

Strathbogie Shire Council

Council Meeting Agenda

9 December 2025

Agenda

Council Meeting

9 December 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 Scott Jeffery
Deputy Mayor Cr Claire Ewart-Kennedy
Cr Laura Binks
Cr Greg Carlson
Cr Vicki Halsall
Cr Clark Holloway
Cr Fiona Stevens

Officers

Rachelle Quattrocchi	Chief Executive Officer
Amanda Tingay	Director People and Governance
Oliver McNulty	Director Sustainable Infrastructure
Rachael Frampton	Director Community and Planning
Sharon Rainsbury	Executive Manager Communication, Advocacy and Customer Service
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.

Councillor 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 give 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 Statutory Meeting held on 18 November 2025 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 18 November 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

Nil

11.2 Community

11.2.1 Aquatic Facility Management and Operations- Procurement Authorisation

AUTHOR Manager Community and Culture

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director Community and Planning

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strathbogie Shire has four (4) seasonal aquatic facilities located in Avenel, Euroa, Nagambie and Violet Town. These facilities have been managed by an external contractor for the past six seasons.

An analysis and assessment of the contract management, resourcing and operating models in place across the local government aquatic industry, including benchmarking against other regional and rural Council's with seasonal pools has been completed.

Community engagement on the importance of seasonal pools has also been used to inform the structure and requirements of the operating model and any associated contract. The purpose of the engagement was to listen and understand what was important for our community when it comes to the management and operation of these important community assets, informing Council's future management model.

Based on cost, risk and the quality of service required, external management of the pools through an experienced aquatic facility manager is proposed. A Public Open Tender Process is recommended in line with Council's Procurement Policy.

This report seeks authorisation of Officers to commence the procurement process for *Contract 25-26-34: Aquatic management and operations services* for Council's four Seasonal Aquatic facilities in line with Council's Procurement Policy.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Authorise Officers to commence the procurement process to engage a Contractor for the management and operations of Council's four (4) aquatic facilities.**
- 2. Receive a further report for consideration at a future Council meeting following the outcomes of the procurement process.**

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of the report is to consider the future management model of Strathbogie Shire pools and to authorise the procurement process to secure these services for Season 2026-27 and beyond.

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

Strathbogie Shire has four seasonal aquatic facilities located in Avenel, Euroa, Nagambie and Violet Town. These facilities have been managed by an external contractor for the past six seasons, following a significant review into the delivery of the service assessing in house

delivery by Council versus an outsourced model. The review considered the ongoing increase in costs to manage, challenges in managing lifeguard staffing and internal capacity, resources and experience, risk management and Occupational Health and Safety.

Management Options and Analysis

An analysis and assessment of the contract management, resourcing and operating models in place across the local government aquatic industry, including benchmarking with like Councils' has been completed. A high-level assessment and summary of a range of management options is attached (attachment one).

Recommended Management Model

Based on cost, risk and the quality of service required, external management of the pools through an experienced aquatic facility manager is proposed.

A Public Open Tender Process is recommended in line with Councils Procurement Policy.

Key Contract Performance Metrics

Informed by the Management Model Analysis and the Engagement report, the below key contract performance metrics are also recommended and have been included within the Tender documentation for tenderers to address:

1. Community Engagement

- 1.1 Deliver a Community Partnership Plan with goals, strategies, and actions for positive outcomes.
- 1.2 Include strategies to increase attendance, collaborate with stakeholders (e.g., Friends of the Pool group), and outline proposed programs with frequency

2. Communication

- 2.1 Provide a Communication Strategy to promote:
 - Operating hours
 - Closure times and days
 - Pool temperatures
 - Events and programming

3. Local Employment

- 3.1 Meet local employment targets as part of the contract
- 3.2 Customer Service, administration and reporting
- 3.3 Achieve defined customer service measures and targets
- 3.4 Maintain high standards of cleanliness and presentation
- 3.5 Capture and report on attendance, growth metrics and monthly performance

4. Safety and Risk Management

- 4.1 Implement robust safety protocols and risk management practices
- 4.2 Ensure compliance with Life Saving Victoria Audit and deliver improvements

5. Staffing and Training

- 5.1 Meet recruitment, staffing, and training targets.
- 5.2 Monitor and improve staff satisfaction and retention.

Season Hours And Length

The proposed operating hours will remain consistent with prior years as outlined in table one . While the Community Survey highlighted extended operating hours and extended season as being important to the community, the costs associated with this are significant.

Table One: Proposed Season Operating Hours*

Date	Operating Hours	Per Week
1 December to 14 December	3.00 pm to 7.00 pm	Seven days per week, all locations
15 December 2025 to 1 February	12.00 pm to 7.00 pm	Seven days per week, all locations All pools closed on Christmas Day
2 February to Monday of the March long weekend	3.00 pm to 7.00pm Weekdays 12.00 pm to 7.00 pm Weekends/ Public Holidays	All locations
Morning swims, commence 15 December	9.30am to 11.30am	A total of three morning swims across the four sites

*The Pools will only open if the ambient temperature is predicted to be 23 degrees and above at 12.00pm on the day prior, based on the forecasts of the Bureau of Meteorology. This is an increase of one degree when compared with past seasons.

There is scope within a proposed contract to include options or a schedule of rates for any potential extension of hours or season extensions

In addition to the above a Contract may be constructed to include a mechanism to support future shared service models across local government.

The Contract will also include review triggers, end of season performance assessments, contract management and reporting requirements.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement on the importance of seasonal pools with the community and key stakeholders was undertaken in September - November 2025. The purpose of the engagement was to listen to what the community valued in their Aquatic facilities, how they were being used, and how they could be improved. The Engagement comprised of:

- a community survey
- a key stakeholder Meeting with Friends of the Pool
- a Community Round Table.

The engagement was set at the **Involve** level on the International Association of Public Participation Spectrum - To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

The detailed Engagement Report is attached (attachment two) to this report.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following objectives and or actions in the 2025-2029 Council Plan:

Objective One: Connect

We are committed to enhancing access for all residents, promoting healthy living, fostering connections, and providing opportunities to thrive and participate in community life.

Objective Two: Sustain

We aim to collaborate with others to foster a sustainable environment, a thriving economy and resilient communities.

Objective Three: Deliver

We are committed to delivering quality services and infrastructure that meets the needs of our community. We aim to strengthen the Council's governance and provide improved, customer-focused experiences.

Regional, State and National Plans, Policies and Legislation

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

- Strathbogie Shire Council Community Pools Strategy 2019-29
- Strathbogie Shire Council Procurement Policy

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

This report has identified the following risk(s):

Risk(s)	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
No aquatic manager appointed for the 2026-2027 season	Possible	Major	High	Progress procurement process
Council directly required to operate pools for the 2026-2027 season, causing significant resourcing and financial impacts	Possible	Major	High	Progress procurement process
Potential safety and compliance risk due to lack of experience and technical requirements if managed by council	Medium	Major	High	Progress procurement process.
Unable to recruit local staff causing increase in operations cost	Possible	Moderate	Medium	Recruitment and retention strategy to be implemented

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no significant 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

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

The costs associated with operating four seasonal aquatic facilities is significant. An overview of the seasonal management costs is outlined in the below table, table two.

Table Two Seasonal Management Costs –External Contract

Financial Year	Seasonal Management Cost
2020-2021	\$305,365.00
2021-2022	\$329,426.00
2022-2023	\$339,308.78
2023-2024	\$349,488.04
2024-2025	\$439,086.00
2025-2026*	\$453,597.00*

*Budgeted amount, actuals are yet to be determined.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Economic

Aquatic facilities remain a large economic investment for the Council. In outsourcing to a contractor, management costs can be negotiated and consistently managed through the contract clauses and regular contract meetings.

Social

Public aquatic facilities can provide much more than just “places to cool off in summer”. A properly managed pool can deliver a sense of community, improve social capital, offer access to water safety education and increase patron enjoyment. Council’s aquatic facilities have the potential to deliver increased value to the community and can be measured by such things as:

- a) sense of community – e.g. stakeholder participation, recognition of diversity, social cohesion

- b) community services – e.g. range and quality of services for different groups (children and families, young people, elderly people and people with disabilities), accessibility of services or cost of services
- c) community health and well-being – e.g. recreation facilities, public safety, health services and facilities or public health implications
- d) education and skills development – e.g. number and quality of education options for the community, life-long learning opportunities.

Environmental

The contracted aquatic facility manager will be required to implement environmental indicators into their OHS audit requirements, including the requirement to have staff responsible for raising environmental concerns and improvements. Tenderers are required to demonstrate their environmental management systems as a part of the Tender process

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

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

CONCLUSION

Strathbogie Shire has four seasonal aquatic facilities located in Avenel, Euroa, Nagambie and Violet Town. These facilities have been managed by an external contractor for the past six seasons.

This report seeks authorisation of Officers to commence the procurement process for *Contract 25-26-34: Aquatic Management And Operations Services* for Council's Four Seasonal Aquatic facilities in line with Council's Procurement Policy.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment One. Analysis of Management Options
2. Attachment Two. Aquatic Services Community Survey Engagement Report

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Table One (1) below provides an analysis of management options based on benchmarking and assessment across Local Government

Table One. Analysis of Management Options

Model Type	Strengths	Possible constraints
Council In-House - Council directly manages all aspects of pool operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full control over staffing and culture • Positive community perception • Offers more flexibility in operating hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost. High Risk • EBA award rates Vs Fitness industry award rates • Significant start up costs and processes for operations and compliance • Staffing challenges – risk of closure days due to shortages • Operational inefficiency • Cost variation Vs Budget
Aquatic Manager- Contracted to aquatic facility management professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlled costs • Reduced administration burden • Professional aquatic management driving compliance improvements and managing risk. • Operational efficiencies – scalability and staffing flexibility • Ability to control service through key performance indicators and strong contract management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited community engagement • Public perception that outsourcing reduces quality and service • Lack of flexibility to programming and service without additional contract costs being incurred

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Committee of Management-Incorporated committee of management runs the pools with financial contribution from Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong community ownership • Cost effective • Flexible operating hours to service schools and other user groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline in volunteerism • Compliance risk • Council carry ultimate legal responsibility • Risk of closure days due to staff shortages • This model is being phased out across Victoria. Only three pools in Victoria operate under this model and all have large Council led aquatic leisure facilities and management structures to support the model
Hybrid Model- Mix of Council managed, and volunteer led. Council would employ duty managers who would run the pools with volunteer and paid workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost savings • Strategic control • Strong community engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex model to manage • Operational inefficiencies • Staffing challenges, risk of closure days due to lack of staff • Compliance risk



Aquatic Services- Seasonal Outdoor Pools

Engagement Report November 2025

Background

Council undertook community engagement on the importance of seasonal pools with the community and key stakeholders in August–November 2025. The purpose of this engagement was to listen to what the community valued in their Aquatic facilities and to understand how they were being used, and how they could be improved.

The Engagement Approach

The Engagement comprised of a community survey, a Strathbogie Shire Pools – Community Roundtable, and a targeted Stakeholder meeting with Friends of the Pool.

The intent of the engagement was to collect information and community insights that can inform the future management model, facility and infrastructure improvements and community activation.

Engagement associated with the Aquatic Services was undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy and set at the **Consult** level on the International Association of Public Participation Spectrum.

Public Participation Goal: to obtain public feedback on analysis of alternatives, options and/or decisions.

Promise: to keep the community informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations and provide feedback on how community input influenced the decision.

Methodology:

Community Survey

The survey was released to the public for a period of four weeks between 9 October and 7 November 2025. It was available online via the Share Strathbogie platform and in hard copy at the Euroa Council Office and Nagambie Council Office. To ensure broad community participation, the survey was promoted throughout the month via print media and Council's social media channels.

Aquatic Services Community Survey Engagement 2025

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Key Stakeholder Meeting: Friends of the Pool

This session focused on discussing survey progress and feedback. Approximately 10 people attended, including Council officers and representatives from Belgravia Leisure.

Strathbogie Shire Council Pools- Roundtable

Open to all community members, this session attracted approximately 15 participants. Attendees reviewed survey results and participated in a facilitated workshop to explore future planning options for Programs/Activities, Facility features/improvements, Daily operations/ Financial viability of the Strathbogie Shire pools.

Both sessions were communicated through social media and were open for all to attend, ensuring transparency and inclusivity in the engagement process.

- An online survey hosted on the *Share Strathbogie* platform 9 October 2025-7 November 2025
- Friends of the Pool in person meeting held on the 30 October 2025 in Euroa
- Roundtable discussion in person session held on the 13 November in Euroa
- Social media promotion via Council's official channels
- Notification of all stakeholders via email and an invitation to contribute to the survey

Participation and Reach

Social Media

Facebook posts – 5
Total views – 2343
Link clicks - 71

Instagram posts – 5
Total views - 797

Share Strathbogie (online engagement platform)

Page Views: 299
Survey responses: 175

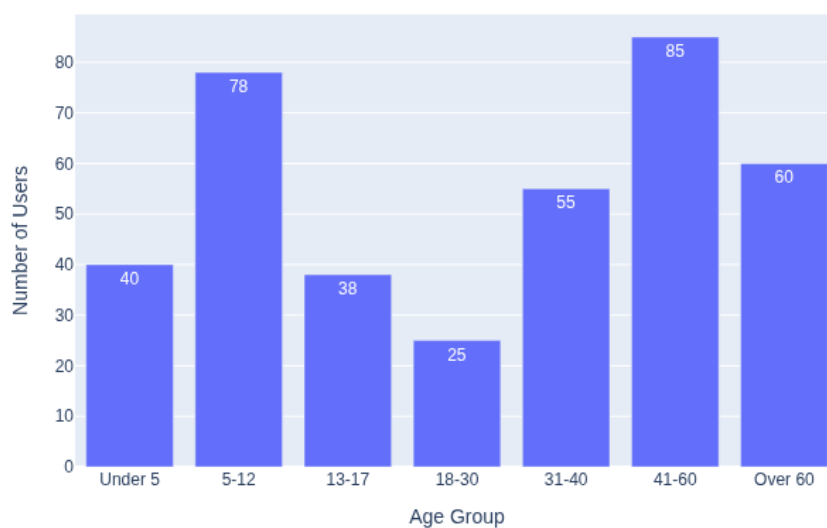
In-Person Engagement

Roundtable: Approximately 15 community members in attendance
Friends of the pool Meeting: 10 participants

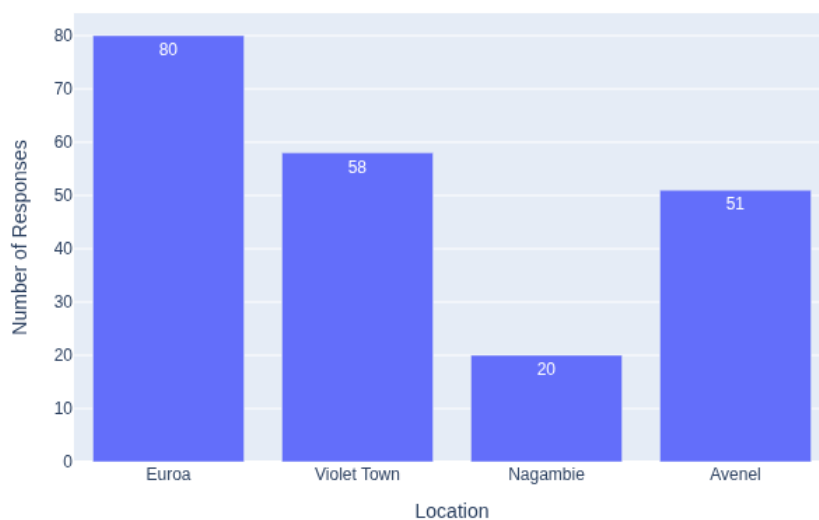
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Results- Survey

Number of Pool Users by Age Group

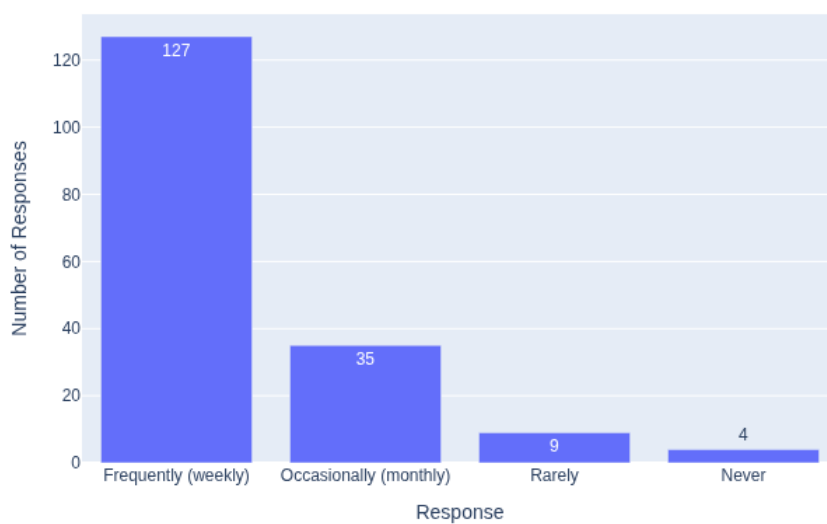


Which pool do you visit in Strathbogie Shire?

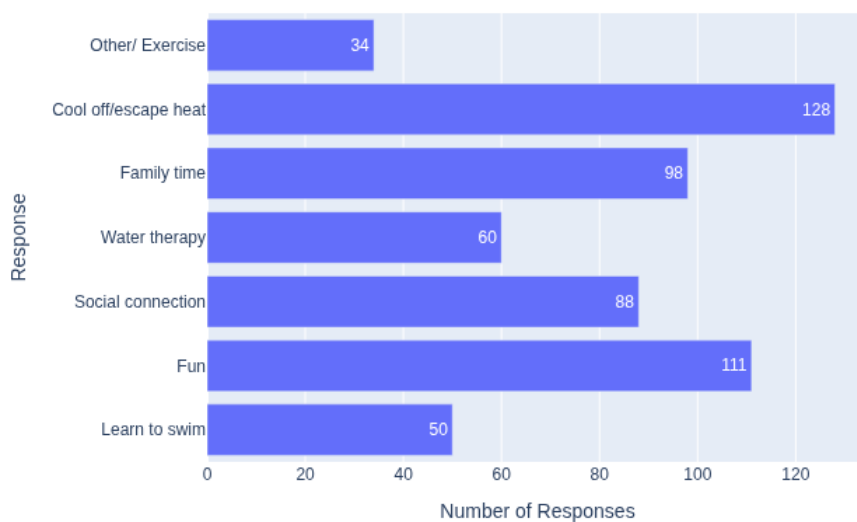


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How often do you visit Strathbogie Shire pools?

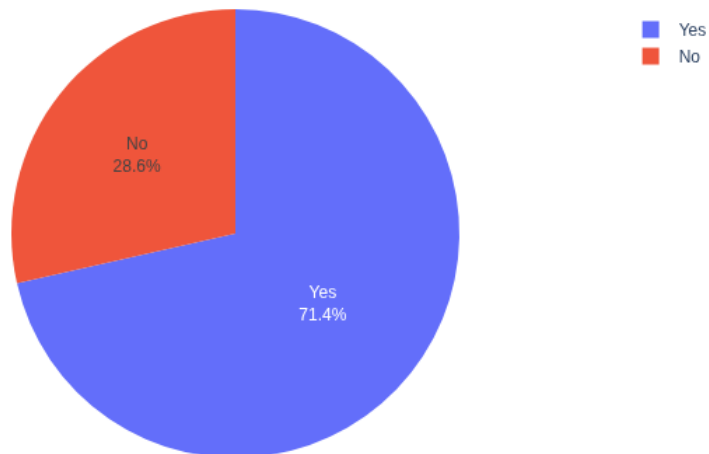


Why do you use the pool?

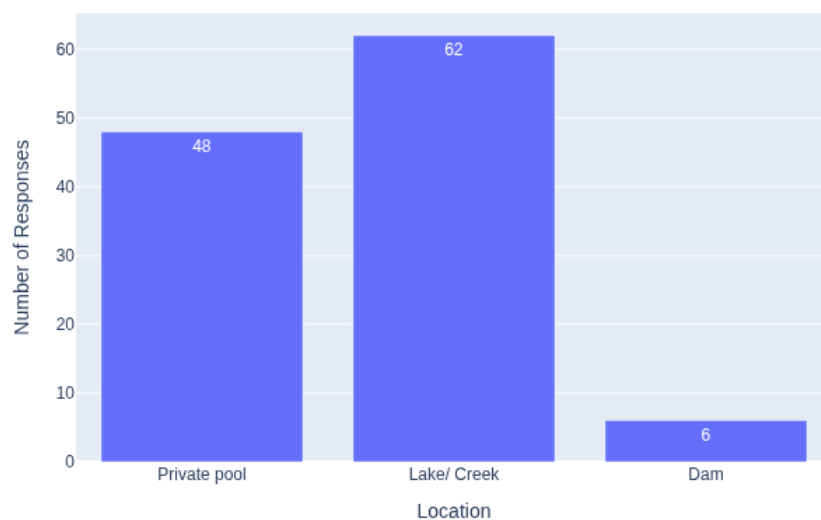


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Outside of our pool season do you travel to other municipalities to use an indoor pool?

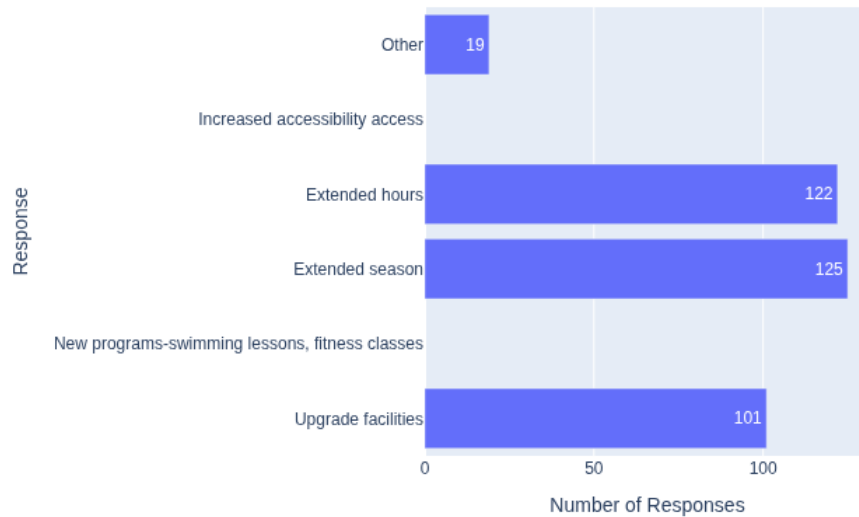


Where else do you swim in the shire?

