

Strathbogie Shire Council

Council Meeting Agenda

Tuesday 18 February 2025

Agenda

Council Meeting

Tuesday 18 February 2025 at 4:00 pm

Meeting to be held at the Euroa Community Conference Centre and livestreamed on Council's website

<https://www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au/council/our-council/council-meetings-and-minutes/>

Councillors

Mayor Cr Ewart-Kennedy
Deputy Mayor Cr Jeffery
Cr Binks
Cr Carlson
Cr Halsall
Cr Holloway
Cr Stevens

Municipal Monitor

Marg Allan

Officers

Tim Tamlin	Interim Chief Executive Officer
Amanda Tingay	Director People and Governance
Brian Doyle	Acting Director Sustainable Infrastructure
Rachael Frampton	Director Community and Planning
Michelle Harris	Interim Media and Communications Manager
Kerry Lynch	Governance Officer

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Meeting Procedure

1 Welcome

Councillors Vision

We will be a Councillor group that delivers valuable outcomes for our community through teamwork characterised by:

- respectful debate
- collaboration, and
- the commitment to being inclusive and transparent.

Councillors Values

- Respect
- Integrity
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Responsiveness

2 Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the places we live, work and play. We recognise and respect the enduring relationship they have with their lands and waters, and we pay respects to the Elders past, present and emerging.

Today we are meeting on the lands of the Taungurung peoples of the Eastern Kulin nation, whose sovereignty here has never been ceded.

3 Privacy Notice

This public meeting is being streamed live via our website ([Council Meetings and Minutes | Strathbogie Shire](#)) and made available for public access on our website along with the official Minutes/Decisions of this meeting.

All care is taken to maintain your privacy, however, as a visitor in the public gallery, it is assumed that your consent is given in the event that your image is broadcast to the public. It is also assumed that your consent is given to the use and disclosure of any information that you share at the meeting (including personal or sensitive information) to any person who accesses those recordings or Minutes/Decisions.

4 Governance Principles

Council considers that the recommendations contained in this Agenda gives effect to the overarching governance principles stated in Section 9(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*. These principles are as follows:

1. Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law
2. priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations

3. the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted
4. the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making
5. innovation and continuous improvement are to be pursued
6. collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought
7. the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured
8. regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making
9. the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

5 Apologies/Leave of Absence

6 Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

7 Confirmation of Minutes/Decisions of Previous Meetings

The minutes have been circulated to Councillors and posted on Council website [Council Meetings and Minutes | Strathbogie Shire](#) pending confirmation at this meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 21 January 2025 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

8 Petitions

Nil

9 Mayor and Councillor Reports

9.1 Mayor's Report

9.2 Councillor Reports

10 Public Question Time

Public Question Time

Questions for the Ordinary Council Meeting can be submitted to be read, and responded to, by the Chair, or a member of Council staff nominated by the Chair, during the Public Question Time. Questions must be submitted 30 hours prior to the Council meeting, by emailing info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au.

Public Question Time will be conducted as per Rule 35 of Strathbogie Shire Council's Governance Rules. The required [form](#) for completion and lodgement, and associated [Procedural Guidelines](#), can be found on Council's website at www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au.

As the questions are a permanent public record and to meet the requirements of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*, only the initials of the person asking the question will be used in the Minutes of the meeting, together with a Council reference number.

11 Officer Reports

11.1 Strategic and Statutory Planning

11.1.1 P2023-121 - 222 Faithfull Road, Longwood East

AUTHOR	Senior Planner
RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR	Director Community and Planning

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Planning Application P2023-121 was lodged with Strathbogie Shire Council in November 2023 for the use and development of the site at 222 Faithfull Road, Longwood East as a Greyhound re-homing facility (domestic animal husbandry) and caretaker's house. Council subsequently issued a Notice of Decision to refuse a permit for the site in June 2024.

The permit applicant subsequently appealed Council's decision with the *Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal* (VCAT). Upon engagement of a planning consultant, on behalf of Strathbogie Shire Council, it has been determined that the proposal should now be supported, instead of the original refusal that was recommended.

This situation has arisen due to the permit applicant providing additional documentation and proposing recommended permit conditions that address the primary concerns previously raised by Council's planning officers.

The purpose of this report is to enable Council (as the respondent) to understand the revised position of officers and to enable consent orders to be signed and a decision to be passed by VCAT.

Council is not being asked to reassess the application, only to provide direction to Council officers and Council's representative in relation to the current VCAT proceeding.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Agree for VCAT to issue a planning permit under the provisions of the Strathbogie Planning Scheme allowing for the use and development of 222 Faithfull Road, Longwood East (Lots 1 & 2 TP953561 and CA20 Sec B Parish Longwood) as a domestic animal husbandry and caretakers house, generally in accordance with the amended draft conditions included in Attachment one of this report and the recommendations of the acoustic report in Attachment two
2. Delegates power to Council's Manager of Planning and Investment, Principal Planner and Senior Planner to settle this matter at future VCAT hearings or by way of consent orders.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

This report is presented to consider whether Council support the preparation of Consent Orders that will allow a planning permit to be granted for domestic animal husbandry (greyhound rehoming facility) and a caretaker's house at 222 Faithful Road, Longwood East.

During the Compulsory Conference at VCAT negotiations occurred between the permit applicant, Council officers and Council's representative. These negotiations resulted in Council officers believing that an orderly planning outcome can be achieved that ensures the amenity of the area is protected.

Planning Application P2023-121 was lodged with Strathbogie Council in November 2023 for the use and development of the site at 222 Faithfull Road, Longwood East as a Greyhound rehoming facility (domestic animal husbandry) and caretaker's house. Council subsequently issued a Notice of Decision to refuse a permit for the site in June 2024 on the grounds that:

1. The proposal does not support the Purpose of the Farming Zone and does not weight in favour of support when assessed against the appropriate decision guidelines of the Farming Zone:
 - The proposal has the potential to limit the operation and expansion of adjoining and nearby agricultural uses
 - The proposed dwelling has the potential to be adversely affected by agricultural activities on adjacent and nearby land due to dust, noise, odour, use of chemicals and farm machinery, traffic, and hours of operation.
2. The proposal, when assessed against the policy throughout the Strathbogie Planning Scheme, is not weighted in favour of support. The relevant policy that provides direction are:
 - a. Clause 02.03-4 – given the proximity to Melbourne and major regional centres, and the scenic nature of the area, there is a continual demand for rural lifestyle development not associated with farming. This leads to land use conflicts between genuine farming activities occurring on neighbouring properties and existing rural lifestyle properties
 - b. Clause 13.07-1S – the proposal results in a dwelling being located in proximity to neighbouring activities that have the potential to cause off-site amenity impacts.
 - c. Clause 14.01-1S –
 - i. the proposal does not appropriately address the impact it will have on agricultural activities on adjacent land
 - ii. the proposed dwelling is incompatible with the activities occurring on neighbouring properties.
 - d. Clause 14.01-2L- the proposal does not sufficiently outline how noise from the proposed activity will be managed to avoid amenity impacts.

It is noted that one objection was received to the application.

The applicant subsequently appealed Council's decision with VCAT.

As part of the VCAT appeal process a Compulsory Conference was conducted. Prior to the Compulsory Conference the applicant prepared and circulated an Acoustic Report which

contained several recommendations to minimise offsite amenity impacts. The possible amenity impacts were a major consideration by Council in determining to refuse the grant of a planning permit.

As part of the Compulsory Conference process Council was required to circulate draft conditions. These conditions were drafted by Council's representative in discussion with Council officers. The draft conditions included recommendations of the Acoustic Report and ultimately, on balance, Council's representative (Mountain Planning, a Human Habitats company) in conjunction with Council officers formed the view that the proposal facilitates an orderly outcome whilst minimising amenity impacts and that a planning permit could now be supported.

During the Compulsory Conference the applicant consented to the draft conditions and both parties were in agreement that a planning permit could be granted.

The fifteen conditions listed below have been agreed to with the permit applicant to be added to the permit conditions to further address amenity:

1. Access to the kennels must be restricted to the caretaker and staff only to ensure that the animals are not overly stimulated
2. Visitors are not permitted to access the kennel enclosure
3. A caretaker should be on site at all times to provide supervision and where necessary, management of overly noisy or excited dogs. Such management could include the excited dog being moved to another kennel, moved to one of the three isolation kennels, or housed within the dwelling located onsite
4. The caretaker and staff must immediately attend to any excessive barking events to investigate the cause of the barking, and any overly excited dogs must be settled
5. Prior to the commencement of the use a two-way monitoring system must be installed within the kennels to assist in monitoring noise and alerting the caretaker if dogs are barking, particularly during the evening and night time
6. The dogs must be monitored 24 hours per day, seven days a week. During the daytime, the on-duty staff member or caretaker is to monitor the dogs whilst conducting their duties, whilst during the night time the two-way monitoring system is to provide real time feedback and alerts to the caretaker living onsite
7. If a group of dogs within an outdoor area are overly excited, the dogs must be moved into the internal areas of the kennel, or into the three isolated kennels to reduce their exposure to stimulation. During extended periods of excessive barking, dogs should be housed within the isolated kennel with all doors closed
8. Dogs must be kept indoors (within the kennels) between 9:00pm and 7:00am (summer) and 8:00pm and 8:00am (winter)
9. Doors between internal and external areas of the kennels must be well sealed and are to be kept closed between 9:00pm and 7:00am (summer) and 8:00pm and 8:00am (winter).
10. Exercise is only permitted during daylight hours only, seven days a week
11. Feeding time is restricted to daytime hours only, seven days a week

12. Feeding of all dogs is restricted to internal areas or within the attached yards only.
13. Electronic masking devices (e.g. radio) should be used in the kennel to assist in settling dogs at all times
14. A complaint resolution system must be implemented, to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority, with a 24-hour contact telephone number for the caretaker of the facility made available to all neighbouring properties
15. Before the use starts, the owner must enter into an Agreement with the Responsible Authority pursuant to Section 173 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* to provide the following:
 - a. The owner acknowledges that the subject land is located in a rural area where there is agricultural/dog training activity where there may be adverse amenity impacts from noise, odour, dust, chemicals, light, etc. from time to time

The owner must pay the reasonable costs of the preparation, execution and registration of the section 173 agreement. Evidence of the registration of the section 173 agreement must be provided to the responsible authority prior to the commencement of the use authorised by this permit.

Additionally, the acoustic report contains recommendations in relation to the construction of the proposed kennel and caretaker's dwelling. These recommendations should also be included in any planning permit issued by VCAT. Approval of the recommendation forming part of this report will allow officers to require their inclusion as part of the VCAT proceedings.

Council officers and Council's representative did not have the authority to settle the matter as the decision to refuse the grant of a permit was made by Council. As such, this report is presented to Council with a recommendation to reach Consent Orders to enable the VCAT to direct that a planning permit be granted.

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

Issues

It was originally recommended that Planning Application P2023-121 be refused based on planning officer concerns, primarily with potential amenity impacts. The permit applicant has since provided an acoustic report which has recommended the conditions listed above. In consultation with Council's representative, it is considered that the blanks in the original application regarding amenity impacts have now been filled in and that amenity (primarily noise) can be managed to a level that is consistent with the relevant noise standards.

The Acoustic Report was prepared by Acoustic Dynamics on 10 October 2024. The report provides expert guidance as to noise mitigation from the neighbouring properties to the subject land and vice versa. The report includes acoustic measurements from the nearest noise sensitive receivers.

The provision of the acoustic report and its recommended permit conditions addresses the previous primary grounds for refusal and provide evidence for a satisfactory amenity outcome. As a result, it is considered that Council should provide direction to officers to settle the matter and allow VCAT to issue planning permit application P2023-121.

It must also be remembered that the subject land and neighbouring properties are subject to the Farming Zone, where it is accepted that residents do not have the same amenity expectations as residents in residentially zoned areas.

Options

There are two options available to Council.

Option One

The first option is to not resolve to agree to consent orders that will result in planning application P2023-121 being approved. This will lead to Council being required to attend a full hearing at VCAT, which can be costly and time-consuming.

Option Two (recommended)

The second option is to resolve to allow officers to agree to consent orders that will result in the planning application being issued.

Discussion

Council officers recommend that Council resolve to agree to consent orders, which will result in the issue of a permit for Planning Application P2023-121. The permit applicant has provided additional documentation that has enabled a more detailed assessment of amenity, which was the primary ground of refusal for the original application by Council officers.

Based on advice from Council's representative, review of the acoustic report (attachment two) and proposed permit conditions, Council officers are comfortable that amenity can be addressed to an acceptable standard.

Additional permit conditions will be added to the permit that will provide tight restrictions around the animal husbandry component of the application and control the construction of the proposed kennels and caretakers dwelling to minimise noise impacts.

With regards to the amenity of the resident of the proposed caretaker's residence, a section 173 agreement is proposed to make future purchasers aware that the subject site is in a rural area where there will be adverse amenity impacts, particularly from animal training activities, from neighbouring properties.

It is recommended that Council resolve to agree for VCAT to issue planning permit P2023-121 generally in line with the draft conditions set out in attachment one but modified to include conditions that address kennel and dwelling construction in accordance with sections 4.1.2 and 4.1.3 of the attached acoustic report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In accordance with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, the application was subject to Third Party Appeal rights and as such was advertised for the legislated 14-day period. During this time, one objection was received. The primary grounds of this objection included alignment with the purpose of the zone, as well as what the objector believed to be an unsatisfactory distance between the proposed dwelling and the existing dwelling on the objector's property, given the context of the Farming Zone.

The objector also believed the proposal would impact the ability of them to use the training runs on their property, as well as raising concerns over disease transmission. These concerns have been addressed in the discussion above.

The objector did not apply to become a party to the VCAT appeal and VCAT has confirmed that there is no need to further advertise the application as the proposed draft conditions,

with acoustic mitigation measures, will tighten up the proposal and there will be no further detriment to that proposed in the original application.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following key strategic focus areas and or actions in the 2021-25 Council Plan:

Strategic Focus Area 4: Inclusive. Productive. Balanced.

We target economic development to enhance our region.

We are managing growth carefully to protect the environment and meet our social infrastructure needs.

Strategic Focus Area 6: Accountable. Transparent. Responsible.

Be accountable for the decisions we make and the quality of service we deliver.

Maximise public transparency and accountability around our performance and decision-making processes.

Regional, State and National Plans, Policies and Legislation

This report is aligned with the following legislation, Council Policies and key strategic documents:

- Melbourne Plan 2030
- Hume Regional Growth Plan 2014

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

This report has identified the following risk(s):

Risk(s)	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
If the recommendation is not followed then the matter will progress to a hearing at VCAT where Council could possibly have its position overturned.	Possible	Minimal	Medium	This report provides Council with the ability to mitigate this risk

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

In accordance with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, VCAT is now the decision maker for this application. The purpose of this meeting is for Council to reach an understanding of the VCAT applicants' position, so that VCAT can issue the relevant consent orders.

No other legal considerations are considered relevant to Council at this time.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

No Council officers and/or contractors who have provided advice in relation to this report have declared a general or material conflict of interest regarding the matter under consideration.

TRANSPARENCY

This report will be presented to Council in a Council meeting, open to the public and live streamed to the public. This is consistent with Council's Transparency Policy, enabling the community to have oversight regarding the matters being discussed by Council and the decisions being made.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The recommendation forming part of this report does not impose any sustainability considerations.

COLLABORATION

No formal collaboration was undertaken in the production of this report.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

There are no significant human rights implications arising from this report.

CONCLUSION

Council officers and Council's representative for VCAT are of the opinion that planning application P2023-121 should now be approved.

The permit applicant has provided additional documentation that addresses the concerns raised by Council officers that ultimately led to the refusal of the original planning application. Subject to the inclusion of appropriate planning permit conditions, to address these concerns officers believe that a planning permit should be issued. Direction is sought from Council to proceed in this manner at the upcoming VCAT proceedings.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft conditions previously discussed at VCAT
2. Acoustic Report

222 Faithfull Road, Longwood East – Without Prejudice Draft Conditions for Discussion

Compliance with documents approved under this permit:

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

Layout not altered:

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

Consolidation of lots

3. Prior to the commencement of construction, Lots 1 & 2 TP953561 and CA20 Sec B Parish Longwood must be consolidated to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

Minimising glare:

4. The external cladding of the proposed buildings, including the roof, must be constructed of materials in good order and condition and be of muted colours to enhance the aesthetic amenity of the area. Materials having a highly reflective surface must not be used.

Use of land for a dwelling:

5. The approved dwelling must meet the following requirements:
 - Access to the dwelling must be provided via an all-weather road (gravel) with dimensions adequate to accommodate emergency vehicles.
 - Connection to reticulated sewerage, if available. If reticulated sewerage is not available all wastewater from each dwelling must be treated and retained within the lot in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Protection Regulations under the *Environment Protection Act 2017* for an on-site wastewater management system.
 - The dwelling must be connected to a reticulated potable water supply or have an alternative potable water supply with adequate storage for domestic use as well as for fire fighting purposes.
 - The dwelling must be connected to a reticulated electricity supply or have an alternative energy source.

Noise management:

6. Access to the kennels must be restricted to the caretaker and staff only to ensure that the animals are not overly stimulated.
7. Visitors are not permitted to access the kennel enclosure.
8. A caretaker should be on site at all times to provide supervision and where necessary, management of overly noisy or excited dogs. Such management could include the excited dog being moved to another kennel, moved to one of the three isolation kennels, or housed within the dwelling located onsite.
9. The caretaker and staff must immediately attend to any excessive barking events to investigate the cause of the barking, and any overly excited dogs must be settled.

10. Prior to the commencement of the use a 2-way monitoring system must be installed within the kennels to assist in monitoring noise and alerting the caretaker if dogs are barking, particularly during the evening and night time.
11. The dogs must be monitored 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. During the daytime, the on-duty staff member or caretaker is to monitor the dogs whilst conducting their duties, whilst during the night time the 2-way monitoring system is to provide real time feedback and alerts to the caretaker living onsite.
12. If a group of dogs within an outdoor area are overly excited, the dogs must be moved into the internal areas of the kennel, or into the three isolated kennels to reduce their exposure to stimulation. During extended periods of excessive barking, dogs should be housed within the isolated kennel with all doors closed.
13. Dogs must be kept indoors (within the kennels) between 9:00pm and 7:00am (summer) and 8:00pm and 8:00am (winter).
14. Doors between internal and external areas of the kennels must be well sealed and are to be kept closed between 9:00pm and 7:00am (summer) and 8:00pm and 8:00am (winter).
15. Exercise is only permitted during daylight hours only, 7 days a week.
16. Feeding time is restricted to daytime hours only, 7 days a week.
17. Feeding of all dogs is restricted to internal areas or within the attached yards only.
18. Electronic masking devices (e.g. radio) should be used in the kennel to assist in settling dogs at all times.
19. A complaint resolution system must be implemented, to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority, with a 24-hour contact telephone number for the caretaker of the facility made available to all neighbouring properties.

Amenity:

20. At all times noise emanating from the land must comply with the requirements of the *Environment Protection Regulations 2021* (Vic) (as amended from time to time) as measured in accordance with the Noise Protocol 'Noise limit and assessment protocol for the control of noise from commercial, industrial and trade premises and entertainment venues' (Publication 1826.4, May 2021) (as amended from time to time) to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.
21. Before the use starts, the owner must enter into an Agreement with the Responsible Authority pursuant to Section 173 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 to provide the following:
 - a. The owner acknowledges that the subject land is located in a rural area where there is agricultural/dog training activity where there may be adverse amenity impacts from noise, odour, dust, chemicals, light, etc. from time to time.

The owner must pay the reasonable costs of the preparation, execution and registration of the section 173 agreement. Evidence of the registration of the section 173 agreement must be provided to the responsible authority prior to the commencement of the use authorised by this permit.

Number of rehomed dogs allowed on site:

22. No more than 20 rehomed dogs are to be kept on site at any given time.

Engineering:

Rural Vehicle Crossing Requirements

23. Prior to the issue of a certificate of occupancy, the proposed lot must have a vehicular crossing constructed to the council's Infrastructure Design Manual standard drawing SD255 or SD265, and must:
- a. Be constructed at a right angle to the road or as otherwise approved, any redundant crossing shall be removed and reinstated to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority
 - b. Be setback a minimum of 1.5 meters from any side-entry pit, power or telecommunication pole, manhole cover, or marker, or 3 meters from any street tree;
 - c. residential vehicular crossings shall not be less than 3 meters nor more than 6 meters in width and shall be constructed from concrete or other material as approved in writing by the Responsible Authority; and
 - d. A works within Road Reserves permit must be obtained from the Responsible Authority prior to carrying out any vehicle crossing works.

Internal Access Road Requirements

24. Prior to the commencement of the use all internal access roads must be constructed, formed and drained to avoid erosion and to minimise disturbance to natural topography of the land to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority. Internal access, including the turn-around areas for emergency vehicles, must be all weather construction with a minimum trafficable width of 4m.

Drainage Requirements

25. Prior to the commencement of use, all stormwater and surface water discharging from the site, buildings, and works must be conveyed to the legal point of discharge drains to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority/Goulburn Murray Water or dissipated within the site boundaries. No effluent or polluted water of any type may be allowed to enter the stormwater drainage system.
26. Prior to the commencement of any works, the design parameters for any defined watercourse crossing(s), both structural and hydraulic design, shall be approved by the Responsible Authority (GBCMA- works on waterways permit)

Miscellaneous

27. Prior to the issue of a certificate of occupancy, the nature strip and all disturbed areas are to be topsoiled and seeded to establish grass cover.
28. Appropriate steps must be taken to retain all silt and sediment on-site during the construction phase to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority, in accordance with the sediment control principles outlined in Construction Techniques for Sediment Pollution Control (EPA, 1991) and to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.
29. No excavated or construction materials may be placed or stored outside the site area or on the adjoining road reserves, except where the materials are required in connection with any road or footpath construction works in such reserves that are required as part of the permit.
30. Prior to the commencement of works, the owner or developer must submit to the Responsible Authority a written report and photos of any prior damage to public infrastructure. Listed in the report must be the condition of the kerb & channel, footpath, seal, streetlights, signs, and other public infrastructure fronting the property and abutting at least two properties on either side of the development. Unless identified with the written report, any damage to infrastructure post-construction will be attributed to the development. The owner or developer of the subject land must pay for any damage caused to the Council's assets/Public infrastructure caused as a result of the development or use permitted by this permit.

Wastewater Management:

31. Prior to the commencement of works on the dwelling the owner shall lodge with the Council an Application for a Permit to Install an Onsite Wastewater Management System. The application shall be in accordance with the Environment Protection Regulations 2021, the EPA Code of Practice – Onsite Wastewater Management, Publication 891.4, July 2016 and the Land Capability Assessment prepared by Ground Science, Report No. E3281.1, date 29/01/2024.
32. All wastewater from the dwelling must be treated to a standard of at least 20mg/L BOD and 30mg/L suspended solids using a package treatment plant or equivalent. The system must be installed, operated and maintained in accordance with the EPA Code of Practice – Onsite Wastewater Management, Publication 891.4, July 2016 and must have a Certificate of Conformity.
33. The wastewater disposal land application area must not be used for any other purpose. No buildings, works, paths, vehicles, driveways, service trenching or domestic facilities eg. water tanks or any other structures are permitted in the wastewater disposal area. The site plan must provide for separate areas for dog exercise yards and the effluent disposal system.

Commencement of permit:

34. This permit will operate from the issued date of this permit.

Expiry – Development and use:

35. This permit will expire if one of the following circumstances applies:

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

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

EPA Note:

- The Environment Protection Act 2017 came into effect on 1 July 2021. The amended Environment Protection Act 2017 imposes new duties on individuals and/or businesses undertaking the activity permitted by this permit. If your business engages in activities that may give rise to a risk to human health or the environment from pollution or waste, you must understand those risks and take action to minimise them as far as reasonably practicable.



Proposed Domestic Animal Husbandry and
Associated Dwelling/Caretakers' Residence
Noise Impact Assessment
222 Faithfull Rd Longwood East

Client:
Mr Michael Barry
C/o- CS Town Planning



10 October 2024



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GLOSSARY

NOISE

Noise is produced through rapid variations in air pressure at audible frequencies (20 Hz – 20 kHz). Most noise sources vary with time. The measurement of a variable noise source requires the ability to describe the sound over a particular duration of time. A series of industry standard statistical descriptors have been developed to describe variable noise, as outlined in Section 2 below.

NOISE DESCRIPTORS

dB – Decibels. The fundamental unit of sound, a Bell is defined as the logarithm of the ratio of the sound pressure squared over the reference pressure squared. A Decibel is one-tenth of a Bell. Probably the most common usage of the Decibel in reference to sound loudness is dB sound pressure level (SPL), referenced to the nominal threshold of human hearing. For sound in air and other gases, dB(SPL) is relative to 20 micropascals (μPa) = 2×10^{-5} Pa, the quietest sound a human can hear.

L_{Aeq} – The A-weighted sound pressure level averaged over the measurement period. It can be considered as the equivalent continuous steady-state sound pressure level, which would have the same total acoustic energy as the real fluctuating noise over the same time period. Measured in dB.

L_{Amax} – The maximum or peak A-weighted noise level that occurs over the measurement period. Measured in dB.

Indoor Design Level – The recommended maximum level in dB(A) inside a building from external noise sources.

A-WEIGHTING

"A-weighting" refers to a prescribed amplitude versus frequency curve used to "weight" noise measurements in order to represent the frequency response of the human ear. Simply, the human ear is less sensitive to noise at some frequencies and more sensitive to noise at other frequencies. The A-weighting is a method to present a measurement or calculation result with a number representing how humans subjectively hear different frequencies at different levels.

NOISE CHARACTER, NOISE LEVEL AND ANNOYANCE

The perception of a given sound to be deemed annoying or acceptable is greatly influenced by the character of the sound and how it contrasts with the character of the background noise. A noise source may be measured to have only a marginal difference to the background noise level, but may be perceived as annoying due to the character of the noise.

Acoustic Dynamics' analysis of noise considers both the noise level and sound character in the assessment of annoyance and impact on amenity.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 SUMMARY

Acoustic Dynamics is engaged by **CS Town Planning** on behalf of **Mr Michael Barry** to conduct an assessment of potential noise impacts associated with the proposed domestic animal husbandry and associated dwelling/caretakers' residence, to be located at 222 Faithfull Road Longwood East, in the Strathbogie Shire Council area of Victoria.

This document provides an assessment of potential noise impacts at nearby sensitive receivers, and an assessment of noise intrusion into the development, along with recommendations to ensure the acoustic impacts are acceptable.

This assessment is prepared in accordance with the various acoustic assessment requirements of Council, Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) and relevant Australian Standards.

Based on the results of our review of the site and surrounds, the proposed design and operations and our noise emission calculations, Acoustic Dynamics advises that the development can be designed to achieve compliance with the relevant noise limits and the amenity of neighbouring sensitive receivers will be adequately protected.

1.2 LOCATION & DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

The proposal is for a domestic animal husbandry and associated dwelling/caretakers' residence, located at 222 Faithfull Road Longwood East, situated within a Farming Zone (FZ) land zone. The site is bounded by Faithfull Road to the north-west, a dog and cat boarding facility to the south-west/south-east, and a road reserve to the east.

The proposal involves developing a greyhound kennel on the site for the rehoming of retired racing greyhounds. Additionally, the construction of a caretakers' residence is planned as an ancillary facility to support the duties related to operating the kennel. A maximum of 20 retired greyhounds will be accommodated on the site.

It is understood that the proposed building works include:

- Construction of a Colorbond shed (24.3m x 6.3m) at the southern aspect of the site which will house:
 - 20 kennels with access to outside yards;
 - 2 whelping kennels with access to outside yards;
 - 3 isolation kennels;
 - Food preparation area;
 - Cool room;
 - Record store;
- Construction of a single-storey, 4 bedroom dwelling at the northern aspect of the site; and
- Construction of a Colorbond shed (7.5m x 21m) at the western aspect of the site.



With regard to acoustical assessment, the nearest noise sensitive receivers are as follows:

1. **[R1]** Residential receiver located at 15 Scobie Road (to the west and south);
2. **[R2]** Residential receiver located at 35 Scobie Road (to the south);
3. **[R3]** Residential receiver located at 222 Faithfull Road (Parcel PC376330) (to the east); and
4. **[R4]** Residential receiver located at 173 Faithfull Road (to the west).

Compliance at the assessed sensitive receiver locations will ensure compliance at all other sensitive receivers located further away. The subject site and surrounding area are shown in the location map and photographs presented within **Appendix A**.

1.3 SCOPE

Acoustic Dynamics has been engaged to provide an acoustic assessment suitable for submission to Council.

The scope of the assessment is to include the following:

- Review of legislation and Council criteria relevant to the assessment of acoustic impacts associated with the proposal;
- Travel to site to conduct inspections and measurements;
- Establish relevant noise limits for the site;
- Examination of architectural drawings and proposed layout; and
- Assessment of noise impacts associated with the proposal.

