	3.10%	4.43%	8.96%	11.09%
Northern Grampians	0.60%	2.88%	15.71%	2.48%	19.17%	22.28%
Pyrenees	0.16%	8.81%	3.46%	7.81%	5.10%	5.76%
Queenscliffe	0.21%	3.76%	0.32%	2.76%	3.51%	4.78%
Strathbogie	0.43%	3.18%	3.81%	2.70%	8.35%	9.81%
Towong	0.07%	0.16%	0.00%	0.13%	0.00%	0.00%
Yarriambiack	0.26%	1.67%	3.37%	1.52%	1.72%	1.89%
Average	0.51%	3.96%	10.05%	3.25%	13.32%	16.23%
Median	0.40%	3.65%	4.22%	2.73%	8.65%	10.45%

Table 9: Council Comparison Debt Levels within Small Rural Group – 2015/16

Debt levels will decrease by \$.509 million from 30 June 2017 to 30 June 2018.

Relative debt ratios for the Strathbogie Shire Council will remain well within *State Government Prudential Guidelines* throughout the life of the SRP.

7.2 Borrowing Assessment Policy

Strathbogie Shire Council assessed its capacity to borrow against the (Better Practice) former Victorian State Government's Prudential Guidelines.

The administration of the Local Government sector's borrowing involves:

- The collation of the sector's borrowing requirements through an annual survey;
- The assessment of individual Strathbogie Shire Council's borrowings; and
- Recommendation to the *Department of Treasury and Finance* (DTF) of the aggregate net new borrowing requirement of the sector.

All borrowings by individual Councils are assessed under a borrowings assessment policy adopted by the Local Government Division. The policy identifies key areas of financial management with certain thresholds that are required to be met.

Detailed below is Council's current and projected performance on a number of the financial indicators which are necessary for borrowing approval by State Government.

Area	Financial Indicator	Threshold (Prudential Guidelines)	Position 2016/17	Budget 2017/18
Liquidity	Current Assets to Current Liabilities	1.5%	2.54:1	1.38:1
Debt Servicing	Debt Servicing Costs as a % of Total Revenue	5%	.4%	.2%
Debt Commitment	Debt Servicing and Redemption Costs as a % of Rate Revenue	10%	3.2%	3.1%

Table 10: State Government Prudential Guidelines– 2015/16 to 2016/17

Strathbogie Shire Council was well within the State Government Prudential Guidelines as at 30 June 2016.

7.3 What do the Financial Indicators Mean?

The graphs below detail the previously mentioned financial indicators and present the council's position graphically.

The threshold detailed against each indicator is the minimum level council must meet in order to achieve approval to borrow from the State Government.

To encourage longer term planning by councils, the framework also includes an assessment of reasons for the new borrowings.

This rationale is explained in the council's policy, which is to fund long term intergenerational assets from loan funds to ensure intergenerational equity. Strathbogie Shire Council's forecast is within the State Government prudential guidelines at June 30, 2016 for most indicators.

7.3.1 Liquidity

How measured Current assets over current liabilities

Threshold 110 percent or higher

Description This indicator reflects the short-term liquidity position. That is, the council’s ability to repay current commitments from cash or near cash assets. Councils with a ratio of 110 percent and below or with a deteriorating trend may be financially at risk of not being able to meet creditors’.

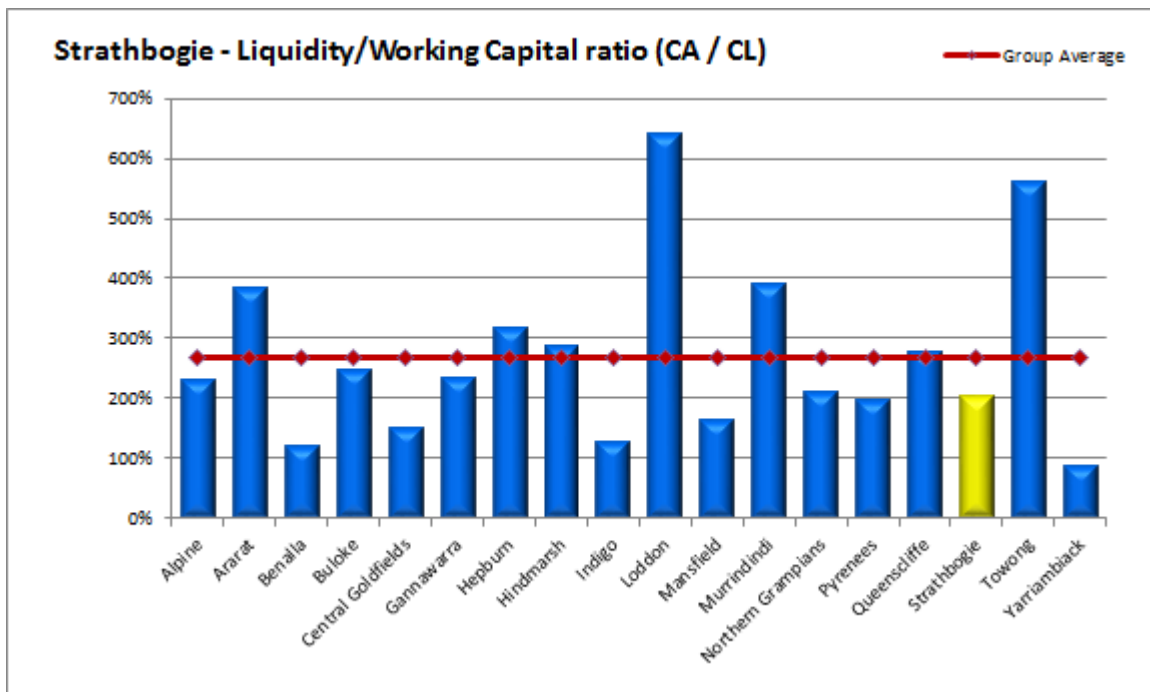


Chart 10: Current Assets / Current Liabilities – 2015/16

Strathbogie Shire Council’s working capital ratio as at June 30, 2016 was 203.6 percent (that is, current assets over current liabilities), which is in excess of the 110 percent benchmark, which would be the minimum acceptable level.

7.3.2 Debt Management

How measured Total debt as a percentage of rate revenue

Threshold 80 percent or below

Description The *Local Government Act 1989* requires that all loans are secured against the revenue stream from rates. A council with total debt in excess of the revenue from rates would be unable to meet all debt commitments from rate revenue should they be required to be paid at one time. A threshold of 80 percent has been set.

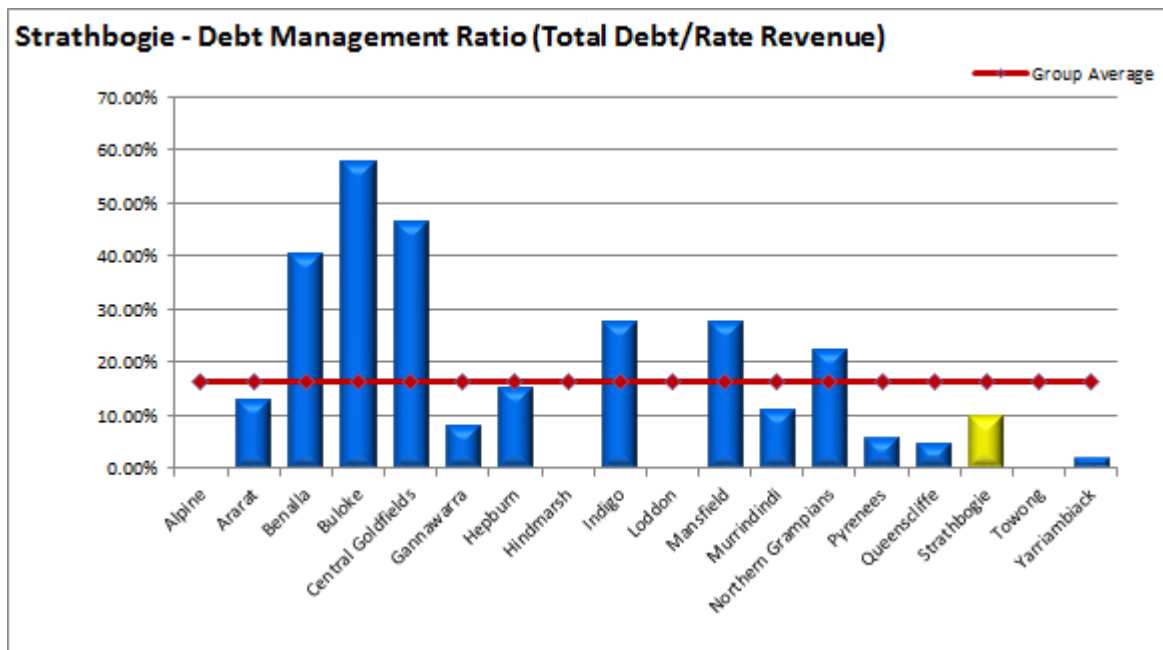
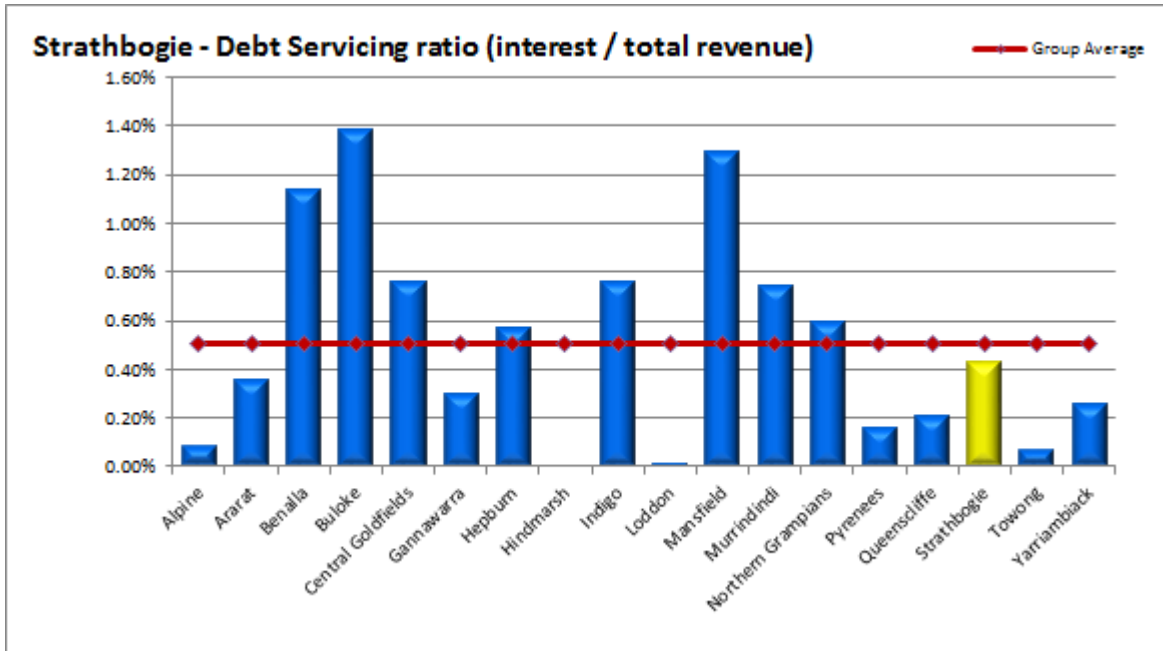


