

Strathbogie Shire Council

Engagement Report

Pitch My Project 2024/25

June 2024



Strathbogie
SHIRE COUNCIL

Acknowledgement of Country

Strathbogie Shire Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands on which we strive, the peoples of the rivers and the hills of the Strathbogie Shire region who walked these lands for generations.

We pay our respects to the elders of the past, and the speakers of the first words, who lived in harmony with this country.

We acknowledge the elders of the present, who seek to regain their culture, and to teach the elders of the future their law, their history and their language.

We pay our respects to them and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

We honour their spirit – and the memory, culture, art and science of the world's oldest living culture through 60,000 years.

2024/25 Pitch My Project

Background

A key component of the 2024/25 Budget is the Pitch My Project initiative.

Now in its fourth year, the Pitch My Project initiative was established as a way of encouraging community involvement in the development of the Draft Budget.

Based on the deliberative principles in the *Local Government Act 2020* and Strathbogie Shire Council's Engagement Policy, Pitch My Project provides a way to involve the community in setting priorities and identifying which projects and initiatives that matter to them.

Pitch My Project is a community-driven initiative that helps Council prioritise funding for the projects and programs that matter to our community. It also encourages discussion and involvement in the Council Plan, Budget and financial planning.

The 2024/25 budget includes an allocation of \$300,000, with up to \$50,000 available for each of the six Council Plan Strategic Focus Areas.

1. Engage. Create. Unite.
2. Live. Access. Connect.
3. Protect. Enhance. Adapt.
4. Inclusive. Productive. Balanced.
5. Strong. Healthy. Safe.
6. Accountable. Transparent. Responsible.

Participation has been significant over several years with projects providing extensive community benefit with more than 20 projects funded across the municipality, totalling more than \$1 million.

The Engagement Approach

A three-stage approach was developed for 2024/25.

1. *Projects submitted (December 2023 to February 2024)*

Community encouraged to submit projects for pitching in accordance with the Pitch My Project Guidelines.

2. *Projects assessed and shortlisted (March/April 2024)*

- Projects assessed across criteria in accordance with the guidelines including:
 - deliverable under \$50,000
 - ability for Council to deliver the project in the coming financial year
 - whether there are other available funding sources
 - whether it is one-off project or initiative
 - whether it is council owned asset for infrastructure projects
 - community benefit
 - alignment to Council Plan Strategic Focus Area.
- Ideas that met this criteria and received a score of 11 or over proceeded to community voting.

3. *Community voting (April/May 2024)*

- Shortlisted projects presented to community for vote alongside draft Budget and draft Fees and Charges.

In total, 15 projects progressed through to the community vote as part of the 2024/25 draft budget engagement in April and May 2024.

Community members were invited to rank the following projects from 1 to 15.

- Avenel Memorial Hall standby generator to enable the hall to operate as a power outage and heat refuge
- Avenel Hughes Creek Bridge condition assessment and proposed works by experienced heritage consultant
- Euroa Branding Project Stage 2 wayfinding signage.
- Euroa Outdoor Space Precinct design plan
- Euroa Strathbogie Shire Art Trail installation
- Longwood Nature Play Space Stage 2 installation
- Nagambie Tennis Club Master Plan including staged approach for clubhouse renovations and tennis court detailed design
- Nagambie Recreation Reserve hot water service upgrade
- Ruffy - Tablelands Community Centre Shelter Shed Verandah
- Strathbogie Walking Path on the eastern side of Spring Creek Road between the Recreation Ground and Main Street.
- Strathbogie Memorial Hall generator and rewiring to provide a power source during outages.
- Violet Town Bowls Club floor covering replacement
- Violet Town Outdoor Gym Equipment near the Town Sports and Recreation Reserve and the Honeysuckle Creek Walking Track
- Violet Town Community Complex Hall Upgrade
- Violet Town to Euroa Cycling Track feasibility study and design concept for McDiarmids Road between Mahers Road and Wilbraham Road.