2 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND STANDARDS

2.1 PLANNING SCHEME – CLAUSE 13.05

Clause 13.05 of the planning scheme includes the following relevant noise assessment policy:

“13.05 NOISE

13.05-1S Noise abatement

Objective

To assist the control of noise effects on sensitive land uses.

Strategy

Ensure that development is not prejudiced and community amenity is not reduced by noise emissions, using a range of building design, urban design and land use separation techniques as appropriate to the land use functions and character of the area.



Policy guidelines

Consider as relevant:

- *The noise requirements in accordance with the Environment Protection Regulations under the Environment Protection Act 2017.*

Policy documents

Consider as relevant

- *Environment Protection Regulations under the Environment Protection Act 2017*
- *Noise Limit and Assessment Protocol for the Control of Noise from Commercial, Industrial and Trade Premises and Entertainment Venues (Publication 1826.2, Environment Protection Authority, March 2021)"*

2.2 ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ACT

The *Environment Protection Act 2017* (incorporating amendments as at 1 July 2021), provides a legislative framework for the assessment and control of noise impacts.

Part 3.2 of the Act provides the following detail regarding the environmental noise obligations of all Victorians:

"25 General environmental duty

- 1) *A person who is engaging in an activity that may give rise to risks of harm to human health or the environment from pollution or waste must minimise those risks, so far as reasonably practicable."*

Part 7.6 of the Act provides the following detail regarding the control of unreasonable and aggravated noise:

"Part 7.6—Control of unreasonable and aggravated noise

166 Unreasonable noise

A person must not, from a place or premises that are not residential premises—

- a) *emit an unreasonable noise; or*
- b) *permit an unreasonable noise to be emitted.*

Section 3 of the Act provides a definition of unreasonable noise:

"unreasonable noise means noise that—

- a) *is unreasonable having regard to the following—*



- i. *its volume, intensity or duration;*
- ii. *its character;*
- iii. *the time, place and other circumstances in which it is emitted;*
- iv. *how often it is emitted;*
- v. *any prescribed factors; or*

b) *is prescribed to be unreasonable noise;”*

2.2.1 NOISE LIMIT AND ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL

From 1 July 2021, environment protection legislation – the *Environment Protection Act 2017* (incorporating amendments as at 1 July 2021), provides a legislative framework for the assessment and control of noise impacts.

Part 5.3 of the Environment Protection Regulations (2021) provides the following detail regarding the assessment of commercial noise impacts:

“113 Prediction, measurement, assessment and analysis of noise must be in accordance with Noise Protocol

A person who conducts a prediction, measurement, assessment or analysis of noise within a noise sensitive area for the purposes of the Act or these Regulations, must conduct the prediction, measurement, assessment or analysis in accordance with the Noise Protocol.”

2.2.2 COMMERCIAL NOISE LIMITS

In Victoria, industry compliance with noise limits is regulated by the *Noise limit and assessment protocol for the control of noise from commercial, industrial and trade premises and entertainment venues* (Noise Protocol) and is mandatory under the Environment Protection Act 2017 and Environment Protection Regulations 2021.

The Noise Protocol sets noise limits which are determined based on the purpose of the local land zones at a given noise generation and receiver area and are used to exemplify the reasonable amenity expectations for the area.

To establish the operational noise limits at the subject site, limits were derived as per the prescribed methodology in accordance with the Noise Protocol (“2. *Noise limits – Rural area method*”). Acoustic Dynamics advises that the noise generating property and all nearby receiving properties are within the Farming Zone (FZ) with no intervening zones.

Background noise logging was conducted at the subject site in accordance with the Noise Protocol, between Monday 9 September 2024 and Monday 16 September 2024. The noise logger was installed at the central southern aspect of the site at a height of 1.5 metres above ground level (see images in **Appendix A**).



The noise monitoring data was supplemented and correlated with short-term operator-attended measurements during installation and collection of the noise monitor. Background noise measurements were conducted between the boundaries of 15 Sobie Road and 35 Scobie Road, and at the intersection of the road reserve to the south-east of the site.

Based on an analysis of the short-term operator-attended background noise measurements, a correction of -7 dB has been applied to the unattended measured background noise level.

Note that in accordance with the EPA's Noise Protocol, the noise limit is determined as the greater of the distance-adjusted level, or base noise level, or background level plus 8 (day) and plus 5 (evening/night).

Weather data was sourced from the Bureau of Meteorology's (BoM) Mangalore automatic weather station (AWS) with exclusions made within the long-term noise logging data for periods of high wind and rain. Long-term monitoring and short-term operator-attended measurement locations are shown within **Appendix A**. Any periods of rain or high wind (i.e. >5mm/s) have been excluded from the unattended logging data results.

Following the general procedures outlined in the EPA's Noise Protocol, a summary of relevant noise limits is presented in **Table 2.1** below.

Table 2.1 Measured Background Noise Levels and Calculated Noise Limits for Nearest Sensitive Receivers

Location	Period	Measured L _{A90} [dB]	Corrected L _{A90} [dB]	L _{A90} + Level [dB]	Base Noise Level [dB]	Distance Adjusted Level [dB]	Noise Limit [dB]
Nearest Sensitive Receivers	Day	43	36	L _{A90} + 8 dB = 44	46	46	46
	Evening	43	36	L _{A90} + 5 dB = 41	41	41	41
	Night	32	25	L _{A90} + 5 dB = 30	36	36	36

Note. 1) Day: Monday to Saturday (except public holidays) 7am to 6pm.
2) Evening: Mon to Sat 6pm to 10pm, Sun and public holidays 7am to 10pm
3) Night: 10pm to 7am.

2.3 NOISE CONTROL GUIDELINES (EPA PUBLICATION 1254.2)

The EPA provides additional guidelines for the control of noise associated with dog kennels in the document "*Publication 1254.2*" (May 2021). The following relevant information is contained within.

"4 Dog kennels

The problems caused by the perpetual barking of dogs has been known to exist at distances as far as 500 metres from the actual source. The following criteria for dog kennels have therefore been assembled to limit both the physical stimuli to the dogs and the outbreak of noise from the kennels.



- *The kennels should be located at least 500 metres from residential areas.*
- *Some fully enclosed or acoustically baffled kennels should be available to house particularly noisy animals, at a ratio of 1:15.*
- *Electronic masking noise devices should be provided to reduce audible stimuli to the dogs.*
- *Kennels should be constructed to visually screen stimuli such as other dogs, animals, traffic or passers-by.*
- *Access to kennels should be restricted solely to staff.*
- *Feeding of the dogs should be restricted to the daytime hours of 7 am — 6 pm.*
- *Exercise of the dogs may only be performed between the hours of 9 am and 5 pm.*
- *A responsible person must be available on site 24 hours per day.*
- *Kennels should be constructed of such a material so as to provide an appropriate reduction in the emission of noise. Materials such as masonry and cement sheeting would provide a suitable structural basis.*
- *The kennels should be positioned so as to utilise the ability of the topography to reduce noise.*

Note: For the purposes of section 166 of the Environment Protection Act 2017 (the Act), noise originating from dog kennels may be unreasonable having regard to paragraphs (a)(i)–(v) of the definition of unreasonable noise in section 3(1) of the Act.

The noise originating from dog kennels may be unreasonable when assessed under Part 5.3, Division 3 of the Environment Protection Regulations 2021 and in accordance with the 'Noise limit and assessment protocol for the control of noise from commercial, industrial and trade premises and entertainment venues (incorporated under the Environment Protection Regulations).

2.4 SLEEP DISTURBANCE OBJECTIVE

Acoustic Dynamics advises that sleep disturbance is a complex issue, and the potential for sleep disturbance to occur depends on both the level of noise at a sensitive receiver, and the number of events that occur. In lieu of applicable Victorian legislation or guidelines, the NSW Environmental Protection Agency's document "*Noise Guide for Local Government*" can be used as guidance in Victoria although it is not a mandatory policy.

The EPA has previously published the following information relating to findings of significant research carried out for sleep disturbance:

"Maximum internal noise levels below 50-55 dBA are unlikely to cause awakening reactions... One or more noise events per night, with maximum internal noise levels of 65-70 dBA, are not likely to affect health and wellbeing significantly."

Therefore, in accordance with the guidelines detailed above, the following sleep disturbance screening criterion has been applied for this project:

Sleep Disturbance External Objective = 65 dB(A)

Sleep Disturbance Internal Objective = 55 dB(A)



2.5 INSTRUMENTATION & MEASUREMENT STANDARDS

All measurements were conducted in general accordance with Australian Standard 1055.1-1997, "Acoustics - Description and Measurement of Environmental Noise Part 1: General Procedures". Acoustic Dynamics' sound measurements were carried out using precision sound level meters conforming to the requirements of IEC 61672-2002 "Electroacoustics: Sound Level Meters – Part 1: Specifications". The survey instrumentation used during the survey is set out in **Table 2.2**.

Table 2.2 Noise Survey Instrumentation

Type	Serial Number	Instrument Description
2250	2679541	Brüel & Kjaer Modular Precision Sound Level Meter
4189	2670479	Brüel & Kjaer 12.5 mm Prepolarised Condenser Microphone
4231	909240	Brüel & Kjaer Acoustic Calibrator
Type 1	878068	ARL NGARA Environmental Noise Logger

The reference sound pressure level was checked prior to and after the measurements using the acoustic calibrator and remained within acceptable limits.

3 NOISE EMISSION ASSESSMENT

The following section provides an assessment of the maximum cumulative noise impacts from noise sources associated with the development at nearby sensitive receivers. The assessment location is defined as the most affected point on or within any sensitive receiver property boundary.

Based on the site visit, previous experience and the drawings and information provided by the client, Acoustic Dynamics has conservatively undertaken modelling and calculations to predict the likely **maximum** noise levels at the nearest sensitive receivers resulting from the operation of the kennel.

The predicted noise levels for site operations are shown in **Table 3.2** include the benefit of the recommended management measures and architectural mitigation detailed in **Section 5**, along with the acoustic benefit of the existing 1.8 metre high Colorbond fence along the property boundary.

Table 3.2 indicates operational noise levels associated with well managed operations are expected to comply with the relevant noise limits at all identified sensitive receivers. It is advised that by achieving compliance at the nearest residential receiver locations, compliance will also be achieved at all other residential and commercial receiver locations further away.



3.1.1 DOG BARKING DATA

It is understood that the temperament of greyhounds is such that they have a quiet disposition, and generally spend a significant amount of time sleeping.

Acoustic Dynamics has previously undertaken short-term operator-attended nearfield noise measurements of small, medium and large dogs at a similar dog kennels and breeding facilities. Based on feedback from the client, and our understanding of the noise character associated with greyhounds barking, the following dog barking noise data has been used for the determination of the noise emission associated with the subject kennel.

Table 3.1 Dog Barking Noise Data

Noise Source Description	Maximum $L_{Aeq(30sec)}$ Noise Emission [dBA]	Maximum L_{Amax} Noise Emission [dB]
2 x adult dogs at 2 metres in an open run	97	105

3.1.2 NOISE EMISSION SCENARIOS

The following operational scenarios have been assessed:

Day/Evening Scenario:

- Up to 10 dogs barking simultaneously; and
- Barking occurring for 15 minutes of a 30 minute assessment period.

Night Scenario:

- Dogs barking intermittently within the kennels (assessed as barking occurring for 15 minutes of a 30 minute assessment period).

3.1.3 NOISE EMISSION PREDICTIONS

The calculated noise levels presented in **Table 3.2** include the acoustic benefit of the recommendations detailed in **Section 4**.

Table 3.2 Predicted Dog Barking Noise Levels at Nearest Sensitive Receivers

Receiver Location	Period ¹	Overall $L_{Aeq(30min)}$ Noise Contribution [dB]	Noise Limit $L_{Aeq(30min)}$ [dB]	Complies?
R1 15 Scobie Rd	Day /Evening	39	41	Yes
	Night	31	36 ¹	Yes
R2 35 Scobie Rd	Day /Evening	35	41	Yes
	Night	27	36 ¹	Yes
R3 Parcel PC376330	Day /Evening	34	41	Yes
	Night	28	36 ¹	Yes
R4 173 Faithfull Rd	Day /Evening	34	41	Yes
	Night	25	36 ¹	Yes

Note. 1) Compliance with the more stringent evening noise limit ensures compliance with the less stringent day noise limit.



3.1.4 CUMULATIVE NOISE EMISSION PREDICTIONS

Table 3.3 presents the calculated cumulative noise levels at the neighbouring sensitive receiver locations, based on the simultaneous proposed operation of the dog kennel at 222 Faithfull Road, and the operation of the dog and cat boarding and training facility at 15 Scobie Road.

Note. It is assumed that the dog and cat boarding and training facility at 15 Scobie Road is operating, and will operate in future, in a compliant manner (i.e. noise from the site is managed to achieve compliance with the noise limits as set out in **Table 2.1**).

Table 3.3 Calc. Cumulative Dog Barking Noise Levels Due to Operation of 222 Faithfull Rd & 15 Scobie Rd

Receiver Location	Period ¹	Noise Contribution [dB]		Cumulative Noise Contribution L _{Aeq} (30min) [dB]	Noise Limit L _{Aeq} (30min) [dB]	Complies?
		222 Faithful Rd	15 Scobie Rd			
R2 35 Scobie Rd	Day /Evening	35	41	42	41	Yes²
	Night	27	36	37	36¹	Yes²
R3 Parcel PC376330	Day /Evening	34	41	42	41	Yes²
	Night	28	36	37	36¹	Yes²
R4 173 Faithfull Rd	Day /Evening	34	41	42	41	Yes²
	Night	25	36	36	36¹	Yes

Note. 1) Compliance with the more stringent evening noise limit ensures compliance with the less stringent day noise limit.

2) Compliance is achieved as an exceedance of 1-2 dB is considered to be acoustically insignificant and is unlikely to be discernible to a typical listener.

Table 3.4 presents the calculated cumulative noise levels at the neighbouring sensitive receiver locations, based on the simultaneous proposed operation of the dog kennel at 222 Faithfull Road, and the approved a permit for greyhound breeding and training at Parcel PC376330.

Note. It is assumed that the greyhound breeding and training at Parcel PC376330 is operating, and will operate in future, in a compliant manner (i.e. noise from the site is managed to achieve compliance with the noise limits as set out in **Table 2.1**).

Table 3.4 Calc. Cumulative Dog Barking Noise Levels Due to Operation of 222 Faithfull Rd & PC376330

Receiver Location	Period ¹	Noise Contribution [dB]		Cumulative Noise Contribution L _{Aeq} (30min) [dB]	Noise Limit L _{Aeq} (30min) [dB]	Complies?
		222 Faithful Rd	Parcel PC 376330			
R1 15 Scobie Rd	Day /Evening	39	41	43	41	Yes²
	Night	31	36	37	36¹	Yes²
R2 35 Scobie Rd	Day /Evening	35	41	42	41	Yes²
	Night	27	36	37	36¹	Yes²
R4 173 Faithfull Rd	Day /Evening	34	41	42	41	Yes²
	Night	25	36	36	36¹	Yes

Note. 1) Compliance with the more stringent evening noise limit ensures compliance with the less stringent day noise limit.

2) Compliance is achieved as an exceedance of 1-2 dB is considered to be acoustically insignificant and is unlikely to be discernible to a typical listener.



3.2 SLEEP DISTURBANCE ASSESSMENT

Acoustic Dynamics has calculated the L_{Amax} noise emission from a transient dog bark during the night time to be L_{Amax} **37 dB** (external) and L_{Amax} **26 dB** (internal) for receivers located within close proximity to the site and achieves compliance with the sleep disturbance objective of $L_{Amax} \leq 65$ dB (external) and $L_{Amax} \leq 55$ dB (internal with windows open) during night-time hours.

Acoustic Dynamics advises that although there may be occasional transient events associated with a dog bark that exceeds the external L_{Amax} objective at the nearest residential receivers, the maximum instantaneous noise levels are predicted to comply with the internal guideline $L_{Amax} \leq 50-55$ dB and is unlikely to cause awakening reactions. It is advised that by achieving compliance with the nearest sensitive receivers, compliance will also be achieved at all other sensitive receiver locations further away.

3.3 NOISE INTRUSION ASSESSMENT

Analysis of the noise logging data and audio indicates that the noise environment at the development site at 222 Faithfull Road is influenced by relatively constant traffic flow along Hume Freeway to the north.

Dogs barking and howling could be heard in the logger audio, however this generally occurred intermittently during the dawn and dusk period. It is assumed that these periods of barking align with the morning and evening feeding schedule of the dogs currently accommodated within the dog and cat boarding and training facility at 15 Scobie Road.

Acoustic amenity impacts associated with the approved operations of the dog and cat boarding and training facility at 15 Scobie Road (i.e. approved for 100 dogs and 50 cats), and the approved land for dog breeding and racing dog keeping at 222 Faithfull Road (Parcel PC376330) (i.e. up to 25 greyhounds), have also been considered.

Noise impacts associated with the following assumed operational scenario has been assessed:

- 15 Scobie Road: Up to 20 dogs barking simultaneously across the site; and
- Parcel PC376330: Up to 5 dogs barking simultaneously across the site.

Table 3.5 Dog Barking Noise Intrusion Noise Levels at 222 Faithfull Road

Receiver Location	Period ¹	Noise Contribution [dB]		Cumulative Noise Contribution $L_{Aeq(30min)}$ [dB]	Noise Limit $L_{Aeq(30min)}$ [dB] ¹	Complies?
		Parcel PC 376330	15 Scobie Rd			
222 Faithfull Rd	Day /Evening	44	46	48	48	Yes
	Night	34	36	38	37	Yes ¹

Note 1) Noise limit based on measured background noise level at 222 Faithfull Rd.

2) Compliance is achieved as an exceedance of 1-2 dB is considered acoustically insignificant.



4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Acoustic Dynamics' calculations and analysis indicate that noise emission associated with the use and operation of the facility can be suitably controlled with the implementation of the recommendations below.

Noise from dogs barking will occur and it would be unreasonable to have the expectation that the dogs will never bark or that barking will be inaudible at receiver properties at all times. The recommendations and management practices detailed below will ensure noise emission is adequately managed and minimised during operation of the facility and that the acoustic amenity of all neighbouring residents is protected.

4.1.1 NOISE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

We recommend the following management plan incorporating measures to protect the acoustic amenity of the surrounding area be implemented by the proprietor.

1. Restricting access to the facility solely to the caretaker and staff. To ensure the animals are not overly stimulated, visitors should be prevented from entering the kennel area during drop off and collection;
2. A caretaker should be on site at all times to provide supervision and where necessary, management of overly noisy or excited dogs. Such management could include the excited dog being moved to another kennel, moved to one of the three isolation kennels, or housed within the dwelling located on site;
3. The caretaker and staff must immediately attend to any excessive barking events to investigate the cause of the barking, and any overly excited dogs must be settled;
4. A 2-way monitoring system should be installed within the kennels to assist in monitoring noise and alerting the caretaker if dogs are barking, particularly during the evening and night time;
5. The dogs are to be monitored 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. During the daytime, the on-duty staff member or caretaker is to monitor the dogs whilst conducting their duties, whilst during the night time the 2-way monitoring system is to provide real time feedback and alerts to the caretaker living onsite;
6. If a group of dogs within an outdoor area are overly excited, it is recommended to move those dogs into the internal areas of the kennel, or into the three isolated kennels to reduce their exposure to stimulation. During extended periods of excessive barking, dogs should be housed within the isolated kennel with all doors closed;
7. Ensuring that all dogs are kept indoors (within the kennels) between 9:00pm and 7:00am (summer) and 8:00pm and 8:00am (winter);



8. Doors between internal and external areas of the kennels should be well sealed and are to be kept closed between 9:00pm and 7:00am (summer) and 8:00pm and 8:00am (winter);
9. Exercise should only be permitted during daylight hours only, 7 days a week;
10. Restricting the feeding time to daytime hours only, 7 days a week;
11. Feeding of all dogs should be restricted to internal areas or within the attached yards;
12. Electronic masking devices (e.g. radio) should be used in the kennel to assist in settling dogs at all times;
13. Restricting access to the facility solely to the caretaker and staff; and
14. A complaint resolution system should be implemented with a 24-hour contact telephone number for the caretaker of the facility made available to all neighbouring properties.

4.1.2 CONSTRUCTION GUIDANCE

The following construction guidance is provided to assist in the progression of the design to ensure that the acoustic amenity of neighbouring residents is adequately protected.

1. The kennels should be designed to achieve a sound transmission performance $R_w \geq 30$;
2. Suitable construction would be:
 - Double layer Colorbond on stud frame; or
 - 2 layers of fibre cement sheet on insulated stud frame;
3. The three isolated kennels should be designed to achieve a sound transmission performance $R_w \geq 35$;
4. Suitable construction for the isolated kennels would be:
 - Double layer Colorbond on stud frame; or
 - 2 layers of fibre cement sheet on insulated stud frame; with
 - Insulation (14kg/m^3) in the stud frame;
5. 6.35mm laminated glazing ($R_w \geq 30$) should be used for all windows and skylights within the kennels;
6. Doors are required to be hinged and must have an airtight seal when closed;
7. Doors for dogs should be constructed of a material with a minimum density $\geq 15\text{kg/m}^3$ such as 15mm compressed fibre cement sheeting and are required to be well sealed



when closed. Any sound flanking paths around the dog doors must be acoustically sealed to provide adequate acoustic insulation; and

8. Possum deterrent measures must be incorporated into the design of the kennels to prevent possums traversing the roof of the kennel and exciting the dogs.

4.1.3 DWELLING CONSTRUCTION

Due to the proximity of the caretaker dwelling to the Hume Freeway, a high standard of construction will be required to ensure road traffic noise levels are adequately reduced and internal noise levels are acceptable for occupants.

It is likely that solid construction (e.g. masonry, or other heavyweight construction material) will be required for the facade walls, and insulated tile or metal deck roof with appropriate plasterboard linings, and double-glazed window systems.

It is recommended that a detailed acoustic review of the facade and proposed construction materials be undertaken following development approval.

It is noted that any acoustic benefit afforded by the facade construction, will also assist in reducing noise impacts associated with the operation of the neighbouring dog and cat boarding facility.

5 CONCLUSION

Acoustic Dynamics has conducted an assessment of noise impacts associated with the proposed domestic animal husbandry and associated dwelling/caretakers' residence, to be located at 222 Faithfull Road Longwood East, in the Strathbogie Shire Council area of Victoria

Acoustic Opinion

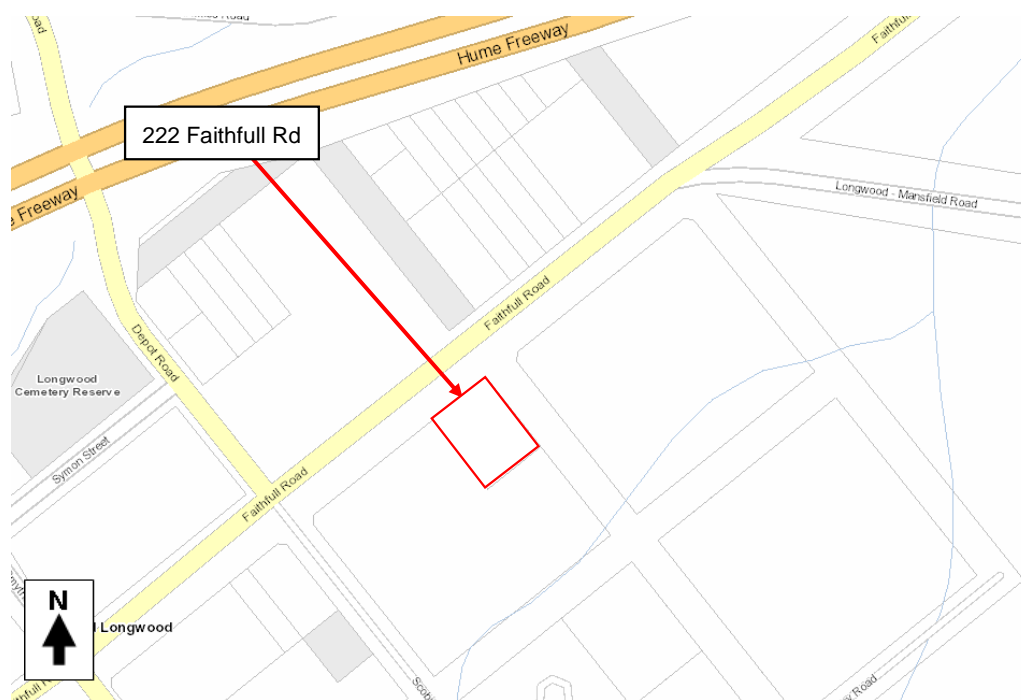
Further to our review of the relevant acoustic criteria and our calculations, Acoustic Dynamics advises that noise impacts associated with the proposed use can be satisfactorily managed subsequent to the incorporation of the recommendations and controls outlined within Section 4, and compliance with the relevant noise limits can be achieved.

We trust that the above information meets with your requirements and expectations. Please do not hesitate to contact us on 03 7015 5112 should you require more information.