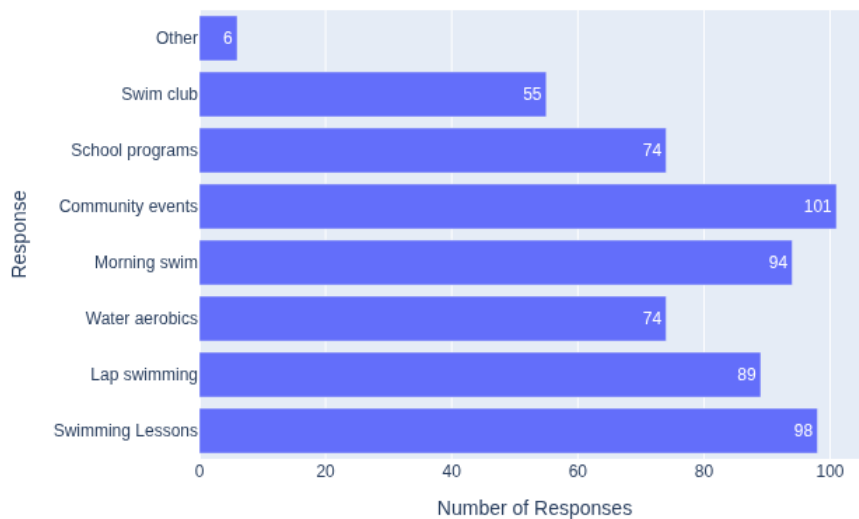


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What do you want for the future of the pools?

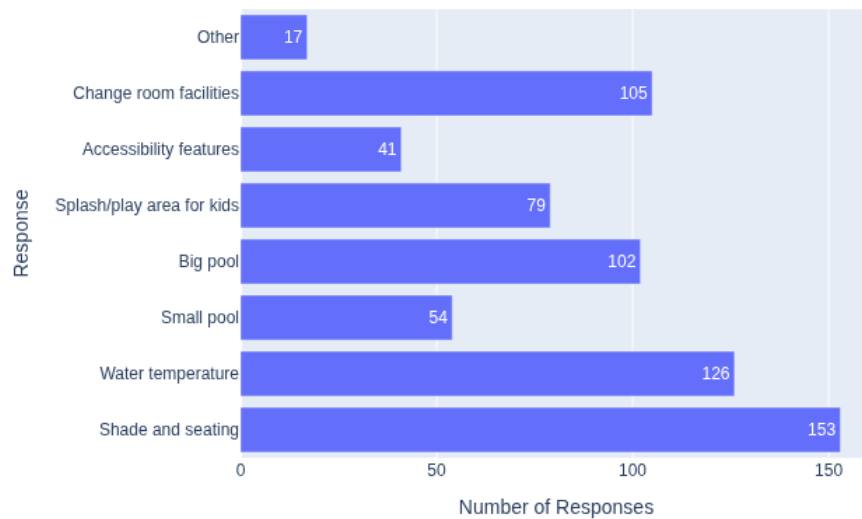


What activities would you like to see offered at your local pool?

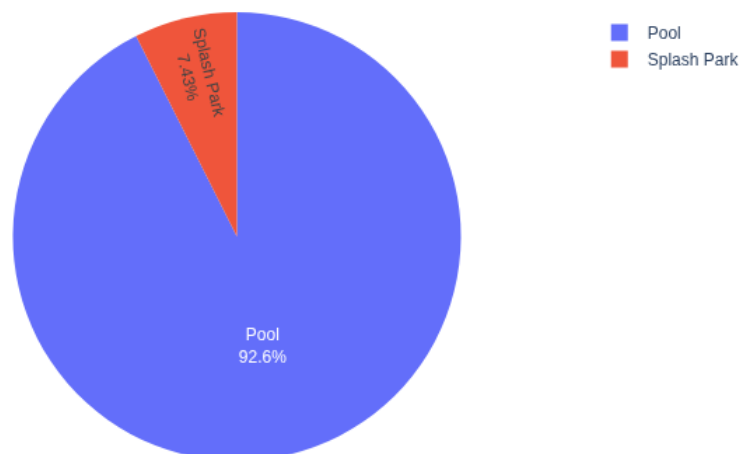


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What facilities are important to you at the pool?

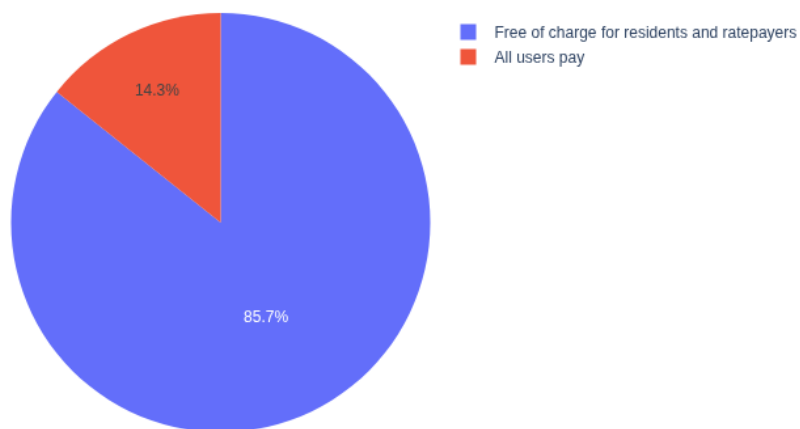


If you had a choice, would you prefer to visit a?



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Pool Payment Preference



Survey Comment Analysis

Theme	Detail
Community	Pools are seen as vital community hubs, especially in small towns. They foster social interaction, family bonding, and provide safe recreation.
Opening Hours	Many respondents requested extended hours, particularly early morning and evening sessions to accommodate work and school schedules.
Season Duration	Strong support for longer pool seasons, with suggestions to open earlier in spring and close later in autumn due to changing climate patterns.
Cost & Affordability	Concerns about pool fees, especially for families and schools. Some support a user-pays model for sustainability, others advocate free access.
Facilities & Amenities	Requests include upgrades to change rooms, showers, toilets, and general cleanliness. Accessibility improvements were also highlighted.
Temperature & Heating	Heated pools and hot showers were frequently mentioned to improve comfort and extend usability.
Indoor Pool Requests	Many comments supported developing indoor, year-round pools for swim clubs, rehabilitation, and winter use.
Management & Staffing	Concerns about outsourced management, lifeguard staffing, and communication issues. Some suggested returning to local management models.
Accessibility	Users with disabilities expressed difficulty accessing pools and facilities, calling for more inclusive infrastructure.
Health & Wellbeing	Pools praised for their role in physical rehabilitation, mental health support, and promoting active lifestyles.

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In addition there were also several site specific requests, these are outlined in the below:

Avenel

- Provide **shade** and healthy snacks at the kiosk.
- Add **early morning swim sessions** and extend season.
- Ensure **signage matches actual opening hours** (e.g., late openings on hot days).
- Desire for **year-round swimming options** (e.g., 50m pool in Euroa or Nagambie).

Violet Town

- Keep pool **free or affordable**, especially for families.
- Extend **season** (open earlier in November, close later in March).
- Upgrade **change rooms** and improve accessibility (e.g., disability steps).
- Maintain pool as a **social hub** and community asset.
- Interest in **splash parks** for kids

Euroa

- Strong demand for an **indoor heated pool** and **gym facility** for year-round use.
- Provide **school access without high fees** for swimming lessons and carnivals.
- Add **BBQ areas, canteen, and community events**.
- Improve **change rooms**, cleanliness, and add **hot showers**.
- Suggestions for **solar heating**, rehab pool, and better lap lane management

Nagambie

- Increase **awareness and profile** of the pool.
- Suggest **returning pool to lakefront** for scenic value.
- Add **earlier lap swim times** and consider an **indoor 50m lap pool** for winter.
- Improve **amenities and shaded areas** for visitors

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Roundtable and Friends of the Pool Feedback- Key Themes

Key Themes	Description of Comments
Safety	<p>Significant improvement in safety and commitment to OHS under the management of aquatic facility manager.</p> <p>Evidenced in Life Saving Victoria Audits conducted over the past few years.</p> <p>Obstructed line of sight impacting supervision in Euroa</p>
Cleanliness	<p>Duck presence across all venues challenging</p> <p>Issues with cleanliness of toilets due to misbehaviour by patrons</p>
Signage	<p>Need better signage at all pools around whether the pool is open or closed.</p> <p>To promote daily water temperature and upcoming events and programs</p>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirement for a central information point for operating hours, events and closures Daily updates on water temperature Improve awareness of pools and activities happening Improve communication targeting Youth <p>Promote information through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice boards Public toilets School newsletters Local papers Libraries Newspapers Social media <p>Advertise that the pool is free on the Rates notice not a voucher</p> <p>Include pool details in Shire Welcome Pack and website</p>
Program Ideas and Activities	<p>After school programs</p> <p>Morning activities</p> <p>Water aerobics</p> <p>Social swim and chat sessions</p> <p>More community events</p> <p>Increase in learn to swim programs</p> <p>Family BBQs on Friday and Saturday nights, potentially run by clubs to fundraise funds</p> <p>Inflatables equipment for water play</p> <p>Outdoor cinema</p> <p>Pre-season for local sport clubs</p> <p>Mums and bubs sessions</p> <p>Friday night family games</p> <p>Fun equipment for kids water play</p>
Kiosks	Larger variety of foods in the kiosk
Infrastructure Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access upgrades including steps, ramps, handrails Showers and amenities including hot water and fixing drainage issues in toilet and showers Aesthetic upgrades Shade sails

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage solutions • Robotic cleaners for all pools • Solar heating and solar power • Add activities for kids eg. Slides, diving boards, basketball hoops, beach volleyball
Financial Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community is not surprised by high operating costs, acknowledging that all public pools require significant maintenance and cleaning. • The pool is viewed as a worthwhile community investment, similar to playgrounds and recreation reserves, even if attendance fluctuates. • Cost-of-living pressures are a major concern. • Strong support to keep pools free for rate payers and residents as well as support to extend free entry to visitors • No support for Council to introduce a pool levy on rates notices • Suggestion to add QR-code/pay square donation option/ donation box • Consider extra income streams (e.g., kiosk, sponsorship, stock, menu, drinks/snacks, merchandise). • Consider pool temperature adjustments (1–2°C) and possibly reviewing season length and hours. • Remove or rethink passes and consider models from other regions. • Baby pool in Euroa could be considered for closure • Safety & staffing • Current requirement for two lifeguards questioned — could it be reduced to one for morning swims • All staff should be trained and qualified for emergency response. • Consider ways to activate and spread lap swimmers, especially as costs rise. • Questions around lap swimmer donations/fees/lap swimmer membership. • Euroa medium pool praised for being 12–3pm out of sun.

Recommendations

1. Community Activation

- Maintain pools as community hubs by introducing social programs (e.g., family BBQ nights, outdoor cinema, social swim sessions).
- Promote health and wellbeing benefits through targeted campaigns.

2. Operating Hours & Season

- Investigate extended **opening hours** to include early mornings, or rotate early morning swims

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- Create options/ provisions in the delivery model to extend the hours on extreme heat days or extend the season
- Increase the trigger temperature to open by 1-2 degrees

3. Accessibility & Inclusivity

- Investigate infrastructure plans for each facility and consider the installation of ramps, handrails, accessible change rooms, pending infrastructure feasibility assessment
- Improve signage and communication for operating hours and closures.

4. Facility & Infrastructure Improvements

- Investigate infrastructure plans for each facility that consider change rooms, showers, shade structures and toilets; ensure hot water availability.

5. Financial Sustainability

- Keep pools free for residents, consider making it free for all users
- Explore donation options (QR codes, boxes)
- Increase revenue through kiosk improvements, consider sponsorships, and community events, along with any other ways to increase income.
- Avoid introducing a pool levy, or the introduction of fees, cost of living is impacting families, and individuals

6. Communication & Engagement

- Create a central information point for pool updates (hours, water temperature, events)
- Include physical signage at pools, A-Frame and online channels
- Use multiple channels: social media, school newsletters, local papers, and community notice boards.
- Include pool details in any Shire Welcome Pack and advertise free entry clearly, including Council's website

7. Safety & Staffing

- Maintain strong OHS standards and staff training.

8. Program Development

- Expand learn-to-swim programs, water aerobics, and youth-targeted activities.
- Introduce seasonal community events and partnerships with local sports clubs, other forms of community activation to drive attendance.

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Next Steps

The purpose of the engagement was to listen and understand what was important for our community when it comes to the management and operation of these important community assets. This report will inform Council's future management model of the four aquatic facilities in the municipality.

11.2.2 Strategic Funding Agreement - APS Heads of the River

AUTHOR Manager Community and Culture

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director Community and Planning

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nagambie has hosted the Associated Public Schools of Victoria (APS) Heads of the River Rowing Regatta since 2001. This prestigious event brings together over 1,500 student athletes from eleven leading private schools across Melbourne and Geelong, reinforcing Nagambie's reputation as a premier rowing destination, often attracting up to 10,000 visitors to the town.

In 2019, Strathbogie Shire Council (Council) entered into a five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with APS Sport (APS). This agreement outlined the roles and responsibilities of both parties and saw Strathbogie Shire providing full event management services along with a discounted rate for use of the Nagambie Regatta Centre. The MoU has now expired.

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to enter into a Strategic Partnership Funding Agreement between Strathbogie Shire Council and APS to support the delivery of the APS Heads of the River Event in 2026 in Nagambie.

This report outlines the terms and conditions of a draft Strategic Partnership Funding Agreement between Strathbogie Shire Council and the Associated Public Schools Incorporated and provides a recommendation to Council for consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to execute a one-year Strategic Partnership Funding Agreement with the Associated Public Schools (APS), to support the delivery of the Heads of the River 2026 Rowing Event valued at \$5,536.25 (excluding GST).

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to enter into a Strategic Partnership Funding Agreement between Strathbogie Shire Council and APS to support the delivery of the APS Heads of the River Event in 2026 in Nagambie.

Council recognises the importance of events and tourism. Events can provide significant economic uplift and promote Strathbogie Shire as a destination. Council has for many years provided Community Funding through various grants and sponsorships for events and initiatives that support tourism, visitation, and those that have social and economic benefit to the municipality. Council has a range of mechanisms to support events and initiatives including the ability to enter into a strategic partnership funding agreement.

Council's Community Funding Policy allows Council to enter into a strategic partnership funding agreement. A Strategic Partnership is defined as 'A partnership that has been entered into between Council and a community organisation so they can work collaboratively to achieve

common outcomes. Strategic partnerships include the provision of funding to deliver on an idea that will strengthen the community and is aligned with Council's strategic priorities'.

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

The draft Strategic Partnership Funding Agreement (attachment one) is for a value of \$5,536.25 (excluding GST), to support the delivery of the APS Heads of the River 2026 Regatta in Nagambie.

Under the proposed agreement, APS would:

- Acknowledge Council in event promotions
- Collaborate with Council to promote the region and tourism opportunities through shared communication channels (website, newsletters, social media)
- Continue partnering with Council to recommend the Nagambie Lakes Regatta Centre as a venue for APS school camps and regattas.

Council has a long-standing relationship with APS through hosting the APS Heads of the River Regatta at the Nagambie Lakes Regatta Centre. This event attracts including competitors, families, and support staff to the township of Nagambie. Beyond the regatta itself, the partnership generates significant economic benefits through regular APS training camps (up to 120 students for week-long stays) and an additional regatta in November with similar participation numbers.

The support provided through this Agreement:

- Ensures that the APS Heads of the River 2026 Regatta is held at Nagambie
- Strengthens partnerships between APS and Council to promote Nagambie as a premier rowing destination
- Delivers significant economic and tourism benefits to the region.

Officers will also be working with APS in 2026, to establish a longer-term agreement which will secure the delivery of the APS Heads of the River Event in Nagambie for future years.

Water recreation and sports on Lake Nagambie is a primary tourism driver that supports the local economy and provides for return visitation. This event attracts a large volume of visitors and schools who are likely to return to the Region.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The author of this report considers that community engagement was not required on this matter.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following Objectives and or actions in the 2025-2029 Council Plan:

Objective Two: Sustain

We aim to collaborate with others to foster a sustainable environment, a thriving economy and resilient communities.

Regional, State and National Plans, Policies and Legislation

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

- Goulburn Region Destination Management Plan
- Strathbogie Shire Council: Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2027
- Strathbogie Shire Council Community Funding Policy

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

This report has identified the following risk(s):

Risk(s)	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Loss of income to Nagambie businesses if the event is not held here	Almost Certain	Minimal	Medium	Work closely with APS to ensure ongoing partnership and retaining regattas at Nagambie
Events are no longer able to be delivered due to increased cost	Possible	Moderate	Medium	Work with event organisers to consider funding opportunities and look to strategic partnership funding agreements

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no significant legal considerations associated with this report.

- **Contractual Obligations:** The Strategic Funding Agreement will formalise the arrangement between Strathbogie Shire Council and APS, clearly outlining roles, responsibilities, and conditions.
- **Risk Management:** The agreement will include indemnity and insurance requirements to protect Council against liability during the event.
- **Governance:** Approval of the agreement falls within Council's governance framework and requires formal resolution to authorise the Chief Executive Officer to execute the Agreement.

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

The costs for 2025-26 Strategic Partnership Funding Agreements will be incurred through the Community Funding Model event grants stream.

The budget allocation for event grants is \$75,000. The financial costs associated with this agreement is \$5,536.25. There is \$31,321 remaining in the 2025-26 budget for event grants.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Economic

The Nagambie Lakes Regatta Centre is a significant economic driver for Strathbogie Shire. By collaborating with APS and RV, Council can secure the ongoing success of the APS Heads of the River Regatta and related events. This partnership will not only maintain but enhance the Region's in attracting visitors and generating substantial economic benefits from outside the Shire, supporting local businesses and strengthening the regional economy.

Social

The Nagambie Lakes Regatta Centre is more than a rowing venue—it is a community asset that fosters pride and engagement. The facility attracts tens of thousands of visitors annually, providing opportunities for visitors to experience the region and return for leisure beyond sporting events.

It also serves as a hub for on-water and social activities, offering amenities that few regional towns can match. A venue enhances community value, creates opportunities for local clubs and groups to fundraise during major events, and strengthens Nagambie's identity as a vibrant destination.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Following each APS Heads of the River Rowing Regatta, Council works in partnership with APS and RV to review event operations and identify opportunities for improvement. This commitment to continuous improvement supports infrastructure planning, the long-term success of the event and reinforces Nagambie's reputation as a premier rowing destination.

HUMAN RIGHTS

There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

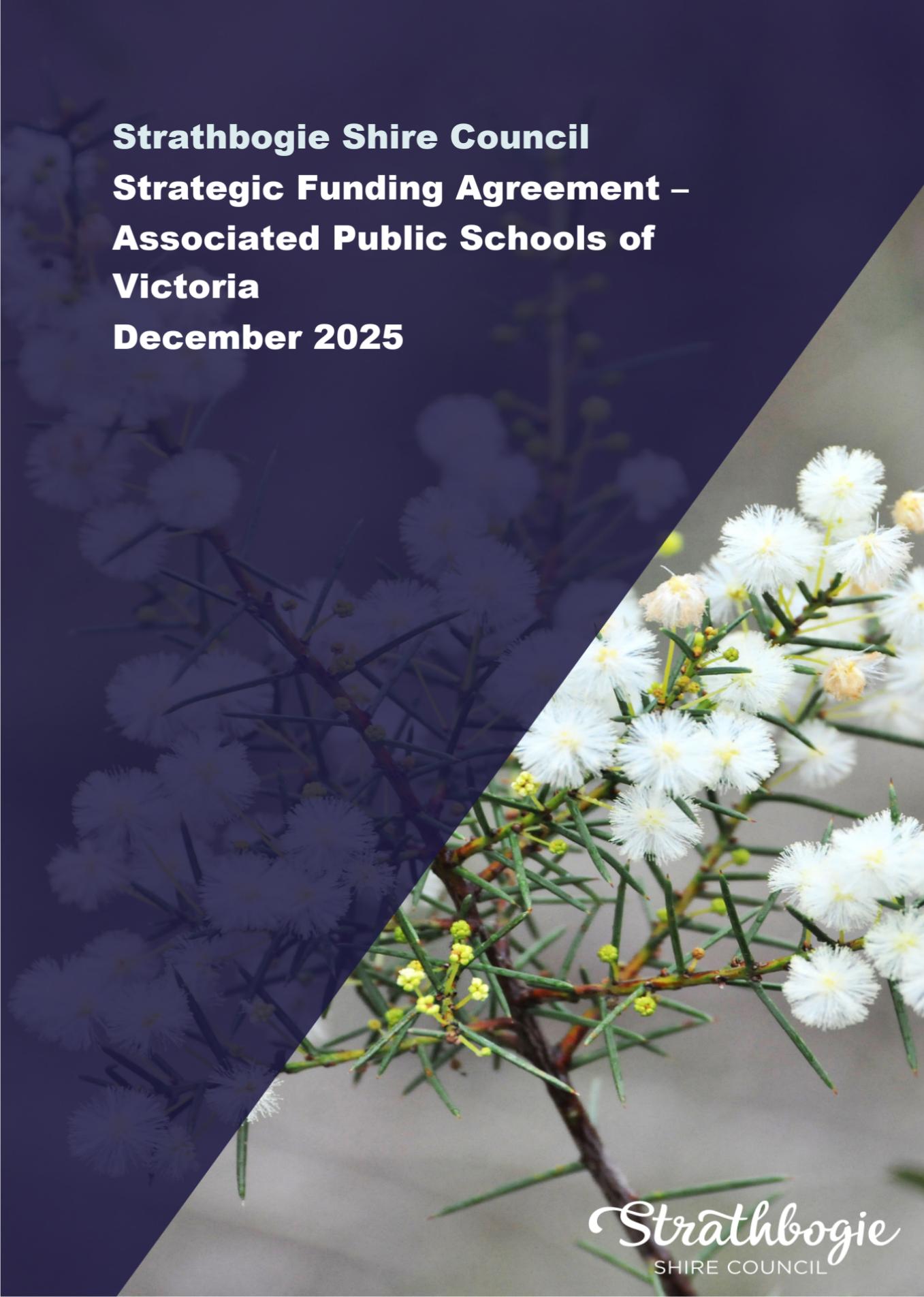
CONCLUSION

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to enter into a Strategic Partnership Funding Agreement between Strathbogie Shire Council and APS to support the delivery of the APS Heads of the River Event in 2026 in Nagambie.

This report outlines the terms and conditions of a draft Strategic Partnership Funding Agreement between Strathbogie Shire Council and the Associated Public Schools Incorporated and provides a recommendation to Council for consideration.