Chart 11: Total Debt as a Percentage of Rate Revenue – 2015/16

Strathbogie Shire Council’s debt as a percentage of rate revenue as at June 30, 2016 was 9.80 percent, which is well below the 80 percent benchmark and below the Small Rural’s average.

7.3.3 Debt Servicing

How measured	Debt servicing costs as a percentage of adjusted total revenue
Threshold	5 percent or below
Description	This indicator reflects the proportion of total revenue that is used to service debt (interest on outstanding debt and any loan administration charges) and which cannot be used directly for service delivery.



A threshold of 5 percent has been set.

Chart 12: Debt Servicing Ratio (Interest / Total Revenue) – 2015/16

The Strathbogie Shire Council’s projected ratio is .4 percent at 30 June 2016, which is below both the state and Small Rural’s average and the 5 percent benchmark.

This illustrates the benefit of taking loans over a longer period of time such that each generation of ratepayers incurs a modest share of the long term cost of providing long life community assets.

7.4 What is a Prudent Level of Debt?

The following graph introduces an additional financial ratio namely debt commitment costs as a percentage of rates. Debt commitment costs include principal and interest repayments in a year.

The ratio details how much of the Council’s rate dollar is being spent to repay debt and interest as an overall percentage of the Council’s rate revenue.

What should the debt servicing and redemption costs be for Strathbogie Shire Council, if any? This ratio is the most important ratio as it provides the best indicator of the affordability of debt for a community and Council.

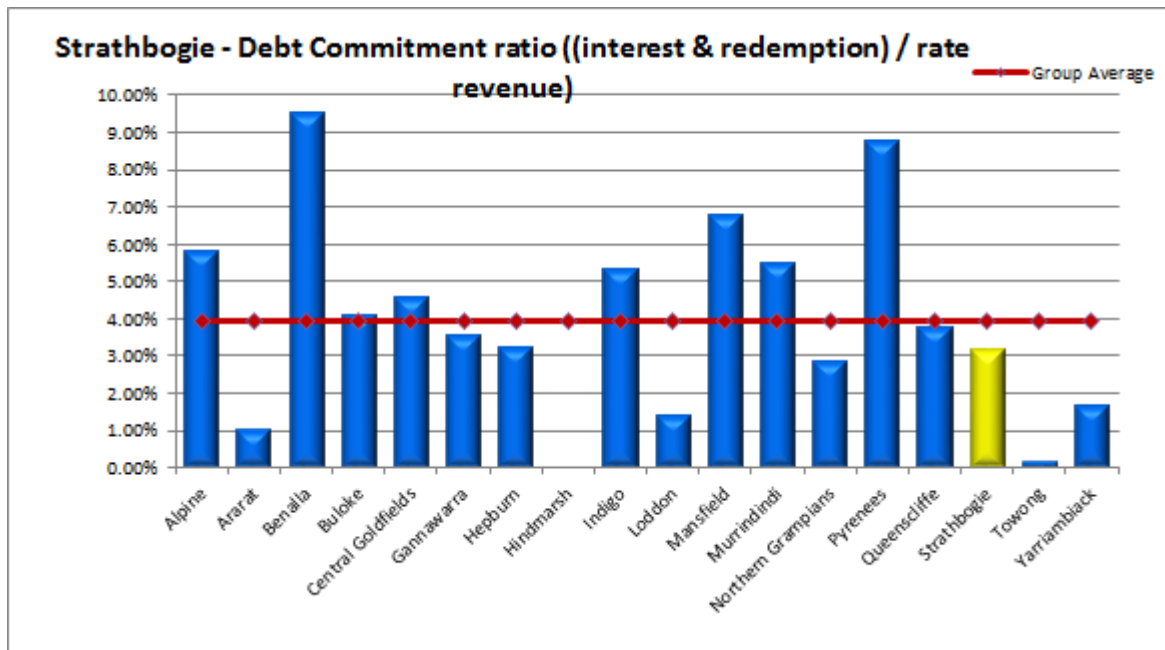


Chart 13: Debt Commitment Ratio (Interest & Redemption / Rate Revenue – 2015/16

Council needs to determine what a prudent level of debt is given that it is a growing Small Rural that services a community greater than its population and rate base.

The examination should determine:

- If the Council was to borrow, what types of projects should these funds be put towards; and
- If the Council was to borrow, on what terms should these borrowings be structured

In 2016/17 3.2 cents in the rate dollar received serviced debt – both principal and interest payments. This is an affordable level and reflects the benefit of taking out loans over a longer period.

In 2017/18 it is proposed that this figure will decrease to 3.1 cents in the rate dollar received.

Debt is generally used to fund capital expansion projects or new projects (i.e. It should not be used for renewal or maintenance) when the asset life is greater than one generation that is, often described as intergenerational equity.

The intergenerational equity theory is based on the premise that successive generations and new residents should contribute to infrastructure or facilities that they will enjoy and benefit from.

Generally these include major facilities (pre-schools, halls, arts centres) where the benefit of the investment will extend beyond the current ratepayers. By borrowing, the Council ensures today's ratepayers are not fully funding these facilities.

There are limits on borrowings due to the costs of interest payments. If the council was to borrow too heavily it would result in an inability to invest in capital works due to funds being consumed in debt repayment.

Therefore a balance is important.

7.5 Future Loan Program

No borrowings are proposed during the term of this SRP although substantial capacity will be available should it be required.

8. RESTRICTED ASSETS

8.1 Introduction

Victorian Councils have traditionally operated with reserve funds that are allocated for specific purposes. These funds do not have bank accounts of their own but are a theoretical split-up of Council's equity. Discretionary reserves are used only as an indicator of funds for specific purposes and represent what those functions have earned.

This section includes:

- Nature and purpose of restricted assets

8.2 Nature and Purpose of Restricted Assets

Strathbogie Shire Council allocates expenditure for known outlays and revenues, directly to the financial year where the expenditure will be incurred, rather than to specific reserve funds.

The 2017/18 *Strategic Resource Plan* is framed around having sufficient cash reserves to cover restricted assets which are primarily developer open space contributions, long service entitlements and grant funding.

Strathbogie Shire Council also generally provides for at least \$3 million to \$4 million in working capital to meet day to day needs.

8.2.1 Developer Contributions

Development contribution receipts and payments or in-kind works, facilities or services provided by developers towards the supply of infrastructure (generally by the Strathbogie Shire Council) required to meet the future needs of a particular community, of which the development forms part.

Levies can be raised through *Development Contribution Plans* ("DCP"s) for a range of State and local government provided infrastructure including roads, public transport, storm water and urban run-off management systems, open space and community facilities.

Under the current legislative framework, any funds that have been received from developers for those infrastructure works, under a DCP or freely negotiated agreements must be held in reserve or "restricted" for that actual infrastructure and cannot be reallocated for other non-related capital projects.

Additionally, even if the Strathbogie Shire Council does not achieve its predicted expenditure, the works represent Council commitment to infrastructure, and any unspent funds are routinely reserved for the infrastructure in readiness for when it is actually required to be delivered.

These projects should also be placed in the relevant year of the 10 year capital works program.