APPENDIX A – LOCATION MAP, AERIAL IMAGE, PLANNING MAPS AND DRAWINGS

A.1 LOCATION MAP

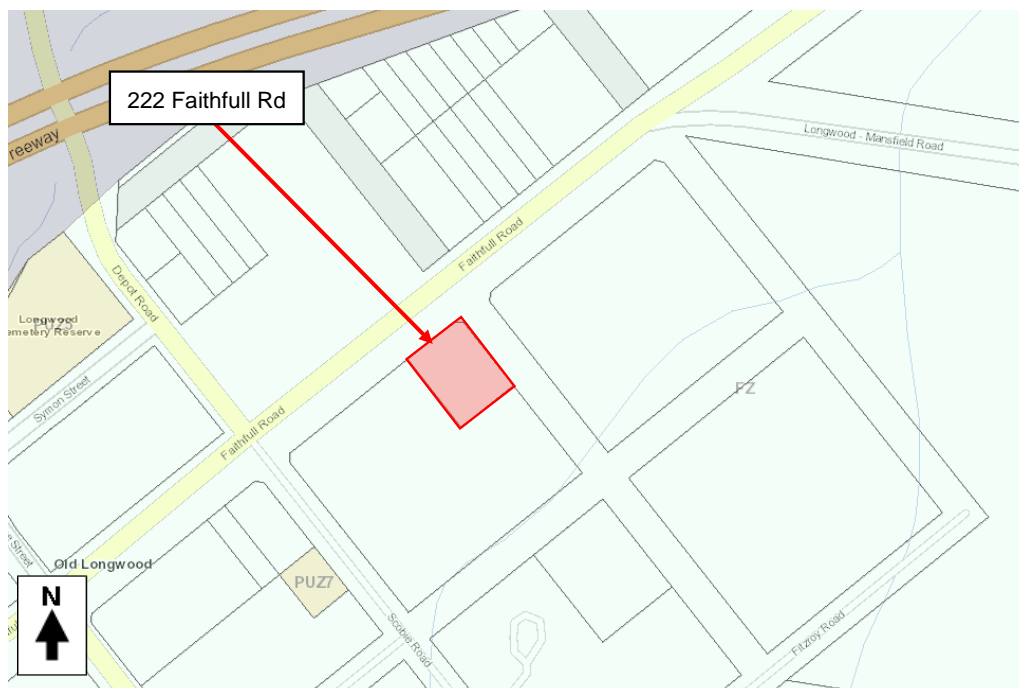


A.2 AERIAL IMAGE



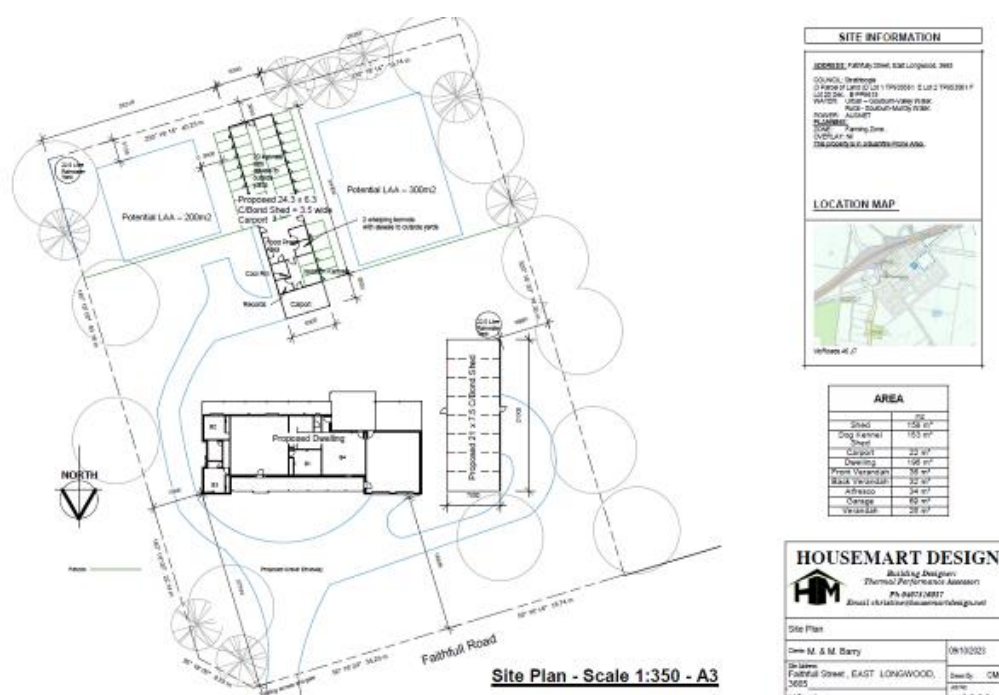


A.3 PLANNING MAP



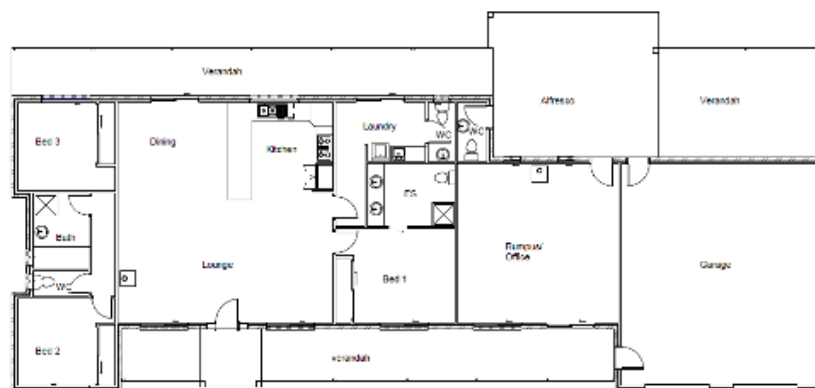
A.4 FLOOR PLANS

A.4.1 SITE PLAN



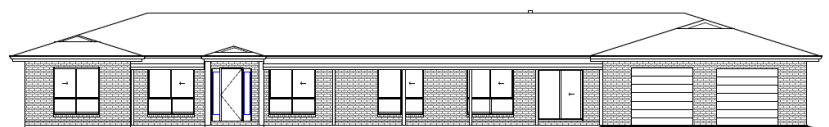


A.4.2 DWELLING FLOOR PLAN

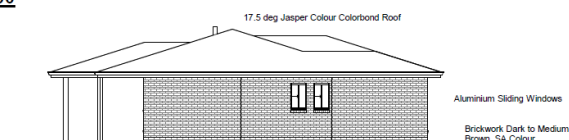


Proposed Floor Plan - Scale 1:100

A.4.2 DWELLING ELEVATIONS



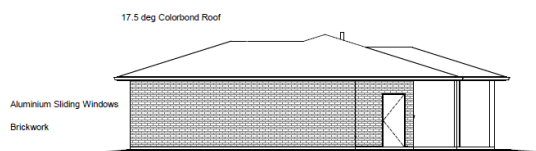
North Elevation- Scale 1:100



East Elevation - Scale 1:100



South Elevation - Scale 1:100

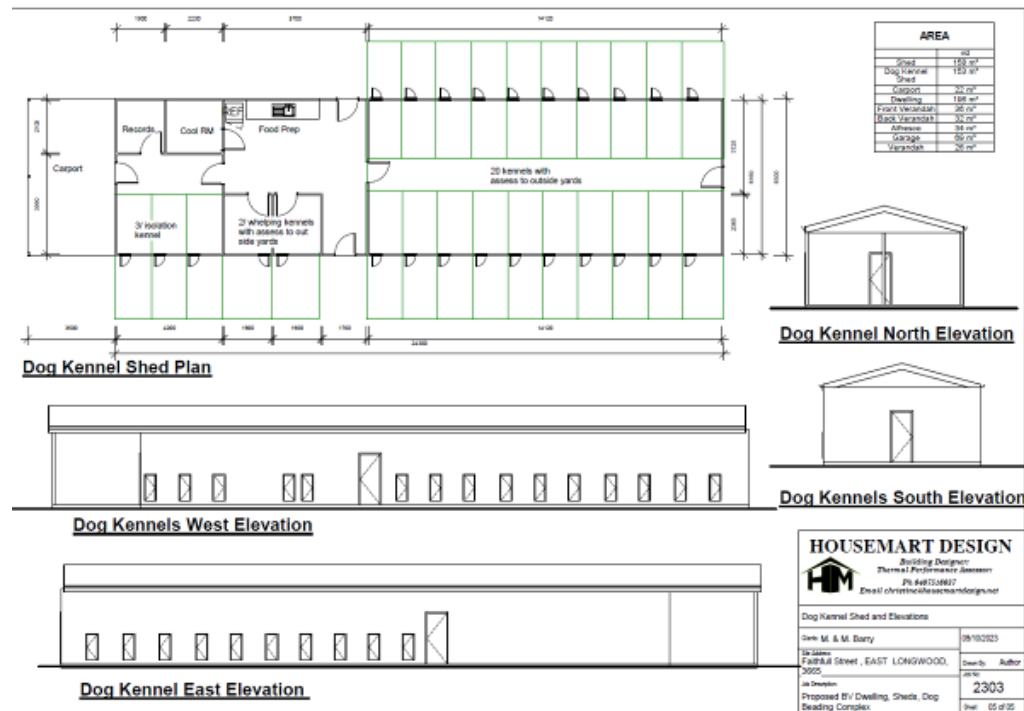


West Elevation- Scale 1:100

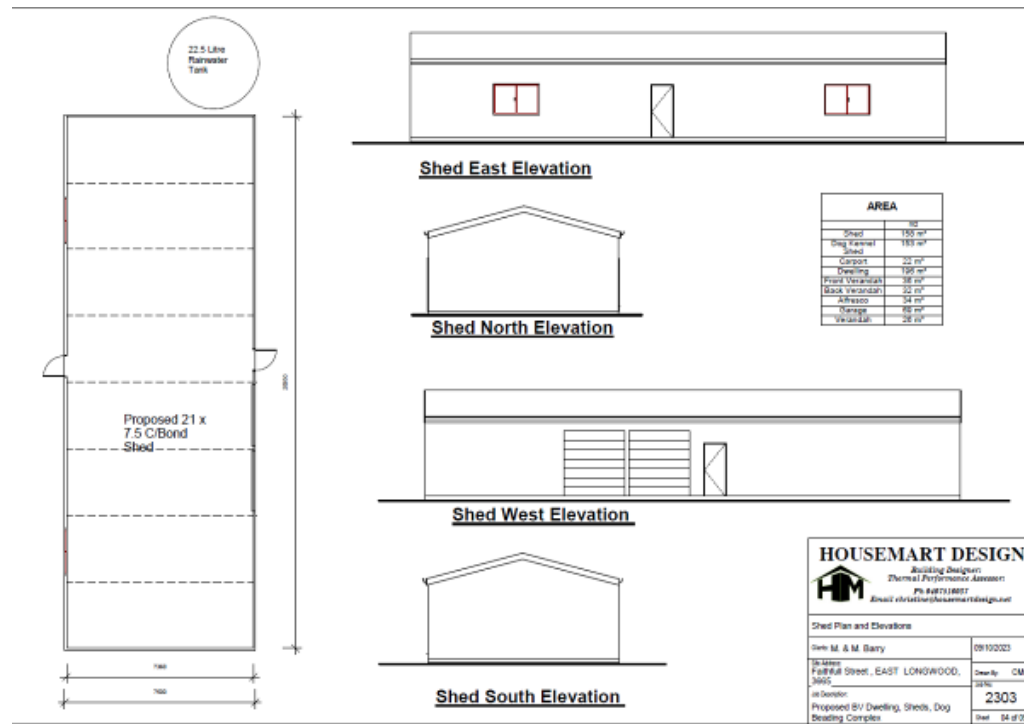
HOUSEMART DESIGN Building Designer Thermal Performance Assessor PH 0407514002 Email christine@housemartdesign.net	
Elevations	
Client: M. & M. Barry	08/10/2023
Site Address: Faithfull Street, EAST LONGWOOD, 3665	Drawn By: CMc
Job Description: Proposed BV Dwelling, Sheds, Dog Leasing Complex	2303
	Sheet: 03 of 05



A.4.3 KENNEL PLAN & ELEVATIONS

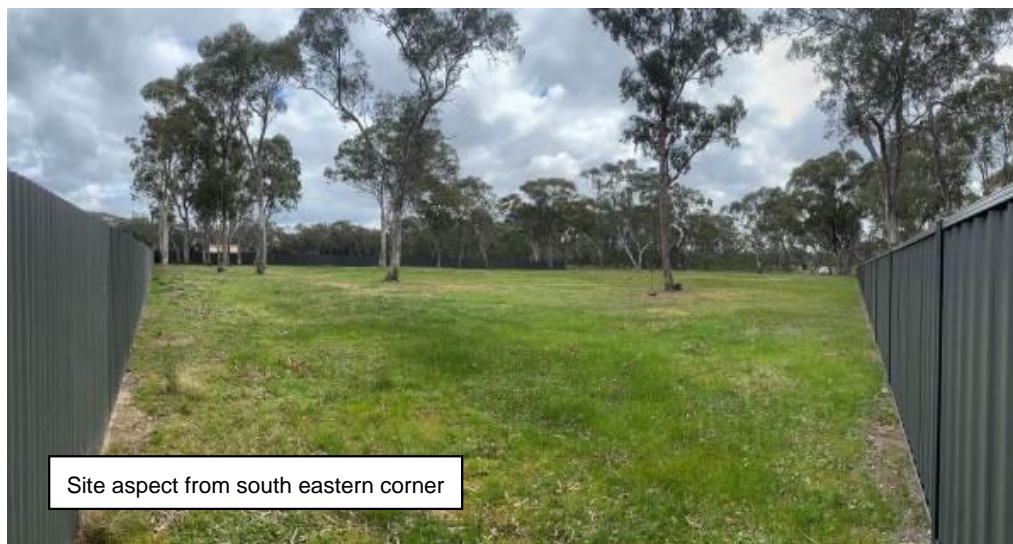


A.4.4 SHED PLAN & ELEVATIONS



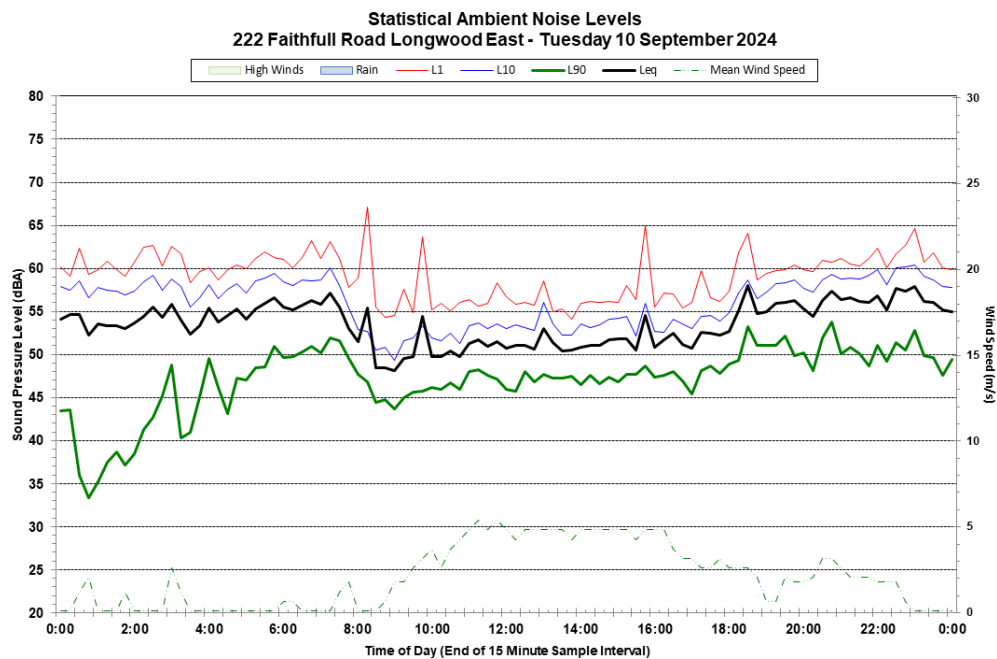
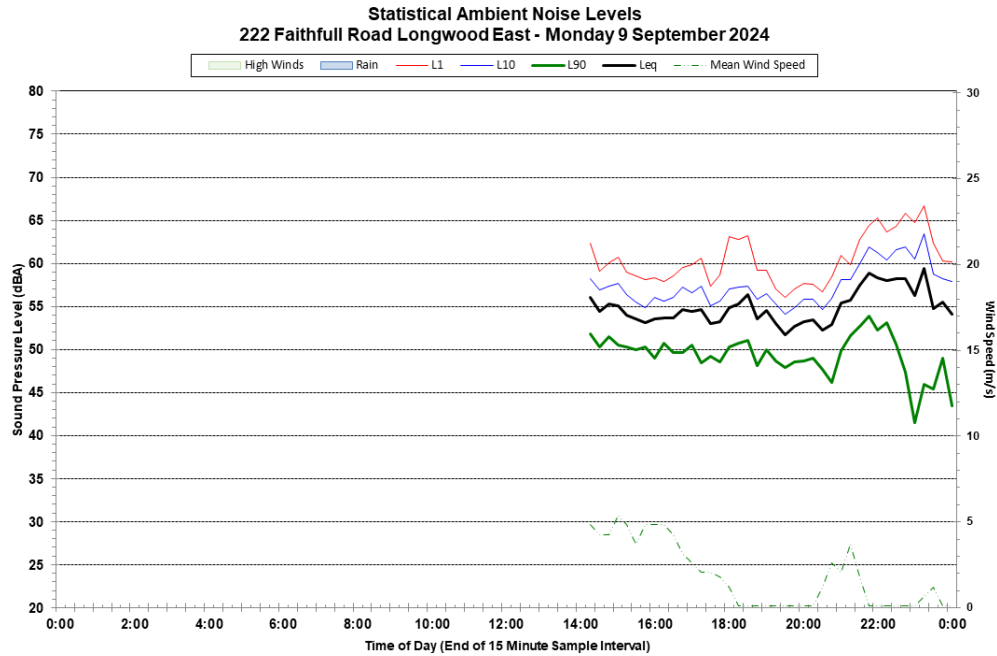


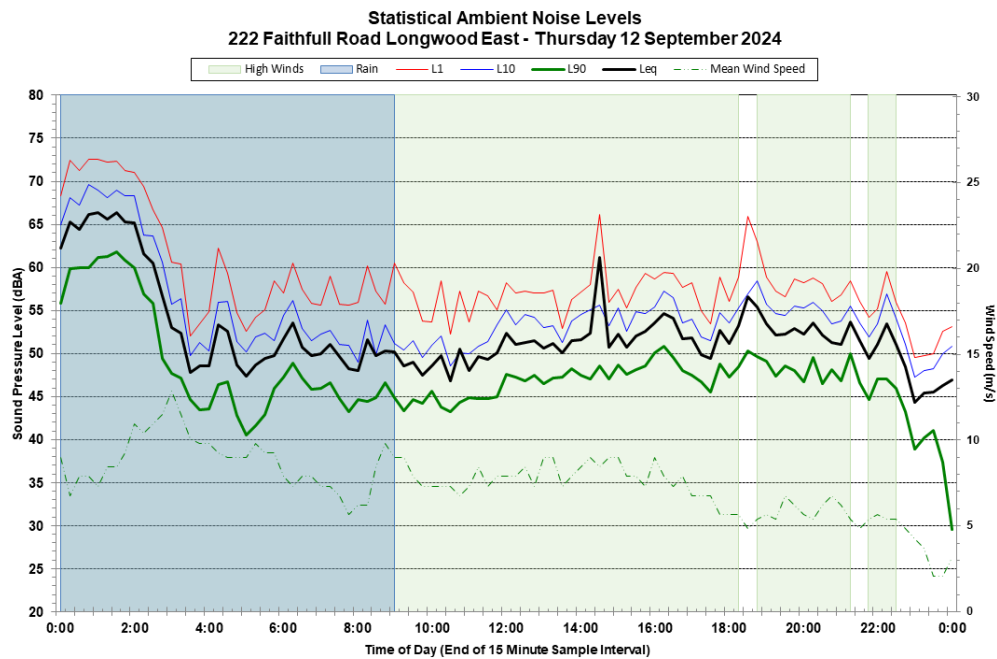
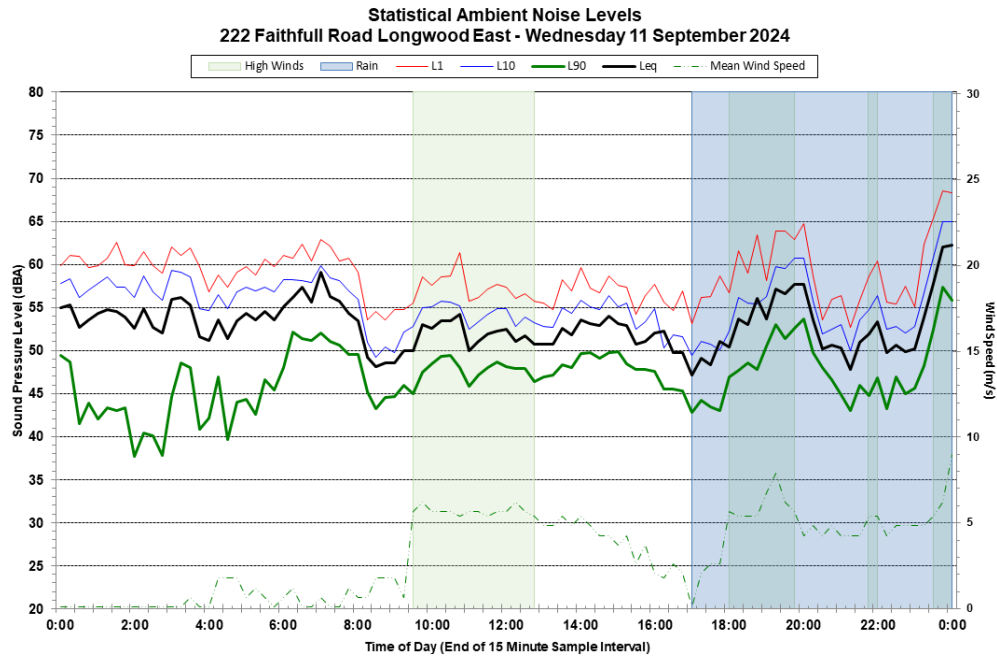
A.5 PHOTOGRAPHS

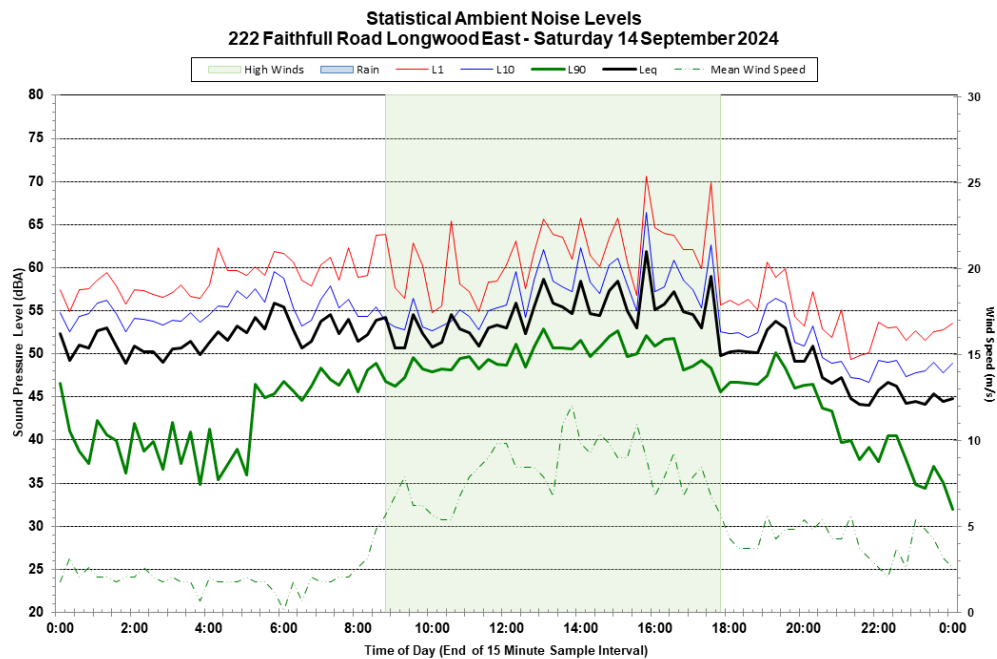
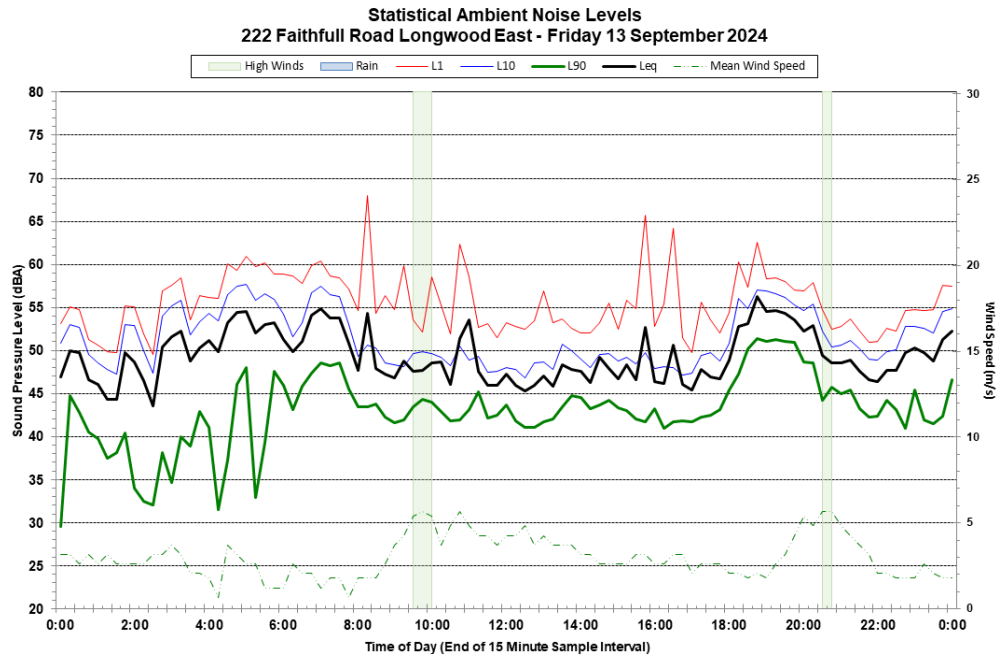


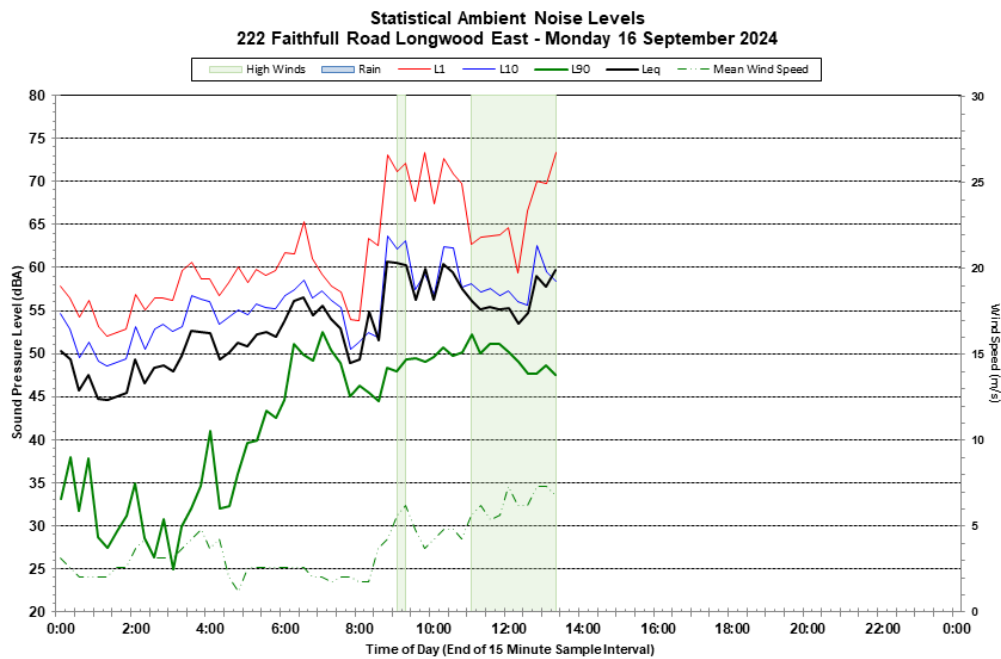
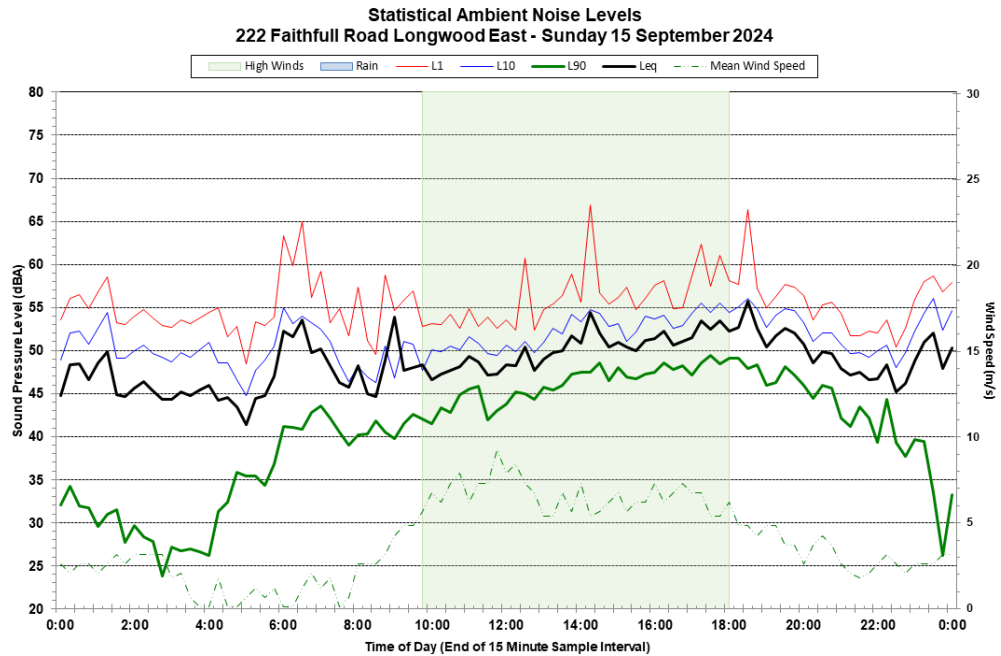


APPENDIX B – UNATTENDED LOGGING DATA









11.1.2 Planning Applications Received and Planning Applications Determined 1 January to 31 January 2025

AUTHOR Manager Planning and Investment

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director Community and Planning

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In line with Council's Planning Applications referral to Council Policy, this monthly report lists all Planning Applications Received (Attachment one) and Planning Applications Determined (Attachment two) from 1 January to 31 January 2025.

It is noted that there were ten (10) new planning applications received, and two (2) planning applications decided in this period. The number of applications decided on this reporting period is lower than usual as officers have allocated significant time to the implementation of the new Greenlight statutory planning software system. This implementation is expected to impact on productivity during the months of February and March 2025.

The latest available Planning Permit Activity Performance (PPARS) figures for November-January 2025 have not been included in this report as there are currently inaccuracies in the reporting associated with the Greenlight implementation. These reports will be provided at a future council meeting once the integration issues have been resolved.

Attachment three provides an update on current Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) appeals.

The contents of this report are provided for information purposes only, the listing of current planning applications on public display can be found on Council's website.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Receive the report**
- 2. Note that there were ten (10) new planning applications received, and two (2) planning applications decided on from 1 January to 31 January 2025.**

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

To report to Council on the current planning application activity and matters considered under delegation for the period 1 January 2025 to 31 January 2025.

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

Council is a Responsible Authority under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act). In this role Council administers the Strathbogie Planning Scheme (Planning Scheme) and, among other things, determines planning permit applications made for the use and development of the land in the municipality. Under delegated authority of Council, Council officers determine some matters.

Many types of use and development do not require a planning permit and may take place without being recorded as part of the planning approvals data. The statistics presented do not represent all development activity in the municipality. In addition, some planning permits are not acted on, or there may be a delay between when the approval is granted and when works take place.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Individual applications consider these requirements through assessment phase of each application as per the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the provisions of the Strathbogie Planning Scheme.

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

This report has identified the following risk(s):

Risk(s)	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Failure to notify Council of a planning permit application of significant public interest or that is controversial in nature.	Possible	Moderate	Low	Regular reporting on planning permit applications received and decided.

Conflict of Interest Declaration

All officers and/or contractors involved in the preparation of this report have signed a written declaration that they do not have a conflict of interest in the subject matter of this report.