The opportunity to vote was promoted through a range of channels including local survey stations, social media, Council's regular advertising column, media releases, community newsletters and outreach to community groups and organisations.

Community members could vote at survey stations located across the shire and online through the Share Strathbogie engagement portal.

Depth of engagement

Depth of engagement: Collaborate.

Public participation goal: To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.

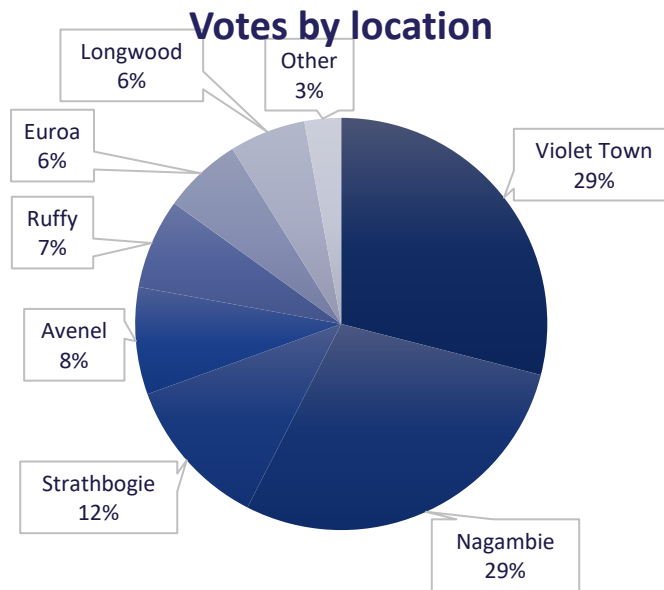
Promise to the public: We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.

Participation

Participants were required to include their name and locality on the hard copy submissions and were required to register to participate online to minimise the potential for duplication of voting.

There was strong participation across all project areas, with the smaller communities of Strathbogie, Ruffy and Longwood outperforming the larger towns on a per capita participation rate.

Council received 452 community contributions to the project, with 221 submitted online and the remainder coming from survey stations in Avenel, Euroa, Longwood, Nagambie, Ruffy, Strathbogie and Violet Town.



Town name	Participants	Population	Participation rate (%)
Violet Town	131	936	14.00
Nagambie	129	2254	5.72
Strathbogie	54	351	15.38
Avenel	38	1112	3.42
Ruffy	32	164	19.51
Euroa	28	3508	0.80
Longwood	27	263	10.27
Other	13	NA	NA

Recommended funding

The biggest challenge with this voting has been how to fairly weight votes amongst smaller rural localities and larger towns.

Last year, there were only two Strategic Focus Areas where there was more than one project. Data was scored based on a weighted average for the ranking of the projects and then a further weighting based on population for the project area.

This year, all but one of the six Strategic Focus Areas had multiple entries. Community members voted for all 15 projects in order of their preference rather than by category.

This year, the same weighted average was used based on the number of participants and the spread of their vote from 1 to 15. The population weighting was then applied as per last year. Projects scoring the highest were identified for each of the six Strategic Focus Areas.

This year, an additional review to consider the spread of projects across the shire compared to the population served by the project and wider community benefit was also conducted.

Further explanation of this is included in the commentary on Key Strategic Focus Area 5 on page 12.

Each of the six (6) projects recommended for funding will help Council deliver its Community Vision. Each project has shown strong alignment with our Council Plan, the key strategic document that details how we will achieve the vision.

The following projects were endorsed for funding at the June 25 Council meeting.