8.2.2 Waste Strategy

Revenue from waste services is designed as far as is possible to cover the cost of providing the service although some administrative overheads are not apportioned against the service.

8.2.3 Unexpended Grants

These are Grants recognised as revenue during the year that were obtained on condition that they be expended in a specified manner that had not occurred at balance date.

8.2.4 Notional Reserves, Amounts held in Trust

It is a requirement of Council to separately identify trust funds or refundable deposits as “restricted assets”. While the council is able to access these funds in its day to day treasury management, the financial statements must recognise that a component of its cash balances relates to deposits that may be refundable in the future.

Restricted Assets	Estimate
	30 June 2016 \$000's
Developer Contributions	100
Unexpended Capital Works	1,855
Amounts held in Trust	762
Infrastructure	600
Total	3,317

Table 11: Restricted Assets – 2015/16

Strategic Direction

1. That Strathbogie Shire Council builds into its 10 year financial plan the estimated movements in restricted assets and provides for at least \$3 million to \$4 million in working capital to meet day to day needs.
2. That to ensure sufficient funds are available to meet operational needs, Strathbogie Shire Council retains a cash position of at least \$3 million to \$4 million after deducting restricted assets, i.e. cash received but not spent or cash to be spent for specific purposes such as developer contributions (infrastructure), security deposits etc.

9. RATING AND OTHER REVENUE STRATEGIES

9.1 Introduction

This section includes:

- Valuations;
- Components of Strathbogie Shire Council's rating base;
- Background to present rating system;
- Rates Affordability;
- Rating Strategy;
- Rate Capping;
- Rating Strategy 2017/18;
- Waste services;
- Grant revenue;
- Victoria Grants Commission; and
- Fees and charges revenue.

9.2 Valuations

Valuations are conducted under the provisions of the *Valuation of Land Act (1960)* with each separate occupancy on rateable land computed at its net annual value (NAV), capital improved value (CIV), and site value (SV).

Valuations are carried out using *Valuation Best Practice Principles* as set down by the State Government Valuer General. In Strathbogie Shire Council, general valuations are required every two years to ensure a common date is used for all valuations. Data on every property is recorded and used by the appointed valuer, along with sales, rentals and other information to determine the valuations.

A general valuation (revaluation) establishes the value of a property relative to all other properties, that is, its market relativity. Valuations form the basis of Strathbogie Shire Council's rating system; therefore, their accuracy is of paramount importance. The 2016 revaluation was undertaken based on property values at 1 January 2016.

The revaluation does not in itself raise the total rate income for Strathbogie Shire Council, as the rates are distributed based on the property value of all properties across the municipality. As a result of the revaluation, some property owners may pay more in rates and others less, depending on their new property valuation, relative to others.

9.2.1 Definitions of valuations

Strathbogie Shire Council uses the capital improved method of valuation (CIV), which is the market value of a property including land, buildings and improvements. CIV has the following long-term advantages relative to other valuation bases:

- flexibility to apply an unlimited range of strategic differentials;
- does not prejudice the industrial, commercial and retail sectors in terms of the rate burden; and
- is easier for people to understand.

The other valuation bases the Valuer is required to return are:

- Site value (SV) which is the market value of land excluding improvements; and
- Net annual value (NAV) which represents the reasonable annual rental of a property, minus specified outgoings. In most cases this is five percent of the CIV.

9.2.2 Supplementary valuations

Supplementary valuations are made during the financial year when a significant change to the valuation occurs. The most common causes for supplementary valuations are:

- construction of a new dwelling or building;
- subdivision of a property; or
- consolidation of properties

Strathbogie Shire Council presently undertakes this task on a monthly basis.

As a result of a supplementary valuation, a rate notice is issued to reflect any change in rates.

9.3 Components of Council's Rating Base

Strathbogie Shire Council levies differential rates, annual service charges and a municipal charge, to raise its annual rates and charges revenue.

The legislative basis of how they apply to Strathbogie Shire Council are available upon request:

- Differential Rates – Legislation;
- Municipal Charges;
- Special Rates and Charges;
- Service Rates and Charges; and
- Rebates and Concessions

9.4 Assessment of Current Rating Levels

Comparing the relativity of rating levels between Councils can be a difficult exercise due to debate over the most appropriate methods to use and the inability to take into account the intricacies of rating structures in different councils.

Each local government sets rates based on an assessment of the desires, wants and needs of its community and as each community is different, direct comparisons can be difficult. For example, cash holdings of municipalities vary and councils have significantly different infrastructure needs and geographic sizes.

Each municipality also has significantly different levels of capital works, funding structures for capital works and varying debt levels.

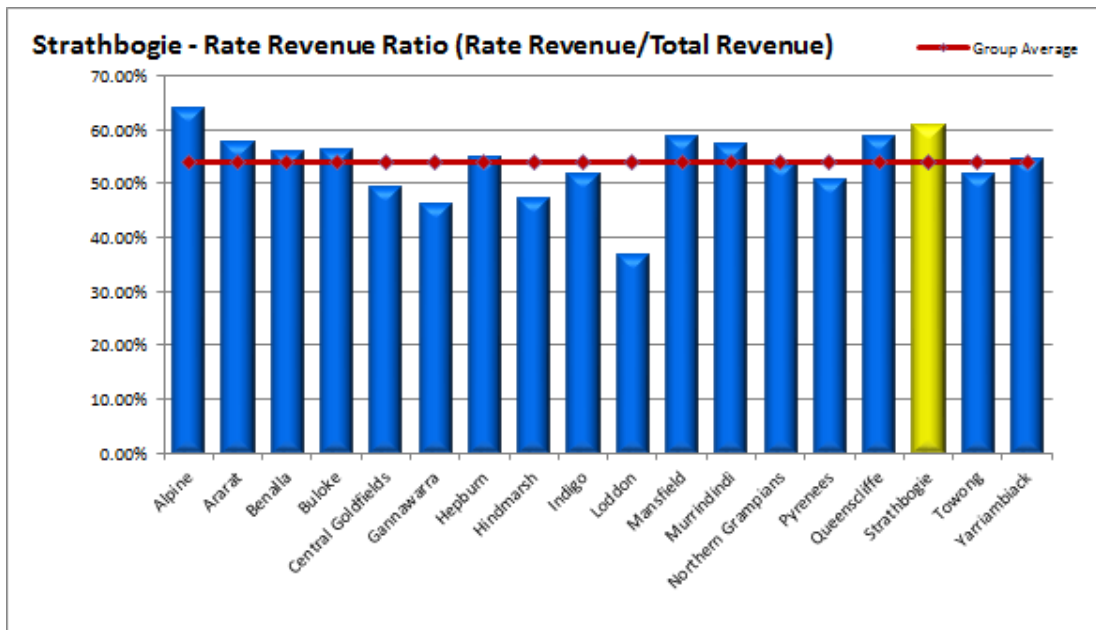


Chart 14: Rates as % of Total Revenue– 2015/16

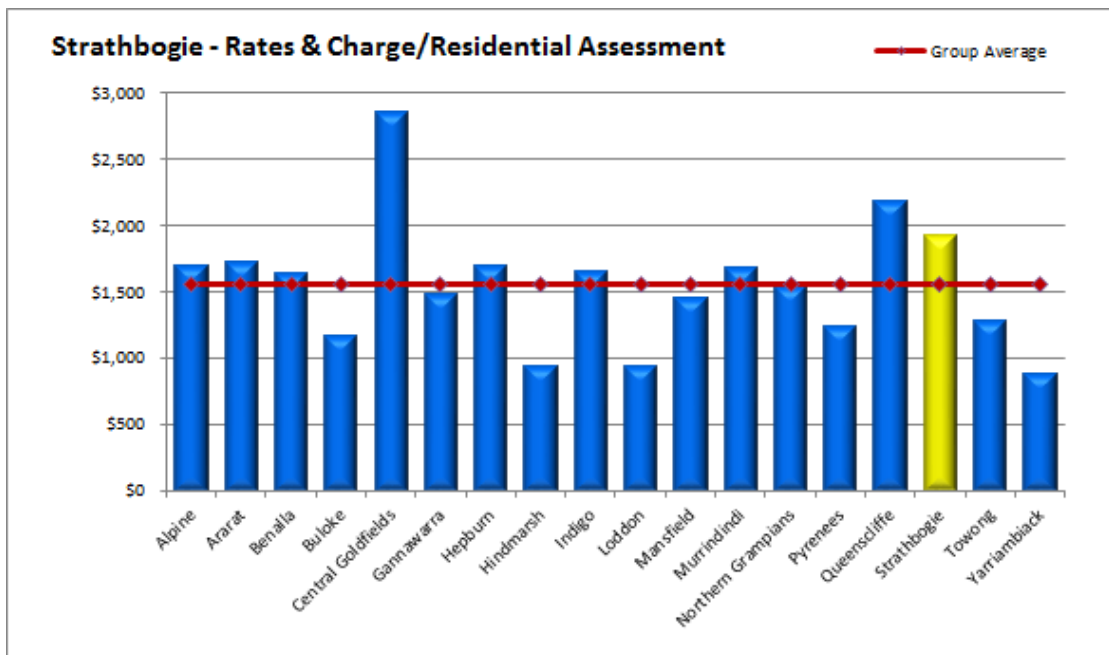


Chart 15: Rates & Charges per Residential Assessment – 2015/16

On a rates per residential assessment Strathbogie Shire’s rating effort is approximately \$368 above the average of the benchmark group.