Transparency

This report continues to demonstrate that Council is being transparent in its position in relation to all applications received and determined by Council.

CONCLUSION

This report is provided for Council to note the current planning permit application activity in accordance with Council's Planning Applications referral to Council Policy.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Planning Applications Received

Attachment 2: Planning Applications Determined

Attachment 3: Current VCAT Appeals



Planning Department Applications Received Report – January 2025

Received Date	Application No	Description	Property	Status	Cost Of Development
06-01-2025	P2025-004	Use of the land for Materials Recycling.	11 DUNNS LANE CREIGHTONS CREEK VIC 3666.	Awaiting Further Information	\$0.00
07-01-2025	P2025-005	2 Lot Re-Subdivision	168 MCLEANS LANE RUFFY VIC 3666	Allocated to officer for initial assessment.	\$0.00
13-01-2025	P2021-122-1	Change of liquor licence restrictions to allow trading on Good Friday, Christmas Day, all days to 11pm and Sundays from 9am.	25 Tarcombe Street Euroa VIC 3666.	Allocated to officer for initial assessment.	\$0.00
14-01-2025	P2025-007	A two lot re-subdivision to create legal access.	1484 PRANJIP ROAD PRANJIP VIC 3666	Allocated to officer for initial assessment.	\$0.00
15-01-2025	P2025-008	Development of land for a small second dwelling and farm storage shed.	341 GALLS GAP ROAD GOORAM VIC 3666 Australia	Allocated to officer for initial assessment.	\$35,000.00
16-01-2025	P2025-011	Construction of a boat storage bay.	41 Glencairn Lane Nagambie Vic 3608	Allocated to officer for initial assessment.	\$20,000.00
20-01-2025	P2025-012	Addition to an Existing Residence	1796 NORTHWOOD ROAD TABILK VIC 3607	Allocated to officer for initial assessment.	\$320,000.00
20-01-2025	P2025-010	Construction of a storage shed associated with an existing dwelling to store general	17 COZENS LANE GOULBURN WEIR VIC 3608 Australia.	Allocated to officer for initial assessment.	\$55,000.00



		household items, gardening equipment and vehicles.			
20-01-2025	P2024-004-1	Use and development for a dwelling	11 Nolans Road Ruffy VIC 3666	Allocated to officer for initial assessment.	\$300,000.00
28-01-2025	V2025-001	Farm shed to house machinery.	Morgans Lane Tabilk 3607	To be allocated	\$50,000.00

**Planning Applications Determined Report – January 2025**

Received Date	Application No	Property	Description	Status	Est. Cost
12-12-2024	P2017-121-1	1208 Reedy Lake Road Whroo VIC 3612	Amendment to permit that allows the Use and Development of land for Group Accommodation	Approved	\$0.00
16-12-2024	V2024-003	140 Richards Lane Strathbogie VIC 3666	Development of land for the construction of an open sided shed	Approved	\$10000.00

Current VCAT Appeals

Hearing Date	Ref No	Address	Proposal	Appeal
Hearing 21/1/2025	P2023-128 P1022/2023	82 Kirwans Bridge Road Kirwans Bridge	Camping and Caravan Park	S82 objector
Compulsory Conference 11/4/2024	P2023-121 P787/2024	222 Faithfull Road Longwood East	Use and Development for a Dwelling	S80 applicant

11.2 Community

11.2.1 Euroa Swimming Pool - Petition

AUTHOR Manager Community and Culture

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director Community and Planning

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A petition was received on 17 December 2024, from the Euroa Swimming Club, requesting Council support for extended use of the Euroa Swimming Pool, by using a group of Volunteers to support the extension of operating hours. The petition was signed by eighteen people.

The petition was presented to Council at the Council Meeting on 21 January 2025. Council resolved to:

1. *Receive and note the petition in relation to council support for extended utilisation of the Euroa Swimming Pool through the utilisation of a group of volunteers*
2. *That the petition be referred to the Director Community and Planning for consideration and response.*

Following investigation, several constraints have been identified with a volunteer workforce model, particularly regarding serious legal, compliance and safety, operational, and financial implications with the suggested volunteer workforce model.

As the facility owner, Council has a legal and moral responsibility to comply with various legislative requirements and industry guidelines.

Aquatic facilities are highly regulated and controlled environments due to the nature of the activity with risk to life for patrons, through drowning, and the use of chemicals and plant required to provide commercial aquatic facilities.

Safety of the community and of those working at our aquatic facilities is our number one priority. Significant training of the workforce is required to ensure this safety and the safety of these facilities.

The use of volunteers in this environment is also particularly limited as in general life guarding and centre management is considered a paid job and could be seen as exploiting volunteers and may breach relevant labour laws.

This report considers the petition, the issues that have been identified and considers Council's response.

It is recommended that transitioning to a volunteer-run model is not viable due to the compliance, risk and safety issues associated with this model for the public, staff and volunteers. An extension of hours using the current contractor due to cost and timing is also not viable.

RECOMMENDATION**That Council:**

- 1. Decline the offer to use a volunteer workforce or extend the hours of operation of the Euroa Pool due to the safety, risk, cost and compliance implications associated with the proposed petition model**
- 2. Authorise officers to notify the petition writer of the outcome of the petition and Council's decision**
- 3. Authorise officers to work with the Euroa Swimming Club to assess qualifications and interest in running events and activities to help activate the Euroa Pool using volunteers within the existing season and hours of operation, and**
- 4. Invite members of the Euroa Swimming Club to join the Friends of the Pool Group.**

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Aquatic facilities are crucial for promoting public health and wellbeing by providing access to swimming and water-based activities, which can significantly improve physical fitness, mental health, and social connection within a community, particularly for vulnerable groups like children and the elderly.

In 2020, Council identified that the safest and most effective model to manage Councils four aquatic facilities was to contract out the seasonal management and operations to a dedicated commercial aquatic management organisation, including the associated maintenance.

Following a procurement process, Belgravia Health Leisure Group Pty Ltd (Belgravia Leisure) were engaged via contracts to manage and operate the four aquatic facilities located in Strathbogie Shire since 2020-21.

During the contracted season, key responsibilities for Belgravia Leisure are as follows:

- Management and minor maintenance of the facility
- Staffing recruitment and training
- Staff rosters and wages
- Safety compliance
- Communications and marketing
- Water quality control, and
- Customer service.

Belgravia Leisure have worked closely with Council over the tenure of the contract and have performed satisfactorily in all aspects of the contract.

Moreover, Belgravia Leisure have been able to achieve significant improvements in both safety and operational practices since taking on the management of the facilities. This is evident in the Lifesaving Victoria Safety and Compliance Audit conducted in February 2024 where all four (4) pools received outstanding results with an average of 91.75% across all

facilities. The biggest improvement was reported in Violet Town which went from a prior compliance score of 77% to 94% and a safety improvement from 78% to 93%. These results are comparable with large metro venues and are impressive for regional venues with seasonal pools.

Aquatic facilities are highly regulated and controlled environments due to the nature of the activity with risk to life for patrons through drowning, and the use of chemicals and plant required to provide safe, high quality public aquatic facilities.

Safety of the community and of those working at our aquatic facilities is our number one priority.

Consistent with Council's commitment to safety, two lifeguards are required to open and operate each facility, along with the availability of a Duty Manager to manage issues, enable the provision of required breaks and support.

Council uses Friends of the Pool Groups, comprised of local community members to guide and inform the management and operations of the aquatic facilities at a local level. These groups provide insight into operating hours, issues, staff recruitment and retention, future capital projects and management of the pools.

Each year the hours of operation are determined by Council in consultation with the Friends of the Pool Groups, and Belgravia Leisure. At an agreed date prior to season opening the facilities are handed over from Council to Belgravia Leisure for full operation and day to day management and generally handed back to Council within two weeks of season end.

The contracted operating hours for 2024-25 can be found in Table 1 below.

Table 1: 2024-2025 Season Hours

Date	Operating Hours	Per week
1 December to 15 December	3.00 pm to 7.00 pm	Seven days per week
16 December to 2 February	12.00 pm to 7.00 pm	Seven days per week
3 February to 10 March	3.00 pm to 7.00 pm 12:00 pm to 7:00pm	Weekdays Weekends/ public holidays

Council received a petition from the Euroa Swimming Club representative, which was presented to the 21 January 2025 Council Meeting, requesting Council consider an extension of operating hours at the Euroa Pool through the utilisation of volunteers as workforce.

The proposed hours of operation requested by the petition are outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Proposed Petition hours

Date	Operating Hours	Per week
3 February to 10 March (season end)	6:00 am to 7:00 pm	Seven days per week

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

Consideration of constraints relating to the proposed petition model is listed in Table 3.

Table 3: Consideration of constraints of the proposed petition model using volunteers to extend the operating hours.

Constraint	Detail
Legal	<p>Council as the facility owner have a legal and moral obligation to meet the requirements of a range of Legislation, Australian Standards and Industry guidelines. Including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obligations under FairWork and Human Resource law around the use of volunteers for work which should be considered paid work • Responsibility to meet health and safety obligations under the <i>Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004</i> (the OHS Act) and Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (the Regulations) • Adhere to the recommendations of Lifesaving Victoria's Safe Public Pools Code of Conduct (the <i>Code</i>) and industry guidelines and apply practical risk management principles and safe systems of operation
Compliance and water safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset operating policies and procedures • Management of water quality plans and adherence to treatment and management protocols • Public health management
Workforce training requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationally recognised SISSS00133 Pool lifeguard qualification • Cardiac Pulmonary Resuscitation, First Aid • Evacuation / Emergency management • Working with Children, Police Checks • Health and fitness assessment • Chemical handling • Operating policy and procedure
Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer registration • Availability of volunteers • Rostering and coordination/ daily management support • Psychosocial support and supervision • Requirement to have two volunteers/ duty manager rostered at all times
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional running costs • Additional chemical maintenance and testing cost • External/ additional cleaning would be required due to extended operating hours • Additional uniforms

The qualifications of the volunteer group, and their volunteer commitment couldn't be confirmed.

It is the responsibility and obligation of Council in the operation of all four aquatic facilities, to ensure that risks are identified, analysed, evaluated, and treated to an acceptable level to

meet community expectation. Moving away from the current contracted management model for additional hours poses a significant and unacceptable risk to volunteers, the patrons and Council.

As an alternative, if Councils current contracted provider was engaged to extend the hours in line with the hours requested in the petition there would be an additional cost of \$22,102 for the Euroa Pool.

The estimated additional cost to support the extended hours for the estimated 15 days of the existing season outlined in Table 4. Consideration of equity would also need to occur, the extension of hours at one location may require the same extension at all four facilities.

Table 4: Estimated additional contractual charges to extend hours at all four pools.

Expense	Estimated Cost from 2 February to 10 March
Duty Manager	\$7,142.50
Lifeguard costs	\$12,960
Incidentals (cleaning, chemicals, testing equipment etc)	\$2,000
Total	\$22,102.50
Total four pools	\$88,410

A decision to extend the hours and vary the contract at this point is not considered viable, or responsible.

There is an opportunity for Council to work with Euroa Swimming Club to explore alternative ways to activate the pools between now and the season end, through volunteer involvement. This could include aqua aerobics, rehabilitation sessions, events and social group swims, within the existing hours and depending on the nature of the activity.

In addition, an invitation to participate the Friends of the Pool in the Euroa Swimming Group can be extended. The Friends of the Pool play an important role in ensuring our community's voice is heard in the operation and management of pools across the Strathbogie Shire.

Friends of the Pool collaborate closely with Council and Belgravia offering valuable insights and feedback on the operation and management of our pools. They also help shape the future of these important community assets by advising on programming, capital works, and necessary improvements.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement was not required on this matter.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following key strategic focus areas and or actions in the 2021-25 Council Plan:

Strategic Focus Area 1: Engage. Create. Unite.

We create welcoming social spaces where people can connect.

Strategic Focus Area 2: Live. Access. Connect.

We all have access to important services.

We are focused on activities that build economic, financial and social security.

Strategic Focus Area 4: Inclusive. Productive. Balanced.

We care, support and listen to each other.

We partner with our community to achieve great things.

Strategic Focus Area 5: Strong. Healthy. Safe.

We are working together to share knowledge and get things done.

We are encouraging health and wellbeing activities in sport and recreation.

Strategic Focus Area 6: Accountable. Transparent. Responsible.

Be accountable for the decisions we make and the quality of service we deliver.

Be financially responsible, achieving the greatest possible community benefit from the programs, initiatives and services we fund.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

This report is aligned with the following, Regional, State National Plans and Policies:

National Strategies

- Australian Water Safety Strategy 2030 (Australian Water Safety Council)
- Victorian Water Safety Strategy 2021-25 (Victorian Water Safety Taskforce)
- Drowning Prevention Strategies: A framework to reduce drowning deaths in the aquatic environment for nations/regions engaged in lifesaving (International Lifesaving Federation)
- Global Report on Drowning. Preventing a Leading Killer (World Health Organization)
- Coronial Findings/Recommendations (Coroners Court of Victoria)

Standards and Guidelines

- Australian Standards Handbook (Standards Australia)
- Guidelines for Safe Pool Operation (Royal Life Saving Society - Australia)
- Water Quality Guidelines for Public Aquatic Facilities (Department of Health)
- First Aid in the Workplace - Compliance Code (WorkSafe Victoria)
- Adventure Activities - Swimming and Water-based Activities (Department of Education)

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

This report has identified the following risk(s):

Risk(s)	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Drowning or near drowning incident	Possible	Catastrophic	High	Maintain current operating hours with professional aquatic manager
Breach of employment laws relating to the use of volunteers in what is considered paid work	Possible	Major	High	Maintain current operating hours with professional aquatic manager
Safety and compliance risk of pools being operated by volunteer staff	Probable	Major	High	Maintain current operating hours with professional aquatic manager
Financial impact of extended hours	Possible	Major	High	Maintain current operating hours with professional aquatic manager
Reputation risk with an unqualified/ volunteer workforce	Possible	Major	High	Maintain current operating hours with professional aquatic manager
Public health risk due to mismanaged water quality, further compounded by Council's aging infrastructure	Probable	Major	High	Maintain current operating hours with professional aquatic manager
Lack of qualified volunteer staff to manage proposed hours	Almost certain	Major	High	Maintain current operating hours with professional aquatic manager

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following legislation is relevant to this report:

- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019
- *Dangerous Goods Act 1985*
- Dangerous Goods (Storage and Handling) Regulations 2022
- *Equipment (Public Safety) Act 1994*
- Equipment (Public Safety) Regulations 2017
- *Consumer Affairs Legislation Amendment Act 2014*
- *Emergency Management Act 2013*

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

No Council officers and/or contractors who have provided advice in relation to this report have declared a general or material conflict of interest regarding the matter under consideration

TRANSPARENCY

In the interests of transparency and open and honest communication with our community this report is presented to a public Council meeting.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Council's aquatic facilities have very limited ability to generate income under the current operating model. Access to the aquatic facilities is free of charge for every household in the municipality.

There would be additional costs associated with training, management and supervision of volunteers as well as additional operating costs to extend the hours of operation. Due to the timing of this report an estimate of these costs has not been possible.

The cost to Council to extend the hours through our contracted provider, Belgravia Leisure, across the four pools is estimated to be approximately \$89,000, with each facility estimated to cost approximately \$22,102 for the extended hours. This would be subject to Belgravia's acceptance of a variation and Council's procurement policy requirements.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Economic

Aquatic facilities remain a large economic investment for Council. The 2024-25 operating hours were set in consultation with the Friends of the Pool and were based on attendance numbers, school booking requirements and weather patterns.

Social

Aquatic facilities are crucial for promoting public health and wellbeing by providing access to swimming and water-based activities, which can significantly improve physical fitness, mental health, and social connection within a community, particularly for vulnerable groups like children and the elderly.

Increased hours and the use of volunteers at these facilities, in specific roles, has the potential to improve social outcomes within the community.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The petition received demonstrates innovation from the community which needs to be considered within the appropriate risk management framework of Council. The petition has provided an opportunity to engage further with a new group in the community and seek their input to drive continuous improvement at our aquatic facilities via Friends of the pool.

CONCLUSION

Council has investigated the feasibility of extending aquatic facility operations at the Euroa Swimming Pool from a contracted workforce to a volunteer-based model to extend the current contracted operating hours.

As the facility owner, Council has a legal and moral responsibility to comply with various legislative requirements and industry guidelines. Aquatic facilities are highly regulated and controlled environments due to the nature of the activity with risk to life for patrons, through drowning, and the use of chemicals and plant required to provide commercial aquatic facilities. Safety of the community and of those working at our aquatic facilities is our number one priority.

Following consideration, several constraints have been identified, particularly regarding serious legal, compliance and safety, operational, and financial implications with a potential volunteer workforce model.

Moving away from the current contracted management model for additional hours poses a significant and unacceptable risk to volunteers, the patrons and Council and is not recommended.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

11.3 Infrastructure

11.3.1 Changes to Capital Works Footpath Program

AUTHOR Project Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director Sustainable Infrastructure

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to amend Council's footpath renewal program that was approved at the August 2024 Council Meeting to include a section of footpath on Railway Street, Euroa.

John Holland is currently establishing a compound on Railway Street, Euroa where the footpath works are proposed. It is recommended that the footpath works be deferred until the Inland Rail works are completed, and the John Holland compound is removed due to the possible impact of construction activity at the location.

It is further recommended that the funds be reallocated to the next highest priority in the Bicycle and Walking Path Strategy to ensure expenditure of the allocated funds for the 2024-25 Footpath Replacement Program.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council amend the location of the footpath renewal work contained in Council's 2024-25 Capital Works program by:

- 1. Approving the removal of the section of footpath along Railway Street, Euroa**
- 2. Refer the funding associated with the removal of the section of footpath along Railway Street, Euroa for reallocation in accordance with Council's Bicycle and Walking Path works program.**

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to amend the location of the footpath for the footpath renewal program that was approved at the August 2024 Council meeting.

At the August 2024 Council meeting it was approved to amend the 2024-25 adopted Capital Works program to include a section of footpath along Railway Street, Euroa.

With the current design from Inland Rail and the setup of the Site Compound by John Holland on Railway Street, Euroa it is proposed that these funds be reallocated according to Council's Bicycle and Walking Path 2024-25 works program. This will delay the replacement of the path until the completion of the proposed works and removal of the site compound as discussed above.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following key strategic focus areas and or actions in the 2021-25 Council Plan:

Strategic Focus Area 2: Live. Access. Connect.

Council is repairing and replacing sections of footpath in accordance with Council's Bicycle and Walking Path Strategy.

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

This report has identified the following risk(s):

Risk(s)	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Quality of work	Possible	Minor	Low	Regular meetings with suppliers to provide feedback on works ensuring that work is at or above Australian Standards.
Traffic accidents	Possible	Minor	Low	Traffic control is mandatory. Use of ONLY qualified personal to manage traffic control. Work must be carried out during good weather. Contractor safety induction for all personnel. Adequate signs and traffic warnings. Hi-Vis clothing and correct PPE.
Budget Overrun	Possible	Minor	Low	Ensure detailed project specifications, job prioritisation at tendering.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

No Council officers and/or contractors who have provided advice in relation to this report have declared a general or material conflict of interest regarding the matter under consideration.

TRANSPARENCY

In the interests of transparency and open and honest communication with our community this report is presented to a public Council meeting.

CONCLUSION

Approving the removal of the section of footpath along Railway Street, Euroa and reallocating in accordance with Council's Bicycle and Walking Path works program will avoid the possible impact of construction activity and ensure funds for the 2024-25 Footpath Replacement Program are expended.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

11.4 Corporate

11.4.1 Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council Motions

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks Council's endorsement for the submission of three motions to the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council meeting scheduled for Friday 16 May 2025. The MAV is a membership association and the legislated peak body for local government in Victoria. The State Council is the governing body and is made up of delegates from each member council, including delegates from Strathbogie Shire Council.

Councils are encouraged to submit motions of strategic relevance to the MAV or significance to local government that align with the ten enabling priorities in the MAV Strategy 2024-2027.

The proposed three motions to the MAV are:

Motion 1: Emergency Services and Volunteers Funds

That the MAV call on the State Government:

- a) to require the impacted Emergency Services and Volunteer Agencies to engage their members to advise Councils if they are exempt from the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund service charge on their rates notice.
- b) To ensure equitable distribution of funds on a needs-based equalisation basis, ensuring that the rural and regional branches of the benefiting Emergency Services and Volunteer Agencies are adequately supported given the higher impact of natural disasters in the regions.

Motion 2: Natural Disaster Recovery Funding

That the MAV call on the State and Federal Governments to ensure that the Natural Disaster Recovery Funding is sufficient at a minimum to reinstate the level of service provided by the damaged asset to the same level as before.

Furthermore, all consideration must be given at the time of reinstatement to secure all funding options for a betterment response including, but not limited to, if the previous service delivery level was found to be lacking.

Motion 3: Local Government Sustainability

That the MAV work in partnership with the State and Federal Governments to derive a funding model that addresses the challenges of Local Government as set out in the MAV Submission to Parliamentary Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability (June 2024).

A council resolution is required to submit any motion to the MAV State Council meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council endorse the following three (3) motions for submission to the 16 May 2025 Municipal Association of Victoria State Council Meeting:

Motion 1

That the MAV call on the State Government:

- a. to require the impacted Emergency Services and Volunteer Agencies to engage their members to advise Councils if they are exempt from the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund service charge on their rates notice.
- b. To ensure equitable distribution of funds on a needs-based equalisation basis, ensuring that the rural and regional branches of the benefiting Emergency Services and Volunteer Agencies are adequately supported given the higher impact of natural disasters in the regions.

Motion 2

That the MAV call on the State and Federal Governments to ensure that the Natural Disaster Recovery Funding is sufficient at a minimum to reinstate the level of service provided by the damaged asset to the same level as before.

Furthermore, all consideration must be given at the time of reinstatement to secure all funding options for a betterment response including, but not limited to, if the previous service delivery level was found to be lacking.

Motion 3

That the MAV work in partnership with the State and Federal Governments to derive a funding model that addresses the challenges of Local Government as set out in the MAV Submission to Parliamentary Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability (June 2024).

2. That Council:

- a. Authorise officers to submit the Motions to Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) for consideration at the MAV State Council Meeting scheduled for 16 May 2025
- b. Authorise the Mayor to approve amendments to the above motions following any feedback or advice from the MAV in keeping with the Council endorsed motions intent.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council meetings are an opportunity to debate motions put by member councils. As the MAV is the state peak body, motions give a mandate for MAV leadership and advocacy on issues of importance to the sector. This benefits council by advancing our advocacy priorities and promoting the role of local government.

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

This report seeks Council's endorsement for the submission of three motions to the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council meeting scheduled for Friday 16 May 2025.

The proposed three motions to be submitted are:

Motion 1: Emergency Services and Volunteers Funds

That the MAV call on the State Government:

- a. to require the impacted Emergency Services and Volunteer Agencies to engage their members to advise Councils if they are exempt from the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund service charge on their rates notice.
- b. To ensure equitable distribution of funds on a needs-based equalisation basis, ensuring that the rural and regional branches of the benefiting Emergency Services and Volunteer Agencies are adequately supported given the higher impact of natural disasters in the regions.

Motion 2: Natural Disaster Recovery Funding

That the MAV call on the State and Federal Governments to ensure that the Natural Disaster Recovery Funding is sufficient at a minimum to reinstate the level of service provided by the damaged asset to the same level as before.

Furthermore, all consideration must be given at the time of reinstatement to secure all funding options for a betterment response including, but not limited to, if the previous service delivery level was found to be lacking.

Motion 3: Local Government Sustainability

That the MAV work in partnership with the State and Federal Governments to derive a funding model that addresses the challenges of Local Government as set out in the MAV Submission to Parliamentary Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability (June 2024).

RATIONALE FOR EACH MOTION

Motion 1: Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund:

- The State Government has announced that the Fire Services Property Levy (FSLP) will be replaced by the Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund (ESVF) commencing 1 July 2025. It was also announced that active volunteers and life members won't have to pay the ESVF on their primary place of residence.
- There is limited information currently available regarding the eligibility of this exemption to pay the ESVF. As 1 July is fast approaching, Council's require clarity of

eligibility as soon as possible to ensure the correct information is included in individual rates notices.

- There needs to be an equitable distribution of funds on a needs-based equalisation basis, to ensure that rural and regional branches of the benefiting Emergency Services and Volunteer Agencies are adequately supported given the higher impact of natural disasters in the regions.
- This motion aligns with the MAV priority Sustainable Economy.

Motion 2: Natural Disaster Recovery Funding:

- Council has experience where funding for the repair of a damaged asset is well below the required funding to undertake the required works and consequently Council has not undertaken the works due to its inability to self-fund the gap.
- Recovery funding has proven to be problematic following natural disasters and the lack of an equitable funding model appears to leave regional and rural councils fiscally challenged and disadvantaged. Furthermore, the need for betterment funding is crucial, to ensure sustainability of the replaced asset. To do less would be financially irresponsible and not in the best interests of our future.
- This motion aligns with the MAV priority Resilience and Recovery.

Motion 3: Local Government Sustainability:

- Local Government is extremely limited in its ability to raise revenue and thereby pay for the services that it is expected to provide. Councils are often faced with cost shifting from the other levels of government onto local government, which adds additional financial strain on councils.
- Regional and rural councils are disproportionately financially impacted by limited revenue raising capacity and the need to provide additional services arising from the geographical size of the municipality and service gaps within communities.
- An equitable and sustainable funding model is essential for regional and rural councils if they are to (1) maintain, and (2) expand existing service expectations from their communities.
- This motion aligns with the MAV priority – Sustainable Economy.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following key strategic focus areas and or actions in the 2021-25 Council Plan:

Strategic Focus Area 4: Inclusive. Productive. Balanced.

We target economic development to enhance our region.

Strategic Focus Area 6: Accountable. Transparent. Responsible.

Achieve the highest level of good governance across the organisation and as an elected Council.

Be accountable for the decisions we make and the quality of service we deliver.

Maximise public transparency and accountability around our performance and decision-making processes.

Be financially responsible, achieving the greatest possible community benefit from the programs, initiatives and services we fund.

Regional, State and National Plans, Policies and Legislation

This report is aligned with the following legislation, council policies and key strategic documents:

- MAV Strategy 2024-27
- Council Plan 2021-25

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

This report has identified the following risk(s):

Risk(s)	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Financial insecurity and inability to meet community expectations and fund services	Medium	Medium	Medium	Sound fiscal practices in place. Advocate through external stakeholders for additional/equitable funding.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Municipal Association of Victoria Rules 2022 (the Rules) require motions to be of strategic relevance to the MAV or of such significance to local government that they ought to be considered by State Council.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

No Council officers and/or contractors who have provided advice in relation to this report have declared a general or material conflict of interest regarding the matter under consideration.

TRANSPARENCY

In the interests of transparency and open and honest communication with our community this report is presented to a public Council meeting.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Being financially responsible, achieving the greatest possible community benefit from the programs, initiatives and services we fund will be more sustainable and viable if Council is ensured of equitable and consistent funding streams.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

By supporting the MAV to advocate for improved recovery funding and funding models for local government, it is hoped that more sustainable funding outcomes can be achieved in the face of emergency and natural disaster events that confront local government agencies and councils.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

It is anticipated that the motions to MAV should initiate discussions between the State and Local Government bodies and support the strategic plan for sustainable and resilient local government councils.

CONCLUSION

This report seeks Council's endorsement for the submission of three motions to the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council meeting scheduled for Friday 16 May 2025.

The MAV is a membership association and the legislated peak body for local government in Victoria. The State Council is the governing body and is made up of delegates from each member council, including delegates from Strathbogie Shire Council.

ATTACHMENT

1. MAV-submission- Commonwealth-parliamentary-inquiry-into-local-government-sustainability



SUBMISSION TO PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUSTAINABILITY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Disclaimer and Copyright

This submission has been prepared by the MAV to represent the views and interests of Victoria's councils. It does not purport to reflect the exact views of individual councils.

The MAV is the statutory peak body for local government in Victoria, representing all 79 municipalities within the state.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

No one understands the challenges and opportunities facing Victoria in the 21st century better than local councils. From rapidly evolving technology to social changes, shifting economies to environmental pressures, our local communities— and the local governments that represent them—are at the forefront of multiple transformations happening simultaneously.

Victorian councils are delivering the essential services and infrastructure to meet local and national priorities across numerous areas including community resilience, social cohesion and safety, climate change, and housing.

The direct connection between councillors and council staff and the communities they serve means councils are best placed to understand, anticipate, and respond to the needs of those communities. To efficiently deliver on local, regional, and national priorities we need to harness this local government knowledge and expertise.

Current funding models leave councils under-resourced and uncertain about their financial futures. Many are forced to make hard decisions about which essential community services to exit. For example, across Victoria many councils are exiting the provision of aged care, as their overall financial position means they can't carry the risk of an uncertain funding model.

Early years education and care in Victoria couldn't exist without council facilities, contributing to and enabling national productivity

outcomes. Increasingly Victorian councils are withdrawing from early years service and infrastructure provision due to escalating infrastructure costs and workforce shortages.