ATTACHMENTS

1. DRAFT Strategic Funding Agreement with APS



**Strathbogie Shire Council
Strategic Funding Agreement –
Associated Public Schools of
Victoria
December 2025**

Strathbogie
SHIRE COUNCIL

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Acknowledgement of Country

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

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

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

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

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

Document ID	
Last review	
Current review	
Adopted by Council	
Next review	
Responsible officer/s	

Document name
Doc ID#

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

STRATEGIC FUNDING AGREEMENT FOR WAIVER OF FEES

This strategic funding agreement will outline the terms and conditions under which Strathbogrie Shire Council will provide funding to Associated Public Schools of Victoria for strategic purposes.

This Strategic Funding Agreement ("**Agreement**") is made and entered into as of [Date], by and between:

Strathbogrie Shire Council ("**Council**") with its principal place of business located at 109a Binney Street Euroa VIC 3666 (hereinafter referred to as the "**Investor**").

and

Associated Public Schools of Victoria (APS Sport) with its principal place of business located at 15/13-25 Church Street Hawthorn, VIC, 3122 (hereinafter referred to as the "**Recipient**").

Background

Council has a long-standing relationship with APS Sport through the use of Council's Lake Nagambie Regatta Centre. Nagambie has been the centre for rowing since the 1980's. The man-made course was created in 1998 and forms part of the Lake Nagambie waterway. The Nagambie Lakes Regatta Centre is one Victoria's premier rowing sports facilities. The venue offers a 2000m, fully buoyed, National Standard rowing course and associated infrastructure.

APS Sport has been involved with events on Lake Nagambie for over 25 years, hosting the premier private schools rowing regatta at Nagambie annually. This Regatta attracts competitors, families and support staff of approximately 5,000. By holding this Regatta at Nagambie, it has the flow on effect of facilitating regular training camps for the schools, that bring up to 120 students to stay for a week at a time, as well as another regatta with a similar number of competitors in November.

It is therefore agreed that Strathbogrie Shire Council will waive hire fees of the Nagambie Lakes Regatta Centre including maintenance staff to support the future viability of Heads of the River regattas at the facility and to work in partnership with APS Sport to continue to promote the facility for regattas and training camps.

1. WAIVER OF FEES

1.1 Council agrees to waive the following fees for 2026 APS Heads of the River Rowing Regatta:

Hire fees to the total amount of \$5,536.25 for 2026 event, consisting of:

- Peninsular hire x 3 days \$3,538.05
- Regatta Centre entire venue hire x 1 day \$1,998.20

Including Maintenance staff for the day of the event to support any immediate requirements.

Document name
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OFFICIAL: Sensitive

This does not include:

- Provision of event day staff
- Administrative support in the lead up to the event

These costs will be charged on an hourly rate as required and is dependent on final operating model for the 2026 Regatta.

2. CONDITIONS OF WAIVER

2.1 The waiver of fees is granted to the recipient for the hire of Lake Nagambie Regatta Centre for the 2026 Heads of the River Rowing Regatta event in section 1.1

2.2 The recipient agrees to:

- o Acknowledge Council in promotion of the event where the fee has been waived.
- o Work in partnership with Council to promote the region and tourism opportunities through shared communication, website, newsletters, and any other relevant opportunities; and
- o Continue to partner with Council to provide recommendations to the APS Schools for the use of the Nagambie Lakes Regatta Centre as a venue for camps and regattas.

3. TERM AND TERMINATION

3.1 This Agreement shall commence on the date first written above and shall continue for an initial period of one year, until [specify end date or conditions for termination].

3.2 Either party may terminate this Agreement by giving 30 days written notice to the other party if the other party is in material breach of this Agreement and fails to cure such breach within 30 days after receipt of notice specifying the breach.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

4.1 Both parties agree to keep confidential all non-public information obtained from the other party in connection with this Agreement.

4.2 The obligation of confidentiality shall not apply to information that is (a) in the public domain, (b) known to the receiving party prior to disclosure, or (c) required to be disclosed by law.

5. NOMINATION OF AUTHORISED REPRESENTATIVES

5.1 The Parties must each appoint one or more authorised representatives to function as a contact point for the purposes of this agreement and carry out any of that party's functions or obligations under this agreement.

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6. ENTIRE AGREEMENT

6.1 This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the parties with respect to the subject matter hereof and supersedes all prior agreements and understandings.

7. VARIATION OF THIS AGREEMENT

7.1 This Agreement may be varied by agreement in writing signed by the parties.

8. COSTS OF PREPARING THIS AGREEMENT

8.1 Each party must bear its own costs of preparing, negotiating, executing, and implementing this agreement.

9. REVIEW

9.1 This agreement will be reviewed after the 2026 Heads of the River Rowing Regatta event.

9.2 An option of further years will be offered subject to Council's strategic direction and subsequent approval at a relevant Council meeting.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Strategic Funding Agreement for Waiver of Fees as of the day and year first above written.

STRATHBOGIE SHIRE COUNCIL

By: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

ASSOCIATED PUBLIC SCHOOLS of Victoria

By: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Document name
Doc ID#

11.2.3 Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated Memorandum of Understanding

AUTHOR Manager Community and Culture

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director Community and Planning

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated was formally established as a legal entity in February 2024. Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated is recognised by the Victorian government as a Visitor Economy Partnership and receives financial support from the State Government under the Visitor Economy Partnership Program, overseen by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions.

The Visitor Economy Partnership program requires a minimum of three (3) local government areas to partner and financially contribute to the partnership to be eligible for ongoing State Government funding. The partnership, between the tourism industry, local government and state government, aims to support and grow tourism and visitation across the municipalities of Greater Shepparton, Mitchell, and Strathbogie.

Council endorsed a one-year agreement to make a financial contribution to the entity in 2023, for the 2024-2025 financial year.

A new four-year Memorandum of Understanding, along with a schedule of annual financial contributions has been negotiated by the three Councils and Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated.

Council's commitment to the Memorandum of Understanding will support Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated to strengthen and grow the visitor economy of the region and provide increased opportunities to our region, supporting Council to deliver on its Council Plan 2025-29, and the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2023-27.

The purpose of this report is to seek authorisation from Council for the continued commitment to Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated through a formalised Memorandum of Understanding for the period of 1 July 2025 – 30 June 2029.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council authorise the Chief Executive Officer to make any minor amendments and to sign the Memorandum of Understanding to support Goulburn Region Tourism as Council's Visitor Economy Partnership for the period 1 July 2025 - 30 June 2029.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Tourism and visitation is a key driver of the local economy of Strathbogie Shire and the Goulburn Region. A thriving visitor economy is identified as a key theme in Council's Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2027.

In 2024, tourism spend in the Goulburn tourism region was \$596 million and tourism visitation was 2.5 million.

In 2022 the Victorian Government provided Mitchell Shire, Greater Shepparton City and Strathbogie Shire Councils with \$300,000 to form the Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated Partnership. This was an interim arrangement, acknowledging that the region was disadvantaged without a Regional Tourism Board and to support the region until outcomes of the Regional Tourism Review were finalised.

In 2023 the Victorian Government released the Visitor Economy Partnership Framework, which changes how regional tourism is supported in the state of Victoria. The ambition of the Visitor Economy Partnership Framework is to transition Regional Tourism Boards to new entities called Visitor Economy Partnerships and to ensure that all regions have equitable access to these entities.

The Goulburn Region, including Greater Shepparton City Council, Strathbogie Shire Council and Mitchell Shire Council were prioritised for transition to a Visitor Economy Partnership, due to the lack of previous representation by a Regional Tourism Board.

The Visitor Economy Partnership Framework details that entities must have three (3) or more councils to receive funding and that all three Local Government Areas must financially contribute to the partnership. Council contributions are not prescribed due to the different nature of structures with each Visitor Economy Partnership. Amounts paid to the Visitor Economy Partnership have been modelled on the visitation numbers to each Local Government Area.

This was identified as the fairest model to allow for different Council size and capacity. Initial financial contributions made in 2024 were as follows:

- Greater Shepparton City Council initial contribution of \$121,000 per annum
- Strathbogie Shire council contributing \$39,000
- Mitchell Shire Council contributing \$75,000.

Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated was formally established as a legal entity in February 2024. Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated is recognised by the Victorian Government as a Visitor Economy Partnership. The purpose of Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated is to drive the sustainable growth of the visitor economy throughout the municipalities served by Greater Shepparton City Council, Mitchell Shire Council, and Strathbogie Shire Council ('the Goulburn region')

It seeks support for Strathbogie Shire Council to agree to the Memorandum of Understanding and associated ongoing financial commitment of the Partnership. Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated will strengthen and grow the visitor economy of the region and provide an increase in opportunities to our region.

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated is recognised by the Victorian Government as the Visitor Economy Partnership for the Goulburn Region. This area is defined as the local government areas of Mitchell Shire Council, Greater Shepparton City Council, and Strathbogie Shire Council. A partnership of this nature is an essential way to obtain support and funding from State agencies for tourism-related initiatives and provides a unique regional destination offering for visitors.

The Memorandum of Understanding outlines the proposed ongoing partnership between Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated and Member Councils, including Strathbogie Shire Council until 30 June 2029.

The Memorandum of Understanding includes the annual investment of member councils to Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated. In the financial year 2025-2026 it is proposed that Strathbogie Shire Council invests \$39,000 to Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated, these funds were allocated in Council's 2025-2026 budget process. Investment in subsequent years are subject to the annual rate cap adjustment and are as follows:

Table One: Annual Contributions

Financial Year	Annual Contribution
2025-2026	\$39,000
2026-2027	\$40,000
2027-2028	\$41,000
2028-2029	\$43,000

The vision for Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated is that:

By 2030, the Goulburn region will be celebrated as one of Victoria's most visited regional destinations - where culture and adventure converge.

Key performance metrics for the entity include:

- increase visitor economy by over \$150M
- increase visitor numbers from 2M to 3M
- increase overnight stays value from 700k to 1M.

These economic impacts and growth will contribute positively to the local economy of Strathbogie Shire, positioning Strathbogie Shire as an integral part of a regional destination.

The achievement of this vision and the improvement in performance metrics, enabled through Councils investment in the entity, support Council to achieve initiatives identified in the Council Plan 2025-29, and Council's Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2027.

Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated aims to amplify the efforts of Council by creating additional resources to support the growth and development of the visitor economy, including through destination development, industry development, marketing and advocacy efforts.

The current Visitor Economy Partnership State Government funding agreement with Goulbourn Region Tourism is a two-year agreement. In the case that State Government funding is not renewed the deliverables of the Memorandum of Understanding would be renegotiated.

Visitor Economy Partnerships require a minimum of three (3) local government areas as Member Councils to be eligible for funding. If one member council does not endorse this Memorandum of Understanding there is a risk to the viability of the State Government funding agreement and financial sustainability of the entity. The State also provide specific funding opportunities to Visitor Economy Partnerships through various grant streams.

The Memorandum of Understanding outlines the following key roles and responsibilities for signing entities:

Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated Role

- Develop and oversee the delivery of the Goulburn Region Destination Management Plan
- Meet annual KPIs as set by the Board
- Develop and oversee the delivery of annual work plan
- Ensure industry relationships are nurtured and developed
- Advocate for the visitor economy of the region
- Develop and source additional funding to contribute towards the financial sustainability of the Association
- Adhere to all financial and legal responsibilities of the Association.

Strathbogie Shire Council Role

- Appoint CEO as the Local Government Delegate on the Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated Board
- Acknowledge Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated as peak Visitor Economy Partnership organisation and actively promote the associated brand
- Work cooperatively with Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated on projects in line with the Goulburn Region Destination Management Plan 2024-2029
- Ensure regular communications
- Deliver and coordinate tourism functions at a local level, including visitor servicing.

Communications between parties

- Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated will report regularly to Council Chief Executive Officers and to Council
- Council will ensure Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated is briefed on visitor economy matters of significance
- Council will recognise and promote Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated through Council distribution channels as appropriate.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**Council Plan**

This report is consistent with the following objectives and or actions in the 2025-2029 Council Plan:

Objective Two: Sustain

We aim to collaborate with others to foster a sustainable environment, a thriving economy and resilient communities.

Specifically, 2.3 Continue to support Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated and implement actions from the Goulburn Region Destination Management plan.

Regional, State and National Plans, Policies and Legislation

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

- Visit Victoria 2030

- Strathbogie Shire Council Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2027

Theme 4: A Thriving Visitor Economy: *Establish Strathbogie Shire as a desirable and high-value visitor destination that drives year-round visitation and generates economic benefits for the region.*

4.1 Strengthen the destination brand and tourism governance

- Goulburn Region Destination Management plan 2024-2029

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

This report has identified the following risk(s):

Table Two: Risk Considerations

Risk(s)	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
If one council does not proceed, the Visitor Economy Partnership cannot proceed as it does not meet the minimum government requirements	Low	Major	Medium	Ongoing engagement with Councils through the project working group and signing of MoU
State Government tourism funding opportunities are directed to Visitor Economy Partnerships. If we don't participate we will not be eligible for these funds	Almost Certain	Major	High	Proceed with MoU
Not capitalising on regional opportunity to create a brand identify and the efficiency of this model for a small rural Council	Possible	Moderate	Medium	Proceed with MoU
Lack of trust and buy-in from industry due to perceived non-transparent decision-making	Possible	Moderate	Medium	Mitigated with ongoing engagement with industry and peak industry groups, and including strong industry representation on the Board of GRT

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no significant 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

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 is required to financially contribute to the Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated if it wishes to participate and benefit from the regional approach. The contribution value is modelled on the visitation numbers to each Local Government Area.

In the financial year 2025-2026 it is proposed that Strathbogie Shire Council invests \$39,000 to Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated, these funds were allocated in Council's 2025-2026 budget.

The Memorandum of Understanding seeks to secure funding from Strathbogie Shire Council for the period of the Memorandum of Understanding from 1 July 2025 – 30 June 2029. The annual contribution has been detailed in Table One: Annual Contributions in the Issues and Opportunities section of this report. This allocation of funding is subject to Goulburn Region Tourism's performance and compliance with the Memorandum of Understanding, as detailed in attachment one.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Economic

Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated is the recognised peak body to support the visitor economy of the region. Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated advocates for greater investment into the visitor economy, creating a broader range of activities available for both locals and visitors to experience. Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated is actively involved in marketing the region to boost the visitor economy.

The vision of Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated is:

- By 2030, the Goulburn region will be celebrated as one of Victoria's most visited regional destinations - where culture and adventure converge.

Key performance metrics for the entity include:

- increase visitor economy by over \$150M
- increase visitor numbers from 2M to 3M
- increase overnight stays value from 700k to 1M

These economic impacts and growth will contribute positively to the local economy of Strathbogie Shire, positioning Strathbogie Shire as an integral part of a regional destination.

Environmental

Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated Inc will be implementing the Goulburn Region Destination Management Plan (attachment two) as the key strategic document for the entity. This document was holistically planned and strongly acknowledges the importance of growing visitation in a sustainable manner so as to not negatively impact the region's environment.

COLLABORATION

This report was prepared in collaboration with Mitchell Shire and Greater Shepparton Councils.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

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

CONCLUSION

Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated was formally established as a legal entity in February 2024. Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated is recognised by the Victorian government as a Visitor Economy Partnership and receives financial support from the State Government under the Visitor Economy Partnership Program, overseen by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions.

The partnership, between the tourism industry, local government and state government, aims to support and grow tourism and visitation across the municipalities of Greater Shepparton, Mitchell and Strathbogie.

A four-year Memorandum of Understanding, along with a schedule of annual financial contributions has been negotiated by the three Councils and Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated.

Council's commitment to the Memorandum of Understanding will support Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated to strengthen and grow the visitor economy of the region and provide increased opportunities to our region, supporting Council to deliver on its Council Plan 2025-29, and the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2023-27.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 20251121 GRT Memorandum of Understanding Updated 003

PROTECTED

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between: Goulburn Region Tourism Inc.

And: Greater Shepparton City Council
Mitchell Shire Council
Strathbogie Shire Council

Parties to the Agreement

The parties to this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are:

GOULBURN REGION TOURISM INCORPORATED, ABN 73 402 514 063 an Association corporation incorporated under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and member Councils established under the *Local Government Act 1989*:

GREATER SHEPPARTON CITY COUNCIL

MITCHELL SHIRE COUNCIL

STRATHBOGIE SHIRE COUNCIL

Preamble

1. Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated (GRT) was formally established as a legal entity in February 2024.
2. GRT is recognised by the Victorian government as a Visitor Economy Partnership (VEP). As a VEP, GRT receives financial support from the State Government under the Visitor Economy Partnership Program, overseen by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions.
3. The VEP program requires a minimum of three councils to partner and financially contribute to a Visitor Economy Partnership (VEP) to be eligible for State Government funding.
4. The partnership, between the tourism industry, local government and state government, aims to support and grow tourism and visitation to the areas of the Greater Shepparton City, Mitchell Shire and Strathbogies Shire Councils.
5. GRT received funding from *Greater Shepparton City Council, Mitchell Shire and Strathbogies Shire Councils* for the 2024/25 financial year.
6. This MOU has been drafted to secure funding with *Greater Shepparton City Council* for four years (1 July 2025 – 30 June 2029).
7. This MOU has been drafted to secure funding with *Mitchell Shire Council* for four years (1 July 2025 – 30 June 2029).
8. This MOU has been drafted to secure funding with *Strathbogies Shire Council* for up to four years, in two, two year terms (Term One: 1 July 2025 – 30 June 2027, Term Two: 1 July 2027-30 June 2029) and is subject to GRT performance and Council's annual budget process.
9. This MOU may be renegotiated or renewed by further agreement between the parties to this MOU.
10. The Parties to this MOU have recorded their understandings and obligations and as signatories to this document agree to the following:

Goulburn Region Tourism Incorporated**Purpose**

11. The purpose of the Association is to drive the sustainable growth of the visitor economy throughout the municipalities served by Greater Shepparton City Council, Mitchell Shire Council, and Strathbogie Shire Council ('the Goulburn region').

Goulburn Region Tourism Role

12. The role of Goulburn Region Tourism Inc for the duration of this MOU will be to:
- develop and oversee the delivery of agreed components of the *Goulburn Region Destination Management Plan 2024 – 2029*
 - develop and oversee the delivery of the Business and Annual Work Plans for the organisation
 - ensure industry relationships are nurtured and developed through communication channels, activities, events, professional development and other appropriate mechanisms
 - ensure regular and formal communication with key stakeholders including Member Councils, relevant Member Council Officers, Visit Victoria, Regional Tourism Boards, Local Tourism Associations, peak industry bodies and relevant government agencies
 - develop and coordinate policy and mechanisms to provide a consistent approach and application to tourism activities across the region, noting this does not include resourcing of Visitor Information Centres
 - act as an independent voice and advocate on behalf of the visitor economy of the region
 - provide Council and key stakeholders with quarterly statistical reports relating to tourism performance in the region
 - work with other VEPs / Regional Tourism Boards as appropriate to identify and engage in opportunities of benefit to operators in the Goulburn region
 - develop self-generating funding to contribute towards the financial sustainability of the Association
 - source, wherever possible, additional funding through industry and funding bodies to support the costs of delivery of projects
 - adhere to all financial and legal responsibilities of the Association.

Member Councils

Objectives of Member Councils

13. To have an effective independent peak Visitor Economy Partnership for the municipalities served by Greater Shepparton City Council, Mitchell Shire Council, and Strathbogie Shire Council.
14. To have Goulburn Region Tourism deliver specific strategic functions for the region including:
 - marketing
 - development
 - industry
 - product
 - skills
 - investment
 - engagement
 - advocacy

Member Council Role

15. The role of each Member Council for the duration of this MOU will be to:
 - acknowledge the role of Goulburn Region Tourism as the peak Visitor Economy Partnership organisation for the region and actively promote the associated brand and assets via council relevant Council visitor servicing collateral
 - appoint their CEO as the LGA Delegate on the Goulburn Region Tourism Board.
 - work cooperatively with Goulburn Region Tourism on agreed projects, activities and standards in line with the *Goulburn Region Destination Management Plan 2024 – 2029* subject to available resourcing and negotiation.
 - ensure regular communication, both formal and informal, is maintained with Goulburn Region Tourism on matters of joint interest
 - support the involvement of relevant Council staff in appropriate Goulburn Region Tourism activities
 - recognise and promote Goulburn Region Tourism through Council distribution channels as appropriate
 - deliver and coordinate tourism functions at a council level including the management of economic development / tourism strategies, marketing, signage, events, applications, compliance and associated activities
 - work with entities as represented by (but not limited to) Local Tourism Associations, Chambers of Commerce, special interest groups and industry associations to develop tourism at local level

Communication between Parties

16. All parties recognise the importance of regular communication – both formal and informal to support the success of tourism in the region and commit to open and regular dialogue. Key points of communication will be identified across a range of officer levels to ensure timely and responsive communication.

17. Goulburn Region Tourism will:

- report to Member Council CEOs biannually on progress against key performance indicators. To maximise efficient deployment of organisational resources, the timing of progress reports will be aligned with reporting requirements of the Visitor Economy Partnership Program, overseen by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions.
- present annually to Councillors on the activities of Goulburn Region Tourism
- attend Council meetings or briefings to discuss or present on tourism related matters if requested
- comply with GRT Board approved policies and legal requirements regarding the financial position and activities of the company
- raise directly with member Councils any issues, concerns, queries or questions it may have in relation to activities, function, performance or obligations under this MOU.

18. Member Councils will:

- ensure that Goulburn Region Tourism is briefed on, and kept informed of, visitor economy matters that have regional significance as and when appropriate
- encourage Councillors to attend annual Goulburn Region Tourism briefings
- provide opportunities for Goulburn Region Tourism to brief or present to Councillors as and when deemed necessary
- recognise and promote Goulburn Region Tourism through Council distribution channels as appropriate
- raise directly with Goulburn Region Tourism any issues, concerns, queries or questions it may have in relation to its activities, function, performance or obligations under this MOU.

Key Performance Indicators

19. The key performance indicators that Goulburn Region Tourism are set by the Goulburn Region Tourism board as part of the annual planning processes, with reference to the Goulburn Region Destination Management Plan 2024-2029 and feedback from key stakeholders. Key Performance Indicators will be detailed in the GRT Annual Work Plan approved by the Goulburn Region Tourism board.

KPIs for 2025-2026 are detailed in Schedule A.

20. In the event of reduction of the core State Government VEP funding of \$350,000/annum (excl GST), a renegotiation of the scope of activities of Goulburn Region Tourism will occur.