Higher comparative rating levels do not necessarily represent a position of weakness or inefficiency.

External funding bodies may consider levels of rating effort in their funding decisions, i.e. low rates could be construed as less preparedness at the local level to match the external contribution.

Higher rating can also indicate that a council has opted for more control of its destiny, e.g. to achieve a particular project for the community that would otherwise be out of reach, or to eliminate its renewal gap.

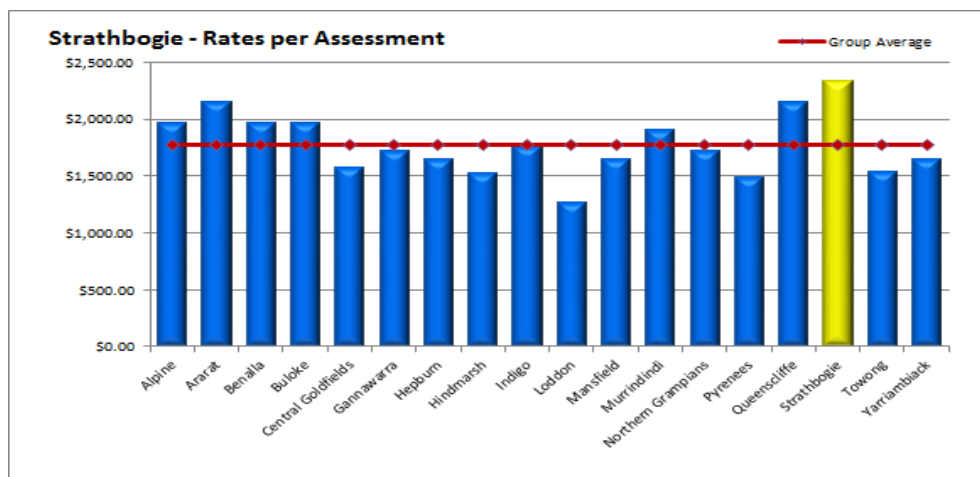


Chart 16: Rates Per Assessment – 2015/16

What is most critical in setting a rating structure is for Strathbogie Shire Council to be accountable and responsible for the policy decisions with respect to the range of services provided, the expenditure and delivery of the services and the way services are funded and paid for by the community.

9.5 Background to the Present Rating System

Prior to dealing with the rating strategy, it is important to have a broad knowledge of the present rating structure and trends. The following tables summarise the rates in the dollar levied in the 2016/17 year including a comparison with 2015/16 (rates in the dollar decreased between 2015/16 and 2016/17 as a result of the two yearly revaluation.)

Differential Rate Type	Cents in/\$ CIV 2015/16	Cents in/\$CIV 2016/17	Change (%)
Rateable Residential Properties	.5335	.5226	-2.04
Rateable Vacant Land Residential Properties	.9336	.9145	-2.04
Rateable Farm Properties	.4534	.4442	-2.04
Rateable Commercial/Industrial Properties	.6402	.6271	-2.04
Rateable Vacant Land Commercial/Industrial Properties	1.1202	1.097	-2.04

Table 12: Rates in \$ 2015/16 as compared to 2016/17

The table below outlines the total rates and charges for 2015/16 and 2016/17:

Description	Total 2015/16 (\$)	Total 2016/17 (\$)	Change (%)
General Rates	13,217,429	13,811,129	4.5
Municipal Charges	1,750,978	1,768,633	1.0
Waste Service Charges	2,265,764	2,288,302	1.0
Total Rates and Charges Revenue	17,234,171	17,868,064	3.6

Table 13: Rates and Charges 2015/16 as compared to 2016/17

Type of Property	2016/17 (\$)
Residential Properties	6,084,891
Vacant Land Residential Properties	521,185
Farm Properties	6,500,696
Commercial/Industrial Properties	691,462
Vacant Land Commercial/Industrial Properties	12,895
TOTAL	13,811,129

Table 14: Individual Rates 2016/17

9.6 Rates Affordability

The ability to increase rate revenue is a significant factor in determining whether a Council is potentially at risk. Strathbogie Shire Council’s rating effort has been satisfactory and when benchmarked was on the average effort of the Small Rural group. Australian Taxation Office (ATO) income data for wage and salary earners (PAYE) can be used to give some indication of rates affordability. The Rates Affordability Chart above details the percentage of income that pays rates and charges to Council.

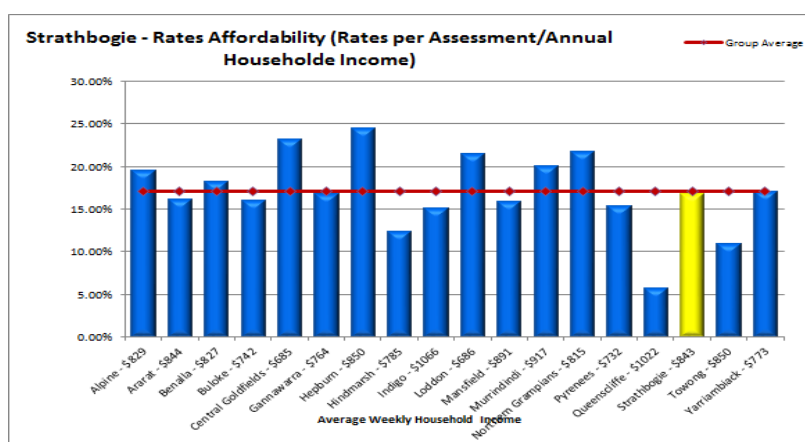


Chart 17: Rates Affordability Small Rural – 2015/16

9.7 Rating Strategy

Strathbogie Shire Council's rating establishes a framework by which rates and charges will be shared by the community. In developing a long-term financial plan, rates and charges are an important source of revenue.

The rating system determines how Strathbogie Shire Council will raise money from properties within the municipality. It does not influence the total amount of money to be raised, only the share of revenue contributed by each property.

The total money to be raised is taken from Strathbogie Shire Council's long-term financial plan.

Strathbogie Shire Council and the community invariably confront trade-offs and the principles are designed to improve the quality of decision making in this environment.

The principles were synthesized from a number of sources including the work published by a number of authors quoted in the Productivity Commission report, *Assessing Local Government Revenue Raising Capacity*.

Strathbogie Shire Council can then exercise its legitimate governance role and determine not only who wants what service and who benefits but what is socially equitable, that is, who pays how much.

Use was also made of long-established principles in the public finance and economics literature, as well as some of the principles outlined in recent Financial Sustainability reports around the nation.

The principles of the Rating Strategy include ensuring the capacity for:

- Sustainable financial management
- Evaluating and setting priorities
- Core functions
- Service delivery
- Prudent borrowings
- Rate setting and pricing for services
- Openness and transparency
- Providing services on behalf of other tiers of government.

Appendix C details the rating principles in more detail.

Council has reviewed current rating differentials, and charges a Municipal Charge and Tree Management Charge. Councils are able to levy a municipal charge on each rateable property within the municipality with the exception of farms where a single municipal charge is payable on multiple assessments operated as part of a single farm enterprise.

The municipal charge is a fixed charge per assessment regardless of the valuation of that property and is used to offset some of the governance costs of the Council. It cannot generate more than 20 per cent of the revenue raised from rates and the municipal charge. Options have been looked at in the context of shifting the rate burden, rather than increases in rates and charges. Council reviewed its Rating Strategy in March 2017 and has not proposed altering the Differential rate structure.

The following table summarises the effect on the rate in the dollar of proposed changes to the rating structure which is shown below.

	Current Structure	Municipal Charge 10%, Farm Differential 85%, Tree Charge 2016/17	Municipal Charge 10%, Farm Differential 85%, Tree Charge 2017/18
Residential Properties	Y	.522579	.5340485
Vacant Land Residential properties	Y	.9145133	.934585
Farm Properties	Y	.4441922	.4539412
Commercial/Industrial Properties	Y	.6270948	.6408582
Vacant Land Commercial/Industrial Properties	Y	1.097416	1.1215019
Municipal Charge	Y	266	266
Tree Management Charge	Y	25	26

Table 15: Summary rate in the dollar – proposed rating structure – 2017/18

The Council believes Rating Strategy provides an equitable distribution of the rate and charge burden across the various property types and categories.

9.8 Rates and Charges Budget – 2017/18

A key decision of Strathbogie Shire Council during the life of the SRP is to determine the rating structure and the level of rate increase that will address funding levels for capital works, service provision for the municipality and improve Strathbogie Shire Council’s long-term financial sustainability.

Council has established a rating structure which is comprised of two key elements. These are:

- Property values, which reflect capacity to pay and form the central basis of rating under the *Local Government Act 1989*
- A “user pays” component to reflect usage of services provided by Council

Striking a proper balance between these elements provides equity in the distribution of the rate burden across residents.

Council makes a further distinction within the property value component of rates based on the purpose for which property is used; that is, whether the property is used for residential, commercial, industrial, farming or a social purpose such as public housing or recreation.

The distinction is based on the concept that different property categories should pay a fair and equitable contribution to rates, taking into account the benefits those properties derive from the local community and Council.