Financially sustainable councils can, and are often required to, step in and respond to issues as they emerge - from addressing social issues to emergency response and recovery. We need to ensure that councils have the ongoing capacity to prevent, step in and respond to local issues as they arise.

Brimbank Council in Melbourne's west is pro-actively targeting unemployment through mentoring programs and micro-credential courses. These types of programs can't happen without financial security for councils.

There are serious risks to the financial sustainability of Victorian councils. Increasingly, councils report underlying deficits, reductions in unrestricted cash and working capital, and deteriorating asset renewal rates.

The Australian system of government is built on an assumption of revenue sharing from higher levels of government to more localised ones. This addresses both the revenue-raising and service delivery imbalance between tiers of government and diverse needs between jurisdictions.

These assumptions have eroded over time, exacerbated by cost shifting, with councils and local communities bearing the cost. As a share of Commonwealth tax receipts, Financial

Assistance Grants are now the lowest they have ever been.

For every dollar of revenue they collect, Victorian councils manage \$10 of physical assets like parks, and roads and kindergartens. For the Victorian Government this figure is \$4, and for the Commonwealth \$0.40

The benefits of addressing these problems are numerous, diverse, and immediate.

Financially secure councils are more proactive, from providing preventative maintenance to shaping a circular economy or prioritising continuous improvement in service delivery.

Victoria's 79 councils are incubators for innovation. A partnership between Bass Coast, Baw Baw, and South Gippsland Shire Councils established MyLi as the first library corporation to be a registered not for profit and has since expanded to service Cardinia Shire.

Councils are also economic drivers and provide high quality stable jobs to over 40,000 Victorians. The Australian Local Government Association estimates restoring Financial Assistance Grants to 1% of Commonwealth tax receipts would support over 22,000 additional FTE of jobs and increase Gross Regional Product 1.4 times greater than the investment required¹.

Trust in government has never been a more important resource. Victorian councils want to partner with their state and federal counterparts in building social cohesion and realising their communities' aspirations. They need a funding model that affords them the capacity to do so.

RECOMMENDATIONS

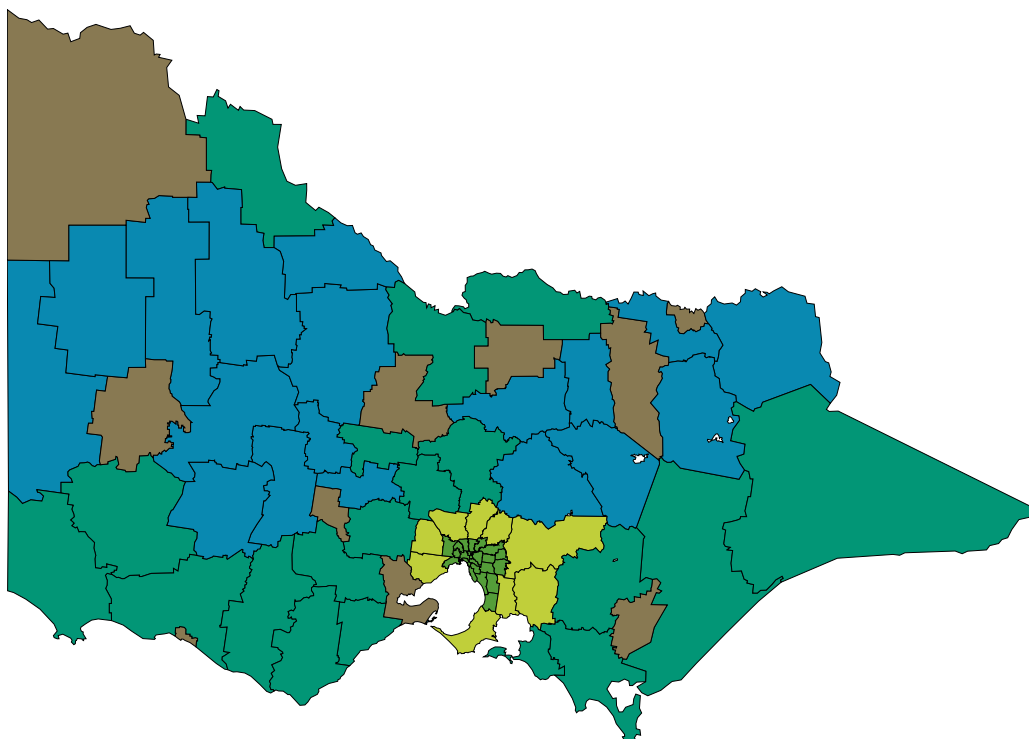
1. Increase the quantum of Financial Assistance Grants to 1% of Commonwealth tax revenue
2. Make grants more productive by:
 - a. Reducing administrative burden
 - b. Easing co-contribution requirements
 - c. Allowing for more flexible timelines
 - d. Expanding eligible projects beyond just shovel-ready infrastructure
 - e. Reinstating, restoring, or reinvigorating funding streams like the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure fund
3. Partner with local government, particularly to deliver technology transformation and climate change adaptation and mitigation and community resilience.
4. Address critical skill shortages through tertiary education and skilled migration pathways
5. Incorporate principles of betterment into the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements at a national level
6. Ambitiously pursue product stewardship to incentivise reducing waste and ensure the costs of waste are borne by those who create it



VICTORIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT



VICTORIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT








Victorian local government is made up of 79 councils representing the state's more than six million people.

Councils are area-based representative governments with a legislative and electoral mandate to manage local issues and plan for the community's needs.

Councils and the communities they represent are diverse. Council populations range from 3,000 people to more than 340,000. The largest local government area spans 22,000 square kilometres, and the smallest just 8.6. Budgets range from \$13 million to \$580 million and collectively councils manage over \$140 billion in physical assets and infrastructure.

The functions councils perform are just as diverse. From emergency management to economic development, maternal and child health to kindergarten, food safety to road management.

Victoria's councils are commonly divided into five comparator groups which will be used throughout this submission and are summarised on this page.

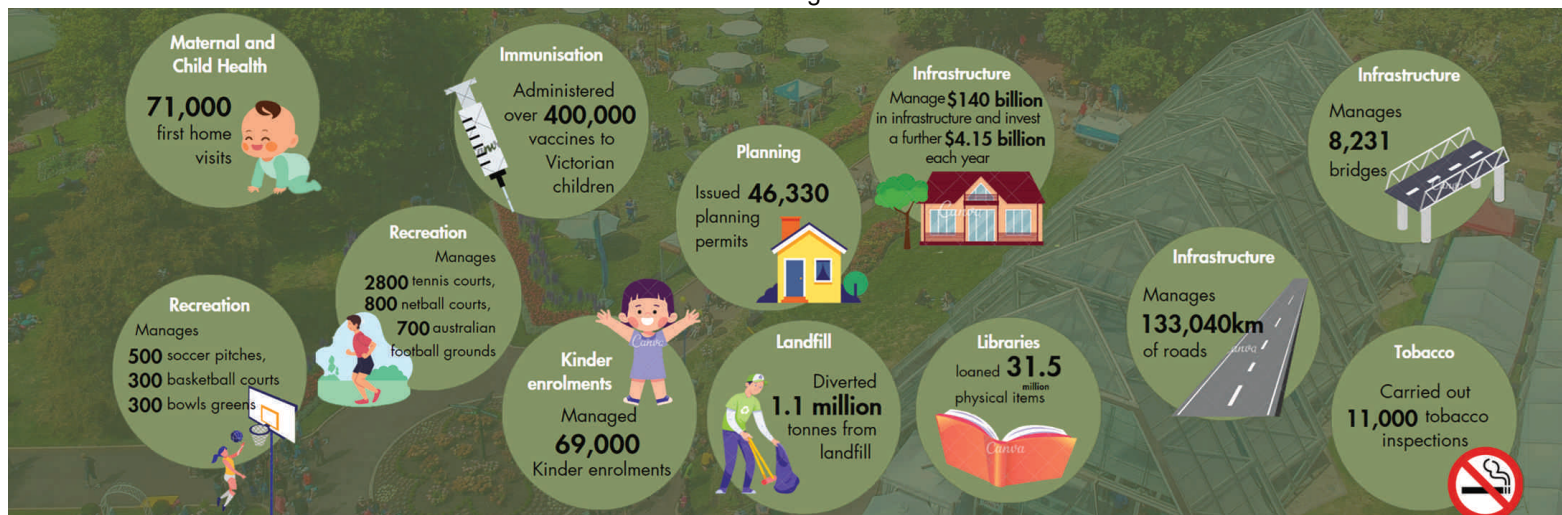
Victorian council comparator groups					
		Population	Revenue	Physical Assets	Workforce FTE
		Range [Median]	Range [Median]	Range [Median]	Range [Median]
	Metropolitan	92,000 - 204,000 [149,000]	\$161m - \$567m [\$229m]	\$1.35bn - \$4.73bn [\$2.76bn]	468 - 2453 [707]
	Interface	63,000 - 390,000 [206,000]	\$113m - \$782m [\$407m]	\$0.91bn - \$6.64bn [\$3.75bn]	324 - 1461 [700]
	Regional City	20,000 - 282,000 [63,000]	\$66m - \$619m [\$164m]	\$0.63bn - \$4.7bn [\$1.19bn]	212 - 1597 [419]
	Large Shire	16,000 - 61,000 [31,000]	\$51m - \$180m [\$97m]	\$0.42bn - \$1.44bn [\$0.77bn]	171 - 358 [265]
	Small Shire	3,200 - 18,000 [11,000]	\$15m - \$54m [\$41m]	\$0.17bn - \$0.48bn [\$0.29bn]	41 - 197 [117]

Source: MAV, data source: Victorian Auditor General's Office - Audited financial statements of councils, Australian Bureau of Statistics - Estimated Regional Population, Victorian Local Government Grants Commission - Council Employment survey

VICTORIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The breadth of activities undertaken by councils touch every resident in their day-to-day life. To name just a portion:

- Road management and maintenance
- Aged care
- Protecting historic buildings
- Promoting local tourism
- Conducting citizenship ceremonies
- Library services
- Community buses
- Kindergarten
- Managing permits for on-street trading and busking
- Regulating prescribed premises such as food businesses, beauty and body art salons, and rooming houses
- Assessing and issuing planning permits
- Regulating the safety and compliance of buildings
- Kerbside and public bin collections
- Street sweeping, litter management and graffiti removal
- Supporting community groups through grants and advice
- Prevention of Violence Against Women and gender equity
- Emergency management
- Street tree and public tree planting and maintenance
- Issuing permits for septic tanks
- Roadside pest and weed control
- Investigating and addressing nuisance complaints
- Neighbourhood and community houses
- Maternal and Child Health services
- Immunisation
- Sport and recreation facilities
- Resident and disabled parking permits
- Animal welfare and registration
- Public parks, gardens, and playgrounds
- Stormwater management
- Active transport routes
- Noise from residential buildings or residential construction sites
- Foreshore and waterfront management
- Youth centres and programs
- Regional airports
- Promoting diversity and inclusion
- Strategic planning
- Childcare
- Street lighting
- Supporting local businesses and chambers of commerce



Selected Victorian council activities based on 2022-23 data. Source: MAV

VICTORIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Fiscal Relations

Government fiscal relations in Australia operate on principles of vertical fiscal imbalance (VFI) and horizontal fiscal equalisation (HFE).

VFI means that the revenue raising powers across different levels of government do not reflect their expenditure needs. In Australia over the last decade the Commonwealth has collected 81% of total tax revenue, the States and Territories 15.5% and local governments the remaining 3.5%. By comparison local governments manage 25% of public non-financial assets and states and territories 65% while the Commonwealth manages only 10%.

To put this in a Victorian context, for every dollar of revenue they collect, Victorian councils manage \$10 of physical assets like

parks and roads and kindergartens. For the Victorian Government this figure is \$4, and for the Commonwealth \$0.40.

Transfers such as Financial Assistance Grants are not a nicety, they are a

For every dollar of revenue they collect, Victorian councils manage \$10 of physical assets like parks, and roads and kindergartens. For the Victorian Government this figure is \$4, and for the Commonwealth \$0.40

fundamental part of how Australian government works. However, as a percentage of Commonwealth tax receipts they have now reached historic lows. This, combined with State-based constraints on own-source revenue has left many Victorian councils struggling to find the necessary funds to continue services.

The other principle is that of horizontal fiscal equalisation (HFE). This recognises that across jurisdictions at the same level of

government, the capacity to raise revenue and the costs of performing functions varies significantly.

HFE proposes that different jurisdictions should be able to provide similar levels of

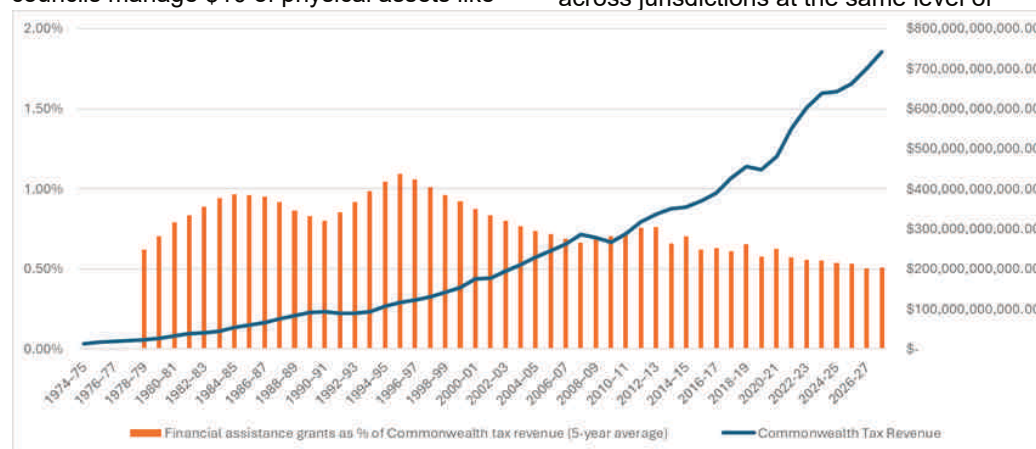
service to their communities at a similar level of burden.

In Victoria the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission assesses cost and revenue modifiers in determining the share of Financial Assistance Grants that is distributed to each council.

Cost modifiers include proportions of aged pensioners, indigenous people, and people under 6 within the population, environmental risk from fire and flood, languages spoken, socio-economic status within the municipality, remoteness and population dispersal, tourism, and whether the council provides or draws from broader regional services.

Revenue modifiers include household income, the proportion of valuations which are commercial properties, and the value of development occurring.

In general, these factors identify rural councils as being less able to raise revenue and facing higher costs to deliver equivalent service levels than metropolitan councils, though there are exceptions.



Source: MAV, data sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics – Taxation Revenue, Reserve Bank of Australia – Commonwealth Government Taxation Receipts, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts – Financial Assistance Grants Cash Payments & Local Government National Reports

VICTORIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Key Indicators

There are serious risks to the financial sustainability of Victorian councils. Increasingly, councils report underlying deficits, reductions in unrestricted cash and working capital, and deteriorating asset renewal rates.

This is made more concerning by the fact that State-based reporting does not pick up on these factors. Several decisions in the way the state monitors financial sustainability obfuscate underlying problems.

Accounting surplus rather than underlying surplus is frequently used. Total cash is also referred to rather than unrestricted cash. In both cases these are significantly distorted by money that is ringfenced from operational uses, such as developer contributions.

Over time the State has also included upgrade expenditure when calculating asset renewal gaps, rather than purely maintenance expenditure. This provided a significant boost to the number of councils that appear to be meeting targets but is inaccurate.

A further challenge to analysis is the timing of release of Financial Assistance Grants, which can make up a sizable portion of the underlying revenue for many councils. A portion of Financial Assistance Grants has often been brought forward into the preceding financial year, but in recent years particularly the % of total grants brought forward has varied. This can lead to councils effectively receiving much more than a normal yearly allocation in one year, and much less in the following year.

In 2021-22 normalising these payments would bring the number of councils reporting deficits from 35 up to 43, and in 2022-23 from 37 up to 46.

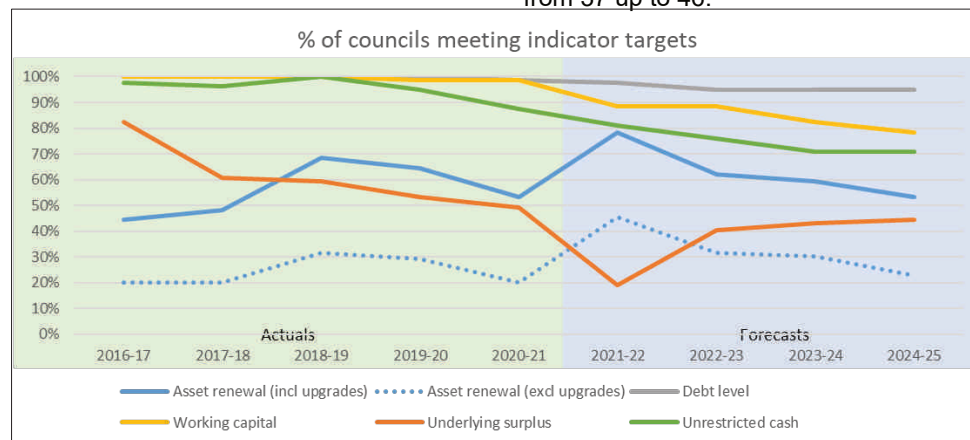
A key part of the deterioration in local government sustainability has been the introduction of a rate cap in Victoria. Victoria's rate cap is set based on Department of Treasury and Finance forecasts for CPI growth. There are two main problems with this.

Firstly, CPI is not an accurate indicator of the costs facing local government. The MAV has developed a cost indicator that better reflects what councils are paying year to year to maintain service standards which is detailed elsewhere in this paper.

Secondly, there is no adjustment mechanism to account for when forecasts do not match reality. Instead, the rate cap is merely set based on the new forecast without consideration of previous gaps. Incorporating a mechanism to "catch up" via future rate caps would go some way to addressing the compounding revenue challenges councils face.

The rate cap is not the sole challenge for councils, however. Even absent of a rate cap, councils are constrained by the capacity of their community to pay additional costs. In many cases, communities with the least ability to pay are also the most expensive to service due to factors such as socio-economic disadvantage and small and disparate populations.

Ultimately this needs to be addressed through redistributions from other levels of government, including restoring the quantum of Financial Assistance Grants to previous levels and expanding and improving upon other sources of grants.



Source: MAV and LG Finance Professionals - Sustainability Gap Report, data source: council budgets and financial statements

VICTORIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

International Comparison

Using OECD data, we can examine how Australian local government compares to similar countries across some key indicators.

The comparison countries are those which are classified as high-income and have federal systems of government, rather than unitary ones. That is, subnational governments have a right to exist and are recognised in the constitution as having powers the national government can't take away unilaterally.

Interestingly, without constitutional recognition of local government councils effectively operate within a unitary system

within their state. Local governments in Victoria are established by state legislation and the barriers to the Victorian Government making unilateral decisions are political ones rather than legal ones.

Australian local government is smaller than comparable counterparts.

It receives the smallest proportion of its income through transfers from other levels of government. It is the most reliant on non-tax non-grant revenue, which in Victoria consists largely of user fees and fines.

This reliance has significant equity implications, as the costs of providing services fall more proportionally on those using that service.

While having a fairly low capital expenditure compared to other countries, this is due to the smaller overall budgets of Australian

councils. When looked at as a portion of total local government expenditure, Australia spends the most by far - double that of the country ranking second.

This points again to councils in Australia being a level of government that is laden with infrastructure. This affects many facets of their overall financial sustainability as there are large baked in maintenance and renewal costs.

Comparison of key local government indicators across high-income federated OECD countries 2019/20 data								
	Australia		Austria	Belgium	Germany	Spain	Switzerland	Canada
Per capita LG expenditure (\$USD)	\$ 1,302.60	7th	\$ 4,980.30	\$ 3,871.50	\$ 4,794.00	\$ 2,445.50	\$ 5,359.00	\$ 4,472.90
LG expenditure as % of GDP	2.5%	7th	8.9%	7.4%	8.8%	6.4%	7.5%	9.3%
LG expenditure as % of total government expenditure	5.9%	7th	15.7%	12.4%	17.4%	12.2%	19.8%	17.3%
Grant and subsidy revenue per capita	\$ 406.80	7th	\$ 3,137.10	\$ 2,063.80	\$ 2,374.50	\$ 1,049.50	\$ 906.10	\$ 2,178.30
as % of LG revenue	31%	6th	63%	53%	50%	43%	17%	49%
Per capita tax revenue (\$USD)	\$ 517.90	7th	\$ 726.20	\$ 1,162.90	\$ 1,662.80	\$ 1,241.10	\$ 3,173.80	\$ 1,714.70
as % of LG revenue	39.8%	3rd	14.6%	30.0%	34.7%	50.8%	59.2%	38.3%
% of revenue not grants or tax	29%	1st	22%	17%	16%	6%	24%	13%
Share of national tax revenue	3.50%	7th	4.90%	7.50%	13.20%	14.20%	21.30%	11.80%
Per capita LG CapEx (\$USD)	\$ 467.10	5th	\$ 563.00	\$ 433.40	\$ 656.10	\$ 255.30	\$ 851.90	\$ 759.10
LG CapEx as % of LG expenditure	36%	1st	11%	11%	14%	10%	16%	17%
Share of national CapEx	19.9%	6th	24.4%	22.8%	29.6%	14.3%	23.0%	34.4%

Source: MAV, data source: OECD Subnational Government Finance



BENEFITS OF FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE COUNCILS



BENEFITS OF FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE COUNCILS

BRIMBANK
METROPOLITAN



Investing in community capacity

Through targeted investment councils can improve engagement and resilience within their communities

Since 2009, the Brimbank Community Capacity Building Program has aimed to enhance governance and leadership skills among community members who work with and on behalf of their community. This long-running initiative includes three distinct streams designed to foster community resilience, participation, and empowerment.

The Brimbank Community Governance Training Program offers one-off training sessions to community groups within Brimbank, focusing on the governance and management of their organisations. The Brimbank Community Leadership Program provides a series of training to individuals, enhancing their leadership skills and capacity. Additionally, the Brimbank Leadership Alumni network connects participants who have completed the leadership program and attended multiple governance training sessions, allowing them to stay engaged and contribute to council activities.

To date, the program has trained over 600 community members. An evaluation conducted in 2023 revealed that the program effectively achieves its goals. Participants reported that the program improves community resilience by enhancing knowledge and connections, fostering increased community participation, and positively influencing engagement with council tools and initiatives. The findings indicated that the program has significantly improved participants' skills, knowledge, and self-confidence.

The impact of the program on the Brimbank community has been overwhelmingly positive, with sustained increases in engagement, skills, resilience, and empowerment among participants. By investing in the capacity of its community members, Brimbank Council has successfully fostered a more resilient, engaged, and capable community, demonstrating the long-term benefits of targeted capacity-building initiatives.

Investing in communities

Councils are the most connected level of government to their communities. They are constantly receiving local feedback, whether at the front desk, through engagement with elected representatives, at council meetings, or in formal consultation processes.

This means they are able to identify and respond to the needs of individual communities within their municipal area much faster than state or federal governments can hope to.

This can take the form of responding to acute or widespread disadvantage, or in addressing significant divides within the municipality.

Ideally these issues can be pre-empted and not reach a boiling point. Multicultural festivals and events held by councils are not just about bringing diverse communities together, but also and bridging gaps in understanding and building socially cohesive society.

Providers of last resort

Many communities rely on services that are simply not commercially viable for private operators to offer, or at least not at a price communities can afford.

In some cases, legislation requires councils to act as a potential alternative to commercial operators.

The Victorian building regulatory system was privatised in the early 1990s. Statewide over 90% of building permits are now issued by private building certifiers. In parts of rural Victoria however council is the only or one of very few issuers of building permits. Without providing this function residents would be unable to undertake all but the most minor of building works.

Where they have the capacity to do so, some councils step into this gap and offer the service directly, or support providers to deliver it.

A number of councils operate childcare to ensure their community has access to a high quality and affordable service that the market had otherwise failed to deliver.

Unless they have a solid baseline of financial stability councils don't have the capacity to take on these roles.

BENEFITS OF FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE COUNCILS

Stability

Having a strong financial base means councils are able to step in and help absorb the impacts of significant shocks for their community.

During the worst periods of the COVID-19 pandemic every Victorian council dedicated extensive resources to supporting their communities.

Support to businesses included direct support packages and rate relief, fast-tracked applications for approvals, liaison and mentoring programs, professional development opportunities, facilitating collaboration and networking, and rent relief for tenants of council facilities.

For communities councils continued vital services such as maternal and child health appointments, provided enhanced assistance for vulnerable people including establishing dedicated relief packages and expanding the eligibility criteria for in-home support, providing public health information, establishing local community networks, relaxing enforcement where public safety was not compromised, and offering rate waivers and deferrals.

This approach can be seen as similar to the role taken on by Victoria in absorbing the immediate impact of the pandemic to keep communities and economies going.

Compared to the Victorian Government however, councils have a very limited ability to increase their revenue streams. This means they had to take a more conservative

approach during the pandemic and have fewer options available to them to pursue budget repair.

"The first and most important step was to let the Victorian Government's balance sheet absorb the blow of the pandemic – protecting jobs, businesses, families and the community"²

- Victorian Treasurer Tim Pallas MP

In addition to one-in-a-hundred-year pandemics the role of councils in supporting their communities through shock and disruption can be seen each year.

The governance structures, local networks, and strategic partnerships councils have are critical to activating relief and recovery measures as quickly as possible following a disaster.

After the initial response from emergency services, councils undertake building and environmental health risk assessments, establish relief and recovery centres, and provide information and leadership to impacted communities.

Efficiency and cooperation

State and federal governments benefit from councils as willing and able partners with equipment and expertise deployed across the country.

Other levels of government will often arrange for council to undertake functions they would otherwise do.

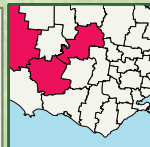
Victorian councils are currently funded to perform inspections on tobacco retailers to ensure they are not supplying to minors.

Many Victorian councils also perform maintenance on state road assets such as vegetation management. This has been more cost effective than the state having to deploy its own resources across the entire network.

Unfortunately, funding agreements have become so out of date that they no longer reflect the cost to council of undertaking this maintenance. As a result councils are considering whether they can justify continuing to do this at the expense of other priorities. Several councils have already ceased this maintenance.

BENEFITS OF FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE COUNCILS

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS,
NORTHERN GRAMPIANS,
QUEENSCLIFFE & WEST WIMMERA



SMALL AND LARGE SHIRES

Collaborative ERP Renewal and Cloud Records Project

State funding allows councils to achieve long-term benefits through investing in systems

Northern Grampians, Southern Grampians, and Queenscliffe councils have recently completed the initial implementation of two collaborative projects funded by the Rural Councils Transformation Program: Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) renewal and Cloud Records (With West Wimmera also joining the second project). These projects are designed to enhance digital infrastructure and streamline business processes across the participating councils. The ERP renewal project saw three councils jointly procure and implement a suite of "Best of Breed" software to replace their outdated ERP systems. This collaboration enabled cost savings, standardised business processes, and laid the foundation for potential service sharing and joint recruitment in the future.

Simultaneously, four councils worked together on the Cloud Records Project, transitioning from old records management systems to MS365 SharePoint. Staff now use MS Teams as their primary workspace, with AvePoint managing records compliance in the background. This new approach ensures high compliance with minimal user intervention by implementing in-place records management. These projects highlight how State Government funding supports small rural councils, allowing them to achieve outcomes that would be difficult independently.

As the councils move into Phase 2, they are focused on building training resources and developing standardised policies and procedures to maximise the efficient use of new systems. This ongoing collaboration fosters continuous improvement, with staff from the participating councils supporting each other and sharing best practices. The ERP renewal and Cloud Records projects exemplify the significant benefits of collaborative, state-funded initiatives in modernising digital infrastructure and setting the stage for future cooperation and efficiency in small rural councils.

Delivering on shared priorities

In addition to assisting State and Federal operations, the functions of local government are critical to delivering on the priorities of other levels of government.

Victorian councils manage 87 per cent of Victoria's road network, representing not only the roads many travel on in and around their communities but the first and last mile for longer trips such as interstate and intermodal freight.

Early years education in Victoria couldn't exist without council facilities, often leased to service providers at peppercorn rates.

Councils invest heavily into climate change initiatives, both mitigation and adaptation. They ensure their own buildings and services are efficient as well as supporting their communities to do the same.

Councils are taking on an increasing role in funding library services that support lifelong learning, digital literacy, and skill development.

Councils also engage heavily with individual communities to promote social cohesion across Victoria.

Continuous improvement

Continuous improvement is vital for councils, and any organisation, to maintain a high level of performance.

Unfortunately when budgets are under pressure it can be extremely difficult for councils to dedicate resources to continuous improvement over more immediate community-facing priorities such as service delivery and infrastructure management.