Strategic Focus Area	Project	Value
Engage. Create. Unite.	Euroa Strathbogie Shire Art Trail	\$50,000
Live. Access. Connect.	Strathbogie Walking Path*	\$50,000
Inclusive. Productive. Balanced.	Euroa Branding Project Stage 2	\$50,000
Strong. Healthy. Safe.	Longwood Nature Play Space Stage 2	\$50,000
Protect. Enhance. Adapt.	Avenel Memorial Hall	\$50,000
Accountable Transparent. Responsible.	Ruffy Tablelands Centre Verandah	\$50,000

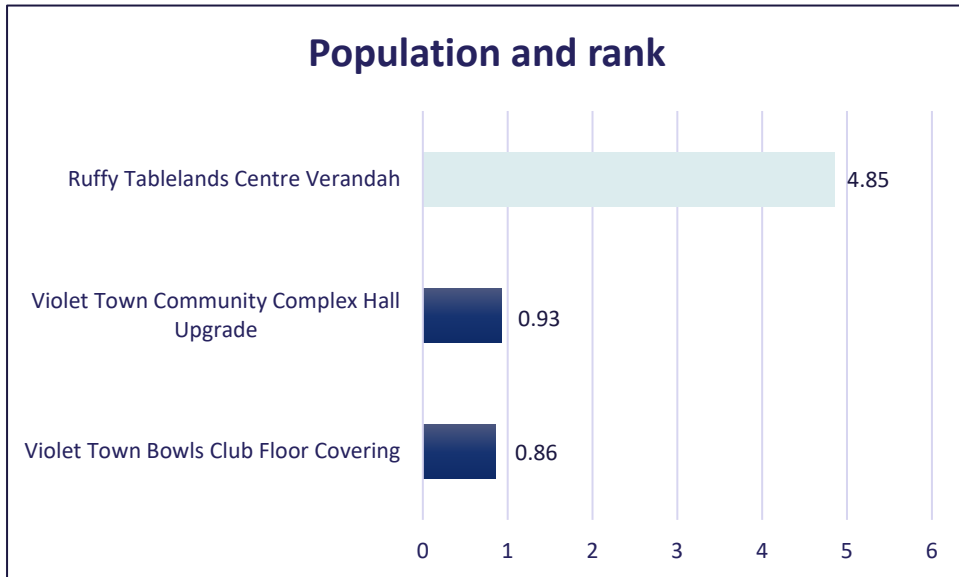
*provisionally allocated based on seeking further advice and direction from the Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action regarding Native Vegetation Impacts).

Findings: Pitch My Project

Key Strategic Focus Area 1

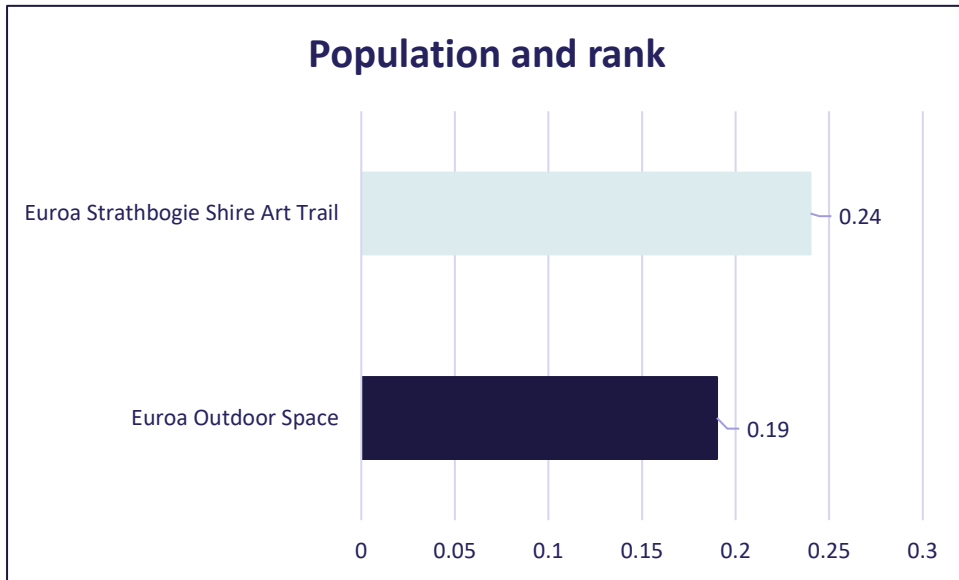
Accountable. Transparent. Responsible.