Council’s current rating structure comprised of five differential rates (Residential , Residential Vacant, Farmland , Commercial/Industrial and Commercial/Industrial Vacant).

The vacant land residential rate is set at 175% of the residential rate and the vacant commercial rate is set at 210% of the residential rate , whilst the commercial industrial rate is set at 120% of the residential rate.

These rates are structured in accordance with the requirements of Section 161 “Differential Rates” of the Act and in line with Ministerial Guidelines for differential rating.

First Home Buyers

Council intends to grant a rebate of two years rates to each owner who qualifies for the Victorian Government First Home Owners Grant, on the following basis:

- Proof of approval for State First Home Buyers Grant (\$20,000) to be provided
- Council will excuse the rates and municipal charge for a period of two years from commencement of the first full financial year in which the rates are payable by the new owner.

Home Buyers will qualify :

- > For a newly built home sold for the first time – applied from the date of contract of purchase
- > For a house and land package –applied from date of contract of purchase
- > For a vacant block which new home is to be built – applied from the date of contract to build house
- >Maximum value of property is \$750,000

9.9 Rate Capping

Rate effort is now constrained by the State Government’s introduction of rate capping legislation in the form of its “Fair Go” Rates system (FGRS).

The FGRS or rate capping introduces an annual rate cap set by the Minister for Local Government which controls general rate increases for all Councils during that financial year.

The Minister for Local Government has advised that an annual rate increase of 2.0 per cent will apply for the 2017/18 financial year.

Councils can seek approval for an increase above this figure through a variation with the Essential Service Commission (ESC).

The introduction of rate capping, with an increase of 2% in the second year compared to the 2.5% of the previous a cumulative loss of capacity based on the 2015/16 Strategic Resource Plan over the coming 9 years from 2016/17 of \$4.9 M.

9.10 Waste Service Charges – Waste Collection Service and Tree Management Program

Strathbogie Shire Council is empowered under Section 162(1) (b) of the *Local Government Act (1989)* to levy a service charge for the collection and disposal of refuse. The purpose of this charge is to meet the costs of waste disposal and recycling and organics activities throughout the Strathbogie Shire area, including development and rehabilitation of Landfill sites and the operating costs of Landfills and Transfer Stations as well as providing for important tree management activities. Strathbogie Shire Council has typically used this option through the raising of garbage and recycling charges on the annual rate assessment. Council believes the introduction of the environment charge shares the burden of waste management costs more equitably across the property categories rather than being totally funded by the users of the kerbside collection services.

Strathbogie Shire Council's Waste Services includes:

- Weekly kerbside waste collection service;

- Fortnightly kerbside recycling and green organics collection service;
- Public recycling and waste disposal and transfer station facilities;
- Commercial disposal facility and Landfill;
- Street litter and public place recycling bins; and
- Forward planning and for capital budget requirements.
- Tree Management Program

Strathbogie Shire Council’s garbage proposed charges are as described below (** denotes ex GST). A total income of \$2.38 million will be received for garbage and recycling and tree management services in 2017/18 to support recurrent operating expenditure).

Service Charge	Charge per Service 2016/2017 (\$)	Charge per Service 2017/2018 (\$)	Change (\$)	Change (%)
Kerbside/Recycling/Organics	500	515	16	3
Recycling Collection	161	166	5	3
Garbage Charge 240 litre bin	679	699	20	3
Garbage Charge 120 litre bin	339	349	10	3
Tree Management	25	26	1	3

Table 16: Projected Waste Charges – 2017/18

9.11 Grant Revenue

As at 30 June 2016 Strathbogie Shire Council was below average in terms of receiving government grant revenue, compared to its like Council grouping as outlined in the graph below.

As a benchmark Strathbogie Shire Council receives 9.72 percent of its revenue (as a percentage of total revenue) from recurrent operating grants compared to the average of Small Rural’s at 16.22 percent.

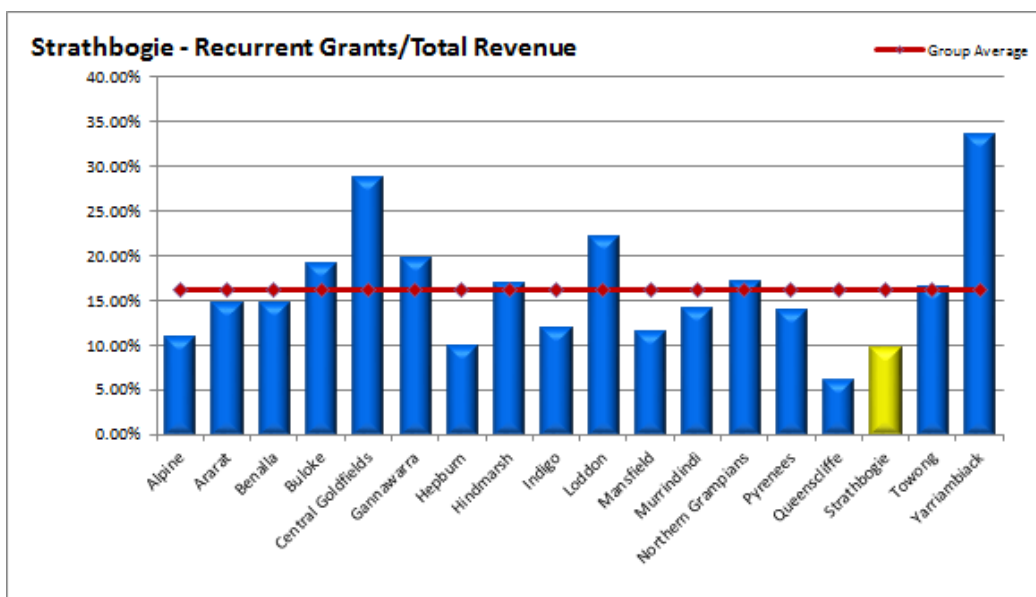


Chart 18: Recurrent Grants/Total Revenue – 2015/16

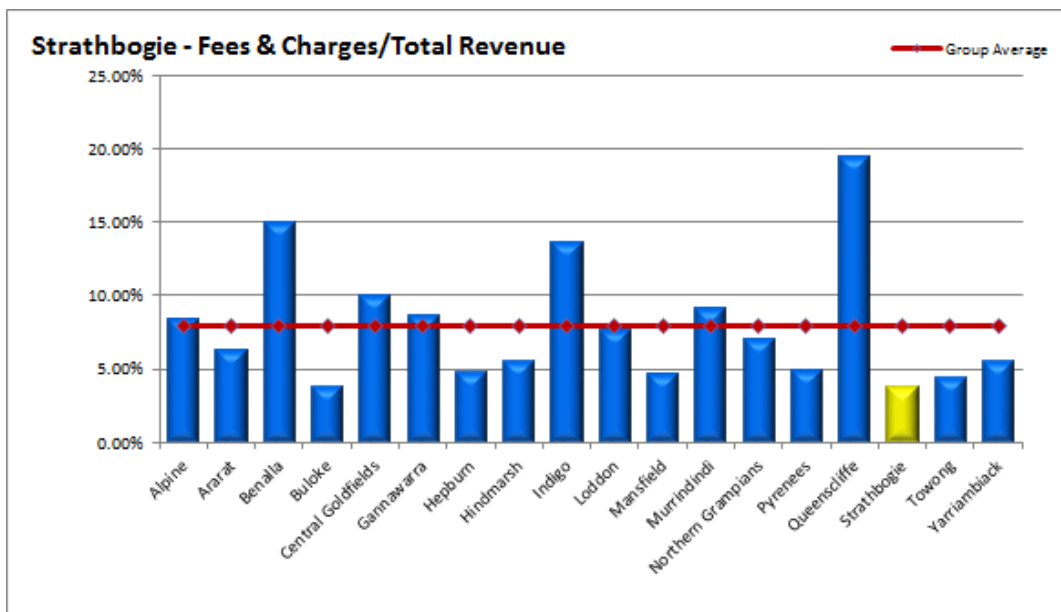
Strathbogie Shire Council must continue its strong focus on securing grant revenue, particularly for capital works. Grants (capital and operating) at 30 June 2016 totalled \$6.904 million. With a longer term capital works program in place Strathbogie Shire Council should be able to target and focus on grants that align with its overall strategic direction.

9.12 Victoria Grants Commission

Strathbogie Shire Council receives approximately 17 percent of its revenue from the Victoria Grants Commission. This revenue is projected at \$7.510 million in 2016/17 and budgeted at \$2.543 million in 2017/18. The previous freeze on Grants Commission indexation has been lifted and the Commonwealth has brought forward 50% of the payment for 2017/18 into 2016/17 , which has distorted the normal pattern of income.

9.13 Fees and Charges Revenue

Strathbogie Shire Council’s fees and charges revenue as a percentage of its total revenue is below average for Small Rurals as outlined in the graph below. There is scope for Strathbogie



Shire Council to review fees and charges to ensure maximum return for service.