Many aspects of continuous improvement have a positive feedback loop, improving the sustainability of councils. Thus the councils that would benefit the most from it are often the ones least able to undertake it without support from other levels of government.

Where councils can undertake continuous improvement practices it can take many different forms.

Many Victorian councils have leant into improving digital systems. This has been significantly aided by programs such as the Victorian Government's Rural Council Transformation Program.

Other areas include professional development, collaboration with other councils and external partners, improved risk management, and forward service planning.

BENEFITS OF FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE COUNCILS

Organised sport

Community participation in sport is heavily dependent on councils. Over half the tennis courts, football grounds, soccer pitches, and swimming pools in Victoria are owned by council.

Councils also provide support to local sporting groups through operating grants and individuals and families to help make participation more affordable for the whole community.

Sport clubs are often the bedrock of communities, particularly in rural areas. A 2015 study ³ by La Trobe University examined the benefits of community clubs and identified a social return on investment of \$4.40 for each \$1 spent on running them.

"Councils collectively invest millions of dollars into football annually in the development and maintenance of football facilities" ⁴

- Then AFL Victoria CEO Steven Reaper, AFL Victoria Local Government Forum

Sports heavily dependent on local government-owned facilities in Victoria

	# owned by local government *	% of total *
Soccer pitches	539	71%
Basketball courts	316	62%
Skate parks	93	58%
Swimming pools	301	58%
Australian rules football grounds	727	58%
BMX tracks	70	57%
Tennis courts	2908	50%
Netball courts	823	48%
Hockey pitches	49	42%

Source: MAV, data source: Sport and Recreation Victoria - Facilities List. (Note, due to gaps in facility ownership in the source data the MAV considers these figures conservative)

Local clubs support local businesses and create direct employment opportunities in the community.

Other benefits include improved social connectedness, mental and physical health, building networks to improve resilience and access to employment opportunities, and gaining skills that can be used in people's personal and professional life.



**GREATER
GEELONG**
REGIONAL

Subsidised access to community facilities

Council-provided subsidies promote access to facilities for those who need it most

In February 2024, the City of Greater Geelong opened the \$65.5 million Northern Aquatic Community Hub (NACH) in the northern suburbs of Norlane and Corio. These areas, identified by the SEIFA index as among the most disadvantaged in Victoria, have greatly benefited from this new facility. The NACH aims to remove financial barriers to participation through various subsidised initiatives, making it accessible to the local community.

Key initiatives include off-peak concession memberships priced at 50% off the full fee, which provide complete access to the facility, including reformer pilates. Additionally, a \$50,000 small grant initiative will be launched in FY25 to offer free access for those unable to afford it, such as one term of swimming lessons. Memberships now also include small group training at no extra cost, and 60 participants per year can take advantage of funded learn-to-swim programs, courtesy of a commercial partner. Ongoing initiatives offer further discounts for concession holders, older adults, families, and corporate members.

These programs are primarily funded by the City of Greater Geelong, with the learn-to-swim program supported by a commercial partner. The council's commitment to subsidising access to the NACH ensures that residents of Norlane and Corio can benefit from the health and wellness opportunities provided by the new aquatic centre, helping to address the area's significant socioeconomic challenges. This approach highlights the role of local government in promoting community well-being and social equity through targeted support and access to essential services.

BENEFITS OF FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE COUNCILS

Open space

In addition to organised sport, council land forms the backbone of our public open space networks.

Within metropolitan Melbourne (encompassing metropolitan and interface councils), councils own 68 per cent of the parks, gardens, and organised recreation facilities by area, amounting to 16,400 hectares.

Across eight municipalities councils own over 90 per cent of this critical public space,

between 80-90 per cent in another nine, and over half in all but six of the 31 councils that make up Melbourne.

The physical and mental health benefits of open space are well documented. In addition to providing a venue for physical activity, natural environments reduce stress, anxiety and depression.

Public open spaces also act as communal gathering spots. They provide a space for organised events such as concerts and festivals, as well as informal gatherings that promote casual interactions among the community.

Environmentally, the open space network promotes biodiversity. Of particular importance are biodiversity corridors which link habitats that would otherwise be isolated and potentially unviable due to urban development.

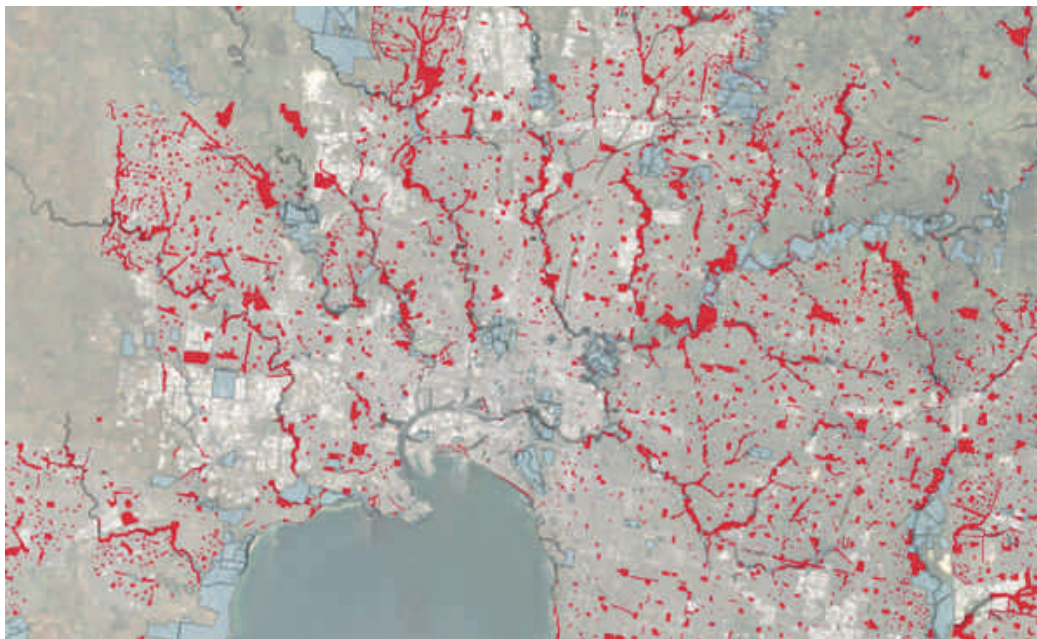
Improving air quality for residents is a significant benefit, particularly in urban environments.

The benefits of open space will also become more pronounced as the impacts of climate change become more severe.

Green spaces counteract the urban heat island effect. They can also be utilised as part of flood mitigation by managing stormwater surges during flood events.

Open space does not generate significant revenue. Even for organised sport, councils will generally charge a low fee for community clubs.

Management of the open space network requires councils that can afford to fund it out of general revenue in recognition of the significant benefits it provides.



Melbourne's open space network. Council owned land highlighted in red and other public open space in blue. Source: MAV, data source: Victorian Planning Authority - Metropolitan Open Space Network

BENEFITS OF FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE COUNCILS

Financial insecurity

By contrast, when councils don't have financial security there are significant impacts to local communities.

Victorian legislation requires councils to ensure their ongoing financial viability. A deteriorating financial position means councils are forced to make difficult decisions about the scope and scale of services they provide to their community.

A study conducted by AEC Group on behalf of the Australian Local Government Association identified specific functions as particularly at risk where finances become a problem ¹:

- Response to climate change
- Provision of recreation and open space activities
- Provision of community events and festivals
- Library and educational services
- Equitable access to services
- Public safety
- Promoting public health
- Additional support for at-risk populations
- Protecting communities from natural disasters
- Road maintenance
- Footpaths and cyclepaths
- Stormwater drainage

There are recent examples of councils having to reassess service delivery due to their financial position.

The Victorian Government's Program for Refugee Immunisation, Monitoring and Education (PRIME) was a program aimed at improving immunisation rates in asylum seeker and refugee communities. In some communities vaccination rates more than tripled under the program.

Despite its success, when the state program ceased participating councils were unable to continue this initiative due to the cost.

In the aged care space, many Victorian councils have announced they will leave the direct provision of in-home services. They will instead move to supporting residents to find and transition to an appropriate alternative service provider.

Changes to federal aged care funding models have increased client choice, but at the expense of the ability of councils to plan services. Many councils felt they were not in a financially strong enough position to take on the risk of uncertainty over funding.

As costs increase faster than revenue more councils will be closely examining their budgets to identify what functions they can no longer justify.



**GREATER
DANDENONG**
METROPOLITAN

Deteriorating financial sustainability

Councils face increasing costs and significant limitations on their ability to raise revenue

The City of Greater Dandenong (CGD) is one of the most diverse multicultural communities in Australia. CGD is currently confronted with substantial medium to long-term financial sustainability challenges. These arise from several factors including rate capping policies that don't reflect increased costs, shifting of responsibilities to council, and the level of hardship experienced by the local community.

For 2024/25 the Victorian Government has set a rate cap of 2.75%. By contrast CGD has experienced cost increases over 20% for building construction, playground materials, tree maintenance services, and other maintenance services. Despite internal staff remuneration being pegged to the rate cap, overall employee costs will rise above this due to the increase in the Superannuation Guarantee.

In addition to this council finds itself taking responsibility to deliver functions that were previously undertaken by other levels of government, or where service agreements have become divorced from the cost of delivery such as council undertaking maintenance works on state road assets.

Even absent of external impositions on revenue and expenditure, CGD carefully considers the ability of its community to bear additional cost burdens. Greater Dandenong has high levels of severe disadvantage, poverty, homelessness, and unemployment. The ability to find additional revenue through either rates or user pays systems is extremely limited. These communities also rely heavily on council services, and any reduction to services would have severe impacts on both an individual and societal level.



FUNDING INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

FUNDING INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

LG Cost Index

Since 2016 Victorian councils have been subject to a State imposed cap on growth in rate revenue. This has exacerbated the challenges councils face in funding the services and infrastructure their communities rely on.

It also stands in stark contrast to the revenue growth other levels of government afford themselves. Since 2016 the tax revenue of Victorian councils has risen 23% in total, compared to a 53% rise in tax receipts for the Victorian Government and 59% for the Commonwealth

The rate cap is set based on Department of Treasury and Finance forecast for CPI. CPI is not an accurate reflection of the costs

facing councils, and Treasury projections of CPI even less so.

To address this, the MAV has developed a cost index for Victorian local government based on methodologies in use in other jurisdictions.

Using this we estimate that since the introduction of the rate cap it has reflected just 60% of the cost increases facing councils.

Our cost index adopts a relatively simple approach of three components - wages, infrastructure, and other.

We have experimented with more complex indices involving upwards of 20 different components such as gas and printing costs. We found that any difference in the output did not warrant the increased complexity.

Employee costs contribute 40% to the cost index. We use increases in the Local Government Industry Award, as well as incorporating increases to the Superannuation Guarantee. While each Victorian council has negotiated an EBA with its workforce, the award still represents a good statewide basis and is the comparison point for Better Off Overall Tests in negotiations.

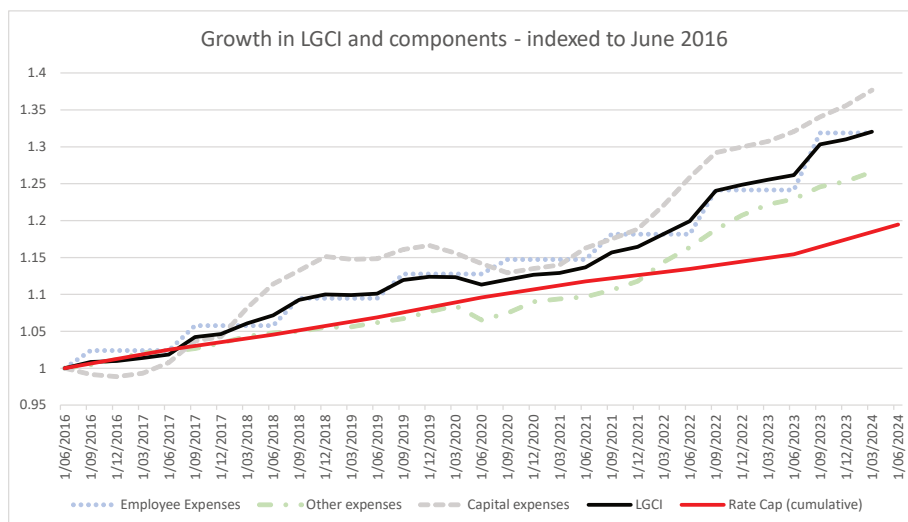
Infrastructure costs are set at 30% and use the Road and Bridge Construction Index for Victoria published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The MAV believes this index may be somewhat conservative compared to the costs being experienced on the ground by councils. However, it still stands as the best option for a broadly available and trusted figure.

Finally we use the CPI for Melbourne for the remaining 30% to account for all other costs.

Using a methodology recently adopted by NSW's Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal ⁵ we can also provide estimates for future growth in the index based on RBA economic forecasts.

Currently we predict the LGCI will increase a further 3.12% in 2024-25 and 2.64% in 2025-26.

For context the Victorian Government has set the rate cap for 2024-25 at 2.75%.



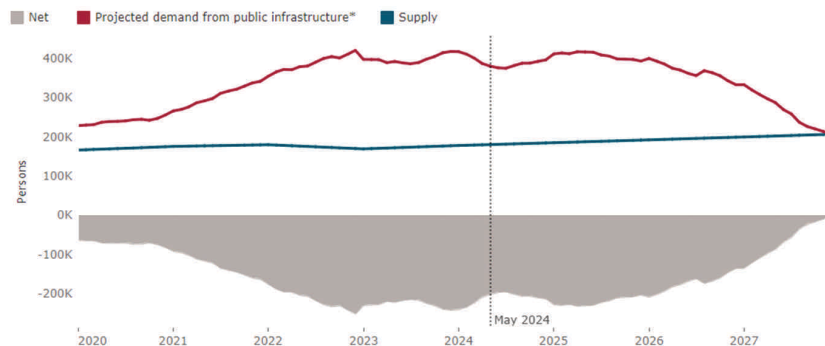
FUNDING INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Infrastructure delivery

Infrastructure Australia ⁶ projects that the supply of labour to build infrastructure won't meet demand until the end of 2027. The biggest labour deficits are among labourers and structural and civil engineers.

The data is based only on announced projects. With years of state, territory, and federal budgets between now and then we would expect demand to have increased significantly by the time 2027 arrives and for a substantial deficit to remain, as no significant increase in workforce is projected.

For councils, delivering and managing infrastructure is a large part of their role. These labour shortages affect them significantly. Costs to deliver infrastructure have risen dramatically. In addition to the shortfall driving up prices, many councils have been simply unable to complete projects.



Source: Infrastructure Australia - Public Infrastructure Workforce Supply Dashboard

An MAV survey ⁷ of councils in late 2022 found that over 80% of respondents had seen responses to infrastructure tenders weaken over the preceding 12 months. This is particularly challenging given tied grants are often quite strict in delivery timelines.

In addition to rising costs we are seeing councils capacity to pay for them erode. The application of a new Windfall Gains Tax to council land when re-zoned has impaired the ability of councils to fund capital projects through rationalising their asset base. For large redevelopments such as turning a car park into an apartment tower, the State would take 50% of the uplift value from re-zoning with no guarantee that this would be reinvested into local infrastructure.

Build-to-rent developments avoid subdivision which is the statutory trigger for some infrastructure contributions. Incentives for build-to-rent will have the (we believe) unintended consequence of leaving councils without the means to provide the infrastructure new residents need.



PORT PHILLIP METROPOLITAN

Impact of build-to-rent reforms on development contributions

Well-meaning reforms have unintended consequences for infrastructure provision

The State Government's incentives for build-to-rent developments, such as a 50% reduction in land tax, aim to create new affordable housing complexes with below-market rentals. However, these developments do not involve the subdivision of property, meaning they do not trigger enliven the statutory trigger which allows councils to levy development contributions for open space.

Open space contributions are essential for Port Phillip City Council (PPCC), providing around \$4-5 million annually to improve and expand public open spaces as the population grows. However, five recent build-to-rent developments in the Fishermans Bend area did not require these contributions, resulting in a loss of approximately \$4.9 million in revenue. This shortfall equates to the funding needed for two municipal park upgrades, highlighting the financial impact on PPCC's ability to enhance community infrastructure.

The loss of open space contribution revenue necessitates adjustments to PPCC's financial plan. More funds from general rates will need to be allocated towards open space projects, reducing the budget for other services. Additionally, the PPCC anticipates lower general rates income from build-to-rent properties, estimated to be 10-15% less than traditional developments. This is because these properties are valued based on rental return rather than the Capital Improved Valuation typically applied to subdivided properties.

Overall, while the build-to-rent reforms promote affordable housing, they pose significant challenges for councils which have not been adequately addressed. They hinder local government's ability to provide the necessary infrastructure to support the very communities being established.

FUNDING INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

GREATER SHEPPARTON REGIONAL CITY



Flood insurance challenges

Cost of insuring against climate change becomes harder and harder on an individual council basis

Since October 2022, Greater Shepparton City Council (GSCC) has faced significant challenges with its flood insurance, as premiums surged by approximately 25% in one year, while coverage for flood damage plummeted from \$20 million to \$2 million. The estimated final cost of insurance claims for 2022 is around \$15 million, excluding business losses for key facilities such as the aquatic centre and performing arts centre. These figures highlight the long-term sustainability issues for civic infrastructure in a flood-prone area.

Climate science indicates that extreme weather and natural disasters will become more intense and unpredictable. In May 2022, the Climate Council of Australia identified the electorate of Nicholls, encompassing Greater Shepparton, as one of five exceptionally vulnerable localities. This underscores the urgent need for enhanced flood resilience and sustainable community planning.

The substantial reduction in flood coverage and rising insurance costs present a severe challenge to GSCC. The council must navigate these financial strains while striving to protect and maintain its infrastructure and supporting the community at large who find their homes and businesses increasingly at risk. These insurance challenges emphasize the broader issue of climate resilience, particularly for communities prone to natural disasters.

These challenges are exacerbated by policy decisions at state and commonwealth levels within the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA). In Victoria DRFA funding can only be used to restore assets to the state they were in immediately prior to being damaged. At a Commonwealth level, the DRFA takes a narrow view of what constitutes essential public assets and thus what is eligible for funding.

Climate impacts

Victorian councils face an array of challenges due to climate change, significantly impacting their operations and planning.

One of the most obvious challenges is the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events, such as bushfires, floods. These events strain emergency response systems, necessitate costly infrastructure repairs, and disrupt community services.

Another major challenge is coastal erosion and rising sea levels, which threaten coastal communities and infrastructure. Councils will need to manage the protection and relocation of assets and potentially even communities.

Climate change also poses challenges for public health, with increased heatwaves leading to higher incidences of heat-related illnesses, particularly among vulnerable populations such as the elderly and those with pre-existing health conditions. Councils will increasingly need to enhance public health services, establish cooling centres, and green their existing public infrastructure.

Furthermore, climate change impacts biodiversity and natural ecosystems, many species are already facing extinction, requiring local governments to develop and implement conservation strategies to protect local flora and fauna. This often involves restoring habitats, managing invasive species, and promoting biodiversity-friendly practices among local communities.

Circular economy

Communities expect local government to play a key role in the circular economy and to maximise the amount of material being reused, recovered, and recycled.

Unfortunately, once something hits the bin is the worst time to start thinking about sustainability. Councils have very limited capacity to influence upstream change. The expectation for councils to solve our waste problems is akin to buying the best bucket possible to sit under a leaking roof.

Federal, and to some extent state, government have far greater levers to address change.

Mandatory product stewardship enacted through state or federal legislation has the ability to require manufacturers and importers of goods to have responsibility for the end-of-lifecycle impacts of products. This creates incentives to design products to be robust, reusable, and recyclable.

It also ensures a price signal is sent to consumers, influencing them to make decisions that avoid waste.

Dealing with the waste-creating decisions of product supply chains comes at a huge cost to councils. In 2022-23, 43 of Victoria's 79 councils spent over 10% of their total budgets on waste management. In addition to the environmental benefits of a circular economy, it would free up funds for other vital services and infrastructure.

FUNDING INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Population growth

Official Victorian Government projections suggest Metropolitan Melbourne's population will increase from 2021 to 2051 by over 3 million, to reach 8 million people total. Regional Victoria's population is projected to grow by 646,000 to 2.28 million.

We can see from the local government area projections that are available to 2036 that this growth will not be evenly spread. The government has had a longstanding ambition to accommodate 70% of population growth within established areas rather than in new greenfield development.

Major investment will need to go into new areas to accommodate population growth putting even greater pressure on council finances and infrastructure delivery

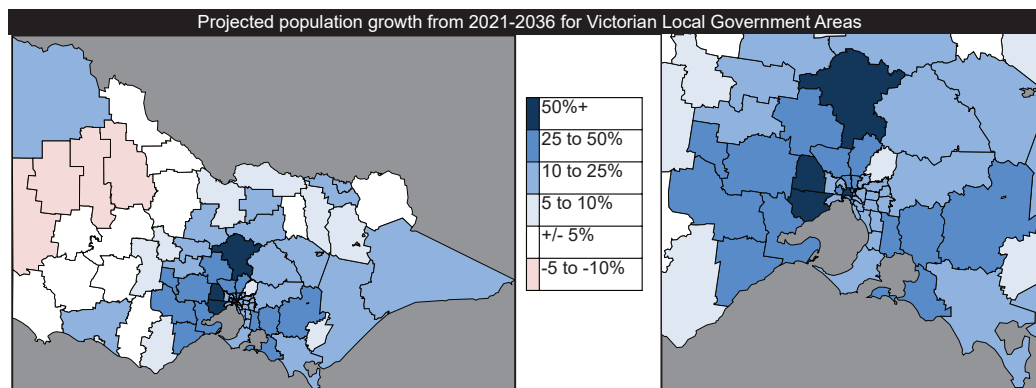
pipelines. Cost won't be the only barrier, space will become scarcer and scarcer.

Service delivery will also need to adjust.

Already services like kerbside collections are more challenging in denser areas.

Areas of western Victoria where population is projected to decline or stagnate will face perhaps even bigger challenges. Small towns with decreasing and aging populations will face questions of their viability. In addition to the cost of servicing small dispersed populations and a declining revenue base, there is a threshold at which the social fabric can no longer renew.

The MAV has released two discussion papers addressing these and other concerns - Shaping Metropolitan Melbourne⁸ and Shaping Regional and Rural Victoria⁹. These are intended as the start of a conversation between councils, communities, and other levels of



Source: MAV, data source: Department of Transport and Planning - Victoria in Future



MORNINGTON PENINSULA INTERFACE

Managing coastal land in a changing climate

Council bears an increasing and unsustainable cost to maintain assets that benefit many Victorians

Mornington Peninsula is host to 192km of coastline - 10% of Victoria's total. Mornington Peninsula Shire Council is responsible for the maintenance and management of around one third of this.

Each year around 8 million people visit the Peninsula to enjoy its unique coastal environment, villages, and hinterlands. MPSC currently spends more than \$8m per annum maintaining infrastructure on the foreshore and keeping beaches clean, safe, and accessible. These costs are rising with increased patronage and the impacts of climate change.

Extreme weather events and changed conditions due to development are increasing the severity and frequency of erosion events and landslips. Council has had to close one historic path for safety reasons, with an options report costing \$85,000 and design \$100,000 budgeted for the start of design work. Early estimates are that the cost of works could be up to \$4m.

The scale of these costs are already beyond the capacity of individual communities and councils to fund, and they will only increase. It highlights the need to address climate change impacts at a strategic level. This must include either undertaking or funding councils to undertake proactive work to improve resilience, rather than merely responding to damage after it occurs.

FUNDING INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

MOONEE VALLEY METROPOLITAN



Public-Private Partnership for community facilities

Council partners with a service provider to address longstanding infrastructure issues and revitalise community assets.

Moonee Valley City Council (MVCC) has entered into a public-private partnership (PPP) with BlueFit, a leisure facility management company to redevelop Riverside Golf and Sports Centre.

The Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct Plan was developed by MVCC in consultation with the local community. Principles were developed that the precinct be safe, multi-use and community focused, green and climate resilient, connected and accessible, and functional and high amenity.

The current precinct has significant problems. In addition to wear and tear and capacity, the placing of the golf driving range and the netball and tennis courts mean that they can't be used simultaneously without risk to the public. The new development will address these issues, provide playgrounds and active spaces, improved access and pathways as well as potential hospitality uses.

The PPP is underpinned by a 20-year management contract, allowing council to oversee the operations and ensure that community needs are met. It will see most of the capital investment provided by BlueFit.

PPPs won't be suitable in all circumstances. However, where a community-led vision has been developed, and there are partners able to deliver upon them, a PPP can help council capital budgets go further in delivering on infrastructure needs.

Funding alternatives

With these pressures on finances and the delivery of services and infrastructure, the idea of finding alternative sources of revenue and funding is an attractive one for local government.

Some options can be done largely under a council's own initiative, while others will require approval in some form from the state government.

Not every option will be viable for every council. In a 2022 report for Rural Councils Victoria¹⁰, SGS Economics and Planning found that while boutique revenue streams could be found, meaningful improvements to council finances need to come from revenue sharing from other levels of government.

Changes to developer contributions through the planning system have numerous benefits. They are hard to avoid and they tie revenue to densification and thus increased demand for infrastructure. Once established they also act by reducing the residual land value - effectively being paid by those

selling land through a reduction in sale value rather than an increased price for those buying new homes. However, like all planning scheme changes, they must ultimately be signed off by the Minister for Planning.

There are benefits rationalising asset inventories. Maintenance costs can be reduced, a one-off injection of funds from the sale achieved, and once developed to a higher yield use the land will contribute more to the local economy and the rate base.

Councils looking at this to fund capital expenditure have been hindered by the imposition of the Victorian Government's windfall gains tax, which would see the State take 50% of the uplift value from any re-zoning.

Other avenues include public private partnerships to deliver infrastructure or developing services commercially to provide either to the public or other councils.

There may also be scope to increase revenue from the use of council services and facilities, however this cost is borne directly by community so should be weighed against the social benefits of subsidised or at-cost offerings.

Sources of revenue for Victorian councils - 2022/23

	Rates and Charges	Grants	Statutory Fees and Fines	User fees	Development contributions	Other revenue
Metropolitan	63%	14%	6%	9%	4%	4%
Interface	43%	14%	3%	5%	32%	3%
Regional Cities	48%	22%	2%	10%	13%	4%
Large Shire	47%	31%	2%	7%	9%	5%
Small Shire	42%	46%	1%	5%	2%	5%

Source: MAV, data source: VAGO audited financial statements of Victorian councils



WORKFORCE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

WORKFORCE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Councils as Employers

One of the major contributions councils make to local communities is their role as an employer.

Councils provide stable and high-quality jobs to local residents. In many areas they are one of the largest employers in a community.

Councils have been criticised for being top-heavy with unnecessary layers of management. This is incorrect, councils have a smaller proportion of management in their workforce than the private sector.

When examining the distribution of wage brackets, again comparing to the private sector, councils have fewer people on low wages, fewer people on the highest wages, and more in the middle.

Councils also help address gender equity in the workplace, both through paying women well and in supporting mechanisms. Councils offer flexible work arrangements to ensure that parents can continue contributing in the workplace in a way that fits their circumstances.

In 2010 Surf Coast Shire Council implemented what we understand were globally the first paid leave provisions for workers experiencing family violence. This has since become a legal right for all Australian employees, whether full-time, part-time, or casual.

In many professions local government also helps train up the bulk of the workforce, whether they stay in the public sector or go to private industry.

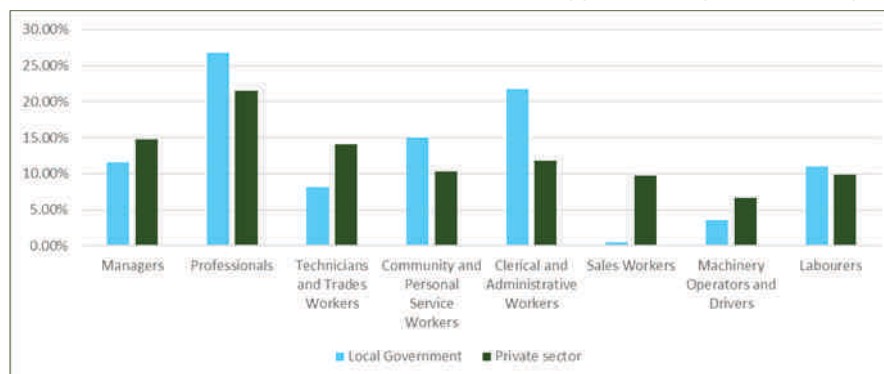
The majority of town planners and building inspectors for example, get their first opportunity in local government.