Name	Location	Population	Weighted average	Pop and weighted average
Violet Town Bowls Club Floor Covering	Violet Town	936	8.04	0.86
Violet Town Community Complex Hall Upgrade	Violet Town	936	8.66	0.93
Ruffy Tablelands Centre Verandah	Ruffy	164	7.96	4.85



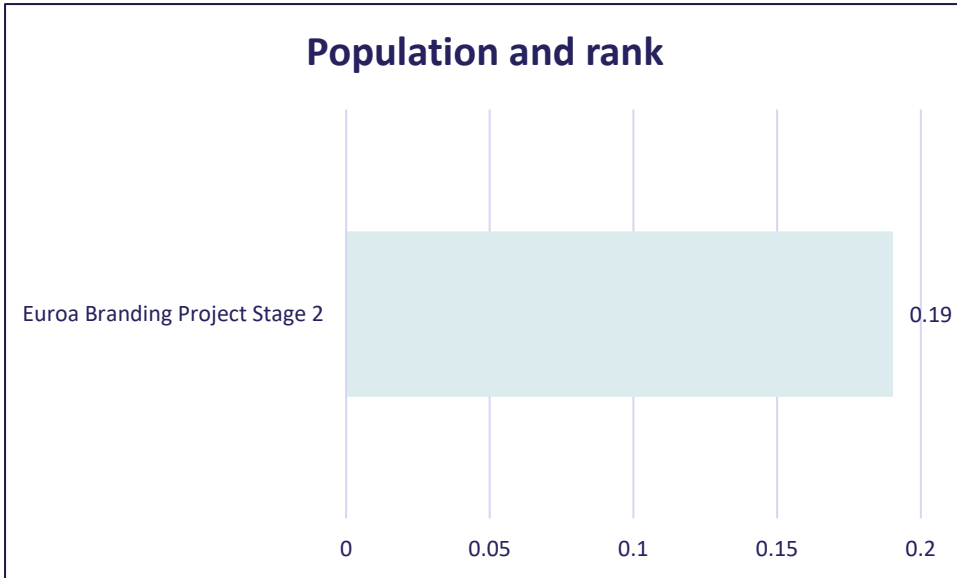
Key Strategic Focus Area 2
Engage. Create. Unite.

Name	Location	Population	Weighted average	Pop and weighted average
Euroa Outdoor Space	Euroa	3508	6.77	0.19
Euroa Strathbogie Shire Art Trail	Euroa	3508	8.33	0.24



Key Strategic Focus Area 3
Inclusive. Productive. Balanced.

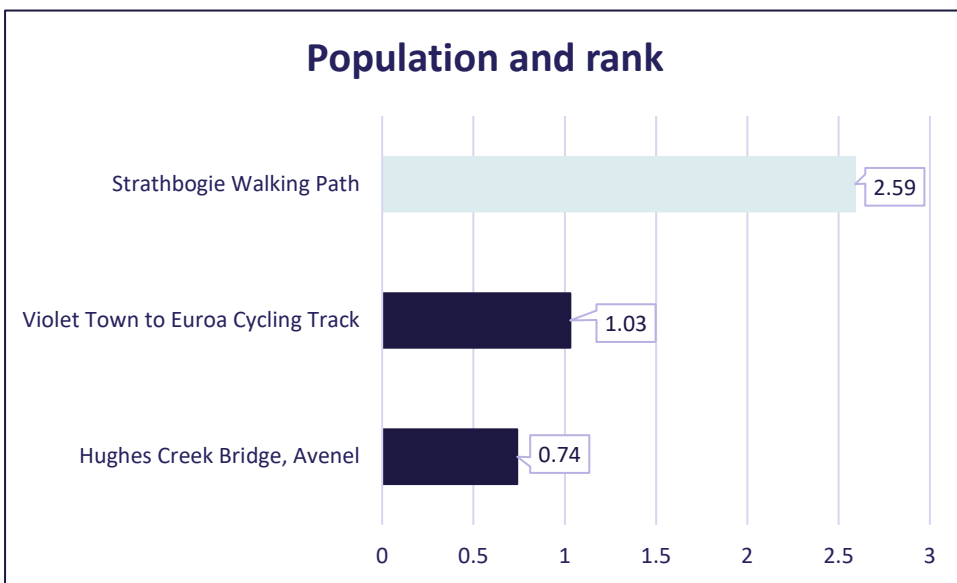
Name	Location	Population	Weighted average	Pop and weighted average
Euroa Branding Project Stage 2	Euroa	3508	3.79	0.11



Key Strategic Focus Area 4

Live. Access. Connect.