Chart 19: Fees & Charges/Total Revenue – 2015/16

Strategic Direction

That Strathbogie Shire Council;

1. retains capital improved value (CIV) as its valuation base;
2. provides a municipal charge that approaches 10 percent of rate revenue plus the municipal charge to ensure an equitable contribution towards the unavoidable fixed costs of Strathbogie Shire Council;

3. considers future increases in environment charge and waste based on EPA, regulatory and safety requirements and the need to sustain the Council's long term waste operations strategy;
4. in 2017/18, adopts an 2.0 percent increase in total revenue for general rates and municipal charges and a 3.0 percent increase in total revenue for waste collection including funding the cost of disposal of domestic waste, recycling collection and the environment levy;
5. pursues recurrent grant funding and strategic capital funding aligned with Council Plan objectives, including benchmarking of results with other Councils; and
6. undertakes detailed analysis on the level of existing fees and charges and investigates new revenue sources and report recommendations to Council.

10. STRATEGIC FINANCIAL PLAN

10.1 Introduction

There are a number of dynamic variables that may influence the outcomes expressed in this SRP. They include:

- Rating levels and supplementary rate income;
- Government grant revenue (both recurrent and capital);
- Granted asset amounts;
- Asset revaluations (major impact on fixed asset value and depreciation);
- Asset sales;
- Mix of funding between capital works/special projects (new initiatives); and
- Level of growth factor applied to expenditure items / rate of expenditure/activity level.

This section includes:

- Modelling methodology;
- Financial assumptions;
- Adopted financial strategy; and
- Conclusion

10.2 Modelling Methodology

The SRP establishes a framework for Council to benchmark its performance and an industry developed long term financial software model has been utilised to verify the data. The base point used for financial modelling has been the Council budget for 30 June 2017.

The Standard Statements (financial statements) are the result of the modelling and are reproduced from the long term financial software model, refer *Appendix B*.

10.3 Financial Assumptions

The following information explains the major financial assumptions applicable to the financial option considered by Council prior to community input.

10.3.1 Labour and on-costs

Increases in labour and on-costs are composed of two elements. The elements are enterprise agreement increments and movements within bandings as part of the annual performance review process. The table below highlights these assumptions. The 2016/17 employee cost projection includes redundancies that are not expected or budgeted in future years.

Year		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
		%	%	%	%
EBA	Banding		2.25	2.20	2.15
Increase/Other					
Award Increments			.75	.75	.75
Total		3.00	3.00	2.95	2.90

Table 17: Labour and on-costs – 2017/18

10.3.2 Depreciation

Depreciation estimates are based on the projected capital spending contained within each assumption. Depreciation estimates are influenced by future asset revaluations and depreciation expenses are assessed following condition assessments. The overall depreciation charge is also impacted by the amount of assets granted to the municipality following subdivision.

10.3.3 Materials and contracts

The broad assumption in materials and contracts is for an increase matching CPI. Outside of the broad parameters are one off expenses such as election expenses, valuation contract amounts and insurances.

10.3.4 Special projects/consultancies

These works are essentially one-off expenditures that do not constitute the creation of an asset and have been informed by proposed projects in 2017/18 .

10.3.5 Debt servicing and redemption

Debt redemption is calculated according to committed loan schedules. Council borrowings are dealt with in detail in Section 9.

10.3.6 Written-down values of assets sold

All written-down values relate to plant and land sold as part of the 10-year program. These are based on information from Council's Asset Registers.

10.3.7 Rate revenue

The 2017/18 Budget is based on an increase of 2.0 percent for rates (excluding supplementaries) and the continuation of a Municipal Charge at approx 11 (falling to 10) per cent of the total revenue. Council's Rating Strategy is dealt with in detail in Section 9.7.

The mechanism to estimate supplementary revenue is at present an arbitrary one, based on historical dollar returns with forward probable development revenue estimated.

10.3.8 Service charges

The 2017/18 Budget is based on a 3 percent increase in waste and tree management charges.

Funds raised are ultimately deployed to waste management (operating and capital) activities. This is discussed in Section 9.8 in more detail.

10.3.9 Grant revenue

An allowance of \$2.833 million has been made as operating grant revenue for services and projects in 2017/18. In broad terms, a 2-3% percent per annum increase has been allowed for operating grants reflecting the nature of this revenue type, which has seldom increased by CPI across the board. Reimbursements from the *State Revenue Office* for land valuations have also been included in the appropriate years. Prepayment of Financial Assistance Grant in 2016/17 has had the effect of showing a reduced figure in 2017/18.

10.3.10 Fees and charges

Fees and charges that Council has discretion over have generally been increased by 3.0 percent per annum. Fees and charges of \$.729 million have been provided for in 2017/18.

10.3.11 Statutory Fees and Fines

Council has no control over a large amount of statutory fees prescribed by the State Government. Fines include town planning, local laws and the animal pound.

10.3.12 Interest on investments

Interest on investments has been estimated based on cash flow.

10.3.13 Proceeds from sale of assets

Proceeds from sale of assets are those relating to plant changeover and land sales.

10.3.14 Capital grants

Capital grant revenue is \$3.054 million in 2017/18, with revenue from future years estimated to fund future capital works.

Capital grants have been forecast conservatively. Funds raised above or below the forecast amount will directly impact on the level of capital expenditure achievable. While conservative amounts have been included, it should be noted that Council does not pursue part-funded capital works that do not fit with its strategic direction.

10.3.15 Granted assets

Granted assets are those handed over to Council following the completion of a subdivision. These include roads, footpaths, kerb, channel, drainage etc.

The level of granted assets is forecast to continue at low-levels based on predicted levels of property development.

However, estimates beyond 2017/18 are not based on any reliable data at this point. While granted assets add to Council's overall asset base, they also add to the future obligations to maintain and replace these assets at the end of their useful lives.

10.3.16 Capital expenditure

Capital expenditure amounts for new assets, local roads, buildings and information technology (renewal), and the like and have been directly budgeted for during the next 4-years. The balance of capital expenditure has been left unallocated at this point.

10.4 Conclusion

The SRP continues to provide a financial framework for Council, enabling an assessment of Council resources and assisting Council to plan and fund capital infrastructure and meet future community aspirations.

The *Financial Statements* are detailed in *Appendix B*.

11. APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

TERM	DEFINITION
Act	The <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> .
Activities	The operations of the council including services undertaken to meet the needs of the community as reflected in the council plan and are generally ongoing in nature.
Adjusted operating surplus/deficit	Operating surplus/deficit less revenue from capital (non-recurrent) grants, developer contributions (i.e. assets contributed), asset revaluations, sale of assets plus expenditure from asset revaluations, WDV of assets sold and unfunded superannuation expense.
Adjusted total operating expenses	Total operating expenses as per the "Statement of financial performance" – net of asset revaluations, unfunded superannuation expense and WDV of asset sold.
Adjusted total revenue	Total revenue from "Statement of financial performance" – net of asset sales, asset contributions in kind. Capital grant funding and revaluation adjustments.
Annual report	A report of the council's operations of the previous financial year and contains a report of operations, audited financial statements and an audited performance statement.
Australian Accounting Standards	The accounting standards published by the Australian Accounting Standards Board.
Average Rate Cap	Means an amount expressed as a percentage amount, based on the change to CPI over the financial year to which the cap relates, plus or minus any adjustment.
Borrowings	Loan funding.
Budget	A plan setting out the services and initiatives to be funded for the financial year and how they will contribute to achieving the strategic objectives specified in the council plan.
Capital works expenditure	Expenditure on non-current assets and includes new assets, asset renewal, asset expansion and asset upgrades.
Council cash	Funding from council's own sources of income. Example include rates, charges, investments and reserves, interest and asset sales.
Council plan	A plan setting out the medium-term strategic objectives, strategies, strategic indicators and resources reflecting vision and aspirations of the community for the next four years.
Current assets	Total current assets from "Statement of financial position".
Current liabilities	Total current liabilities from "Statement of financial position"
Debt redemption	Debt principal's repayments.
Debt servicing costs (interest)	Total borrowing costs or interest expense as per the "Statement of financial performance" or as disclosed in the notes of the council statements.

TERM	DEFINITION
Details list of planned capital works expenditure	A list of projects in relation to non-current assets by class and expenditure type.
Developer cash contributions	Cash contributions from developers. This does not include in-kind works or developer contributed assets.
Federal grants	Grant funding from the Commonwealth government.
Fees and charges revenue	Total fees and charges revenue as per the "Statement of financial performance" or as disclosed in the notes of the council statements (includes fines).
Financial performance indicators	A set of indicators measuring the effectiveness of financial management in a council covering operating position, liquidity, obligations, stability and efficiency.
Financial resources	Income, expenditure, assets, liabilities, equity, cash and capital works required to deliver the services and initiatives in the budget.
Financial statements	The financial statements and notes prepared in accordance with the Local Government Model Financial Report, Australian Accounting Standards and other applicable standards as they apply to the general purpose financial reports and a statement of capital works and included in the annual report.
Financial year	The period of 12 months ending on 30 June each year.
General Order	Means an order made by the Minister under section 185D of the Act.
Grant income and reimbursements	Total grants revenue as per the "Statement of financial performance" or as disclosed in the notes of the council statements (includes VicRoads sometimes shown as "reimbursements" by some councils).
Granted assets	Total value of assets received from developers (in kind) as per the "Statement of financial performance" or as disclosed in the notes of the council statements.
Higher cap	An amount expressed as the average rate cap specified in a general order plus an additional percentage amount in respect of that financial ear.
Human Resources	The staff employed by a council.
Indicator	What will be measured to assess performance.
Initiatives	Actions that are one-off in nature and/or lead to improvements in service.
Interest earnings	Total interest received as per the "Statement of financial performance" or as disclosed in the notes of the councils statements.
Local Government Model Financial Report	The model report published by the department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
Major initiatives	Significant initiatives that will directly contribute to the