Local government, through cadetships, apprenticeships, and work placements, can

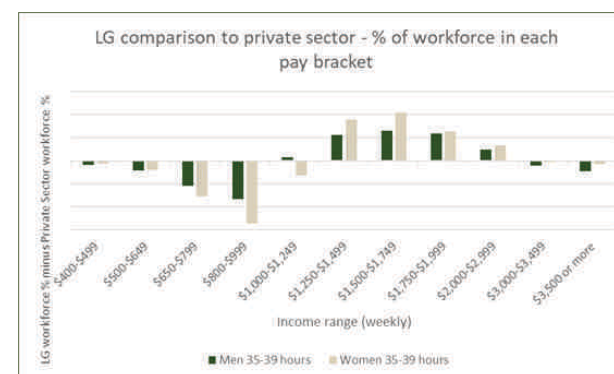
be a great place to develop a career, It can also be a place that helps people get back into the workforce after long-term absence. Local government wages flow into economic activity in local communities.

In examining the rate cap in Victoria, the Centre for Future Work ¹¹ estimated that more than 20,000 indirect jobs are created by local government activity (through downstream consumption and upstream supply chain impacts). This is in addition to the 50,000 people directly employed by councils.

When looking at the impact constrained local government revenue has had (in this case the rate cap), they state this may have cost over 7,000 jobs (direct and indirect) and reduced GDP by up to \$890 million.



Source: MAV, data source: ABS 2021 Census TableBuilder



WORKFORCE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Skills shortages

Victorian local governments face significant challenges in attracting and retaining workforce, particularly across several key skill areas.

The 2022 Australian Local Government Workforce Skills and Capability Survey¹² found that three quarters of responding Victorian councils said workforce capacity and capability issues impacted project delivery.

Building surveyors, maternal and child health nurses, planners and engineers were cited as the hardest roles for councils to fill. There have also been longstanding challenges to recruit environmental health officers, and councils expect waste management and recycling staff to become a critical shortage in the future.

One of the primary issues is the lack of affordable housing. Many rural communities have limited housing options, making it difficult for potential employees to find suitable accommodation. Without affordable housing, even those interested in working in rural settings may be forced to seek employment elsewhere, where housing is more accessible. This is exacerbated by poor access to transport options within an area.

Skills shortages can also become self-perpetuating. Where councils are understaffed each employee will carry a greater workload. This can lead to burnout and the employee leaving for another employer.

Councils expect skills shortages to become worse. Demand for workers will increase due to external factors such as reforms by other levels of government, changing demographics, and climate change. Meeting the workforce demands of the expansion of early years education in particular will be challenging for many councils.

Across some professions, and in rural councils more generally, an aging workforce profile adds additional challenges. As experienced workers reach retirement age we will lose the opportunity to mentor the next generation and retain institutional and professional knowledge.

In some cases the problem is not merely the ability of councils to attract the workforce, but the existence of a sufficient workforce at all. In Victoria demand for building surveyors far exceeds the current workforce across both the public and private sector. In those cases the solutions need considerable involvement from state and federal governments, as well as other partners such as the tertiary education sector.



WANGARATTA
REGIONAL CITY

Challenges of an aging regional workforce

Structural challenges require innovative approaches to recruitment and retention, as well as outsourcing key services

Wangaratta Rural City Council (WRCC) faces significant workforce challenges, particularly in recruiting and retaining skilled personnel for critical service areas such as environmental health officers and arborists. These positions are essential for service delivery, yet attracting qualified individuals is difficult due to the constraints of service delivery budgets.

WRCC's doesn't have the size for career-building programs or scholarships to develop these skills internally. Teams do not exist at a scale large enough to support this, turnover is relatively low, and career progression pathways are limited. As a result, larger councils or private sector employment opportunities can be more attractive employers. Housing shortages further exacerbate recruitment difficulties.

In response WRCC has had to outsource to ensure service delivery can continue without interruption. WRCC has also implemented bespoke recruitment efforts, including referral services, sign-on bonuses, above-band salary offers, and relocation support. Application processes have been tailored to match the technology capabilities likely applicants.

Moreover, Wangaratta's workforce is aging at a materially higher rate than the average Australian workforce, adding further complexity to the recruitment and retention challenges. The Council's proactive measures aim to mitigate these issues, but the combination of regional disadvantages and an aging workforce continues to present significant hurdles.

Through these efforts, Wangaratta Council strives to maintain service quality and continuity while navigating the difficulties inherent in regional workforce management. The situation underscores the need for innovative solutions and support to ensure the sustainability of critical services in rural areas.

WORKFORCE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

YARRA
METROPOLITAN



Early years workforce challenges

Council faces an acute workforce pressure and is able to deploy resources in a targeted and pro-active response

The City of Yarra is facing significant challenges in meeting the growing demand for early childhood education and care. With projections indicating that demand for places will exceed current capacity, and an increasing number of job vacancies across Victoria, the situation is becoming critical.

Inner Melbourne, which includes Yarra, experienced notable employment changes in the five years preceding August 2022. There was a 23% reduction in the employment of educators, compared to a 9% reduction nationally. Early childhood teachers saw a 15% reduction, contrary to a 19% national increase. Interestingly, there was a 50% increase in Childcare Centre Managers, against a 15% national reduction. This disparity reflects the unique challenges faced by the area.

Yarra Council has consistently struggled with a vacancy rate of at least 20% in early childhood educator roles over recent years. This shortage, coupled with rising demand for services, has placed immense strain on existing staff and services. The usual attraction and retention strategies have proven insufficient to address these workforce issues.

In response, Yarra Council has developed a detailed action plan aimed at mitigating these workforce challenges. The plan includes measures for attracting, retaining, and developing early childhood educators. By focusing on innovative solutions and comprehensive support systems, the council aims to stabilise the workforce and ensure that quality early childhood education remains accessible to all families within the municipality.

This proactive approach highlights the council's commitment to addressing the workforce challenges in early childhood education, ensuring that the growing demand for services can be met effectively despite the current staffing shortages.





LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADING THE WAY

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADING THE WAY

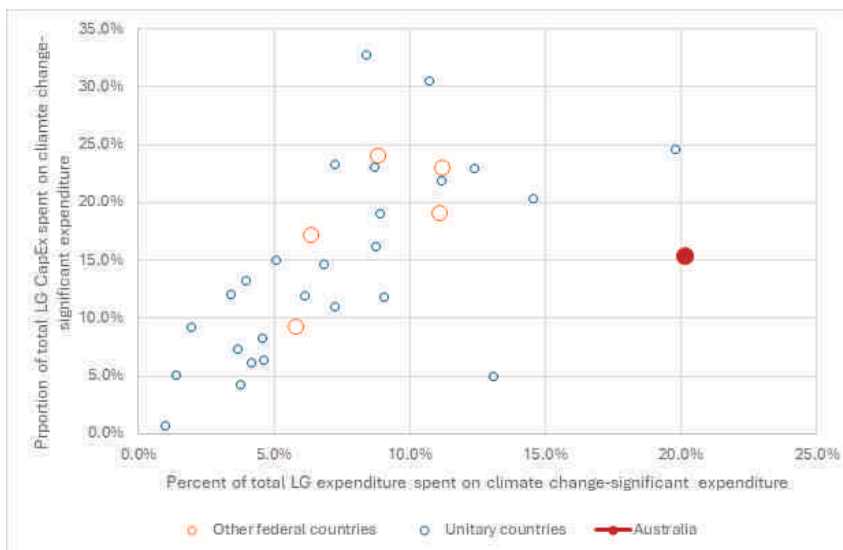
This section seeks to highlight proactive work being undertaken by Victorian councils to address financial sustainability and other challenges.

Councils are not merely sitting back calling for other levels of government to solve their problems. They are actively pursuing innovation and solutions. These case studies document the benefits of councils having the financial room to innovate. In many cases the first mover will be the most expensive and learnings can be applied relatively cheaply across councils and other levels of government.

In addition to specific council examples we can look at broader responses where councils are leaders such as climate change.

Victorian councils have led the way on numerous climate change initiatives from environmentally sustainable design in the planning system to investing in renewable energy.

The OECD has categorised investment and expenditure by subnational governments. By contrast, when councils don't have financial security there are significant impacts to local communities. We can see that Australian councils are world leading in terms of turning their operational expenditure to climate-change significant expenditure.



Source: MAV, data source: OECD Subnational Government Climate Expenditure & Subnational Government Finance and Investment



YARRA
METROPOLITAN

Implementing Victoria's first LG Financial Sustainability Strategy

Council prioritises and delivers a forward-looking strategy for financial sustainability

In December 2023 Yarra City Council (YCC) adopted a Victorian-first Financial Sustainability Strategy (FSS).

The FSS identifies seven strategic levers:

- Sustainable cash reserves & responsible borrowing
- Optimise revenue
- Well planned assets
- Review the service landscape
- Invest in transformation
- Robust financial management
- Prioritise advocacy & partnerships

Since adopting the FSS these levers have already been put into use. A framework of principles for future service planning and review was developed through both broad and targeted community consultation.

The first stage of engagement sought broad feedback from the community both online and in-person to better understand attitudes to YCC's service offering.

After that a 50-person Community Working Group was formed. The CWG was given information from the first stage of engagement, as well as further details on councils' services and finances and examples from outside the municipality of how councils deliver services.

YCC has already and continues to put significant effort and resources into implementing the FSS. This work has been able to take a higher priority than it otherwise might due to strong recommendations from an appointed municipal monitor regarding financial sustainability. For many councils diverting resources away from immediate priorities to take a strategic approach may be extremely difficult to achieve without external funding.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADING THE WAY

BRIMBANK METROPOLITAN



Addressing disadvantage with locally driven responses

Local, targeted investment to address disadvantage within communities

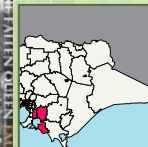
Brimbank, home to some of Victoria's most socio-economically disadvantaged communities, faces significant challenges, including low digital inclusion, poor mental well-being, and the impacts of COVID-19. The area reports high levels of psychological distress, anxiety, and depression, particularly among women. Additional issues such as alcohol and drug abuse, and widespread loneliness further compound these challenges.

To bridge these gaps, Brimbank City Council (BCC) has implemented several initiatives, particularly through its library services. Libraries in Brimbank have undergone enhancements to support equitable access to resources and technology. Additional staff training ensures that library personnel are equipped to assist residents in overcoming digital barriers, providing a crucial lifeline to those with limited online access. These measures help improve digital literacy and facilitate better access to information and services.

Moreover, Brimbank has partnered with the Western Bulldogs football club to deliver the "Sons and Daughters of the West" program, a 10-week mental health initiative. This program is designed to improve mental well-being among residents by offering support and resources to address psychological distress. The program includes activities that foster community connection, reduce loneliness, and provide strategies to manage anxiety and depression.

These efforts illustrate Brimbank's commitment to addressing socio-economic disadvantages and promoting mental health and well-being. By leveraging community resources and partnerships, the council aims to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all residents, helping to mitigate the long-term impacts of socio-economic disparities and improve overall quality of life.

CASEY, BASS COAST, AND CARDINIA INTERFACE AND LARGE SHIRE



Shared environmental health services

Through a shared service model councils can ease workforce challenges and improve the consistency and efficiency of service delivery

In 2021, the City of Casey, Bass Coast Shire, and Cardinia Shire councils collaborated on a shared service arrangement for Environmental Health Services through a competitive procurement process. A single contractor was selected, and benefits have included enhanced service quality, consistency, and cost reductions across the three local government areas. This initiative is designed to welcome other councils, allowing the benefits to be realised on a broader scale.

Environmental Health functions required to be provided by councils include the administration and inspection of food premises and the investigation of nuisance complaints. These services are essential for ensuring public health and safety, with businesses and residents being the primary beneficiaries.

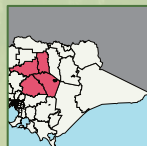
Centralising contract governance has created economies of scale for procuring sub-contractors (e.g., laboratory services) and consumables (e.g., food sampling equipment).

The arrangement also ensures access to a stable, reliable, and skilled Environmental Health workforce, addressing the challenges of workforce shortages and external pressures such as climate change and service growth. A 2023 Victorian Auditor General's Office audit (Regulating Food Safety) highlighted workforce challenges and that councils were finding it difficult to meet legislated responsibilities. The City of Casey was positively showcased in the report for its initiatives to address food safety risks, reflecting the commitment of both the council and the contractor to meet core legislative requirements.

The partnership fosters collaboration and consistency in service provision, ensuring standards are uniformly high across the participating councils.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADING THE WAY

BENALLA, MANSFIELD,
MURRINDINDI & STRATHBOGIE
SMALL SHIRES



Digital transformation across rural shires

Working together, and supported by flexible grant programs, rural councils utilise their diverse areas of expertise for a shared benefit

In a groundbreaking initiative, Benalla, Mansfield, Murrindindi, and Strathbogie Shire Councils embarked on a digital transformation project aimed at improving operational efficiencies and service delivery through a collaborative model. By leveraging shared platforms and architecture, these four councils capitalize on their collective strengths, reducing administrative overheads and fostering a cooperative environment that promotes efficiencies and excellence. This \$4.1 million project is supported by grants from LGV's Rural Council Transformation Program and the Department of Treasury and Finance Business Acceleration Fund as well as funding contributions from the councils.

The collaboration model is founded on a strategic partnership where each council takes a lead role in its area of expertise. This approach not only enhances efficiency but also uplifts the overall performance of the group. The use of shared platforms and architecture streamlines processes and facilitates seamless communication across the organizations. This common infrastructure reduces redundancy and allows for the consolidation of resources, significantly cutting down on project administration costs. The integration of similar platforms paves the way for shared services, further enhancing operational efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

The benefits realized by this project include reduced costs to operate, improved efficiency and service delivery, and a scalable system that can adapt to future demands.

This \$4.1 million project is supported by grants from LGV's Rural Council Transformation Program and the Department of Treasury and Finance Business Acceleration Fund as well as funding contributions from the councils.



SOUTH GIPPSLAND, BAW BAW,
BASS COAST & CARDINIA
INTERFACE AND LARGE SHIRE

Establishing a multi-council not-for-profit library organisation

Councils jointly develop a forward-looking response to changing legislative requirements

MyLi - My Community Library delivers comprehensive library services across Baw Baw Shire, Bass Coast Shire, Cardinia Shire, and South Gippsland Shire. As the first library service in Victoria to become a not-for-profit organization following changes to Victorian legislation, MyLi represents a pioneering model for library services. South Gippsland, Bass Coast, and Baw Baw Shire, formerly part of the West Gippsland Library Corporation, were the founding members of MyLi, and Cardinia has since joined the service.

MyLi operates sixteen traditional libraries, three click-and-collect locations, and services a further 21 locations through a mobile library. Three of the fixed locations also provide 24/7 access for registered users.

MyLi remains connected to the needs of local government through board representation from each of its member councils. This has helped see a commitment to operating within the revenue constraints local governments face, as the primary funders of the service. The service also gives regular strategic briefings to councillor groups.

The service is also delivering investment in collections well above the state average, the opportunity to leverage funding through scale, and growth in membership. It also promotes broader co-operation and relationships between the participating councils.

This innovative approach to library services demonstrates the benefits of collaboration and shared services in enhancing community resources and adapting to evolving needs.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADING THE WAY

BRIMBANK METROPOLITAN



Addressing barriers to unemployment

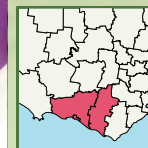
Through its understanding of local context local government delivers tailored interventions to address disadvantage

Brimbank faces numerous employment challenges, including cultural barriers, gender disparity in unemployment, high youth unemployment, limited access to transport, and a reliance on low-skilled and low-paid jobs, which perpetuates intergenerational inequity. To address these issues, Brimbank City Council (BCC) collaborates with community organizations and government agencies to provide tailored support aimed at breaking down these barriers and promoting economic diversification.

One of the key strategies includes offering language and digital proficiency programs to improve employability among residents facing language barriers. BCC also supports various skills development programs to equip individuals with the necessary skills to transition into higher-skilled and better-paid employment opportunities. These programs are crucial in fostering economic resilience and reducing dependency on low-wage jobs.

For youth, BCC provides empowerment activities such as micro-credential courses and mentorship programs. These initiatives are designed to enhance the skills and confidence of young people, making them more competitive in the job market. By focusing on youth empowerment, the council aims to address the high rates of youth unemployment and ensure that young people have access to better employment opportunities.

BCC's comprehensive approach to addressing employment barriers reflects its commitment to fostering a more inclusive and equitable local economy. Through collaboration and targeted support, the council is working to create a brighter economic future for all its residents.



CORANGAMITE, MOYNE & WARRNAMBOOL LARGE SHIRES AND REGIONAL CITY

Joint venture to improve Enterprise Resource Planning

Supported by the Rural Councils Transformation Program, councils implemented a major overhaul of their ERP systems

In recognition of the changing environment of technology and the need to provide their communities with a sustainable and high quality service, Corangamite, Moyne, and Warrnambool councils initiated a transformative project for their business support systems.

An unincorporated joint venture, named South West Councils Information Communication Technology Alliance (SWCICTA) to address this and other digital transformation priorities. Warrnambool City Council, the largest of the three councils, would serve as the administering body. The ERP project, named Coastal Connect, was one of the first initiatives undertaken. Coastal Connect would uplift the entire ERP system to a Software as a Service environment using Technology One software.

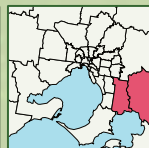
Coastal Connect recognises the significant benefits for the three councils and their communities in having shared systems with common processes to support improved corporate and customer support services. The specific expected business outcomes include:

- Flexible services that meet customer demands
- Making the right investment decisions
- Cheaper cost of doing business
- Higher levels of engagement
- Potential to increase partners or services

The project has been funded under the Rural Councils Transformation Program with a grant of \$4.5 million from the Victorian Government. It is expected that overtime additional partners would join in an expanded shared service offering.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADING THE WAY

CASEY & CARDINIA INTERFACE



Collaborative procurement for immunisation services

Joint procurement leverages economies of scale and reduces administrative burden

In 2022 Casey and Cardinia Councils undertook a Collaborative Procurement to source Immunisation Services from a common provider. In January 2023, A single contractor was awarded the contract for the provision of Immunisation Shared Services across the two municipalities.

The Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 places an obligation on all councils in Victoria to "seek to protect, improve and promote public health and wellbeing by - coordinating and providing immunisation services to children living or being educated within the municipal district". The types of immunisation services provided include:

- Public Immunisation Sessions, to primarily 0-4 year olds
- Secondary School Immunisation Sessions
- Municipal Flu Vax Programs
- The provision of Immunisation Assessment and Catch-up programs

In its first year of delivery, there have been several benefits of this model of service delivery. Combining IT systems has meant that only one council has needed to dedicate resources to interfacing with the Victorian Government's Central Immunisation Records Victoria System.

Collectively the two councils are home to over 7.5 per cent of Victoria's population, with a high proportion of young families. This collaboration offers significant economies of scale through purchasing power, ability to run mass vaccination catch-ups, and avoiding duplicated administration effort.

The model has also been designed to allow other councils to join at a later date to further build on these advantages.





ROLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT



ROLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

The Australian Government has considerable levers which it could use to immediately improve the financial sustainability of local government.

Our recommendations for the Committee are as follows:

1. Increase the quantum of Financial Assistance Grants to 1% of Commonwealth tax revenue

Relative to commonwealth tax receipts, Financial Assistance Grants are at their lowest ever level.

The Australian Local Government Association estimates ¹ that restoring Financial Assistance Grants to 1% of tax receipts would support an additional 22,814 FTE of direct and indirect jobs, and increase Gross Regional Product by 1.4 times the investment required.

In addition to immediately addressing many of the underlying financial challenges for councils, this would better recognise Financial Assistance Grants as a revenue sharing arrangement and part of Vertical Fiscal Imbalance and Horizontal Fiscal Equalisation.

2. Make grants more productive by:

- a. Reducing administrative burden
- b. Easing co-contribution requirements
- c. Allowing for more flexible timelines
- d. Expanding eligible projects beyond just shovel-ready infrastructure
- e. Reinstating, restoring, or reinvigorating funding streams like the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Fund.

In addition to increasing the quantum of Financial Assistance Grants, we believe other grant streams could be made more productive.

One of the strengths of Financial Assistance Grants is their untied and non-competitive nature.

Councils don't have to spend time applying or acquitting Financial Assistance Grants. They simply apply the money received to respond to local priorities.

Particularly for smaller councils and for smaller grant streams the administrative burden in applying for and managing funding represents a meaningful proportion of the value of funds received.

Co-contribution requirements can also act as a barrier to many councils participating in grant streams. Perversely, they can also divert funds away from where they are most needed. A council may feel compelled to apply for a grant stream to maximise funding available, even if this means the co-contribution requirement would draw money away from a more necessary, entirely self-funded, initiative.

Possible solutions would be to vary co-contribution requirements based on the revenue base of a participating councils, or to allow co-contributions to be delivered through in-kind support. Ultimately, an assessment should be made for each grant program on whether the perceived benefits of a co-contribution requirement outweigh the barriers they place on participation.

Too often grant programs focus on projects which are shovel-ready with the goal of having a ribbon-cutting ceremony within political timeframes. This can undermine effective asset and service planning.

For many councils, particularly in rural areas, they don't have the capacity to develop business cases, effective cost benefit analyses or long-term plans. Providing funding for these could prove an efficiency multiplier. Future spending would be better tied to current and future needs and ensure the most efficient delivery and operation.

Finally, there are funding streams councils have found incredibly effective that have either been wound down or abandoned, or could use reinvigoration.

The Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program (LRCI) is seen as an extremely valuable program. Programs like this and Roads to Recovery which offer reasonable flexibility in the projects that can be delivered ensure funding goes towards real local priorities.

The restriction of later phases of the LRCI program to rural, regional, and outer-metropolitan councils was disappointing and does not reflect the challenges all councils face in keeping pace with the demand for infrastructure.

These type of multi-year programs should also be indexed both to population and delivery costs. Infrastructure costs have risen significantly faster than inflation and this risks these programs becoming less and less effective over time.

ROLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

3. Partner with local government, particularly to deliver technology transformation and climate change adaptation and mitigation

All Australians would greatly benefit from increased partnership between local governments and the Commonwealth.

Climate change is a problem that requires a multi-scale response from the national (and international), down to the local.

Similarly, technology transformation can deliver significant benefits for communities through the services they receive from government.

We echo calls from the Australian Local Government Association for the Commonwealth to be more ambitious and confident in directly funding local government.

4. Address critical skill shortages through tertiary education and skilled migration pathways

Through its role in tertiary education and migration the Commonwealth has some of the levers necessary to address the acute skills crises facing local government.

Councils simply can not find enough workers to deliver critical roles such as town planning, building regulation, maternal and child health nursing, and environmental health regulation.

These professions need to be prioritised through migration and the Commonwealth needs to partner with local and state

governments and the tertiary education sector to attract people into these professions.

5. Incorporate principles of betterment into the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements at a national level

In Victoria councils are unable to use funding from the DRFA to improve resilience when replacing infrastructure destroyed in a disaster.

Councils are required to return the infrastructure to the state it was previously in. This seems farcical, as the state it was previously in has just been proven incapable of withstanding a major disaster.

Despite repeated advocacy the Victorian Government has refused to adopt principles of betterment into the Victorian application of DRFA funding. Thus we call on the Commonwealth to implement these principles nationally and compulsorily. Councils should be encouraged, not prohibited, from building back better after a disaster.

6. Ambitiously pursue product stewardship to incentivise reducing waste and ensure the costs of waste are borne by those who create it

Councils are frequently left to deal with the costs of waste while being largely unable to influence waste-creating behaviours.

By the time materials find their way to a kerbside bin, or are dumped in a public place, the options to improve recoverability and reduce waste are very limited.

By far the most effective waste interventions are those that happen up the supply chain and affect production and consumption decisions.

Product stewardship, such as container deposit schemes, can be extremely effective at achieving this. A well implemented product stewardship scheme places the responsibility for whole-of-lifecycle impacts of a product onto its producer. This encourages them to address waste through design, as well as ensures waste impacts are included in price signals to consumers.

ROLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

MAROONDAH METROPOLITAN



Eligibility for JobKeeper

Failing to consult with councils makes for arbitrary and unfair differences in program implementation

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Federal Government introduced the JobKeeper scheme to support organisations in retaining staff during forced closures. However, councils that managed their own leisure facilities, like Maroondah City Council (MCC), were deemed ineligible for this scheme. In contrast, councils that outsourced the management of their leisure facilities to third-party contractors were eligible for JobKeeper support. This discrepancy led to significant inconsistencies and placed self-managing councils at a considerable disadvantage. Ultimately people doing the exact same job were deemed eligible or ineligible for JobKeeper support based solely on whether they worked at an outsourced or in-house managed facility.

MCC chose to retain staff during the lockdowns to maintain the employer-employee relationship, ensuring they were ready to resume operations once restrictions were lifted. This decision aligned with one of the key principles of the JobKeeper policy: to sustain employment relationships for a smooth transition upon reopening. However, without the financial backing of JobKeeper, MCC faced substantial financial strain.

MCC's ineligibility meant council had to absorb the full costs of staff wages during closures, unlike outsourced facilities that received federal support. This situation created a financial burden and highlighted the inequities in the support system, disproportionately affecting councils committed to direct management of their facilities.

Despite these challenges, MCC's commitment to its workforce ensured that the leisure facilities were fully staffed and ready to operate immediately upon receiving the green light to reopen. This experience underscores the need for more inclusive and equitable support mechanisms in future crisis response, as well as more general program design, to avoid significant inequities.



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11.4.2 Quarter Two Finance Report and Mid-Year Budget Review 2024-25

AUTHOR Finance Coordinator

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A mid-year budget review for the 2024-25 financial year has been undertaken as a means of tracking where the delivery of the operating budget and capital works program is at, and also to better inform the development of the 2025-26 budget and revision of Council's 2025-26 to 2034-35 Long Term Financial Plan.

The mid-year budget review for the 2024-25 financial year shows a forecast deterioration of the operating result by \$1,772,635 and increased capital expenditure of \$1,376,004 (which is largely offset by grant income or expenditure requirements carried forward from prior years) when compared to the adopted Budget.

The mid-year review, and associated financial statements, are presented to Council for noting.

There is also a proposal to increase the fee for the truck wash at the Euroa Saleyards from \$1.15 per hour to \$1.25 per hour from Monday 3 March 2025, following the opening of the additional truck wash bays during December 2024.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Note the quarter two Financial Report and the Mid-Year Review of the Financial Statements for the period ending 30 June 2025**
- 2. Note the statement by the Interim Chief Executive Officer in the attachment that a revised budget is not required for the period ending 30 June 2025**
- 3. Approve the increase of the truck wash fee at the Euroa Saleyards from \$1.15 per hour (ex-GST) to \$1.25 per hour (ex-GST) from 3 March 2025.**

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The 2024-25 Budget was prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) and was formally adopted at an Extraordinary Council meeting held on 25 June 2024 after community engagement and input.

Under Section 96 and 97 of the Act, Council must establish and maintain a budgeting and reporting framework that is consistent with the principles of sound financial management and prepare a quarterly budget report.

Undertaking a mid-year review to assess where the budget is currently at, and how this may impact the need for a revised budget in 2024-25 and the development of the 2025-26 budget, satisfies these requirements.

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

One of the overarching governance principles in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020* is that priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.

Process

As part of the mid-year budget process, all operating income, expense line items and capital projects were reviewed by each department manager to identify potential changes to the adopted budget.

Spending priorities were assessed based on various factors such as already committed work, grant funding agreement commitments and prioritising natural disaster recovery initiatives.

These changes were assessed and approved by the Executive Leadership Team for the consideration and adoption by the Council.

Factors Informing the Mid-Year Review

The following factors were considered during the mid-year review:

- Macro-economic factors affecting Council operations – increased costs due to inflationary pressures, labour and material shortages, shortage of contractors and high interest rates were considered during the mid-year budget review. Capacity constraints in the economy are now evident, particularly in the construction industry as a result of significant public and private investments in the economy resulting in increased competition for resources
- Our capacity to deliver – the organisation's capacity to deliver capital projects depends upon various factors including availability of contractors and materials, weather, and availability of in-house project officers to manage capital projects
- Natural disasters – there has been grant funded natural disaster related expenditure carried forward and included in 2024-25 mid-year budget.

These micro and macro-economic factors affect council operations both in short term and longer term.

The major variations made to our financial statements as a result of the mid-year review are:

Positive

- Grant funding received in 2023-24 but income recognised in 2024-25 as milestones were met
- Additional grant funding identified – LEAPing into Safer Communities
- Increase in supplementary rates income and rent income.

Negative

- Carried forward expenditure from 2023-24, some supported by grant funds or prior year rates funding
- Natural disaster related recovery expenditure
- Lower than budget Grant Commission financial assistance grant
- Increased plant operating and hiring expenses.

In relation to the current year, the forecasted operating deficit at the end of the financial period ending 30 June 2025 is \$1,348,721. Of this amount, \$1,333,847 is related to carry forward impacts from prior years. After carry-forward impacts, a deficit of \$16k is forecast.