Name	Location	Population	Weighted average	Pop and weighted average
Hughes Creek Bridge, Avenel	Avenel	1112	8.21	0.74
Violet Town to Euroa Cycling Track	Violet Town	936	9.65	1.03
Strathbogie Walking Path	Strathbogie	351	9.08	2.59

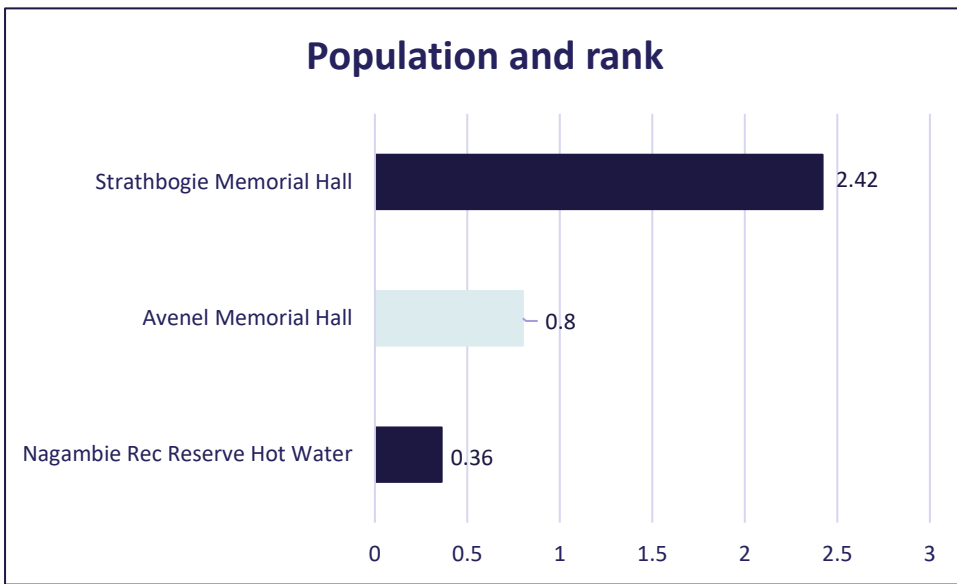


Key Strategic Focus Area 5

Protect. Enhance. Adapt.

Name	Location	Population	Weighted average	Pop and weighted average
Nagambie Rec Reserve Hot Water	Nagambie	2254	8.09	0.36
Avenel Memorial Hall	Avenel	1112	8.88	0.80
Strathbogie Memorial Hall	Strathbogie	351	8.49	2.42*

*Avenel selected based on further assessment. See note at the end of this section.



Based on the population and weighted average method used last year, Strathbogie, with a population of 351, had top ranked projects across two key strategic focus areas. The larger centres of Nagambie, Avenel and Violet Town had none.

With a small population base to receive \$100,000 under that method, a further assessment was conducted to consider the spread of projects compared to the population served by the project and the associated wider community benefit.

Following that assessment, Strathbogie’s highest rated project by population and weighted average was selected (walking path in key strategic focus area 4). The second Strathbogie project in key strategic focus area 5 was dropped, with the next highest scoring project in that section successful instead.

Key Strategic Focus Area 6
Strong. Healthy. Safe.

Name	Location	Population	Weighted average	Pop and weighted average
Nagambie Tennis Club Master Plan	Nagambie	2254	6.98	0.31
Violet Town Outdoor Gym Equipment	Violet Town	936	8.48	0.91
Longwood Nature Play Space Stage 2	Longwood	263	8.60	3.27