Member Council Investment

21. The agreed level of investment from Member Councils (exclusive of GST) is contained in Schedule B of this MOU. Contributions in years two, three and four will be subject to Council rate cap increases, and Council's annual budgetary process.
22. By signing this MOU, Member Councils acknowledge that they are committing to in principle expenditure in future budgets, for the terms outlined in the MOU, providing Goulburn Region Tourism delivers on the key performance indicators as detailed in Schedule A to the satisfaction of Member Councils.
23. Despite clause 22, should a member Council withdraw or not extend membership under this MOU, member Councils have the right to reconsider their own membership and withdraw from the MOU.
24. Annual payments are to be made following the receipt of a tax invoice from Goulburn Region Tourism. Payments from Councils will be made no later than 30 August each year or 30 days after the date of issue of the invoice, whichever is latest.
25. The in-kind support from Member Councils is contained in Schedule C of this MOU. Nothing in Schedule C reduces the Member Council contributions as outlined in Schedule B of this MOU.

Dispute Resolution

26. If any dispute arises between the parties carrying out the principles of this Memorandum of Understanding, the parties will seek bona fide to resolve that difference or dispute between them.
27. Any disputes arising from this MOU will be first referred to a joint meeting of the Chair of Goulburn Region Tourism, one representative from each Member Council and a representative of DJSIR. DJSIR will convene and manage this process unless it is deemed to be a party to the dispute or otherwise decline to participate. If Visit Victoria is a party to the dispute or declines, an external independent mediator will oversee the process.
28. Final dispute resolution, if required, will be referred to a Committee consisting of one representative from each Member Council, Goulburn Region Tourism, DJSIR and an independent industry representative. DJSIR will convene the meeting and chair the Dispute Resolution Committee. If DJSIR is a party to the dispute or declines, an external independent mediator will convene and chair the Committee.

29. The independent industry representative will be appointed by a group consisting of a representative from each Member Council, Goulburn Region Tourism and DJSIR or another such external body agreed by the parties to the dispute.
30. An external independent mediator will be appointed by the Mediator President of the Law Society of Victoria or his or her representative if it is deemed DJSIR is a party to a dispute or declines to participate. The independent mediator must be a person acceptable to all parties to the dispute.

Parties Agree to be Bound

31. It is the intention that this MOU be binding on the parties without the right of withdrawal from the agreement except where there is fundamental breach of any term or condition of this MOU or where there is a fundamental material change in the strategic context within which Goulburn Region Tourism operates.
32. In the case of a dispute, all parties agree that they will not withdraw from this MOU until such time as the prescribed dispute resolution process has been employed and it has been established that a fundamental breach has occurred and that this fundamental breach cannot be remedied to the satisfaction of the parties in dispute.

Terms of MOU

33. If Goulburn Region Tourism is wound up all funds held will be transferred in line with the Winding Up clause in the Rules of the Association.
34. Each party maintains the right to exercise its individual powers as it sees fit.
35. This Memorandum of Understanding lapses on 30 June 2029.

Termination

36. This MOU may be terminated by any party at any time by providing 60 days notice to other parties .

The parties to this Memorandum of Understanding are:

GOULBURN REGION TOURISM INC

Signature:

Peter Russell
Chair - Goulburn Region Tourism

Date: ____/____/____

Witness:

and

GREATER SHEPPARTON CITY COUNCIL

Signature:

Fiona Le Gassick
Chief Executive Officer - Greater Shepparton City Council

Date: ____/____/____

Witness:

and

MITCHELL SHIRE COUNCIL

Signature:

Mary Agostino
Chief Executive Officer - Mitchell Shire Council

Date: ____/____/____

Witness:

and

STRATHBOGIE SHIRE COUNCIL

Signature:

Rachelle Quattrocchi
Chief Executive Officer - Strathbogrie Shire Council

Date: ____/____/____

Witness:

SCHEDULE A – 2025 2026 Performance Indicators

Goulburn Region Tourism has identified several current strategic areas of priorities, principally taken from the Goulburn Region Destination Management Plan 2024- 2029:

- Improved and coordinated regional governance (DMP Action 1.1)
- Developing the brand (DMP Action 4.1 and 4.2)
- Channels of communication (DMP Action 4.5, 4.7 and 4.8)
- Improve industry capabilities (DMP Action 3.1)

The strategic priority areas and associated Annual Work Plan will be reviewed annually through GRT board processes.

The 2025-2026 tactics for delivery and key performance indicators are listed below.

Performance Indicator		2025-2026 Target
Improved and coordinated regional governance		
1.	Finalise governance arrangements for GRT. GRT has all appropriate organizational policies and procedures in place. GRT Rules are being appropriately adhered to.	Essential Board approved policies in place. Operational policies and procedures implemented as required.
2.	GRT attending industry events to create a strong profile with industry and within the regional tourism network. Consumer interest/intent to visit the region is measured by visitor surveys and increases year to year.	Attend 12 events representing GRT (industry or where industry is also participating)
3.	Industry support for GRT (membership) to assist with sustainable funding model.	Launch membership model by May 2026
Developing the brand		
4.	Inclusion of existing regional brands in brand development. Key LTAs actively participate in brand workshops, brand development steering committee and engage with brand agency.	Key LTAs actively participate in brand development process.
5.	Goulburn region brand overarches existing brands such that key LTAs and associated sub regional brands fit and are comfortable with the final regional brand.	Unified regional brand that accommodates subregional branding.
6.	Brand strategy exists.	Regional brand strategy exists
7.	Brand toolkit includes core elements to enable collaborative promotion and marketing across the region.	Regional brand toolkit exists and evidence of uptake of regional brand by industry and evidence of influence/synergies with LGA and LTA branding / promotions.

Channels of communication		
8.	Website exists	Regionally relevant website, including ATDW listed attractions, itineraries and appropriate AI functionality
9.	Social media platforms exist and interacting with website	Linked to new regional website.
10.	Digital platforms meeting performance KPIs	Facebook follower 500 Instagram followers 400 TikTok views 1000
11.	Deploy Helix platform's AI assisted ad generation tool to deliver social media posts for GRT, key stakeholders, industry, events and attractions.	30 ads/campaigns, investing approximately \$3000 in social media advertising (including the industry / operator ads listed below)
12.	Evaluate and where appropriate, deploy AI tools to enhance regional promotion and visitor experience (eg AI generated itineraries, AI web based concierge)	GRT web site and digital presence embraces AI capability and is, as far as commercially practical, leading edge.
13.	Clear and actionable marketing strategy exists for GRT.	Marketing strategy exists
14.	Deploy Helix platform's AI assisted ad generation tool to deliver social media posts for industry, events and attractions.	20 ads/campaigns developed for industry/operators . GRT co-investment of approximately \$1000 in industry ads (industry investing a minimum of \$ for \$ with GRT during Helix trial period).
15.	Develop and share audience profile (Helix personas) for event types and sub regions.	10 audience profiles developed for key activity / experiences / offerings / sub-regions Audience profiles shared with relevant industry / LGAs / LTAs
Improve industry capabilities		
16.	Industry capabilities Determine industry development needs. Build and deliver appropriate training / professional development sessions to meet industry priorities (within budget and scope of GRT activities). Retain staff to enable effective engagement with industry.	4 industry capability activities delivered
17.	Industry engagement Activities including growing database of industry members, effective communication with industry members and delivery of the activities to build awareness and trust of GRT.	Target 300 industry members by 30 June 2026 25% read rate of newsletters

Municipal Benefit		
18	<p>Demonstrate return on investment by municipality through providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Number of local business completing Industry capability events and training- Number of local business utilising GRT platforms (Helix, AI Tools, Data Insights) and Regional brand- Increased local spend on visitor economy- Increase recognition of Strathbogie as a destination.- Grant opportunities made available to the VEP-	

SCHEDULE B –Member Council Investment

The annual investment by Member Councils for the life of this MOU is set out below. It is noted that all amounts are exclusive of GST.

Council Investment in future years of the MOU are subject to the annual rate cap adjustment and the annual budget process of each Council.

Annual Investment	2025 - 2026	2026-27²	2027-28	2028-29
Greater Shepparton City Council	121,000	124,630	128,368	132,219
Mitchell Shire Council	75,000	77,250	79,568	81,955
Strathbogie Shire Council	39,000	40,170	41,375	42,616
Total	235,000	242,050	249,311	256,790

These figures are based on a forward assumption of an annual local government rate cap of 3. The cap can vary as determined by state and respective Councils.

SCHEDULE C – IN KIND SUPPORT

The in-kind support to be provided by Member Councils for the life of the MOU is set out below.

Nothing in this Schedule prevents Member Councils providing additional in-kind support to Goulburn Region Tourism over the life of the MOU. Nothing in this Schedule prevents Goulburn Region Tourism making a request for additional in-kind support over the life of the MOU. Such a request can be accepted or rejected by Member Councils.

Greater Shepparton City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting space including but not limited to Council facilities as available and required • Support for the delivery of key activities through communication channels, participation in working groups and other appropriate activities • Assistance with staffing regional tourism promotions if required • Provision of advice and sharing of data as permitted
Mitchell Shire Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting space including but not limited to Council facilities as available and required • Support for the delivery of key activities through communication channels, participation in working groups and other appropriate activities • Assistance with staffing regional tourism promotions if required • Provision of advice and sharing of data as permitted
Strathbogie Shire Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting space including but not limited to Council facilities as available and required • Support for the delivery of key activities through communication channels, participation in working groups and other appropriate activities • Assistance with staffing regional tourism promotions if required • Provision of advice and sharing of data as permitted

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11.2.4 Euroa Railway Precinct Masterplan

AUTHOR Director Community and Planning

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director Community and Planning

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strathbogie Shire Council received funding from the Victorian State Government to develop a Euroa Railway Precinct Masterplan (Masterplan), building on the significant investment of Inland Rail to the Euroa Railway/and station area to improve connectivity, access, and movement to and from the Railway Precinct.

Council endorsed public consultation on the draft Masterplan for a period of four weeks from 16 July 2025 until 13 August 2025. Two public information sessions were held on Monday 28 July 2025, attended by approximately sixty community members. Council received a total of 56 contributions were received providing valuable feedback which has been used to further inform the Masterplan.

The draft Masterplan, shaped by community and stakeholder input, outlines a clear and staged vision for revitalising the Euroa railway precinct. It seeks to deliver better connectivity, enhanced public spaces, increased amenity, and new opportunities for local business, tourism, and community gathering.

Further planning, engagement, detailed design and delivery of works and projects identified in the draft masterplan is subject to grant funding, and/or allocations considered as part of Council's annual capital budget process.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Adopt the Euroa Railway Precinct Masterplan October 2025**
- 2. Note that the implementation of the Euroa Railway Precinct Masterplan 2025 is dependent on external grant funding and is subject to Council budgetary processes.**

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Strathbogie Shire Council received funding from the Victorian State Government to develop a Euroa Railway Precinct Masterplan (Masterplan), building on the significant investment of Inland Rail to the Euroa Railway/and station area to improve connectivity, access, and movement to and from the Railway Precinct.

UrbanFold were appointed in 2024 to develop the Masterplan on behalf of Council.

Initial consultation occurred in November - December 2024, building on previous consultation associated with the Inland Rail Project. Targeted stakeholder consultation throughout January –June 2025 with Euroa Connect, Taungurung Land and Waters Council, Euroa Chamber of Business and Commerce and the project reference group (comprised of Council, Inland Rail, VicTrack, Department of Transport and Planning and VLine) which was used to inform the draft Masterplan.

Council endorsed the draft Masterplan for final public consultation at the Council Meeting on 15 July, for the period of 16 July - 13 August 2025.

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

Council received a total of fifty six responses to the consultation. Feedback requested in the form of an open-ended feedback question.

A detailed Engagement report is attached (attachment two).

Overall feedback varied, and key themes have been identified.

The feedback has been incorporated or used to inform the Masterplan in the below themes outlined in Table 1:

Table One: Response to Themes

Theme	Concerns	How the Masterplan Responds
Trees and Landscaping	<p>A dominant theme throughout the feedback was the community's strong interest in tree planting and landscaping.</p> <p>Many residents support the inclusion of native vegetation, particularly species sourced from the Euroa Arboretum, which are seen as resilient and reflective of the local environment.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about the practicality and safety of placing trees in the middle of Railway Street. Issues such as visibility for drivers, potential damage to infrastructure, and long-term maintenance costs were frequently mentioned.</p> <p>Some raised fire risks associated with certain plant types and the need for sustainable watering solutions.</p>	<p>Officers believe there is a balance of soft and hard features, which feature a modest increase to greening and tree canopy and with the introduction of a median strip.</p> <p>Due to the feedback received from community and business, the spacing/ density of the tree planting and a reduction of understory planting has been included on Railway Street.</p> <p>Further detailed design of Railway Streetscape works is recommended following the adoption of the Masterplan.</p> <p>Officers are also committed to making sure the Railway Street design doesn't impact business' line of sight, and current driveway access.</p> <p>Tree and plant selection will be carefully considered, appropriate to the area, drought tolerant, and with risk, and maintenance in mind, looking at species which are less likely to drop limbs or create a future hazard.</p> <p>See page 9 and 12</p>
Connectivity and Access	<p>Connectivity emerged as a critical theme, especially regarding the removal of the Frost Street underpass.</p>	<p>As this pedestrian underpass is being replaced by an alternative, which will be DDA compliant, and accessible for all users near the</p>

	<p>Some submissions expressed frustration over the loss of this pedestrian link, which provided access between the northern and southern parts of town.</p> <p>Requests were included regarding the reinstatement of the underpass.</p> <p>Requests were also made relating to the development of alternative pathways that are inclusive and accessible for all, including people with disabilities, older residents, and children.</p> <p>There is also a desire for better integration with existing assets like the Showgrounds and Seven Creeks.</p>	<p>Frost Street site, the Masterplan will focus on the development of connecting paths.</p> <p>Critical paths and links identified include paths along Frost Street to the new pedestrian underpass, to Charles Street, the Showgrounds and the Seven Creeks parklands area, along with the sporting precincts is also seen as essential. This will be considered in detail through the Consolidated Paths, tracks and footpaths Strategy (Council Plan Action 2.11)</p> <p>The Path network, and the importance of paths, safety, connectivity, accessibility, and greater consideration, has been elevated in the draft Masterplan, in response to the feedback received.</p> <p>Advocacy has also been identified to support safety and crossing of pedestrians/cyclists at the Birkett Street crossing.</p> <p>See page 8 and 10</p>
Parking and Traffic	<p>Traffic flow and parking design are of significant interest.</p> <p>While some residents appreciate the proposed roundabout and traffic calming measures, others worry about the impact of median strips and tree placement on road usability and safety.</p> <p>Business owners and residents on Railway Street highlighted potential issues with driveway access and visibility.</p> <p>There is also a strong push for RV-friendly infrastructure, including designated parking, signage, and amenities to support tourism.</p> <p>Concerns have been raised that the proposed roundabout design does not adequately accommodate the specific requirements of the Euroa</p>	<p>Council's engineering team has identified that the preferred intersection treatment at the Binney/ Railway Street intersection is a raised roundabout.</p> <p>This will improve pedestrian and vehicular safety, as well as still providing the necessary functionality for all regular road users.</p> <p>The median strips are dual purpose; they support the traffic calming, whilst increasing the soft/ green landscaping, reducing the number of hard surfaces and the heat generated from these.</p> <p>Greater details on long vehicle (RV/ caravan) parking has been provided in the updated plan, including reference to the need for formalisation and wayfinding signage. Two new formalised long vehicle parking areas have been identified within the area. The</p>

	<p>Criterion Cycling Race or similar cycling activities.</p>	<p>required space and maneuverability is a major constraint.</p> <p>The Events team will work with the Euroa Town Crits event to explore options for this annual event.</p> <p>See page 11 and 16</p>
Design and Character	<p>The community values Euroa's heritage and rural charm and wants the precinct's design to reflect this identity.</p> <p>Feedback indicates a preference for simple, functional, and locally inspired design elements over modern, urban-style features.</p> <p>There is support for using recycled materials from the demolished Goods Shed and incorporating elements that celebrate Euroa's history and natural surroundings.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about the precinct becoming too polished or generic, potentially undermining the town's unique character.</p>	<p>The draft Masterplan balances practicality with aspiration and is a plan for the future. The draft masterplan is not proposing cutting edge public streetscape works or infrastructure, instead focusing on modest development that is fit for purpose, maintainable and can grow with the community.</p> <p>The draft Masterplan also complements Inland Rail works and is consistent with the Euroa Streetscape Plan.</p> <p>Materials that were preserved following the demolition of the Good Shed are being used and repurposed throughout the precinct by Inland Rail, inline with their Heritage Interpretation Plan.</p> <p>Selections like public art, plantings, landscaping, and infrastructure will complement and be consistent with the natural character and identity of Euroa. These selections are indicative only in the draft Masterplan and will be subject to further detailed design.</p> <p>See pages 13 and 14</p>
Sustainability and Climate Resilience	<p>Sustainability is a recurring theme, with many residents advocating for climate-resilient infrastructure for future generations and a changing climate.</p> <p>Suggestions include installing solar panels, EV and e-bike charging stations, and implementing Water Sensitive Urban Design principles. Shade structures and tree canopies are seen as essential for mitigating heat, especially in car parks.</p>	<p>Planting and landscaping will be water sensitive, drought tolerant, and native to the area.</p> <p>The plantings, and soft landscaping aim to increase tree canopy cover, and reduce hard surfaces, contributing to creating cooler places and Council's commitment to climate change.</p> <p>Additional infrastructure like solar panels, EV and e bike charging stations can also be included in the</p>

	<p>The community also supports using local native plants that require minimal maintenance and are suited to changing climate conditions.</p>	<p>detailed design or in further iterations.</p> <p>Resilience (climate responsiveness) is identified in the draft Masterplan as a precinct objective. There will be an opportunity to enhance the climate responsiveness of infrastructure throughout the detailed design and via relevant grant funding, solar power, recycled water, and urban design principles.</p>
Amenities and Public Facilities	<p>The feedback highlights a need for well-placed public amenities, including toilets, seating, and shaded areas.</p> <p>There is support for creating spaces that cater to families, school groups, and tourists, such as performance areas, bike racks, and exercise equipment.</p> <p>However, the location and design of these facilities must be carefully considered to ensure they are accessible, functional, and do not detract from the precinct's aesthetics.</p>	<p>A public amenities block has been identified as important within the Precinct. In the draft Masterplan two potential locations have been included, one in the station forecourt, and the second in the Southern Reserve.</p> <p>There was varied support and opposition to these locations. The appropriateness of these locations will be considered as part of the Public Toilet Strategy.</p> <p>The draft Masterplan identifies three areas as new/ revitalised public space. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Northern Reserve: a nature based local attraction celebrating the Euroa Arboretum and the cultural significance of Euroa as Taungurung Country • the Southern Reserve: a versatile open space with modest and practical infrastructure • the Station Forecourt being delivered by Inland Rail <p>The draft Masterplan aims to improve accessibility, functionality, use of the Precinct, enhancing Euroa's natural aesthetic and character.</p> <p>This also provides a link for community and visitors who are using the main street to utilise and enjoy the new public spaces and amenities.</p>

		<p>See page 15</p> <p>Further detailed design is required on the Northern and Southern Reserves. This will include the placement and selection of public infrastructure (seats, lights, shelters, toilets, bike racks etc)</p>
Public Art and Cultural Recognition	<p>Support for incorporating public art into the precinct.</p> <p>Some feedback supports inviting local artists linking with existing public art, whilst others supported a link to Aboriginal public art works.</p> <p>Some support for the connection with Taungurung Land and Waters Council to contribute to naming and cultural elements.</p> <p>Art is seen not only as a beautification tool but also as a way to foster community pride and identity.</p>	<p>Public art is proposed throughout the Precinct in key locations, complementing and creating a link with Euroa's existing public art.</p> <p>There will be opportunities to use public art to enhance the precinct, build on the character of the local area and identity of Euroa.</p>
Aaffordability and whole of life costs	<p>Concerns regarding cost to Council for the delivery, construction and whole of life costs associated with these works, and around being financially responsible</p>	<p>The draft Masterplan is characterised by practical, fit for purpose design. The Precinct is an area for public enjoyment and will increase visitation and use of public space.</p> <p>The draft Masterplan is clear in indicating that further detailed design and targeted consultation is required on several projects within the Precinct and that many works are subject to further funding. Any works will be balanced with an understanding of whole of life costs to Council and the community.</p>

This draft Masterplan has been updated to reflect elements of the feedback received through the consultation process in line with the above table column 'How the masterplan responds'.

Balancing aspiration with practicality and feasibility, the draft Masterplan outlines a staged approach to identify both immediate improvements and longer-term goals for the precinct. The proposed opportunities vary in scale from quick wins to visionary projects, and are subject to stakeholder and Council support, further detailed design and consultation and future funding/grant availability. This Masterplan provides a strong foundation for Council and the community to pursue grants and advocate for funding to implement identified projects.

The draft Masterplan, shaped by community and stakeholder input, outlines a clear and staged vision for revitalising the Euroa railway precinct. It seeks to deliver better connectivity, access,

enhanced public spaces, increased amenity, and new opportunities for local business, tourism, and community gathering.

The draft Masterplan identifies six precinct objectives informed by stakeholder and community consultation, to guide Council and the community in implementing the shared vision for the precinct:

1. Connectivity: Community make moving between the station and surrounds a safe and comfortable experience for pedestrians and wheelers.

2. Accessibility: Ensure that newly created public spaces and paths are designed so all users feel safe and welcome, regardless of gender, age or ability.

3. Identity and Legibility: Use site-specific public art, street furniture, and landscaping as wayfinding devices to create an intuitive and enjoyable experience for visitors navigating the precinct.

4. Functionality: Provide weather protection and supporting infrastructure to enable activation of newly created public space for community events and a range of uses.

5. Community: Activate the forecourt as a central, community gathering place that serves as the heart of Euroa, fostering social connections and civic pride.

6. Resilience: Maximise opportunities to embed climate-responsive outcomes throughout the precinct.

It also identifies three key precinct areas, referred to as the Northern Reserve, the Southern Reserve and Railway Street.

The updated draft Masterplan also provides further detail on key projects within the Precinct that were identified as an important focus, or of significant interest including:

- Township connectivity
- Canopy and understory landscaping
- Improved pedestrian crossings
- Binney Street intersection
- Railway Street improvements
- Activation of the Southern Reserve
- Northern Reserve local attraction
- Public amenities
- Long vehicle parking in the precinct.

The draft masterplan is presented to Council for adoption. As detailed in the masterplan, the delivery of many aspects of the Plan is subject to further detailed design, funding and more detailed engagement that may be project/neighbourhood/ and or stakeholder specific.

The Euroa Railway Precinct was adopted as a priority advocacy project for 2025-29 by Council in September 2025, recognising the need for funding to enable the delivery of this important project.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engagement associated with the draft Masterplan was undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy.

The engagement process aimed to inform the community and seek final feedback on the draft Masterplan (International Association of Public Participation Level: *Consult*).