Capital works expenditure for 2024-25 is expected to be \$14,970,003 including committed works. There is an overall increase in capital expenditure by \$1,376,004 when compared to the adopted Budget. This is made up of:

Adopted Capital Budget 2024-25	\$13,593,999
Capital projects carried forward from prior year	3,260,567
New capital projects identified	245,318
Market cost escalations on existing projects	1,350,180
Savings on existing projects	(1,260,447)
Projects carried forward to future years	(1,919,614)
Projects removed from adopted capital works program	(200,000)
Projects moved to operating budget	(100,000)
Mid-year capital budget 2024-25	\$14,970,003

Removal of Project

The Boundary Road South Future Open Drain project \$200,000 is removed from the budget as this project requires a significant capital commitment which council cannot fund currently.

Project Inclusions

The following new projects were added during the mid-year budget review:

- Implementation cost for new Assets Management, Building Management and AI Road Inspection Software \$75,000
- Nagambie new library work \$75,000
- Euroa Caravan Park \$70,318 – linked to higher income estimate
- Harry's Creek Road upstream land slip design \$25,000.

Fee Increase For The Truck Wash At The Euroa Saleyards

There has been a recommendation from the Euroa Saleyards Advisory Committee to increase the fee for the use of the truck wash at that facility from \$1.15 per hour (Ex-GST) to \$1.25 per hour (Ex-GST), in recognition of the expansion and upgrade of the facility.

The facility opened in December 2024, and the previous fee has been unchanged for a number of years.

It is proposed that the new fee of \$1.25 per hour (Ex-GST) take effect from Monday 3 March 2025, and replace the previous fee that was in the Fees and Charges listing for Council's 2024-25 Budget. The proposed new fee is consistent with the fees charged at similar facilities in regional Victoria, including Bendigo, Echuca and Shepparton.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A significant amount of community engagement and participation was undertaken in the development of the 2024-25 budget. There has been no consultation for the mid-year review, which is essentially an internal assessment as to the progress of the budget's implementation and progress and recognising unexpected or unknown factors at the time of budget development that need to be reflected in Council's forecast financial statements.

Council's Audit and Risk Committee have not had the opportunity to review the quarter two mid-year review financial statements, however they will be presented to the Committee for noting at the Committee's 28 February 2025 meeting in line with existing practice.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following key strategic focus areas and or actions in the 2021-25 Council Plan:

Strategic Focus Area 6: Accountable. Transparent. Responsible.

Achieve the highest level of good governance across the organisation and as an elected Council.

Be accountable for the decisions we make and the quality of service we deliver.

Maximise public transparency and accountability around our performance and decision-making processes.

Be financially responsible, achieving the greatest possible community benefit from the programs, initiatives and services we fund.

Ensure our organisation's structure and resource allocation are regularly reviewed so they align with the goals and deliverables of the Community Vision and this Council Plan.

Regional, State and National Plans, Policies and Legislation

This report to Council and the attached Quarter two financial statements assists Council to meet its requirements under Part 4 – Planning and financial management of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

This report has identified the following risk(s):

Risk(s)	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Not achieving budgeted income	Low	Deterioration of financial result and lower cash position	Low	Constant budget monitoring and follow up
Spending over the budgeted amount	Low	Deterioration of financial result and lower cash position	Low	Constant budget monitoring and follow up

Not delivering budgeted capital projects	Medium	Projects carry forward to next year	Medium	Constant budget monitoring and follow up
Lower cash position at the year end	Low	Impact on financial sustainability	Low	Constant budget monitoring and follow up

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no legal considerations associated with this report.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

No Council officers and/or contractors who have provided advice in relation to this report have declared a general or material conflict of interest regarding the matter under consideration.

TRANSPARENCY

This report continues to demonstrate that Council is being transparent in its position in relation to all applications received and determined by the Council.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Economic

The mid-year budget report provides updated details on how the Council generates income and spends funds during the financial year. Our report is intended to inform the community of the wider financial and economic impact of council activities.

Social

Council, in partnership with other levels of government, is responsible for aspects of everyday life that our community value – from our public open space to accessible libraries, to strong local business and employment opportunities.

Effective planning and reporting by councils is essential for ensuring transparency and accountability to the community and other levels of government as to how public money is being spent and the quality of services delivered.

The mid-year budget review provides an insight into how the council will spend its funds during 2024-25.

Environmental

There are no adverse effects on environmental initiatives from the mid-year budget changes.

Climate Change

There are no adverse effects on climate change from the mid-year budget changes.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Council continues to refine its budget and the proposed changes in the mid-year budget will better reflect the forecast of its actual expenditure by the end of the current financial year.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

There are no significant human rights implications arising from this report.

CONCLUSION

That following a comprehensive review of the revenue, expenditure and capital works items by the Management Team and the Executive Leadership Team, that the mid-year review for the period ending 30 June 2025, along with the quarter two financial report, be noted, and the recommendation for an increase in fees for the Euroa Truck Wash be approved.

ATTACHMENT

1. 20250129 2024-25 Mid- Year Statements

Strathbogie Shire Council Mid-year Budget Review & Quarter 2 Financial Statements

2024 - 2025



Strathbogie
SHIRE COUNCIL

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Strathbogie Shire Council
Mid-year budget review – 2024/25
Comprehensive Income Statement

	Period ended 31 December 2024			Budget 2024/25			
	Budget YTD \$ Dec 2024	Actual YTD \$ Dec 2024	Variance YTD \$ Dec 2024	Adopted Budget \$	Mid Year Review \$	Variance \$	Notes
Income							
Rates and charges	23,188,128	23,286,802	98,674	23,188,128	23,288,300	100,172	1
Statutory fees and fines	346,916	283,487	(63,429)	693,450	686,450	(7,000)	
User fees	438,450	443,910	5,460	717,800	721,605	3,805	
Grants - operating	7,018,785	7,224,950	206,165	7,911,050	8,320,180	409,130	2
Grants - capital	682,300	163,382	(518,918)	4,262,700	4,327,700	65,000	3
Contributions - monetary	65,904	210,186	144,282	131,800	325,873	194,073	4
Net gain (or loss) on disposal of PPE & infrastructure	25,002	-	(25,002)	50,000	50,000	-	
Other income	414,330	459,299	44,969	1,002,463	1,019,908	17,445	5
Total income	32,304,813	32,072,016	(232,797)	38,207,391	38,990,016	782,625	
Expenses							
Employee costs	(7,712,447)	(7,730,200)	(17,753)	(14,697,024)	(14,585,256)	111,768	6
Materials and services	(7,914,846)	(8,153,958)	(239,112)	(15,346,850)	(17,902,624)	(2,555,774)	7
Depreciation	(3,437,628)	(3,651,775)	(214,147)	(6,875,287)	(6,875,287)	-	
Amortisation - right of use assets	(91,002)	-	91,002	(182,000)	(182,000)	-	
Bad and doubtful debts	(252)	-	252	(500)	(500)	-	
Borrowing costs	(82,146)	(83,207)	(1,061)	(164,296)	(164,296)	-	
Finance costs - leases	(5,154)	-	5,154	(10,306)	(10,306)	-	
Other expenses	(356,226)	(182,281)	173,945	(507,214)	(618,468)	(111,254)	8
Total expenses	(19,599,701)	(19,801,421)	(201,720)	(37,783,477)	(40,338,737)	(2,555,260)	
Surplus/(deficit) for the period	12,705,112	12,270,595	(434,517)	423,914	(1,348,721)	(1,772,635)	
				Carry forwards from 23/24		1,332,847	
				Adjusted Variance		(439,788)	

Mid-year budget - Financial Performance Overview

Income

- Note 1** - Increase in rates and charges income is due to supplementary rate notices issued. Rate revenue is predominantly recognized as income when rates are raised at the start of the financial year. The rates receivables are paid progressively to Council with the 4 instalments dates, with just over 50% of the annual rates received so far, as shown in the cashflow statement.
- Note 2** - Increase in operating grant revenue is mainly due to carry forward of unspent grant from 2023/24: Nagambie Growth Plan \$181,688, LEAPing into safer communities \$150,000 and Euroa Rail Precinct Master Plan \$80,000. Additional grant of \$115,00 was also identified for LEAPing into safer communities in the mid-year review. This partly offset by a lower than budget Grant Commission financial assistance grant \$204,338.
- Note 3** - Increase in capital grant is due to carry forward grant; Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) Program grant \$165,000 and drainage strategy grant \$150,000. This partly offsets the allowance for general capital grants of \$250,000 which is now replaced by specific grants in 2024/25.
- Note 4** - Increase in monetary contribution is due to increased contribution income from GM Water on behalf of Nagambie Leisure Park \$122,618 and increased income from public open space contributions \$71,455.
- Note 5** - Increase in other income is mainly due to the increased interest income on overdue rates and user charges.

Expense

- Note 6** - Decrease in salary expense is due to savings from staff vacancies which partly offset by increased hours and new positions created during the year.
- Note 7** - Increase in materials and services mainly include,
- Unspent grant funded projects carry forward from 2023/24; October 2022 flood recovery related grants \$1,200,305, Victorian Health Promotion grant \$155,990, Nagambie growth plan expenses \$140,190, Euroa Rail Precinct Master Plan \$80,000 and Youth and Early Years related grants \$153,050.
 - Increased and carry forward LEAPing into safer communities expenses \$265,000.
 - The increase in plant hiring and operating expenses of \$240,000 is due to inflationary pressures and higher costs associated with the existing aging plant and fleet stock - which required additional repairs, and hire of additional external plant for specific specialist projects.
 - Increased Euroa caravan park maintenance expenses which is linked to lease income \$146,095
 - Increased emergency storm damage expenses \$77,279
 - Increase Street Tree Planting & Maintenance Project \$62,620
- Note 8** - Increase in other expenses is due to addition of new municipal monitor expense which is partly offset by decreased election expense.

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Strathbogie Shire Council

Mid-year budget review – 2024/25

Balance Sheet

	Period ended 31 December 2024			Budget 2024/25		
	Budget YTD \$	Actual YTD \$	Variance YTD \$	Adopted Budget	Mid Year Review	Variance
	Dec 2024	Dec 2024	Dec 2024	\$	\$	\$
Assets						
Current assets						
Cash and cash equivalents	4,815,373	4,778,327	(37,046)	5,194,121	2,184,437	(3,009,684)
Trade and other receivables	14,738,000	17,747,222	3,009,222	3,079,983	3,637,167	557,184
Other financial assets	4,970,822	3,250,000	(1,720,822)	1,000,000	-	(1,000,000)
Inventories	14,762	24,178	9,416	14,516	14,516	-
Other assets	499,271	455,934	(43,337)	498,895	546,432	47,537
Total current assets	25,038,228	26,255,661	1,217,433	9,787,515	6,382,551	- 3,404,964
Non-current assets						
Trade and other receivables	-	-	-	18,426	18,426	-
Other financial assets	-	2,032	2,032	2,032	2,032	-
Investments in associates, joint arrangements and subsidiaries	260,755	260,487	(268)	258,723	260,487	1,764
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	368,793,060	389,962,947	21,169,887	377,209,493	396,311,641	19,102,148
Right-of-use assets	165,740	324,934	159,194	165,740	143,023	(22,717)
Intangible assets	210,000	235,017	25,017	194,276	228,812	34,536
Total non-current assets	369,429,555	390,785,416	21,355,861	377,848,690	396,964,421	19,115,731
Total assets	394,467,783	417,041,077	22,573,294	387,636,205	403,346,972	15,710,767
Liabilities						
Current liabilities						
Trade and other payables	946,900	495,454	(451,446)	2,940,345	3,027,962	87,617
Trust funds and deposits	1,824,557	2,744,027	919,470	924,557	1,057,889	133,332
Unearned income	-	670,028	670,028	-	681	681
Provisions	2,303,142	2,900,049	596,907	3,053,142	2,905,009	(148,133)
Interest-bearing liabilities	70,984	85,360	14,376	177,291	177,291	(0)
Lease liabilities	-	-	-	75,593	75,593	-
Total current liabilities	5,145,583	6,894,917	1,749,334	7,170,928	7,244,425	73,497
Non-current liabilities						
Trust funds and deposits	34,791	34,791	(0)	34,791	34,791	-
Provisions	1,213,752	1,382,392	168,640	1,713,752	1,402,392	(311,360)
Interest-bearing liabilities	2,992,086	3,171,056	178,970	2,992,086	2,992,060	(26)
Lease liabilities	154,211	343,646	189,435	78,618	78,618	-
Total non-current liabilities	4,394,840	4,931,884	537,044	4,819,247	4,507,861	(311,386)
Total liabilities	9,540,423	11,826,802	2,286,379	11,990,175	11,752,285	(237,890)
Net assets	384,927,360	405,214,276	20,286,916	375,646,030	391,594,686	15,948,656
Equity						
Accumulated surplus	133,963,146	136,429,061	2,465,915	121,681,948	122,809,471	1,127,523
Reserves	250,964,214	268,785,215	17,821,001	253,964,082	268,785,215	14,821,133
Total Equity	384,927,360	405,214,276	20,286,916	375,646,030	391,594,686	15,948,656

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Strathbogie Shire Council
Mid-year budget review – 2024/25
Statement of Cash Flows

	Period ended 31 December 2024			Budget 2024/25		
	Budget YTD \$ Dec 2024	Actual YTD \$ Dec 2024	Variance YTD \$ Dec 2024	Adopted Budget \$	Mid Year Review \$	Variance \$
Cash flows from operating activities						
Rates and charges	11,945,705	12,182,247	236,542	23,891,410	24,004,644	113,235
Statutory fees and fines	346,725	283,487	(63,238)	693,450	686,450	(7,000)
User fees	358,900	481,599	122,699	717,800	796,830	79,030
Grants - operating	3,955,525	7,141,560	3,186,035	7,911,050	8,110,180	199,130
Grants - capital	2,131,350	1,226,854	(904,496)	4,262,700	5,826,080	1,563,380
Contributions - monetary	65,900	210,186	144,286	131,800	325,873	194,073
Interest received	250,000	188,248	(61,752)	500,000	500,000	-
Other receipts	301,232	172,244	(128,988)	602,463	619,908	17,445
Net GST refund/payment	695,090	681,404	(13,686)	1,390,179	1,840,465	450,286
Employee costs	(7,348,512)	(7,715,160)	(366,648)	(14,697,024)	(14,585,256)	111,768
Materials and services	(7,909,544)	(10,751,920)	(2,842,376)	(15,819,089)	(18,210,067)	(2,390,978)
Trust funds and deposits collected/(paid)	-	55,992	55,992	-	-	-
Other payments	(253,857)	(182,281)	71,576	(507,714)	(618,968)	(111,254)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	4,538,513	3,974,460	(564,053)	9,077,025	9,296,139	219,114
Cash flows from investing activities						
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(7,476,699)	(5,435,327)	2,041,373	(14,953,399)	(16,467,003)	(1,513,604)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant & equipment	120,000	-	(120,000)	240,000	240,000	-
Investments Withdrawal/(Payments) - Other Financial Assets *	3,500,000	(3,250,000)	(6,750,000)	7,000,000	-	(7,000,000)
Special rate schemes made/repaid	-	-	-	-	(6,000)	(6,000)
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities	(3,856,699)	(8,685,327)	(4,828,627)	(7,713,399)	(16,233,003)	(8,519,604)
Cash flows from financing activities						
Finance costs	(82,148)	(41,604)	40,545	(164,296)	(164,296)	-
Repayment of borrowings	(85,154)	(83,243)	1,911	(170,308)	(170,308)	-
Interest paid - lease liability	(5,153)	(6,500)	(1,347)	(10,306)	(10,306)	-
Repayment of lease liabilities	(130,986)	(35,104)	95,882	(261,971)	(189,435)	72,536
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities	(303,441)	(166,450)	136,990	(606,881)	(534,345)	72,536
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	378,373	(4,877,318)	(5,255,690)	756,745	(7,471,208)	(8,227,954)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	4,437,000	9,655,645	5,218,645	4,437,375	9,655,645	5,218,270
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period*	4,815,373	4,778,327	(37,045)	5,194,121	2,184,437	(3,009,684)

*Note: Cash and cash equivalents - YTD actual excludes term deposits with original maturity over 90 days. Council held total of \$8m in term deposits as at 31 December 2024.

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Strathbogie Shire Council
Mid-year budget review – 2024/25
Statement of Capital Works

	Period ended 31 December 2024			Budget 2024/25		
	Budget YTD \$ Dec 2024	Actual YTD \$ Dec 2024	Variance YTD \$ Dec 2024	Adopted Budget \$	Mid Year Review \$	Variance \$
Property						
Buildings	551,077	1,003,834	452,757	1,199,977	1,723,039	523,062
Total property	551,077	1,003,834	452,757	1,199,977	1,723,039	523,062
Plant and equipment						
Plant, machinery and equipment	205,000	585,920	380,920	855,000	1,412,588	557,588
Computers and telecommunications	526,044	453,292	(72,752)	1,046,805	820,666	(226,139)
Total plant and equipment	731,044	1,039,212	308,168	1,901,805	2,233,254	331,449
Infrastructure						
Roads	1,100,900	2,177,832	1,076,932	4,630,923	5,419,091	788,168
Bridges	325,000	277,738	(47,262)	1,570,900	1,641,112	70,212
Footpaths and cycleways	119,713	35,764	(83,949)	343,713	517,027	173,314
Drainage	303,460	130,182	(173,278)	874,085	416,282	(457,803)
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	543,300	178,065	(365,235)	1,015,300	657,600	(357,700)
Waste management	-	26,737	26,737	-	255,000	255,000
Parks, open space and streetscapes	1,518,796	565,963	(952,833)	2,057,296	2,107,599	50,303
Total infrastructure	3,911,169	3,392,281	(518,888)	10,492,217	11,013,710	521,493
Total capital works expenditure	5,193,290	5,435,327	242,037	13,593,999	14,970,003	1,376,004
Represented by:						
New asset expenditure	846,121	1,264,856	418,735	1,492,161	1,623,846	131,685
Asset renewal expenditure	2,131,496	3,541,130	1,409,634	8,284,140	10,385,241	2,101,101
Asset expansion expenditure	50,000	25,513	(24,487)	3,631,698	308,893	(3,322,805)
Asset upgrade expenditure	2,165,673	603,828	(1,561,845)	186,000	2,652,022	2,466,022
Total capital works expenditure	5,193,290	5,435,327	242,037	13,593,999	14,970,003	1,376,004
Funding sources represented by:						
Grants				4,262,700	4,327,700	65,000
Contributions				240,000	240,000	-
Council cash				9,091,299	10,402,303	1,311,004
Borrowings				-	-	-
Total capital works expenditure				13,593,999	14,970,003	1,376,004

In accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Act 2020, it is the view of the Chief Executive Officer that a revised budget for 2024/25 will not be required by Strathbogie Shire Council.

.....
 Timothy Tamlin- Chief Executive Officer

11.4.3 Contracts, Works, Variations and Grants Awarded Under Delegation 1 January 2025 to 31 January 2025

AUTHOR Chief Financial Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to inform Council and the community of the status of request for the publicly advertised tenders, invitations for written quotations and quotations provided using collaborative and/or third-party contracts which have been awarded under delegation for the period 1 January 2025 to 31 January 2025. This report specifically relates to works that form part of Council's 2024-25 adopted Budget.

This report also details any grants awarded as per Council's adopted Community Funding Model, or variations approved under delegation. Council adopted a Community Funding Model at the July 2023 Council Meeting authorising the Chief Executive Officer to award Quick Response Grants.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note:

- 1. There was one Contract awarded under delegated authority by the Chief Executive Officer**
- 2. There were nil Contracts awarded under delegated authority by Director(s)**
- 3. There were nil Contracts awarded under delegated authority by Manager(s)**
- 4. There were No Low value Contract Variations of up to 15% of original Contract value awarded under delegation by the Chief Executive Officer in January 2025, and**
- 5. There were no quick response grant applications received during the reporting period.**

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

In line with Council's approach to transparency and good governance, the Contracts, Works and Grants Awarded Under Delegation report will be tabled for information purposes at each Council Meeting. The report details any contracts, works or grants that have been awarded under delegated authority by the Interim Chief Executive Officer, a Director, or a Manager within their approved financial threshold.

This report specifically relates to works and/or services that formed part of Council's approved 2024-25 budget.

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

Any contract awarded under delegation is undertaken in line with Council's Procurement Policy. Through the Instrument of Delegation to the Interim Chief Executive Officer the Council has delegated authority to the following:

- Chief Executive Officer – award a contract up to the value of \$170,000 for goods and services and \$220,000 for works
- A Director – award a contract up to the value of \$100,000 for goods, services and works
- A Manager – varies in value depending on the functionality contained within the portfolio, awarding of contracts up to the value of between \$10,000 to \$50,000 for goods and services and works.

Contracts Awarded Under Delegated Authority by Chief Executive Officer

Contract No.	CN 24/25 03
Contract Name	CN 24/25-03 – Provision of Deliberative Engagement Services for the Council Plan 2025-2029 Provision of professional support to Council to undertake deliberative engagement with the community for the development of the Council Plan 2025-2029.
Contract Details	Request for Quote
Value Including GST	\$30,338.00
Supplier	Capire Consulting Group Pty Ltd
Scheduled Commencement	January 2025
Scheduled Completion Date	May 2025

Contracts Awarded Under Delegated Authority by Director

Nil.

Contracts Awarded Under Delegated Authority Manager(s)

Nil.

Contract variations of up to 15% of original Contract value awarded under delegation by Chief Executive Officer

Nil

Quick Response Grants Awarded Under Delegated Authority by Chief Executive Officer

Nil

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Where required, external stakeholders have been engaged providing input on relevant projects.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following key strategic focus areas and or actions in the 2021-25 Council Plan:

Strategic Focus Area 4: Inclusive. Productive. Balanced.

We partner with our community to achieve great things.

Strategic Focus Area 6: Accountable. Transparent. Responsible.

Achieve the highest level of good governance across the organisation and as an elected Council.

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

This report has identified the following risk(s):

Risk(s)	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Lack of transparency with community	Unlikely	Moderate	Low	Regular reporting to Council and the community on contracts and grants awarded under delegation
Without projects being awarded under delegation, delays to progressing approved and budgeted projects and not meeting annual Council plan targets are possible.	Possible	Moderate	Low	Delegations in place and regular reporting to Council and the community on contracts and grants awarded under delegation

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

No Council officers and/or contractors who have provided advice in relation to this report have declared a general or material conflict of interest regarding the matter under consideration.

TRANSPARENCY

This report demonstrates that Council is being transparent by providing information to the community regarding the awarding of any works projects and grants issued under delegation.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The contracts, works and grants awarded under delegation are projects that have formed part of Council's adopted 2024-25 budget and are within the budget allocation.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Economic

Works awarded under delegation provide an opportunity to generate great economic benefit using local contractors and the purchasing of materials and supplies. In addition, the enhancement of infrastructure continues to make our municipality a place of destination, one where people choose to live, work and play.

Social

Each project includes several social benefits to our community. Some of these benefits include infrastructure that encourages health and wellbeing activities and amenity improvements.

Environmental and Climate Change

The recommendation has no significant implications on the general environment and climate change.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The recommendations do not limit any Human Rights under the Victorian *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

CONCLUSION

It is important that decisions and actions taken under delegation be properly documented and transparent in nature. The report details the publicly advertised tenders, invitations for written quotations and quotations provided using collaborative and/or third-party contracts which have been awarded by the Interim Chief Executive Officer, Directors and Managers under delegated authority of the Council during the period 1 January 2025 to 31 January 2025.

This report advises Council of any grants awarded under Interim Chief Executive Officer delegation as per Council's adopted Community Funding Model. There were no grants awarded during the reporting period.

This report also advises there were no variations to contracts of up to 15% of original contract value that meet this requirement during the reporting period.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

11.4.4 Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors - January 2025

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with Section (114) of the Strathbogie Shire Council Governance Rules, if there is a meeting of Councillors that:

- is scheduled or planned for the purpose of discussing the business of Council or briefing Councillors
- is attended by at least one member of Council staff, and
- is not a Council meeting, Delegated Committee meeting or Community Asset Committee meeting, these are known as Informal Meetings of Councillors.

The Interim Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a summary of the matters discussed at the meeting are:

- tabled at the next convenient Council meeting
- recorded in the minutes of that Council meeting.

The details of the Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors for the period 1 January 2025 to 31 January 2025 are shown in the attachments below.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

Notes the Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors from 1 January 2025 to 31 January 2025.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following key strategic focus areas and or actions in the 2021-25 Council Plan:

Strategic Focus Area 6: Accountable. Transparent. Responsible.

Achieve the highest level of good governance across the organisation and as an elected Council.

Maximise public transparency and accountability around our performance and decision-making processes.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

No Council officers and/or contractors who have provided advice in relation to this report have declared a general or material conflict of interest regarding the matter under consideration.

TRANSPARENCY

This report will be presented to the Council in a Council meeting, open to the public and live streamed to the public. This is consistent with Council's Transparency Policy, enabling the community to have oversight regarding the matters being discussed by Council and the decisions being made.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 20250114 Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors
2. 20250121 Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors
3. 20250128 Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors

Staff Only

Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors

Meeting Details	Title	Councillor Briefing	
	Date and Time	14 January 2025 at 9:30 am	
	Location	Euroa Conference Room	
Present	Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Mayor Cr Jeffery Cr Binks Cr Carlson Cr Halsall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cr Holloway Cr Stevens Marg Allan (Municipal Monitor)
	Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tim Tamlin – Interim CEO Amanda Tingay – Director People and Governance Kerry Lynch – Governance Officer 	
	Guest Speakers	Paul Ayton - Chair Audit and Risk Committee Wendy Jones - Chair CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee Nick Kelly – Gem Executive Kate McRae and Charlie Bird, Regional Development Australia	
	Apologies	Mayor Councillor Claire Ewart-Kennedy	

Disclosures of Conflict of Interests

Disclosure of Interests are to be made immediately prior to any relevant item being discussed
 (Local Government Act 2020 - Section 131)

Matters Considered		Disclosures and Comments
1	Briefing by Chair of Audit and Risk Committee – 2024 Annual Performance Report	None
2	Councillor values/commitment to values session	None
3	CEO Recruitment	Tim Tamlin
4	Councillor and Municipal Monitor conversation	None
5	Council Meeting 21 January 2025 draft agenda review	Tim Tamlin
6	Presentation from Regional Development Australia	None

The meeting concluded at 2:30 pm

Record completed by	Officer Name - Officer Title	Kerry Lynch, Governance Officer
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Staff Only

Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors

Meeting Details	Title	Councillor Briefing	
	Date and Time	21 January 2025 at 1:00 pm	
	Location	Euroa Conference Room	
Present	Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Mayor Cr Jeffery • Cr Binks • Cr Carlson • Cr Halsall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Holloway • Cr Stevens • Marg Allan (Municipal Monitor)
	Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tim Tamlin – Interim CEO • Amanda Tingay – Director People and Governance • June Strutt – Corporate Planning Advisor • Kerry Lynch – Governance Officer 	
	Guest Speakers	Nil	
	Apologies	Mayor Cr Claire Ewart-Kennedy	

Disclosures of Conflict of Interests

Disclosure of Interests are to be made immediately prior to any relevant item being discussed
(Local Government Act 2020 - Section 131)

Matters Considered		Disclosures and Comments
1	Council Plan Engagement Update	None
2	Review Council Meeting Agenda	Tim Tamlin, Item 15 CEO Recruitment

The meeting concluded at 3:00 pm

Record completed by	Officer Name - Officer Title	Kerry Lynch, Governance Officer
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Staff Only

Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors

Meeting Details	Title	Councillor Briefing	
	Date and Time	28 January 2025 at 9:30 am	
	Location	Euroa Conference Room	
Present	Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Mayor Cr Jeffery Cr Binks Cr Carlson Cr Halsall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cr Holloway Cr Stevens Marg Allan (Municipal Monitor)
	Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tim Tamlin – Interim CEO Amanda Tingay – Director People and Governance Rachael Frampton – Director Community and Planning Andrew Davis – Chief Financial Officer Sagara Gunasekara – Finance Coordinator Braydon Aitken – Manager Planning and Investment June Strutt – Corporate Planning Advisor Jean McKinnon – Community Development Officer Kerry Lynch – Governance Officer 	
	Guest Speakers	Nil	
	Apologies	Mayor Cr Claire Ewart-Kennedy	

Disclosures of Conflict of Interests

Disclosure of Interests are to be made immediately prior to any relevant item being discussed
(Local Government Act 2020 - Section 131)

Matters Considered		Disclosures and Comments
1	General business	None
2	Mid-year budget review	None
3	Planning Matters	None
4	Policy process	None
5	Nagambie Waterway	None
6	Kirwans Bridge – Update on Grant Application	None
7	Council Plan – incorporating Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan	None

The meeting concluded at 3:30 pm

Record completed by	Officer Name - Officer Title	Kerry Lynch, Governance Officer
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11.5 Communications, Engagement and Advocacy

Nil reports

12 Notice of Motion

Nil

13 Notice of Rescission

Nil

14 Confidential Business

Nil

15 Urgent Business

16 Next Meeting

The next meeting of Strathbogie Shire Council will be held on 18 March 2025 commencing at 4:00 pm at the Euroa Community Conference Centre.

There being no further business the meeting was declared closed atpm.

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Chair

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Date