TERM	DEFINITION
	achievement of the council plan during the current year and have a major focus in the budget.
Measure	How an indicator will be measured and typically includes a numerator and denominator.
Minister	The Minister for Local Government.
Model Budget	The <i>Victorian City Council Model Budget</i> prepared annually by the Chartered Accountants in Australia and New Zealand.
No. of rateable properties	Number of rateable properties in municipality.
Non-current liabilities	Total non-current liabilities from "Statement of financial position".
Non-financial resources	The resources other than financial resources required to deliver the services and initiatives in the budget.
Non-recurrent grant	A grant obtained on the condition that it be expended in a specified manner and is not expected to be received again during the period covered by a council's strategic resource plan.
Philanthropic or private contributions	Funding from philanthropic or private sources. An example would be a co-contribution by the private sector towards construction of a community asset.
Performance statement	A statement including the results of the prescribed service outcome indicators, financial performance indicators and sustainable capacity indicators for the financial year and included in the annual report.
Planning and accountability framework	The key statutory planning and reporting documents that are required to be prepared by councils to ensure accountability to local communities in the performance of functions and exercise of powers under the Act.
Proceeds from sale of non-current assets	Total proceeds from asset sales as per the "Statement of financial performance" or as disclosed in the notes of the council statements, (gross received not written-down value).
Rate revenue	Total rate revenue as per the "Statement of financial performance" or as disclosed in the notes of the council statements.
Rates outstanding at end of year	Rate debtor amount as disclosed in "Receivables" note.
Recurrent grant	A grant other than a non-recurrent grant.
Regulations	The Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014.
Report of Operations	A report containing a description of the operations of the council during the financial year and included in the annual report.
Services	Assistance, support, advice and other actions undertaken by a council for the benefit of the local community.
Special order	An order made by the ESC under section 185E of the Act.

TERM	DEFINITION
State grants	Grant funding from the State government.
Strategic objectives	The outcomes a council is seeking to achieve over the next four years and included in the council plan.
Strategic resource plan	A plan of the financial and non-financial resources for at least the next four years required to achieve the strategic objectives in the council plan. It also referred to as a long term financial plan.
Strategies	High level actions directed at achieving the strategic objectives in the council plan.
Statement of capital works	A statement which shows all capital expenditure of a council in relation to non-current assets and asset expenditure type prepared in accordance to the model statement of capital works in the Local Government Financial Report.
Statement of human resources	A statement which shows all council staff expenditure and numbers of full time equivalent council staff.
Statements of non-financial resources	A statement which describes the non-financial resources including human resources.
Summary of planned capital works expenditure	A summary of capital works expenditure in relation to non-current assets classified according to the model statement of capital works in the <i>Local Government Model Financial Report</i> , by asset expenditure type and funding source.
Summary of planned human resources expenditure	A summary of permanent council staff expenditure and numbers of full time equivalent council staff categorised according to the organisational structure of the council.
Total assets	Total assets from "Statement of financial position".
Total capital asset outlays	Payments for capital purchases per the "Cash flow statement".
Total cash inflows from operations, finance and Investment Act	Total inflows per the "Cash flow statement".
Total cash outflows from operations, finance and Investment Act	Total outflows per the "Cash flow statement".
Total depreciation	Total depreciation expense as per the "Statement of financial performance" or as disclosed in the notes of the council statements.
Total depreciation on infrastructure assets	Total depreciation on infrastructure assets as disclosed in the "Depreciation expense" note.
Total debt	Total interest bearing liabilities (current and non-current) from "Statement of financial position".
Total indebtedness	Total liabilities (current and non-current) from "Statement of financial position".
Total infrastructure assets	Total infrastructure assets from "Statement of financial

TERM	DEFINITION
	position" or as disclosed in the note (Written-down value). Infrastructure includes roads, bridges, drains, road structures, other structures, playground equipment, and other like categories. Heritage assets have been deemed to be building assets. Work in progress, where not separately split, and have been included as infrastructure.
Total operating expenses	Total operating expenses as per the "Statement of financial performance".
Total revenue	Total revenue from "Statement of financial performance"
User contributions	Funding from users. An example would be a co-contribution by a sporting club to the construction of a new facility.
Written-down value of assets sold	Written-down value of assets sold as per the "Statement of financial performance" or as disclosed in the notes of the council statements.

Table 18: Glossary of Terms / Definitions

12. APPENDIX B: FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

This Appendix contains the financial statements that follow:

- Comprehensive Income Statement;
- Balance Sheet;
- Statement of Changes in Equity;
- Statement of Cash Flows;
- Statement of Capital Works;
- Statement of Human Resources
- Summary of planned capital works expenditure
- Summary of planned human resources expenditure
- Financial Performance Indicators

These statements are required under Division 1, Part 6 of the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014*.

The Regulations commenced on 18 April 2014.

Regulations 13(2), 16(1) and 17(2) come into operation on July 1 2015.

12.1 Comprehensive Income Statement

Strathbogie Shire Council Budgeted Comprehensive Income Statement

For the four years ending 30 June 2021	Forecast	Budget	Strategic Resource Plan		
	Actual		Projections		
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Income					
Rates and charges	17,908	18,550	19,007	19,528	20,005
Statutory fees and fines	361	367	377	386	395
User fees	693	729	722	741	771
Grants - Operating	8,062	2,833	5,553	5,699	5,867
Grants - Capital	3,103	3,054	1,227	1,255	1,283
Contributions - monetary	656	442	193	198	204
Contributions - non-monetary	317	-	-	-	-
Other income	831	677	692	708	722
Total Income	31,931	26,652	27,771	28,515	29,247
Expenses					
Employee costs	-8,794	-8,772	-9,041	-9,288	-9,508
Materials and services	-11,889	-11,853	-11,662	-12,032	-12,365
Depreciation and amortisation	-5,234	-5,259	-5,435	-5,617	-5,921
Borrowing costs	-103	-54	-32	-25	-18
Net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	-711	-641	152	-300	-500
Other expenses	-572	-299	-320	-343	-364
Total Expenses	-27,303	-26,878	-26,338	-27,605	-28,676
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	4,628	-226	1,433	910	571
Other comprehensive income					
Items that will not be reclassified to surplus or deficit in future periods:					
Net asset revaluation increment /(decrement)	100	0	0	0	14,237
Share of other comprehensive income of associates and joint ventures	-	-	-	-	-
Items that may be reclassified to surplus or deficit in future periods	-	-	-	-	-
Total comprehensive result	4,728	-226	1,433	910	14,808

Figure 6: Comprehensive Income Statement

12.2 Budgeted Balance Sheet

Strathbogie Shire Council Budgeted Balance Sheet

For the four years ending 30 June 2021

	Forecast Actual	Budget	Strategic Resource Plan Projections		
	2016/17 \$'000	2017/18 \$'000	2018/19 \$'000	2019/20 \$'000	2020/21 \$'000
Assets					
Current assets					
Cash and cash equivalents	14,229	5,291	5,613	5,487	5,046
Trade and other receivables	1,903	2,126	1,886	1,932	1,987
Inventories	5	5	5	5	5
Non-current assets classified as held for sale	1,898	939	939	939	939
Other assets	143	113	113	113	113
Total current assets	18,178	8,474	8,557	8,476	8,091
Non-current assets					
Trade and other receivables	2	2	2	2	2
Investments in associates and joint ventures	242	242	242	242	242
Property, infrastructure, plant & equipment	274,356	282,855	283,836	284,740	299,880
Total non-current assets	274,600	283,099	284,080	284,984	300,124
Total assets	292,778	291,573	292,637	293,460	308,215
Liabilities					
Current liabilities					
Trade and other payables	2,810	2,530	2,304	2,368	2,437
Trust funds and deposits	762	762	762	762	762
Provisions	3,038	2,348	2,348	2,348	2,348
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	522	505	150	122	129
Total current liabilities	7,132	6,145	5,564	5,600	5,676
Non-current liabilities					
Provisions	699	699	699	699	699
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	678	186	398	275	146
Total non-current liabilities	1,377	885	1,097	974	845
Total liabilities	8,509	7,030	6,661	6,574	6,521
Net assets	284,269	284,543	285,976	286,886	301,694
Equity					
Accumulated surplus	85,500	85,024	86,207	86,867	87,438
Reserves	198,769	199,519	199,769	200,019	214,256
Total equity	284,269	284,543	285,976	286,886	301,694

Figure 7: Budgeted Balance Sheet

12.3 Budgeted Statement of Changes in Equity

Strathbogie Shire Council Budgeted Statement of Changes in Equity

	Total \$'000	Accumulated Surplus \$'000	Revaluation Reserve \$'000	Other Reserves \$'000
2017/18				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	284,269	85,500	198,169	600
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(226)	(226)	-	-
Net revaluation increment/decrement	500		500	
Transfer (to)/from reserves	-	(250)	-	250
Balance at end of financial year	284,543	85,024	198,669	850
2018/19				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	284,543	85,024	198,669	850
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	1,433	1,433	-	-
Transfer (to)/from reserves	-	(250)	-	250
Balance at end of financial year	285,976	86,207	198,669	1,100
2019/20				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	285,976	86,207	198,669	1,100
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	910	910	-	-
Transfer (to)/from reserves	-	(250)	-	250
Balance at end of financial year	286,886	86,867	198,669	1,350
2020/21				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	286,886	86,867	198,669	1,350
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	571	571	-	-
Net asset revaluation increment/(decrement)	14,237	-	14,237	-
Transfer (to)/from reserves	-	-	-	-
Balance at end of financial year	301,694	87,438	212,906	1,350