The draft Masterplan was available for public comment via Share Strathbogie website platform and hard copy at the Euroa Council Office for a period of four weeks between 16 July and 13 August 2025. The consultation opportunity and public information sessions were promoted via print and social mediums across the consultation period.

Two public information sessions were held and open to all to attend. Approximately 60 people attended the two information sessions.

Targeted communications were sent to encourage feedback from individual community members, community groups and stakeholders.

Share Strathbogie received a total of 536 page visits, from 386 unique visitors.

Council's social media (Instagram and Facebook) received 18,701 views.

Council received a total of 56 submissions, across both hard and soft copy.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following objectives and or actions in the 2025-2029 Council Plan:

Objective One: Connect

We are committed to enhancing access for all residents, promoting healthy living, fostering connections, and providing opportunities to thrive and participate in community life.

Objective Two: Sustain

We aim to collaborate with others to foster a sustainable environment, a thriving economy and resilient communities.

Objective Three: Deliver

We are committed to delivering quality services and infrastructure that meets the needs of our community. We aim to strengthen the Council's governance and provide improved, customer-focused experiences.

Regional, State and National Plans, Policies and Legislation

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

- Euroa Township Strategy 2020
- Strathbogie Shire Council Advocacy Strategy 2025-29: Priority: *Euroa Railway Precinct Masterplan*

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

This report has identified the following risk(s):

Risk(s)	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
The masterplan is not reflective of the community aspirations of all	Probable	Minimal	Medium	The draft masterplan attempts to balance the needs and aspirations of key stakeholders and the broader community.
Community and Stakeholders don't feel heard throughout the Project	Possible	Moderate	Medium	Multiple stages and methods of consultation has occurred, involving broad consultations, stakeholder consultations and final Consultation through exhibition and public infoamtion sessions.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no significant 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

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

The Masterplan, once adopted, provides Council and the Community with a series of staged works and projects suitable for applications to State and Federal Government Grant programs and/ or future consideration in Council's 10-year Capital Works Program. These works and projects associated within the Euroa Railway Precinct Masterplan have been identified as one of Council's current advocacy priorities, adopted at the September 2025 meeting.

Council approved the allocation of funding through the Capital Works report in November 2025 to allow for construction of some footpaths along Frost Street, Euroa and Charles Street pedestrian underpass to improve connectivity across the Euroa Rail Corridor. This work, whilst not directly related to the Masterplan, will provide connectivity and accessibility supporting the plan's objectives.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Economic

The draft Masterplan aims to drive economic development, visitor attraction and length of stay and spend in Euroa's civic precinct and central business district, through movement, accessibility, connection and a sense of place, providing attractions and space for individuals and groups to enjoy.

Social

The draft Masterplan aims to improve access and connectivity in and around the precinct and contribute to the identity and sense of community within the township. The precinct will also provide greater access to safer public open spaces, and transport options.

Environmental

The draft Masterplan reflects precinct objectives that include embedding climate responsive outcomes throughout the precinct, delivering potential positive environmental outcomes.

Climate Change

The draft Masterplan reflects precinct objectives that include embedding climate responsive outcomes throughout the precinct, delivering potential positive environmental outcomes.

COLLABORATION

Council, and UrbanFold continue to work closely with the Project Reference Group (comprised of Council, Inland Rail, VicTrack, Department of Transport and Planning and VLine) to inform the draft Masterplan.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

This report does not limit any human rights under the Victorian *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and encourages participation in civic life by our community.

CONCLUSION

The draft Euroa Railway Precinct Masterplan, shaped by community and stakeholder input, outlines a clear and staged vision for revitalising the Euroa railway precinct. It seeks to deliver better connectivity, enhanced public spaces, increased amenity, and new opportunities for local business, tourism, and community gathering.

The adoption of the Masterplan allows Council and community partners to apply for and advocate for investment in this important community precinct.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Euroa Railway Precinct Masterplan
2. 20250908 DRAFT Euroa Railway Precinct Masterplan Engagement Report



Strathbogie Shire Council acknowledges the Taungurung and Yorta Yorta people as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Strathbogie Shire. We pay our respect to their rich cultures and to Elders, past and present, as well as other First Nations people who live, work and play in the area.



The Railway Precinct Masterplan

Project Background

In 2020 Council adopted the Euroa Township Strategy which set out the agreed long-term planning, design and community vision for the future of Euroa. The Township Strategy imagines Euroa in 2040 as a place that is pleasant and inviting, with attractive, pedestrian friendly streets. It plans for a Town Centre that is well connected and easy to navigate, with safe walking and cycling facilities.

In addition, the Federal Government is delivering the Inland Rail Project, a 1,600km freight rail line connecting Melbourne and Brisbane via regional Victoria. The Victorian component involves rail improvement works between Beveridge and Albury to enable double-stacked freight trains to pass safely.

To accommodate increased freight demand, rail and road infrastructure works will be undertaken in Euroa on VicTrack land. These Federal Government managed works include; replacing the Anderson Street bridge with a vehicle underpass, track adjustments, new station platforms, and upgraded pedestrian underpasses and car parking. There will also be some public realm improvements, including a station forecourt, new access pathways, and supporting civil, drainage, and landscape works.

The Scope & Purpose of the Railway Precinct Masterplan (Masterplan).

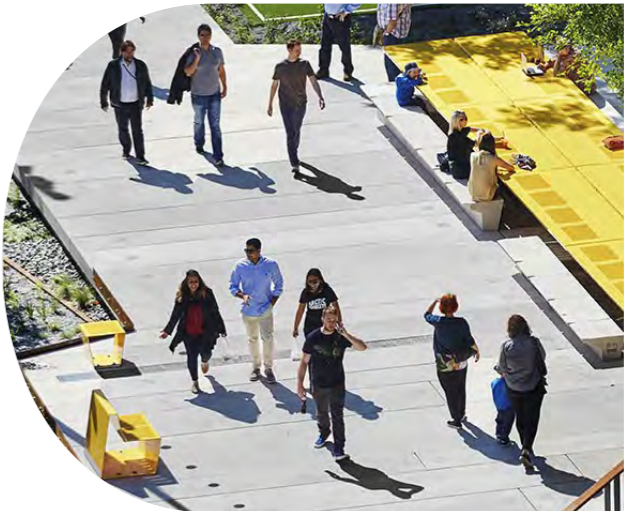
With funding from the State Government (Department of Transport and Planning), Strathbogie Shire Council has developed this Masterplan. Council and the local community are committed to leveraging the opportunities presented by the Inland Rail project to drive further improvements and deliver broader benefits to the Euroa Town Centre, for future generations.

As the Euroa Township Strategy was adopted prior to the detailed planning and delivery of the Inland Rail works, there is a need to explore how the Inland Rail works can be effectively integrated into the township.

The Masterplan identifies opportunities to improve connectivity, access, and movement to and from the Euroa Railway Precinct.

The Precinct is bound by Elliot Street to the north, Railway Street to the south, and the Anderson Street underpass to the south/southwest. The Masterplan proposes capital works projects and improvements on Council land within the precinct, excluding land that is privately owned or owned or leased by the State Government.

The Masterplan balances aspiration with practicality, outlining a staged approach to deliver both immediate improvements and long-term works. Proposed opportunities vary in scale and depend on community, stakeholder, and Council support, as well as external funding availability. This document summarises each project and its benefits to help Council and the community pursue grants and advocate for funding as and when required.



Vision for the Railway Precinct

Key messages from stakeholder and community engagement highlighted the need to improve accessibility and experience and adopt a considered approach to green space design and shading across the precinct. Feedback emphasised the importance of Council adopting a balanced approach to streetscape and public realm improvements to meet the needs of many different users.

“Make the most of this opportunity”

“Crossing Railway St from Binney St is critical”

“Our public art trail is a source of local pride”

The collective vision is to enhance and activate the Railway Precinct, transforming it into an inviting space that welcomes visitors and buzzes with community events. While Binney Street remains the beating heart of the Town Centre, the Railway Precinct will serve as the township’s central spine, creating a shared identity between the North and South.

Railway Street will evolve into a key local destination, strengthening the connection between the Station and Town Centre. A streetscape upgrade will improve the aesthetics and functionality of the northern end of town. Newly created open spaces will cater for a variety of different uses. Landscaping and public art will enhance pedestrian, cycling, and wheeling experiences and access through the precinct.

The precinct will become a source of community pride for locals and an attraction for visitors to the Town Centre.

“Lets bridge the great divide in the Township”

“We need comfortable places to sit & meet”

“ Safe, easy pedestrian access in and around the precinct is essential”

Precinct Objectives

These objectives, developed through consultation with stakeholders and the community, will guide Council and the community in realising the shared vision for the precinct — to enhance the precinct’s character and create a shared identity between north and south Euroa. The project recommendations have been identified to achieve the following agreed objectives.

1. Connectivity

Make moving between the station and surrounds a safe and comfortable experience for pedestrians and wheelers.

2. Accessibility

Ensure that newly created public spaces and paths are designed so all users feel safe and welcome, regardless of gender, age or ability.

3. Identity & Legibility

Use site-specific public art, street furniture, and landscaping as wayfinding devices to create an intuitive and enjoyable experience for visitors navigating the precinct.

4. Functionality

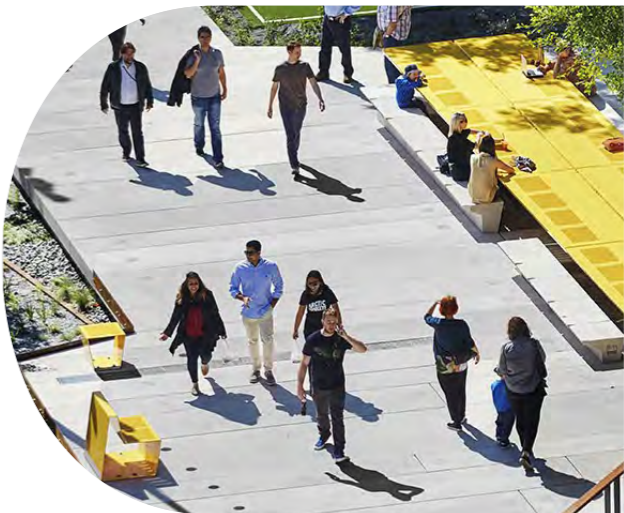
Provide weather protection and supporting infrastructure to enable activation of newly created public space for community events and range of uses.

5. Community

Activate the Forecourt as a central, community gathering place that serves as the heart of Euroa, fostering social connections and civic pride.

6. Resilience

Investigate opportunities to embed climate responsive outcomes throughout the precinct.



Precinct Masterplan

This plan outlines a range of capital works projects proposed by Council to enhance connectivity and amenity within the Railway Precinct. Implementation of these projects is subject to community support, further detailed design and the availability of external funding opportunities.

- 1 Canopy & understorey planting: Scott/Anderson Streets boulevard street trees
- 2 Township connectivity: footpath & improved connection to Recreation Precinct and parklands
- 3 Improved pedestrian crossing
- 4 Formalised car parking
- 5 Formalised RV parking
- 6 Northern Reserve Landscape Attraction
- 7 Picnic pavilion
- 8 Public art
- 9 Potential location for public amenities block
- 10 Railway Street Improvements: centre median greening
- 11 Binney/Railway Street intersection upgrade
- 12 Canopy/understorey landscaping
- 13 Southern Reserve: open pavilion/covered seating area
- 14 Southern Reserve: event infrastructure
- 15 Railway Street Improvements: Landscaping & seating area
- 16 Township connectivity path to Euroa Showgrounds/Seven Creeks Trail

Footpath

Path

Street

Pedestrian Crossing

Existing/Inland Rail Canopy Tree

Proposed Canopy Tree

Understorey Planting

Public Art Opportunity

EUROA RAILWAY PRECINCT MASTERPLAN



Masterplan Project Summary

The Masterplan recommends practical projects to create a welcoming and accessible Railway Precinct. The following pages summarise the Masterplan recommended projects, and have been chosen because they align community priorities with Council's budget, maintenance capacity, and the potential for external funding opportunities.

Key opportunities to enhance amenity and user experience in these areas include improving connectivity through new footpaths, pedestrian crossings, and expanded shared paths; increasing tree canopy and streetscape landscaping; and adding features such as seating, wayfinding signage, and public art.

The following summary of recommended projects and next steps to realise them should be read alongside the Precinct Masterplan.



Township Connectivity

Township Connectivity

Improved connectivity between key destinations through the following initiatives:

1 Between the Railway Precinct and Bicentennial Park:

- Construction of new footpath sections along Scott Street, between Elliott Street (court), and between Beaton and Garrett Streets.
- Addition of a new pedestrian crossing on Scott Street to create a safe and comfortable walking route.

2 Between the Precinct, Euroa Showgrounds, and Sevens Creek Trail:

- Development of a path along Frost Street, providing a continuous link from the northern edge of the Precinct to the Showgrounds.
- Enhanced pedestrian access to the Showgrounds via Railway Street and the Charles Street underpass.

3 Between the southern and northern parts of the township:

- Advocacy to VicTrack to improve pedestrian and cycling safety at Birkett Street.

4 Between the Railway Precinct and the Euroa Get Active Corridor:

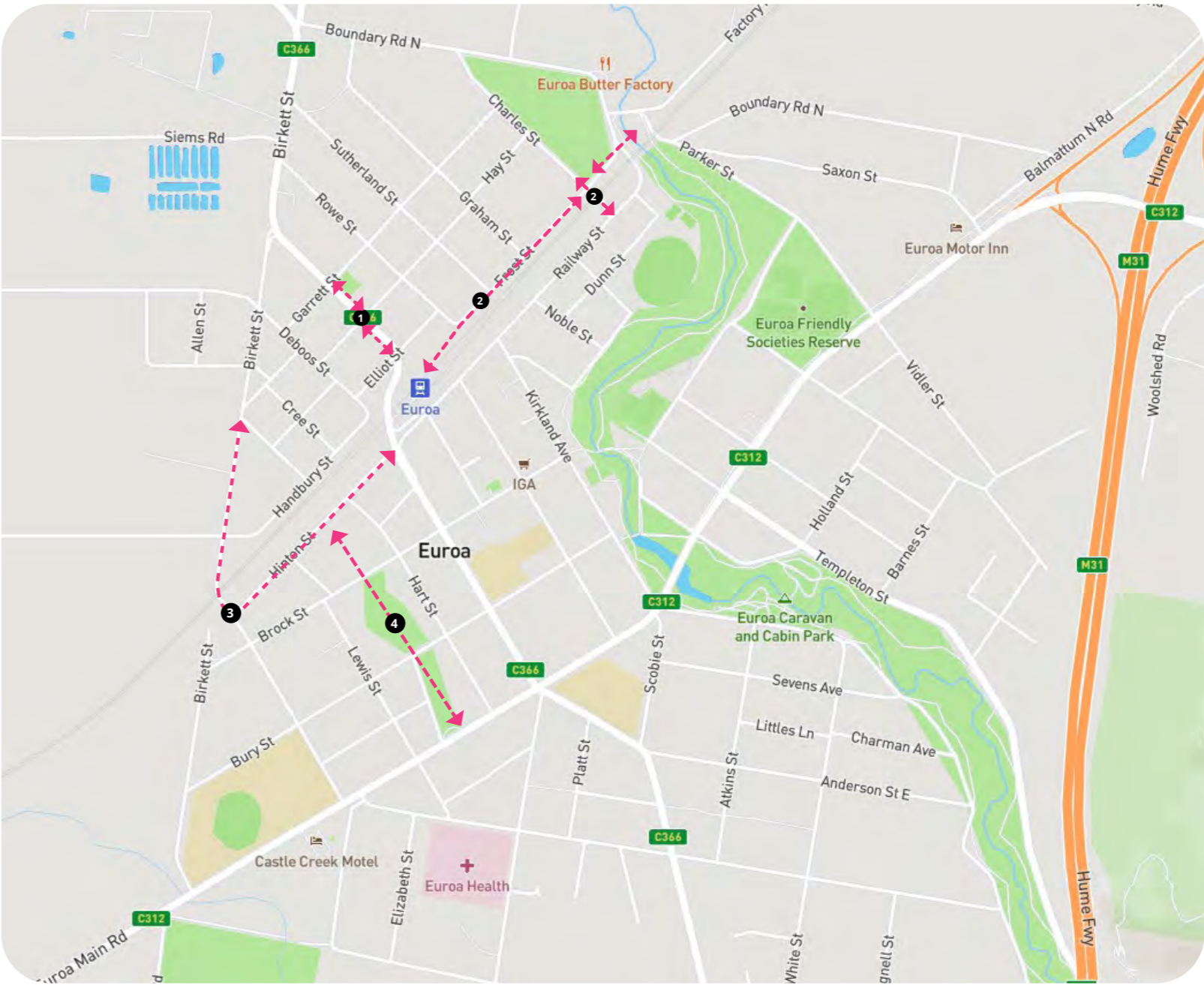
- Upgraded connections along Hinton Street to create a direct, accessible route.

Benefits:

Completing missing footpaths and upgrading crossings will create a safer, more comfortable environment that encourages more people to walk and cycle for local trips.

Next Steps:

Council to undertake detailed design investigations.



Canopy & Understorey Landscaping

Increased landscaping and canopy tree planting in and around the precinct and town centre streets, making it cooler whilst improving both amenity and aesthetics. The plan prioritises:

- Planting street trees throughout the precinct
- Expanding street build-outs along Railway Street to increase planting and permeability
- Landscaping Northern and Southern Reserves
- Integrating water sensitive urban design in future streetscape and public realm upgrades
- Installing plant structures for shade and greening in station car parks (in consultation with VicTrack).

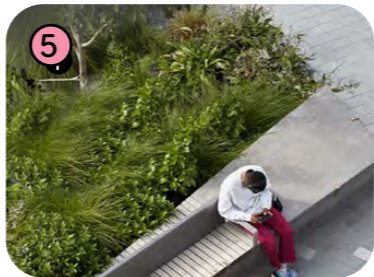
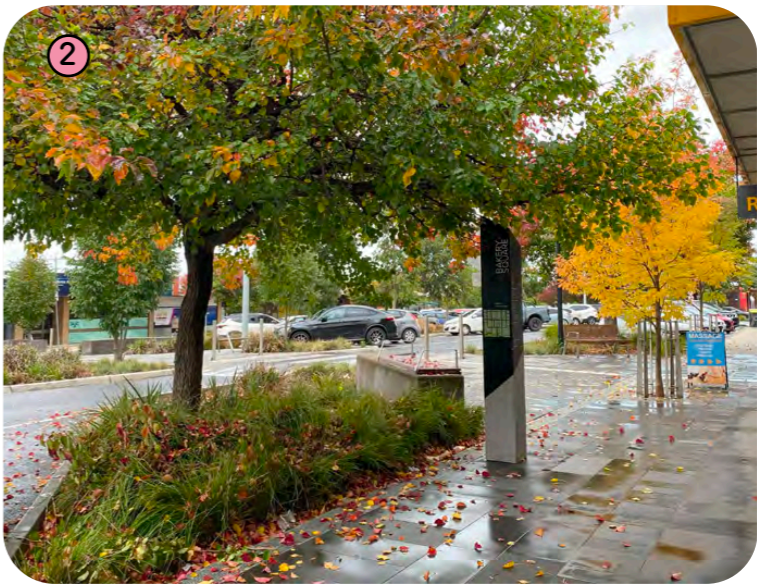
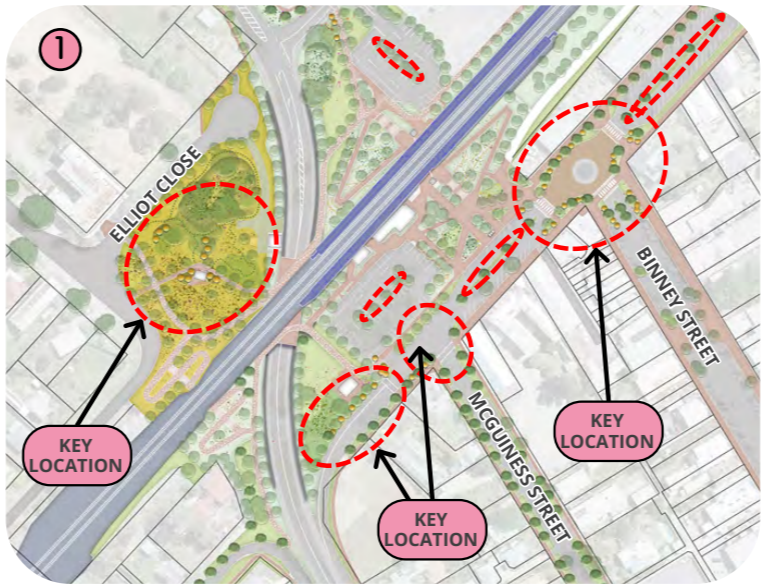
Benefits:

- Increased precinct attractiveness and visitor comfort
- Strengthened local biodiversity and identity through indigenous plants
- Reduced urban heat and improves climate resilience

Next Steps:

Council will focus planting in feasible areas, considering underground services, land tenure, and ongoing maintenance requirements. Council will:

- Balance aesthetic enhancements with practical maintenance and functionality
- Use drought-tolerant, low-growing, indigenous species
- Maintain visibility for pedestrians and vehicles
- Partner with Euroa Arboretum and Taungurung Land and Waters Council for expert guidance



1. Key plan showing preferred locations for public realm landscaping
2. Expanding street build-outs can increase landscaping
3. Low shrub planting in centre median increases greening
4. Incorporating landscaping between road and footpath improves safety and amenity
5. Raised seating areas are a great way to introduce more landscaping
6. Incorporating rain gardens into the street has multiple benefits

Improved Pedestrian Crossings

Enhancing pedestrian movement is vital to connect the northern and southern township areas. New pedestrian crossing treatments will complement improved and DDA compliant pedestrian underpasses and new shared paths, providing practical, yet significant improvements for wide scale community benefit. Priority locations include:

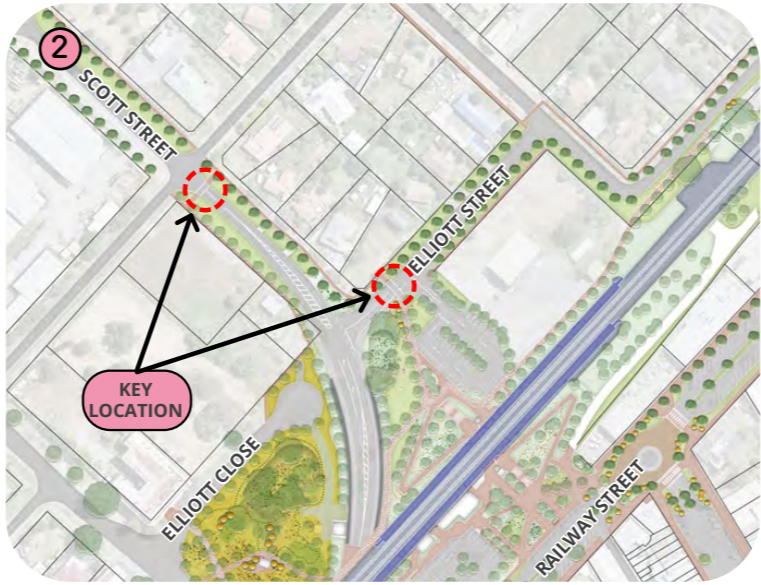
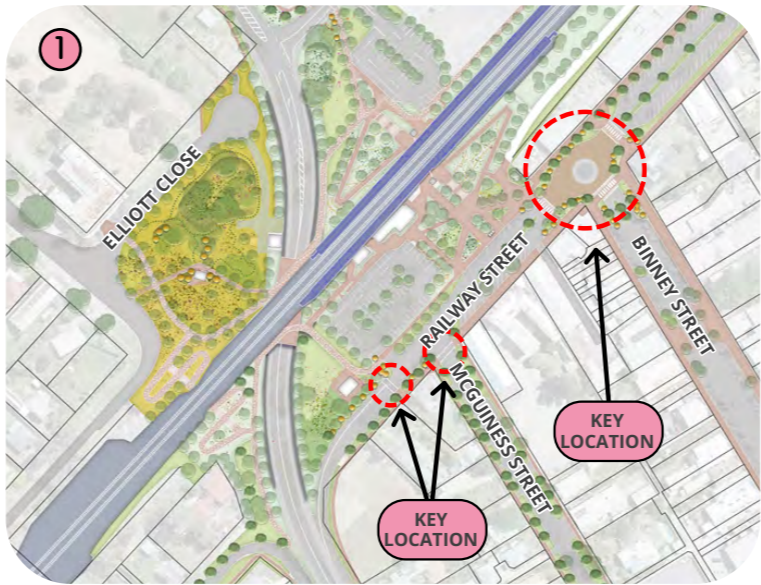
- Intersection of Scott and Beaton Streets
- Intersection of Binney and Railway Streets
- Intersection of McGuinness and Railway Streets
- Elliott Street Station car park entrance
- Southern end of Railway Street crossing into Southern Reserve

Benefits:

- Improves pedestrian safety, visibility and comfort
- Supports township walkability and navigation
- Responds to community priorities

Next Steps:

Council will seek funding for traffic assessments and collaborate with DTP for detailed designs (on State Government roads) Scott/Anderson Streets.



- 1. Key plan showing location of new/improved pedestrian crossings
- 2. Key plan showing location of new/improved pedestrian crossings
- 3. Landscaping incorporated into a wombat crossing
- 4. Street builds outs reduce the crossing length
- 5. Landscaping incorporated into standard crossing treatment
- 6. Example of a raised crossing treatment
- 7. Landscaping incorporated into standard crossing treatment
- 8. Landscaping incorporated into car park

Binney Street Intersection

A raised platform is a pedestrian crossing created by locally raising the road surface to be flush with adjoining footpaths, forming a continuous, gently sloped gradient across an intersection. This design improves pedestrian accessibility by providing a smooth, level crossing surface and also helps to reduce vehicle speeds.

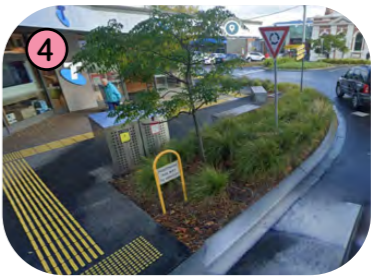
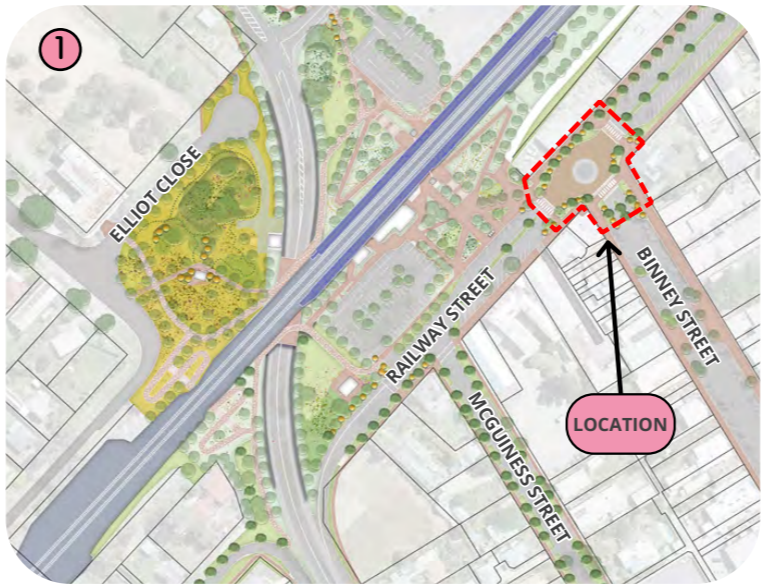
A raised platform integrated into a roundabout at the intersection of Binney and Railway Streets will prioritise pedestrian movement, slow traffic, and enable vehicles to make safe, efficient U-turns. Expanded build-outs around the edge of the intersection will enable space for provision of low growing shrubs to soften the expanse of hardscape and create a pleasing focal point at the end of Binney Street.

Benefits:

- Improved safety and accessibility for all road users
- Creates a pedestrian-friendly and attractive precinct

Next Steps:

Undertake detailed design of the proposed traffic management treatment



1. Key plan showing the location of the proposed intersection treatment
2. Example of a successful landscaped raised platform intersection
3. Raised platforms at roundabouts provide pedestrian priority and slow vehicles
4. Street build-outs at key intersections can accommodate small trees and understorey vegetation, significantly enhancing the streetscape
5. A small strip of landscaping can create an attractive buffer between the street and footpath
6. Low-level native shrubs are visually pleasing, drought tolerant, and require low maintenance so suitable for edge planting

Railway Street Improvements

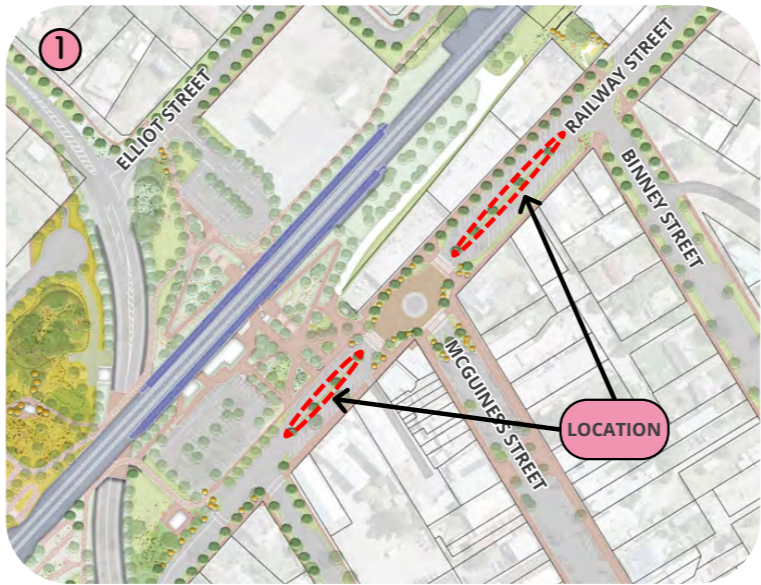
Railway Street is currently dominated by asphalt and vehicles, with limited soft landscaping. Council will investigate the feasibility of installing two small median strips on Railway Street—one between McGuinness and Binney Streets, and the other between Binney Street and Kirkland Avenue—to introduce street greening and improve landscape amenity.

Planted with generously spaced street trees and low-maintenance understory shrubs, the medians will soften the streetscape and create a welcoming arrival for train visitors.

The design of the medians and the selection of vegetation species will balance street beautification with the need for visual permeability across the street. Planting will be planned to ensure clear lines of sight to local business signage in the area and to meet Council's low-maintenance requirements.

Benefits:

- Improves precinct and streetscape character and amenity
- Calms traffic and improves the pedestrian environment
- Greater green canopy



Next Steps:

- Council will undertake detailed design ensuring:
- Safe and comfortable pedestrian access
 - Vehicles can park safely
 - Existing access requirements are maintained
 - Shop front visibility is preserved
 - Suitable selection of vegetation
- Council will seek further community feedback



- 1. Key plan showing the location of landscaped medians
- 2. Median featuring roll-over kerb in Murphy Street, Wangaratta
- 3. Median featuring crossing point and low-level shrubs in Darlinghurst Road, Sydney
- 4. Median featuring canopy trees in Darlot Street, Horsham
- 5. Median featuring native grass example in Cressy Street, Deniliquin

Activation of the Southern Reserve

Inland Rail works will create a new open space between the station car park and the Anderson Street vehicle underpass. This flat, grassed area will include canopy trees and a shared path linking De Boos Street and Railway Street. The reserve will be similar in size to Bicentennial Park.

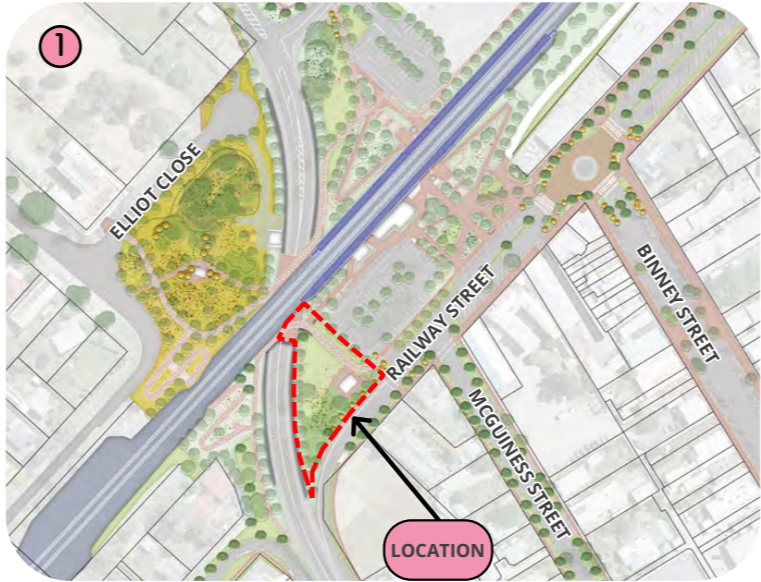
This space is suitable for informal recreation and small, community pop-ups and events (such as ArtBox). To enable this activation, a small sheltered seating area will provide a comfortable place for people to sit, eat, and enjoy green space close to the Town Centre. Infrastructure such as power and water will be provided. This area is also in close proximity to the formalised RV/ long vehicle parking.

Benefits:

- Provides attractive and accessible green space within walking distance of the Town Centre
- Offers facilities to host pop-ups and small scale community events
- Provides a welcoming stop for RV visitors with close proximity to the town centre

Next Steps:

- Confirm with Inland Rail that the necessary services and infrastructure will be included in the planned works
- Prepare a detailed design for planting and seating
- Seek community input into the naming of the reserve and the activation program



1. Key plan showing the location of the Southern Reserve
2. A seating area, informal grassed area and native planting will feature in the reserve
3. A shared-use path and pockets of native planting will be provided
4. An expansive grassed area, adjacent to the station car park, will support small-scale popup events
5. ArtBox is an example of a suitable popup event that could be held in the reserve
6. Feature lighting and public art will enhance the reserves evening atmosphere

Northern Reserve Local Attraction

Inland Rail works are renewing the open space north of the train station, located between DeBoos and Elliott Streets, improving connectivity to the Town Centre. Removing the vehicle overpass has improved sight lines to the Town Centre, and the pedestrian underpass and shared use paths have improved movement between the Northern Reserve and the Town Centre.

Council, in partnership with the Taungurung Land & Waters Council and Euroa Arboretum, will investigate the creation of a nature-based attraction featuring Indigenous plantings, cultural experiences, a picnic shelter, a viewing deck, and integrated public art connected to the local art trail. This initiative will expand the Arboretum and Taungurung cultural programs into the Town Centre.

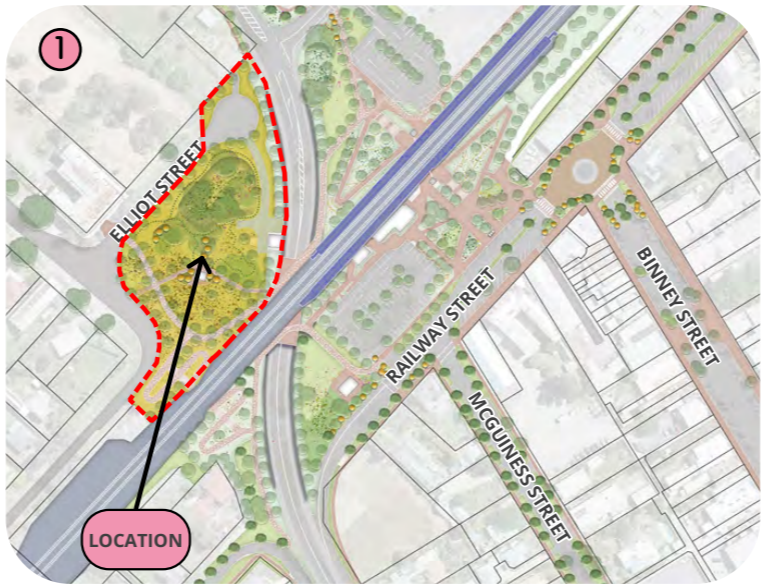
There is an opportunity to name the reserve to reflect the Taungurung Country, and enhance its function through Indigenous landscaping, public art, and feature lighting, creating an immersive and sensory experience that evolves with the seasons.

Benefits:

- Provide the community with Indigenous cultural and sensory experiences
- Expand the Arboretum’s profile using drought-tolerant native species

Next Steps:

- Prepare a grant application, in partnership with Taungurung Land & Waters Council and the Euroa Arboretum to fund the detailed design and construction of the landscape attraction



1. Key plan showing the Northern Reserve location
2. Wawa Biik experiences celebrate Taungurung connection to Country, could extend from Euroa Arboretum to the Northern Reserve
3. On the Daanak (Coolamon) trail at Euroa Arboretum, QR codes enable visitors to hear and learn Taungurung stories
4. A sheltered seating area provides a focal point and meeting place for cultural activities and recreation
5. The reserve serves as a place for learning
6. An immersive landscape defines the reserve experience
7. Feature lighting enhances the immersive landscape
8. Euroa's public art trail connects into the reserve

Public Amenities Block

Existing station toilets only operate during train services. The nearest 24-hour amenities are located on Brock Street. To better serve rail users and local events, additional amenities are proposed closer to the station. Two potential sites have been identified.

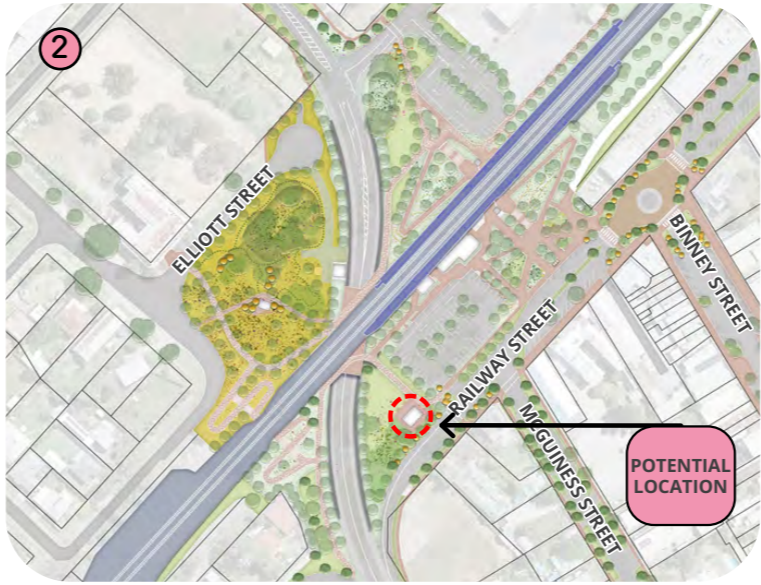
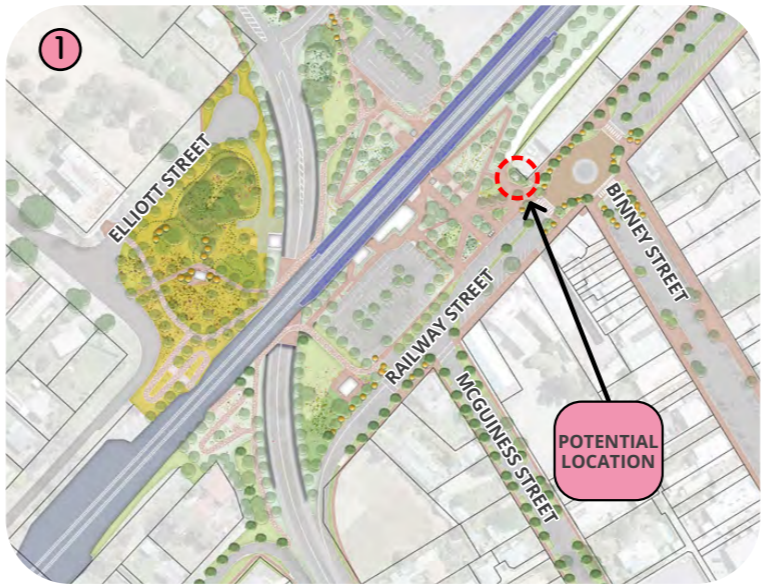
- Station forecourt (between Binney Street and the station platforms)
- Southern Reserve (adjacent to parking and event areas)

Benefits:

- Improved access for public transport users
- Supports daily use and local events in the precinct

Next Steps:

Investigate the two potential sites in Councils development and consideration of the municipal Public Toilet strategy.



- 1. Potential location 1: Southern Reserve (southern corner)
- 2. Potential location 2: Eastern edge of the Railway Forecourt
- 3 - 6. Examples of contemporary public amenities suitable for the precinct

Long Vehicle Parking in the Precinct

Euroa encourages visitors arriving in motorhomes, caravans, and long vehicles. The Masterplan identifies two RV parking locations in the town centre, within the Precinct. RV parking locations will serve visitors at:

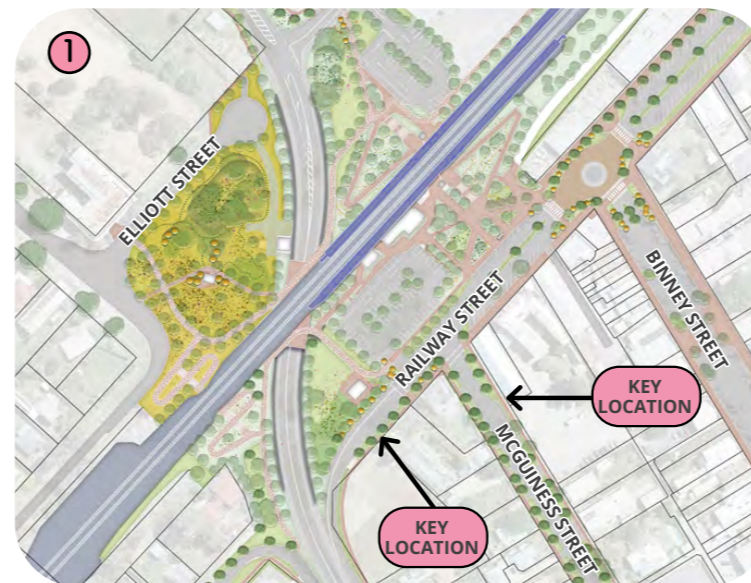
- Northern end of McGuinness Street
- Western end of Railway Street near Southern Reserve
- Existing informal long vehicle parking on Kirkland Avenue remains, with new line marking and signage.
- Signage will guide visitors to dump points and local destinations.

Benefits:

- Improves visitor experience and encourages longer stays
- Increased local economic activity
- Enhances Euroa's reputation as RV-friendly

Next Steps:

- Update the line marking at the identified locations and confirm there are no physical restrictions impacting vehicle parking (i.e. low tree canopy).
- Install consistent, visible wayfinding signage at key decision points in the township providing information on local dump points and key destinations within the township.

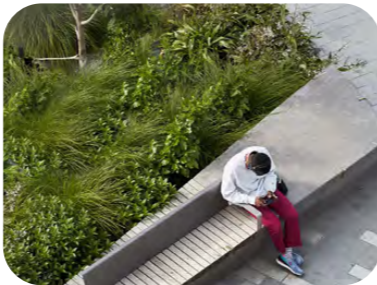


Precinct Summary

The following pages provide detailed plans for:

- Railway Street
- Southern Reserve
- Northern Reserve

Appendix 1 contains the proposed Inland Rail works to provide context to councils Precinct Masterplan.



Masterplan Projects

Railway Street Precinct

Pedestrian connectivity within the precinct will be improved. Pedestrian crossings will be upgraded at the intersections of Kirkland Avenue/Railway Street, Binney Street/Railway Street, and McGuinness Street/ Railway Street. Several missing links in the pedestrian network will be addressed, including sections on Scott, Elliott, and Frost Streets north of the rail line. On the eastern side of the precinct, a new footpath will connect the path to the recreation precinct via Hinton Street. There is also potential for an informal path along Railway Street, connecting to the Seven Creeks Trail.

Railway Street will be enhanced through greening and minor reconfiguration. The streetscape will be beautified with well spaced canopy street trees in central median. Additional landscaping at the three key intersections will be provided in expanded street build-outs. A raised roundabout is proposed at the intersection of Binney Street and Railway Street. The design will prioritise safe movement for pedestrians and cyclists, providing a continuous pavement gradient for seamless access between the Forecourt and Binney Street. Opportunities for public art and signage will be incorporated, and on-street parking will be formalised.