Figure 7: Budgeted Statement of Changes in Equity

12.4 Budgeted Statement of Cash Flows

Strathbogie Shire Council Budgeted Statement of Cash Flows

For the four years ending 30 June 2021

	Forecast Actual	Budget	Strategic Resource Plan Projections		
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
	Inflows (Outflows)	Inflows (Outflows)	Inflows (Outflows)	Inflows (Outflows)	Inflows (Outflows)
Cash flows from operating activities					
Rates and charges	17,908	18,550	19,172	19,496	19,967
Statutory fees and fines	361	367	380	385	394
User fees	693	729	728	740	770
Grants - operating	8,062	2,833	5,601	5,690	5,856
Grants - capital	3,103	3,054	1,238	1,253	1,281
Contributions - monetary	656	442	193	198	203
Interest received	230	227	230	230	230
Other receipts	601	450	468	477	491
Employee costs	-8,794	-8,772	-9,138	-9,261	-9,478
Materials and services	-12,098	-11,853	-11,787	-11,997	-12,326
Other payments	-571	-299	-324	-341	-364
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	10,151	5,728	6,761	6,870	7,024
Cash flows from investing activities					
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	-6,867	-14,542	-7,216	-7,321	-7,624
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	940	1,132	952	500	300
Landfill rehabilitation		-690	-	-	-
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities	-5,927	-14,100	-6,264	-6,821	-7,324
Cash flows from financing activities					
Finance costs	-103	-54	-32	-25	-18
Proceeds from borrowings	-	-	-	-	-
Repayment of borrowings	-472	-512	-143	-150	-123
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities	-575	-566	-175	-175	-141
Net increase/(decrease) in cash & cash equivalents	3,649	-8,938	322	-126	-441
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	10,580	14,229	5,291	5,613	5,487
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	14,229	5,291	5,613	5,487	5,046

Figure 8: Budgeted Cash Flow Statement

12.5 Budgeted Statement of Capital Works

Strathbogie Shire Council Budgeted Capital Works Statement

For the four years ending 30 June 2021

	Forecast Actual	Budget	Strategic Resource Plan Projections		
	2016/17 \$'000	2017/18 \$'000	2018/19 \$'000	2019/20 \$'000	2020/21 \$'000
Property					
Land	3	-	-	-	-
Total land	3	-	-	-	-
Buildings	1,001	1,542	1,181	2,304	2,530
Total buildings	1,001	1,542	1,181	2,304	2,530
Total property	1,004	1,542	1,181	2,304	2,530
Plant and equipment					
Plant, machinery and equipment	390	984	1,286	698	1,578
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	376	406	294	294	294
Computers and telecommunications	-	-	-	-	-
Library books	-	-	-	-	-
Total plant and equipment	766	1,390	1,580	992	1,872
Infrastructure					
Roads	3,196	6,045	3,982	3,538	2,560
Bridges	864	3,443	432	441	610
Footpaths and cycleways	142	303	34	36	39
Drainage	498	1,344	7	10	13
Other infrastructure	397	475	-	-	-
Total infrastructure	5,097	11,610	4,455	4,025	3,222
Total capital works expenditure	6,867	14,542	7,216	7,321	7,624
Represented by:					
New asset expenditure	358	1,734	539	435	432
Asset renewal expenditure	5,633	10,337	5,579	5,781	6,048
Asset expansion expenditure	822	2,251	-	-	-
Asset upgrade expenditure	54	220	1,098	1,105	1,144
Total capital works	6,867	14,542	7,216	7,321	7,624

Figure 9: Statement of Capital Works 2016/17

12.6 Budgeted Statement of Human Resources

Strathbogie Shire Council Budgeted Statement of Human Resources

For the four years ending 30 June 2021

	Forecast Actual	Budget	Strategic Resource Plan Projections		
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Staff expenditure					
Employee costs - Operating	8,794	8,839	9,041	9,288	9,508
Total staff expenditure	8,794	8,839	9,041	9,288	9,508
Staff numbers	EFT	EFT	EFT	EFT	EFT
Employees	96	96	96	96	96
Total staff numbers	96	96	96	96	96

Figure 10: Budgeted Statement of Human Resources

12.7 Financial Performance Indicators

Indicator	Measure	Note	Forecast 2016-17	Budget 2017-18	SRP Projections		
					2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Operating position							
Adjusted underlying result	Adjusted surplus (deficit) / Adjusted revenue	1	11.7%	-6.6%	4.5%	2.5%	1.3%
Liquidity							
Working Capital	Current assets / current liabilities	2	254.9%	137.9%	153.8%	151.4%	142.5%
Unrestricted cash	Unrestricted cash / current liabilities		123.5%	72.1%	99.1%	96.2%	87.1%
Obligations							
Loans and borrowings	Interest bearing loans and borrowings / rate revenue	3	6.7%	3.7%	2.9%	2.0%	1.4%
Loans and borrowings	Interest and principal repayments / rate revenue		3.2%	3.1%	0.9%	0.9%	0.7%
Indebtedness	Non-current liabilities / own source revenue		7.0%	4.4%	5.3%	4.6%	3.9%
Asset renewal	Asset renewal expenditure / depreciation	4	107.6%	196.6%	102.6%	102.9%	102.1%
Stability							
Rates concentration	Rate revenue / adjusted underlying revenue	5	57.3%	64.5%	73.6%	69.5%	69.4%
Rates effort	Rate revenue / property values (CIV)		.7%	.7%	.7%	.7%	.7%
Efficiency							
Expenditure level	Total expenditure / no. of assessments		\$3,694	\$3,637	\$3,537	\$3,680	\$3,795
Revenue level	Residential rate revenue / No. of residential assessments		1,621	1,665	1,707	1,749	1,793
Workforce turnover	No. of resignations & terminations / average no. of staff		9.3%	8.8%	8.4%	8.0%	7.6%

Table 19: Financial Performance Indicators

13. APPENDIX C: RATING PRINCIPLES

(a) Sustainable financial management

The aggregate revenue raised by Council plus that received from grants needs to be sufficient to cover the aggregate long-run cost of delivering the services provided measured on an accrual-accounting basis. Sustainable financial management requires the application of multi-year framework to financial management, asset management, planning, spending and revenue decisions.

(b) Evaluating and setting priorities

Council is aware of and will have regard to the views of its communities with respect to the priority areas for Council services. Council will heighten the communities awareness of the short and long-term financial implications of potential service priorities and key decisions, including trade-offs between service priorities.

(c) Core Functions

Council will continue to provide a full range of municipal goods and services in accordance with its statutory and community service obligations.

Where Council engages in the provision of services, that resemble those of private sector markets, the application of competitive neutrality principles requires

Council to aim to recover the full costs of a significant business activity, including the direct costs of providing goods and services, rate and tax equivalent payments and a commercial rate of return on investment.

(d) Identifying the cost of service delivery

Council will understand the cost of delivering its services as an acknowledgement that this information is useful in determining the range of services, and the level of service provision, and the corresponding structure for rates and charges.

(e) Prudent borrowings for infrastructure

Borrowings when undertaken prudently are an appropriate means for local government to finance long lived infrastructure assets as the cost of servicing of debt through rates or user charges enables the cost of the asset to be matched with the benefits from consumption of the services over the life of the asset, thereby promoting intergenerational equity.

(f) Rate setting and pricing of services

A single rate cap of 2.0% has been advised for the 2017-2018 financial year by the Victorian Government.

Rate capping delivers on a key election promise for a fairer rating system to help ease cost of living pressures on Victorians. It is part of delivering value for communities and provide fair, responsible and effective policies and processes for Victorian ratepayers.

Only the general rate and municipal charges part of a rates bill will be capped at 2.0%. All other parts, such as waste charges and other fees and levies, remain uncapped.

Where infrastructure costs are directly attributable to individual property owners, Council will recover those costs through the application of special charge schemes, developer charges or contributions.

Council will also take consideration of the community's ability to pay as well as the benefits derived from the provision of services.

(g) Openness and transparency

Council is accountable and responsible for the policy decisions with respect to the range of services provided, the expenditure and delivery of the services and the way services are funded and paid for by the community. Open and transparent processes for decision making of Council include the making of information openly available to people in the local community and seeking active participation by the community with respect to choices regarding the range and level of services provided and how they are funded.

(h) Providing services on behalf of other tiers of government

Effective interaction between Council and other tiers of government is important to ensure delivery of some essential services to the community. Where Council enters into the delivery of services on behalf of other tiers of government, the supply of these services should be delivered on commercial terms based on the incremental cost to Council. In situations where Council determines to provide subsidies for the delivery of these services Council will make the costs transparent and inform the community about the purpose and amount of the subsidy and how it is to be funded.