- 1 Footpath
- 2 Improved pedestrian crossing
- 3 Binney/Railway Street intersection
- 4 Car park (formalisation)
- 5 Landscaped centre median
- 6 Canopy/understorey landscaping
- 7 Public art opportunity
- 8 Public amenities block
- 9 Frost Street landscaping
- 10 Path connection to Seven Creeks Trail
- 11 RV/Long vehicle car parking



PROPOSED MASTERPLAN PROJECTS

Footpath

Path

Pedestrian Crossing

Street

Existing/Inland Rail Canopy Tree

Proposed Canopy Tree

Understorey Planting

Potential Public Art

Railway Street Precinct

ARTISTS IMPRESSION - PROPOSED MASTERPLAN PROJECTS



Masterplan Projects

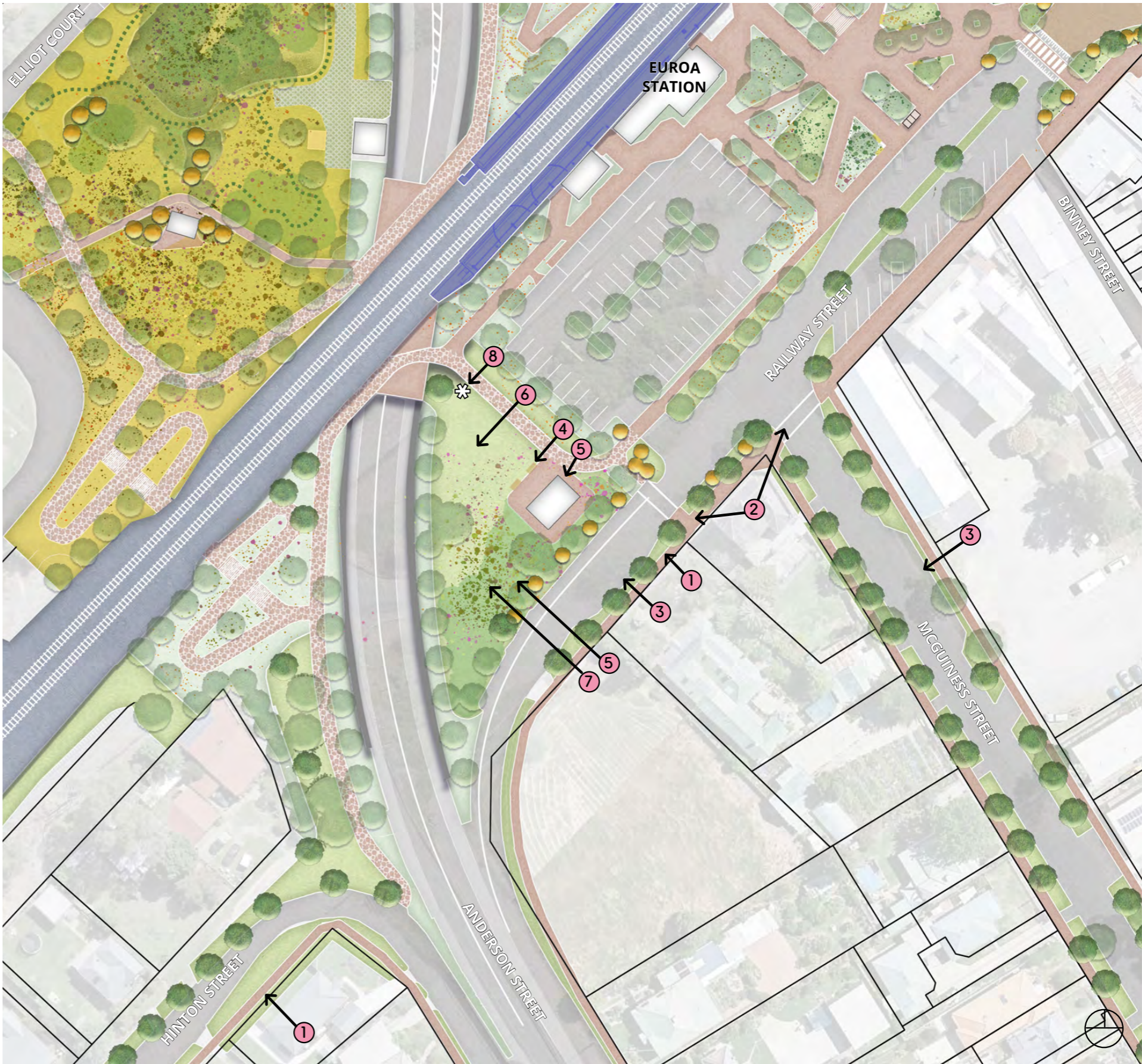
Southern Reserve

The amenity of the grassed reserve will be enhanced. Seating and landscaping along the southern edge will create a pleasant green space within the Town Centre. There is an opportunity to expand the local public art trail into the reserve, establishing a local landmark and a key wayfinding feature in the southern section of the precinct.

Upgrading the McGuinness and Railway Streets intersection will improve pedestrian connectivity to the Town Centre. Expanded street build-outs will provide additional landscaping and reduce the pedestrian crossing area.

Given its generous size and proximity to the Town Centre, this area is ideally suited for staging small activations and providing an accessible green space for visitors to enjoy. Permanent services and infrastructure are proposed to support event activation, including a three-phase power supply, lighting, sewer, water, and waste services. The southwest corner of the reserve is a convenient and visible location for a public amenities block. RV parking on nearby McGuinness Street will enable visitors to park close to the reserve and its facilities.

- 1 Footpath (upgrade)
- 2 Improved pedestrian crossing
- 3 Formalised RV parking
- 4 Seating
- 5 Open pavilion (covered seating area/alternative public amenities block location)
- 6 Utility services for activation (power, water)
- 7 Canopy/understorey landscaping
- 8 Public art opportunity



Masterplan Projects

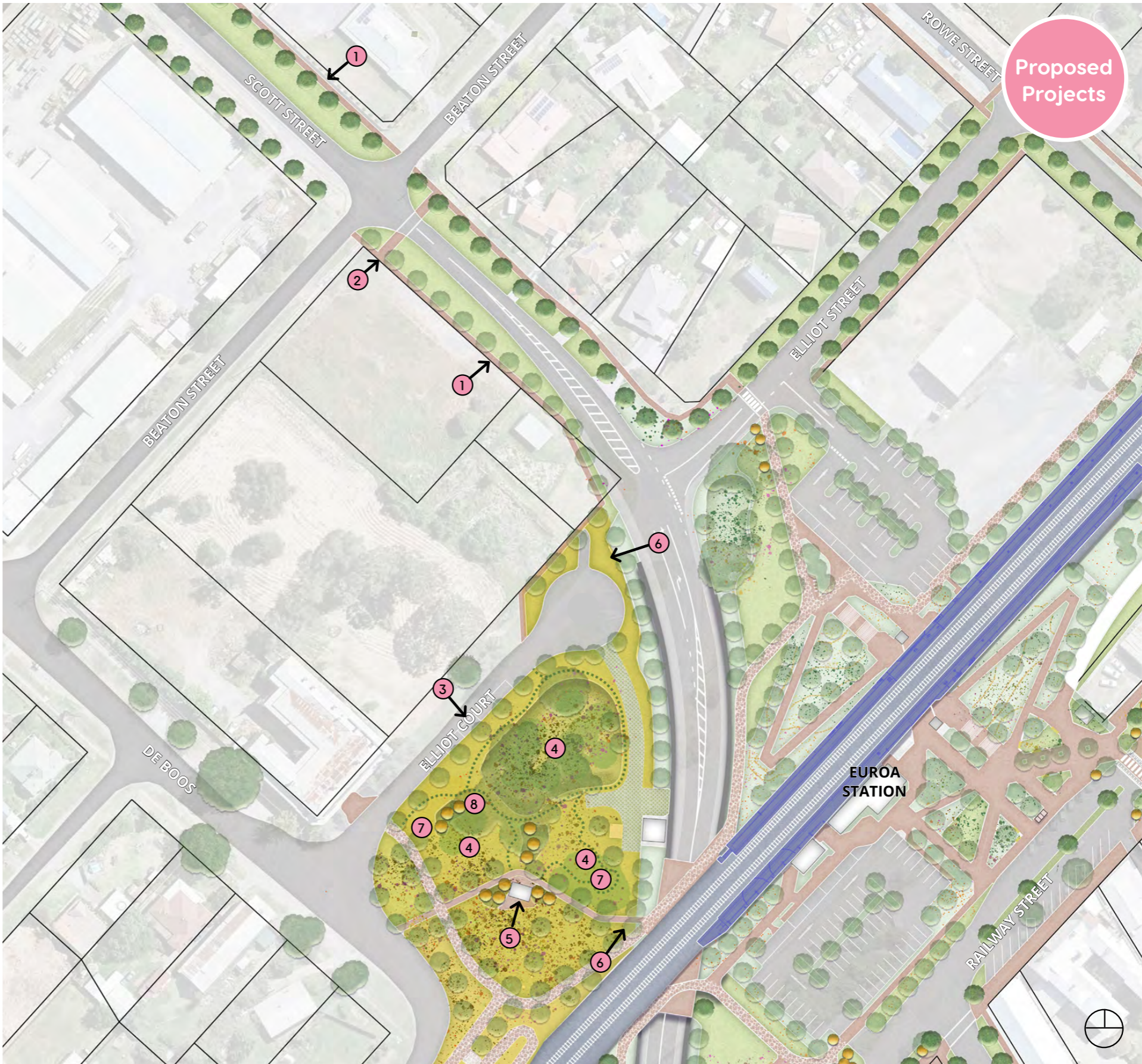
Northern Reserve

The amenity of the grassed reserve will be enhanced. There is an opportunity to transform this reserve into a key destination for both locals and visitors by expanding and enhancing the landscaping to create a nature-focused attraction. Feature Indigenous planting could be designed in collaboration with the Taungurung Land & Waters Council and Euroa Arboretum. A picnic shelter with BBQ facilities, and possibly a viewing deck, could further enhance the visitor experience.

Integrating public art into the landscape could encourage exploration and connect the reserve to the local public art trail. All season, all senses Indigenous attraction featuring interpretative signage and story telling comprised of art, sound and tactile elements.

Public access to the reserve will be improved with the provision of missing links in the footpath network on Scott StreetCar and by the provision of parking on Elliott Street.

- 1 Footpath
- 2 Improved pedestrian crossing
- 3 Parking
- 4 Landscape/nature attraction
- 5 Picnic shelter/pavilion
- 6 Public art
- 7 Seating



PROPOSED MASTERPLAN PROJECTS

- | | | | |
|----------|---------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Footpath | Pedestrian Crossing | Existing/Inland Rail Canopy Tree | Understorey Planting |
| Path | Street | Proposed Canopy Tree | Potential Public Art |

The Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan sets out further investigations, design work, and engagement needed to deliver the recommendations identified in the Railway Precinct Masterplan, for consideration by Strathbogie Shire Council, Inland Rail, and the community.

The adjacent table lists the next steps required to progress each project as outlined in previous chapters, taking into account influencing factors such as design outcomes, stakeholder support, and available funding.

Delivery of these actions depends on detailed design, stakeholder endorsement, and securing necessary funding. Some projects may be delivered earlier if grants arise, while others may be delayed due to funding constraints or unforeseen issues. Importantly, implementation can proceed incrementally as resources and funding become available.

Detailed design should align with relevant Inland Rail strategies and Council programs.

Project	Time Frame			
	DTP Council SSC Inland Rail Community	Short 0-5 years	Medium 5-10 years	Long 10+ years
Township Connectivity				
Capital Works:				
Construction of new footpath sections along Scott Street, between Elliott Street (court)	SSC	✓		
Construction of new footpath sections along Scott Street between Beaton and Garrett Streets	SSC	✓		
New pedestrian crossing on Scott Street at the intersection of Beaton and Scott Streets	SSC	✓		
Development of a path along Frost Street providing a continuous link from the northern edge of the Precinct to the Showgrounds	DTP SSC	✓		
Enhanced pedestrian access to the Showgrounds via Railway Street and the Charles Street underpass	SSC	✓		
Strengthened pedestrian and cycling connection via Birkett Street for cross-town movement, and via Hinton Street for improved access to the Precinct.	SSC	✓		
Upgraded connections along Hinton Street to create a direct, accessible route	SSC	✓		

- SSC - Strathbogie Shire Council
- IR - Inland Rail
- DTP - Department of Transport and Planning
- CG - Community Groups

Railway Street Precinct			Medium 5-10 years	Long 10+ years
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Partnership & Advocacy:

Work with DTP and the Infrastructure team to align street upgrades and footpath enhancements with broader precinct improvements	DTP SSC	✓		
Collaborate with the infrastructure team to explore the delivery of improved pedestrian crossing infrastructure at key intersections, with a focus on DDA compliance and legibility.	DTP SSC IR	✓		
Identify opportunities to integrate public art and interpretive signage in collaboration with local artists and community stakeholders.	SSC C	✓		
Advocate to VicTrack pedestrian/cycling for safety improvements at Birkett Stret	SSC	✓		

Capital Works:

Upgrade pedestrian crossings at the intersections of Kirkland Avenue/Railway Street, Binney Street/Railway Street, and McGuinness Street/Railway Street	DTP SSC IR	✓		
Enhance Railway Street through greening and minor road reconfiguration to improve the public realm and support safe, shared use	DTP SSC IR	✓		
Plant canopy street trees within a landscaped central median on Railway Street	SSC		✓	
Prioritise pedestrian and cyclist safety by integrating traffic calming measures and simplifying road geometry	DTP SSC IR	✓		
Deliver new footpath links to address gaps in the pedestrian network on Scott, Elliott, and Frost Streets north of the rail line.	SSC	✓		
Construct a new footpath linking the path to the recreation precinct via Hinton Street.	SSC			✓
Construct a new roundabout at Binney Street/Railway Street with continuous pavement treatment	SSC	✓		
Deliver landscaping treatments in Frost Street/Kirkland Street parkland	DTP SSC IR		✓	
Formalise on-street parking along Railway Street with integrated landscaping and build-outs at intersections.	DTP SSC IR	✓		
Install seating, canopy/understorey landscaping, and integrate public art elements	SSC IR CG		✓	

Southern Reserve		Short 0-5 years	Medium 5-10 years	Long 10+ years
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Capital Works:

Upgrade footpaths and improve pedestrian access along the southern edge of the reserve	DTP SSC IR	✓		
Formalise RV parking on Railway Street and McGuinness Street	DTP SSC		✓	
Formalise car parking near the reserve to support daily use and event-related demand	DTP SSC		✓	
Install seating and canopy/understorey landscaping to improve comfort and visual amenity	SSC	✓		
Deliver permanent services to support event activation, including three-phase power, lighting, sewer, water, and waste infrastructure	SSC		✓	
Integrate public art elements within the reserve to enhance its identity and role in the precinct's cultural landscape	SSC CG		✓	

Northern Reserve

Partnership & Advocacy:

Collaborate with the Taungurung Land & Waters Council and the Euroa Arboretum to co-design Indigenous planting and deliver a nature-focused landscape experience.	SSC CG	✓		
Work with the Arts and Culture team and community groups to integrate public art into the reserve, extending the local public art trail and encouraging exploration.	SSC CG	✓		

Capital Works:

Upgrade footpaths and address missing links in the pedestrian network along Scott Street	DTP SSC IR	✓		
Provide new parking spaces on Elliott Street to improve visitor access	DTP SSC IR	✓		
Enhance the reserve through feature landscaping, including Indigenous planting, canopy trees, and understorey vegetation	SSC	✓		
Install a picnic shelter with BBQ facilities and explore the feasibility of a viewing deck to improve recreational amenity	SSC CG	✓		
Incorporate seating and informal gathering spaces	SSC	✓		
Integrate public art into the landscape design to reinforce cultural identity and connect with the wider precinct	SSC CG	✓		



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EUROA RAILWAY PRECINCT

Inland Rail Works Plans

The Masterplan builds on works currently being delivered by Inland Rail within the precinct. To support stakeholder and community understanding, plans showing the extent of Inland Rail's works were prepared. These high-level plans help identify what Inland Rail is delivering and highlight opportunities for the Masterplan to respond. They have been produced for communication purposes only.

Inland Rail Works

Railway Street Precinct

Inland Rail works will deliver a new station forecourt, located between the station platforms and Railway Street on the site of the existing station car park. The forecourt will provide direct access to the station platforms. Large canopy trees will offer shade and enhance the area's amenity, while raised gardens will provide landscaping and seating.

Underpasses will improve pedestrian connectivity between north and south Euroa, as well as the station platforms. The Station/Binney Street (DDA compliant) pedestrian underpass will be accessible via lift, stairs, and a ramp. A shared-use path will provide a safe connection between DeBoos Street and Railway Street.

A renewed car park with pick-up and drop-off access will be located adjacent to the station forecourt, accessed via Railway Street. Additionally, a coach bay and sheltered seating area will be provided on Railway Street.

- A** Station forecourt
- B** Central pedestrian underpass, ramp & lift
- C** Seating
- D** Coach bay
- E** Bus shelter
- F** Shared use path
- G** New carpark



INLAND RAIL WORKS - INDICATIVE ILLUSTRATION ONLY

Footpath	Pedestrian Crossing	Existing/Inland Rail Canopy Tree	Understorey Planting
Path	Street	Proposed Canopy Tree	Potential Public Art

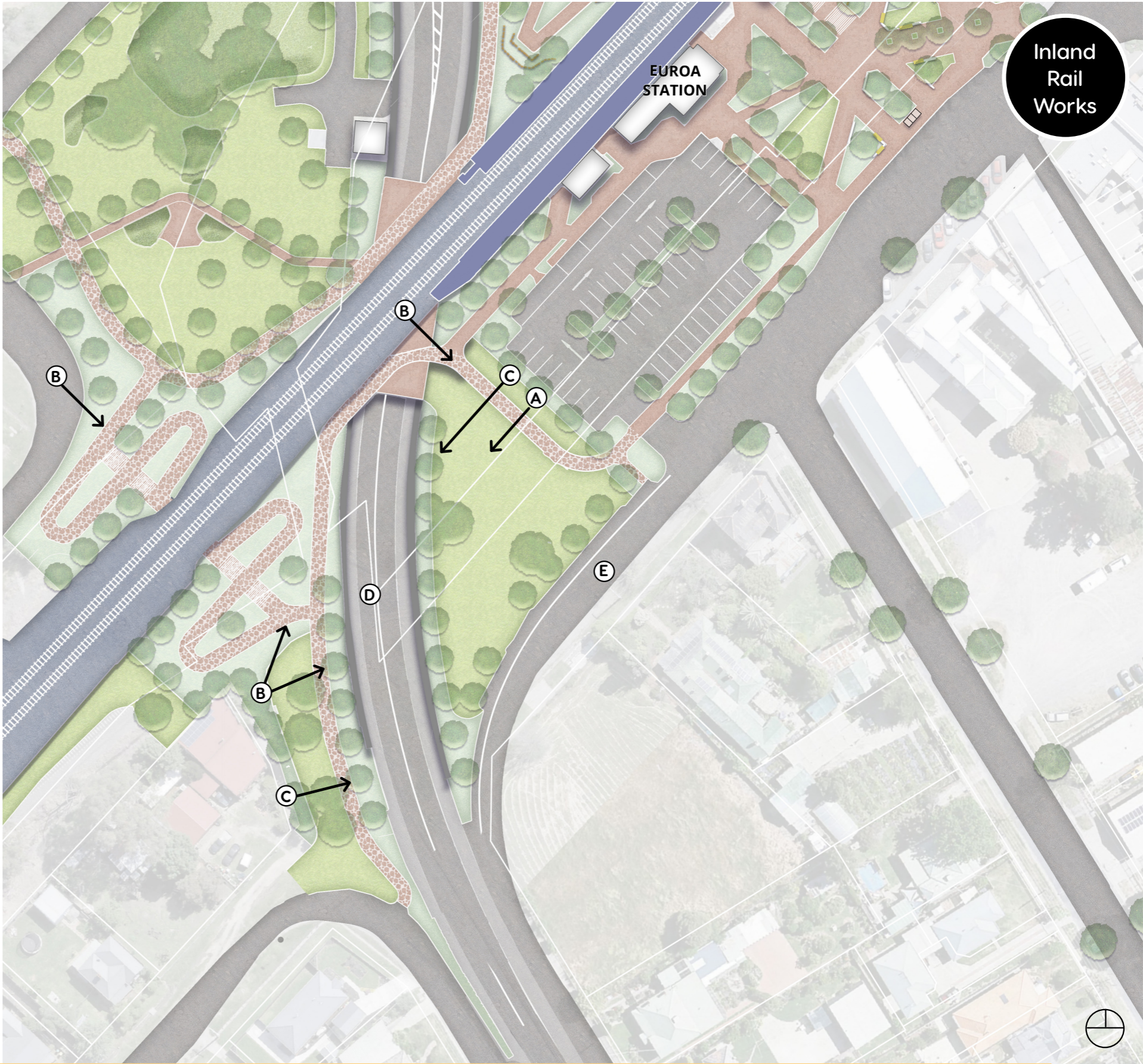
Inland Rail Works

Southern Reserve

Inland Rail will create a new open space between the Railway Street car park and the Anderson Street vehicle underpass. This flat, grassed area will be approximately the same size as Bicentennial Park. Canopy trees will be planted along the western edge of the reserve to screen the vehicle underpass.

A shared-use path will provide a cycling connection between De Boos Street and Railway Street. The adjacent section of Railway Street will be reconfigured for one way traffic (southbound) to Anderson Street.

- A Green space
- B Shared use path
- C Canopy tree(s)
- D Vehicle underpass
- E Reconfiguration of Railway Street west



INLAND RAIL WORKS - INDICATIVE ILLUSTRATION ONLY

- | | | | |
|----------|---------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Footpath | Pedestrian Crossing | Existing/Inland Rail Canopy Tree | Understorey Planting |
| Path | Street | Proposed Canopy Tree | |

Inland Rail Works

Northern Reserve

Inland Rail will deliver a renewed open space area north of the train station. This area will be more visible from the Town Centre following the removal of the vehicle overpass. It will be connected to the Town Centre by shared paths linking to both the central pedestrian underpass and the DeBoos Street shared-use underpass.

Canopy trees will be planted around the perimeter, and a landscaped drainage area will be provided. Elliott Street will be reconfigured as a no-through road due to the new vehicle underpass.

- A Green space
- B Drainage area
- C Reconfigured street access (no through road)
- D Service vehicle access (reinforced grass)
- E Pumping station
- F Footpath/shared path
- G New carpark



INLAND RAIL WORKS - INDICATIVE ILLUSTRATION ONLY

Footpath	Pedestrian Crossing	Existing/Inland Rail Canopy Tree	Understorey Planting
Path	Street	Proposed Canopy Tree	Potential Public Art





Euroa Railway Precinct Masterplan

Engagement Report September 2025

Background

The draft Euroa Railway Precinct Masterplan was released for community feedback from the 16 July to 13 August 2025, including 2 in-person community information sessions held during this period.

The draft Masterplan was informed by previous key stakeholder consultation on the precinct, and initial concepts between December 2024 to June 2025.

The Engagement Approach

The engagement process aimed to inform the community and seek final feedback on the draft Masterplan (**International Association of Public Participation Level: *Consult***).

The draft Masterplan was available for public comment via Share Strathbogie website platform and hard copy at the Euroa Council Office for a period of four weeks between 16 July-13 August 2025. The consultation opportunity and public information sessions were promoted via print and social media across the consultation period.

Two public information sessions were held and open for all to attend. Approximately 60 people attended the two information sessions.

Targeted communications were sent to encourage feedback from individual community members, community groups and stakeholders.

Methodology:

- An online survey hosted on the *Share Strathbogie* platform
- Two in-person information sessions held on the 28 July 2025 in Euroa
- Social media promotion via Council's official channels
- Notification of all stakeholders via email and an invitation to contribute to the survey

Participation and Reach

Social Media

Facebook posts – 8
Total views – 17,193
Link clicks - 84

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Instagram posts – 6
Total views - 1,508

Share Strathbogie (online engagement platform)

Page Views: 536

In-Person Engagement

Two in-person public information sessions: Approximately 60 people in attendance

Direct conversations and information shared with residents

Total Responses Received: 56 (Online and Hard copy)

What our community told us

Theme	Description of Comments	Number of responses
Trees and Landscaping	Support the plantings/ greening proposed in the masterplan	11
	Did not support plantings and greening proposed in the masterplan	3
	Support for the median strip and trees/ understory planting (Railway Street)	9
	Did not support the introduction of a median strip (Railway Street)	15
	Concern regarding fire risk	5
	Concern regarding removal of mature trees (Anderson Street)	7
Connectivity and Access	Comments relating to the closure and reinstatement of Frost Street Underpass	14
	Support for safe accessible path network that connects key areas and features within the township	16
Parking and Traffic	Support for the roundabout intersection treatment (Binney and Railway St)	4
	Opposition to the roundabout treatment (Binney Street and Railway Street)	3
	Concern regarding any change to current driveway access	4
	Concern regarding visibility due to change in conditions (median/ parking)	4
	Support and greater consideration of RV/ Long vehicle parking and associated requirements	7
	Concern regarding road useability, safety due to (median strip/ and trees)	2
	Concern regarding impacts in road conditions on event delivery on Euroa Town Criter	1

Euroa Railway Precinct Masterplan Engagement Report - September 2025

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	Support to make Binney Street One way	2
Design and Character	Support for heritage elements and existing rural charm	7
	Preference for simple, functional and local design elements not polished/ urban- style	4
	Interest regarding the use and interpretation of Good Shed materials	3
	Solar shading over car park, battery	5
Sustainability and climate resilience	Support for sustainability features	6
	Calling for more sustainability features	4
	Supporting the use of local plants/ partnership with the Euroa Arb	11
	Support for Water sensitive design/ drought tolerant/ area appropriate plantings and species selection	5
	Importance of tree canopy and shade structures	6
Amenities and public toilets	Support for well-placed public toilets that are accessible but do not detract from the precinct's aesthetic	5
	Support for public toilet placement in the main forecourt	0
	Opposition to the public toilet placement in the main forecourt	4
	Support for spaces that cater for families/ school groups and tourists	7
	Lighting	3
	Bike parking	3
	Exercise stations	2
	Support for event infrastructure and activations	5
Public Art and Cultural recognition	Support for public art	4
	Support for Aboriginal art	1
	Support work and partnership with TLaWC	5
Affordability, and whole of life costs (maintenance)	Concern regarding cost of works and infrastructure	5
	Concern regarding maintenance costs	11
	Support for low maintenance and low costs elements	5
Other	More accessible version of the Masterplan	1
Other	Anderson Street should be included in the Masterplan	2
Other	Overall supportive of the Masterplan and works	11
Transparency/ Communication	Relating to the Frost Street decision to allow the removal of the Frost Street Pedestrian Underpass	5

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The below table provides an overall summary.

Feedback Analysis

Theme	Concerns
Trees and landscaping	<p>A theme throughout the feedback was the community's strong interest in tree planting and landscaping.</p> <p>Many residents support the inclusion of native vegetation, particularly species sourced from the Euroa Arboretum, which are seen as resilient and reflective of the local environment.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about the practicality and safety of placing trees in the middle of Railway Street. Issues such as visibility for drivers, potential damage to infrastructure, and long-term maintenance costs were frequently mentioned. There was both opposition and support for the introduction of a median strip in Railway Street.</p> <p>Some raised fire risks associated with certain plant types and the need for sustainable watering solutions.</p>
Connectivity and Access	<p>Connectivity emerged as an important theme.</p> <p>Some submissions expressed frustration over the loss of the Frost street Pedestrian Underpass, which provided access between the northern and southern parts of Euroa.</p> <p>Requests were included regarding the reinstatement of the underpass.</p> <p>Requests were also made relating to the development of alternative pathways that are inclusive and accessible for all, including people with disabilities, older residents, and children.</p> <p>There is also a desire for better integration with existing assets like the Showgrounds, sporting precincts and Seven Creeks.</p>
Parking and Traffic	<p>Traffic flow and parking design are of significant interest.</p> <p>While some residents appreciate the proposed roundabout and traffic calming measures, others worry about the impact of median strips and tree placement on road usability and safety.</p> <p>Business owners and residents on Railway Street highlighted potential issues with driveway access and visibility.</p> <p>There is also a strong push for RV-friendly infrastructure, including designated parking, signage, and amenities to support tourism.</p> <p>Concerns have been raised that the proposed roundabout design does not adequately accommodate the specific requirements of the Euroa Criterium Cycling Race or similar cycling activities.</p>

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Design and Character	<p>The community values Euroa's heritage and rural charm and wants the precinct's design to reflect this identity.</p> <p>Feedback indicates a preference for simple, functional, and locally inspired design elements over modern, urban-style features.</p> <p>There is support for using recycled materials from the demolished Goods Shed and incorporating elements that celebrate Euroa's history and natural surroundings.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about the precinct becoming too polished or generic, potentially undermining the town's unique character.</p>
Sustainability and Climate Resilience	<p>Sustainability is a recurring theme, with many residents advocating for climate-resilient infrastructure.</p> <p>Suggestions include installing solar panels, EV and e-bike charging stations, and implementing Water Sensitive Urban Design principles. Shade structures and tree canopies are seen as essential for mitigating heat, especially in car parks.</p> <p>The community also supports using local native plants that require minimal maintenance and are suited to changing climate conditions.</p>
Amenities and public facilities	<p>The feedback highlights a need for well-placed public amenities, including toilets, seating, and shaded areas.</p> <p>There is support for creating spaces that cater to families, school groups, and tourists, such as performance areas, bike racks, and exercise equipment.</p> <p>However, the location and design of these facilities must be carefully considered to ensure they are accessible, functional, and do not detract from the precinct's aesthetics.</p>
Public Art and Cultural Recognition	<p>Support for incorporating public art into the precinct.</p> <p>Some feedback supports inviting local artists linking with existing public art, whilst others supported a link to Aboriginal public art works.</p> <p>Some support for working with Taungurung Land and Waters Council to contribute to naming the Northern Reserve and cultural elements.</p> <p>Art is seen not only as a beautification tool but also as a way to foster community pride and identity.</p>
Affordability and whole of life costs	<p>Concerns regarding cost to Council for the delivery, construction and whole of life costs associated with these works, and around being financially responsible</p>

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Next Steps

The themes identified through the feedback process will be considered and where appropriate the draft Masterplan will be revised/ or updated.

The draft Masterplan will progress and be presented at a Council Meeting.

11.2.5 Community Flag Flying Policy and Procedures

AUTHOR Manager Community and Culture

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director Community and Planning

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Flying community flags provides an opportunity for communities within Strathbogie Shire to express and symbolise identity, pride and belonging celebrated on significant days, weeks and/or at cultural or community events. Flags are a highly visible symbol of respect and can be used to promote a sense of community and create a welcoming environment.

The Policy aligns with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* where every person has the right to freedom of expression, and to our Council Values, we are inclusive and value the opinions of all.

The Community Flag Flying Policy and Procedures has been reviewed and is presented to Council for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Adopt the Community Flag Flying Policy and Procedures**
- 2. Authorise Council officers to place the Policy and Procedures on Council's website, along with the publication of a notice in Council's weekly newspaper column and social media pages informing the community about the Policy.**

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to adopt the Community Flag Flying Policy.

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

The Community Flag Flying Policy provides guidelines for the management and approval of requests from community members, Councillors or Council employees to fly community flags on the existing Council owned flag pole located in the roundabout at the intersection of Binney and Brock Streets, Euroa.

This Policy provides a transparent, standardised process for the management of requests to fly community flags on the Council owned flagpole in Euroa.

As a part of a recent review, Officers have undertaken benchmarking against other Councils to provide insights into current practices and policies for community flag flying, and only a minor amendment to the policy has been identified:

- Re-classification of the Nagambie flagpole, at 352 High Street Nagambie, referenced in the original policy as Community Flagpole at the Nagambie Library. This flagpole is now a Civic Flagpole since occupation of 352 High Street, Nagambie by Council.

The Policy does not apply to the four civic flag poles located at the Council offices at 109a Binney Street Euroa, or the one civic flag pole at 352 High Street Nagambie. They are flown and managed in accordance with other relevant Policy and guidelines.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Inform - To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following objectives and or actions in the 2025-2029 Council Plan:

Objective One: Connect

We are committed to enhancing access for all residents, promoting healthy living, fostering connections, and providing opportunities to thrive and participate in community life.

Objective Three: Deliver

We are committed to delivering quality services and infrastructure that meets the needs of our community. We aim to strengthen the Council's governance and provide improved, customer-focused experiences.

Regional, State and National Plans, Policies and Legislation

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

- *Flags Act 1953*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 (Vic)*
- Civic Flag Flying Policy
- Australian Flag Booklet – Part 2: The Protocols'
- Council Plan 2025-29

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

This report has identified the following risk(s):

Risk(s)	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Council Reputation	Possible	Minimal	Medium	Adopt a Community Flag Flying policy
Duplication of efforts and Council resources without having set policy and procedures	Possible	Minimal	Medium	Adopt a Community Flag Flying policy

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

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

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* was considered in the preparation of this report with consideration given to the aspects of respect, equality and dignity.

CONCLUSION

The Community Flag Flying Policy provides a transparent, standardised process for the management of requests to fly community flags on the Council owned flag pole in Euroa.

ATTACHMENT

1. 2025 Community Flag Flying Policy and Procedures

Strathbogie Shire Council Community Flag Flying Policy and Procedure

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November 2025

Strathbogie
SHIRE COUNCIL

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Community Flag Flying Policy and Procedures

Document ID:	827815 SSCEDOC-43802981-67
Effective Date:	21 March 2023
Last Review:	March 2023
Current Review:	November 2025
Date Adopted by Council:	
Next Scheduled Review Date:	November 2027
Responsible Officer:	Director Community and Planning

PART 1 POLICY

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Community Flag Flying Policy (the Policy) is to provide guidelines for the management and approval of requests from community members, Councillors or Council employees to fly community flags on the existing Council owned flag pole located in the roundabout at the intersection of Binney and Brock Street, Euroa.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Flying community flags provides an opportunity for communities within Strathbogie Shire to express and symbolise identity, pride and belonging celebrated at significant days, weeks and/or cultural or community events. Flags are a highly visible symbol of respect and can be used to promote a sense of community and create a welcoming environment.

The Policy aligns with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* where every person has the right to freedom of expression and to our Council Values, we are inclusive and value the opinions of all.

This Policy aligns with our Community Vision which underpins the Strathbogie Shire Council 2025-29 Council Plan.

The objective of the Policy is to provide a transparent and standardised process for the management and approval of requests to fly community flags on the existing Council owned flag poles located in the roundabout at the intersection of Binney and Brock Street, Euroa.

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3. APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

This Policy applies to requests from community members, Councillors or Council employees requesting community flags be flown on the existing Council owned flagpole at the intersection of Binney and Brock Street, Euroa on the roundabout.

The Policy does not apply to the four civic flag poles located at the Council offices at 109a Binney Street Euroa, or the civic flag at 352 High Street Nagambie. The Australian National Flag, Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Taungurung flags will continue to be flown at Euroa at on the civic flag poles, and the Australian National Flag will fly in Nagambie. The Australian Flag is flown in accordance with the *Flags Act 1953* and the 'Australian Flag Booklet – Part 2: The Protocols', administrated by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy should be applied by all staff, Councillors and the community when making submissions to fly community flags and the assessments of these submissions.

Role	Responsibilities
Council Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply the Policy to guide the process for assessment of submissions for Community flag flying Ensure community flag flying requests meet the criteria and requirements detailed in the Policy
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure community flag flying requests meet the criteria and requirements detailed in the Policy

5. DEFINITIONS

Term	Meaning
Community group	<p>means either an incorporated or unincorporated group or club where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> members agree to act together with a constitution or set of rules under which they will operate is operating in Strathbogie Shire
Community flags	<p>means a flag that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> represents a recognised significant day/week and/or cultural or community event and is not listed in the Australian Flag (3rd edition) booklet by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
Community member	means an individual whose primary place of residence is in Strathbogie Shire
Council	means the Strathbogie Shire Council
Councillor	means a Councillor of Strathbogie Shire who has taken the Oath or Affirmation of Office under Section 5 of the <i>Local Government</i>

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	<i>Act 2020</i> after being duly elected as a Councillor, including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor
Council employee	means permanent, part-time and casual employees including contractors, of Council
Requestor	means the person who makes the request

6. RELATED POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

The following Council, State, regional and national plans and policies are relevant to this policy:

- *Flags Act 1953*
- Civic Flag Flying Policy
- The Victorian *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006*
- Strathbogie Shire Council Plan 2025-29

7. POLICY REVIEW

Council may review this policy at any time and at least two years from the date of adoption.

Minor amendments to the policy may be authorised by the CEO at any time where such changes do not alter the substance of the policy (eg a change to the name of a related document, or a change in legislation).

OFFICIAL**PART 2 PROCEDURES****2.1 Requests**

All requests to fly community flags on existing, available Council owned and managed flag poles require Council approval.

Requests for community flag flying must be submitted in writing using the Community Flag Flying Request Form (Request Form), refer Appendix 1. Requests can be submitted online via Council's website or via hard copy.

Requests must be submitted at least six weeks prior to the start date of the proposed community flag flying event.

Flags that are listed in the Recognised Occasions table (refer Appendix 2) are pre-approved to be flown during the stated time frame.

For flags representing occasions not listed in the Recognised Occasions table, detail regarding which significant days/week and/or cultural/community event the community flag represents, why it is being requested, and a description of the flag will need to be provided in the request.

The Council owned flagpole this Policy applies to will be unavailable on the following dates:

- 25-27 January
- 24-26 April
- 10-12 November

2.2 Eligibility

Only requests from community members residing in Strathbogie Shire, applying as an individual or representing a community group or club operating in Strathbogie Shire, will be eligible for consideration. Requests from Council employees and Councillors will be managed using this policy.

2.3 Criteria for Consideration

All requests for flags not listed in the Recognised Occasions table must be discussed prior to submission with a Community Development Officer.

If the occasion and flag is not listed in the Recognised Occasions table, the proposed flag/s must meet the following criteria:

- Promotes respect for all
- Embraces a sense of belonging and enhanced community life
- Represents a recognised significant day/week and/or cultural or community event that is consistent with the Strathbogie Shire Community Vision which underpins the Strathbogie Shire Council 2025-29 Council Plan
- Is consistent with the Strathbogie Shire Community Values Community members requesting to have a community flag flown, if successful, must supply their own flag/s.

All flag/s must be:

- professionally made
- as new or in good condition with no tears and not faded
- 1800mm wide by 900mm high, with eyelets for attachment at the top and bottom of the hoist side

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Approved flags must be:

- provided to the Council Customer Service Centre at 109a Binney Street, Euroa at least two weeks prior to the date it is intended to be flown
- collected from Council Customer Service Centre within two weeks after the event end date.

Requests to fly a community flag must be for a minimum of one day up to a maximum of seven days.

Requests for flags that are associated with religious, political, or extremist groups or those which incite unrest or ill feeling within the community will not be considered.

Requests for flags that highlight an issue, cause, or group inconsistent with Council's values and commitment to inclusiveness will not be considered.

Submissions for flags for individual advancement and/or advertising purposes will not be considered.

2.4 Assessment

All requests will be considered by the Manager Community and Culture.

Approval will be authorised through the CEO and Council will be notified.

Requestors will be notified within two weeks from receipt of their request via email or written correspondence of the outcome of their request.

If more than one request is received for the same day, priority will be given to the request received first.

If more than one request is received for the same week, Council will endeavour to accommodate each approved request for a period of time during that week.

2.5 Maintenance and Monitoring

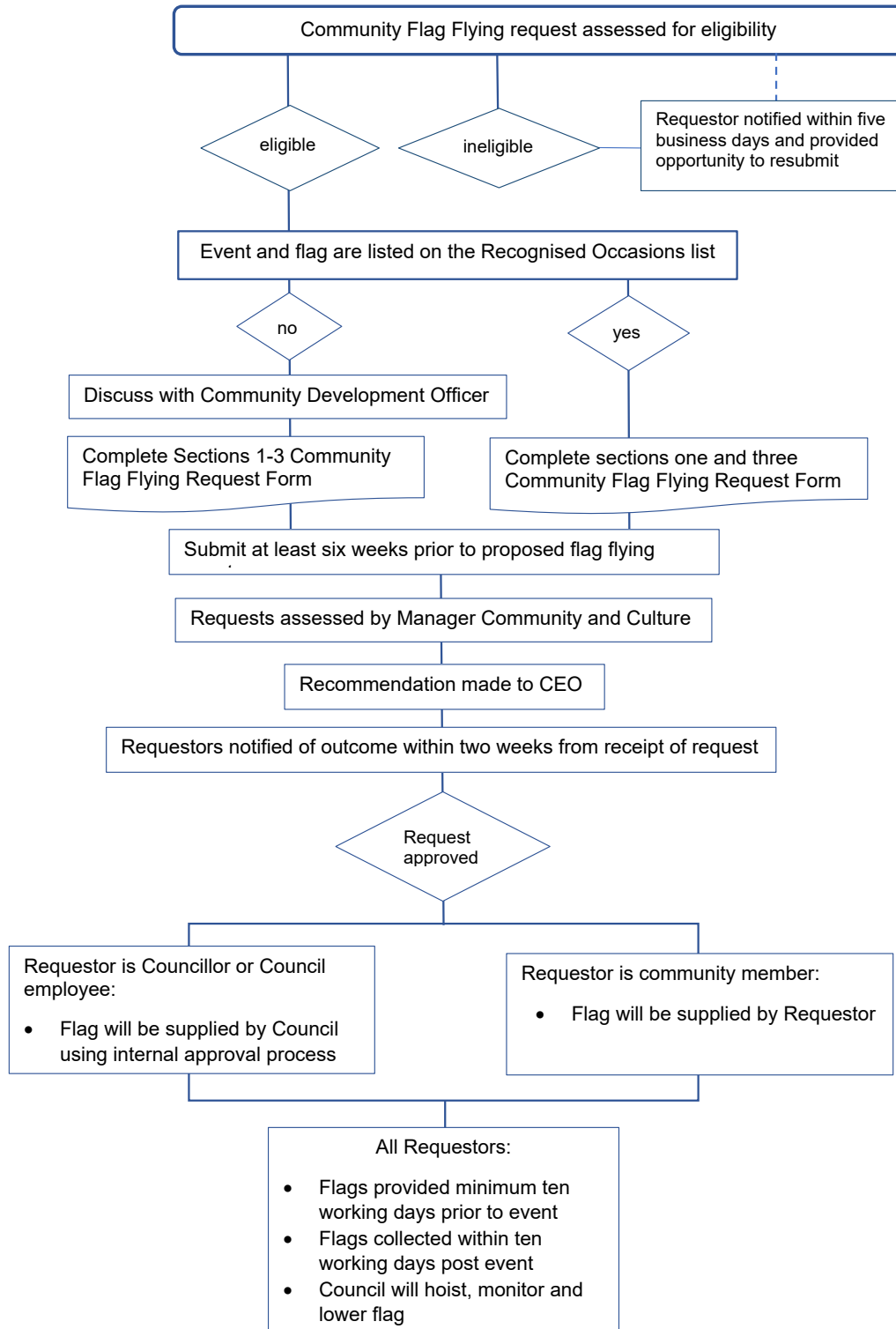
Council will continue to be responsible for the maintenance of Council owned flagpoles in Strathbogie Shire.

Council will be responsible for the coordination and monitoring of flags on the flagpoles located at the intersection of Binney and Brock Street, Euroa.

If a flag suffers damage and is rendered unsuitable for display, the requestor is responsible for coordinating immediate replacement and disposal of the damaged flag.

OFFICIAL

2.6 Implementation Flow Chart



OFFICIAL**Appendix 1: Community Flag Flying Request Form****1. APPLICANT DETAILS**

Name:

Address:

Telephone number:

Email:

Name of community group, club or Committee of Management you are representing (if applicable):

Approval has been given for this request by the community group, club or Committee of Management you are representing

☐ YES☐ NO

Contact name and phone number for community group, club or Committee of Management you are representing:

Is the event and flag listed as a Recognised Event?

☐ YES - proceed to Section 3☐ NO - proceed to Section 2**2. COMMUNITY FLAG DETAILS**

Which significant days/week and/or cultural/community occasion does the community flag represent and why you are requesting it to be flown? (attach any supporting documentation)

Community flag description:

Does the occasion and flag:

- Promote respect for all
- Embrace a sense of belonging and enhanced community life
- Represent a recognised significant day/week and/or cultural or community event that is consistent with the Strathbogie Shire Community Vision and the Strathbogie Shire Community Values

☐ YES☐ NO**3. COMMUNITY FLAG FLYING EVENT****Proposed flagpole location**☐ Binney Street, Euroa

Please describe correct flag orientation:

Community Flag Flying Policy and Procedure Doc SSCED-43802981-67

OFFICIAL**Proposed dates:**

From / / to / /

Community members only

I/we agree to provide the proposed flag which will be:

- professionally made
- as new or in good condition with no tears and not faded
- 1800mm wide by 900mm high, with eyelets for attachment at the top and bottom of the hoist side

☐ YES

☐ NO

I/we will provide the flag to the Customer Service Centre at 109a Binney Street, Euroa, at least 14 days prior to the proposed start date and collect the flag 5-10 days after the event end date.

☐ YES

☐ NO

If you need any more information, please contact the Community and Culture Team.

Phone: 1800 065 993 (toll free)

Email: info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au

For Official Use Only

Applicant has discussed request with Community Development Officer if applicable:

☐ YES

☐ NO

☐ N/A

Date received:

Approval status:

Community requestors only: date confirmed for flag drop off: YES NO

OFFICIAL

APPENDIX 2: Recognised Occasions

Timeframe	Event	Flag Flown
Week that includes 21 March	Harmony Week Harmony Day – Harmony Day began in 1999 and celebrates Australia's success as a diverse society united as one family by a common set of values	Orange flag
17 May	International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia	Rainbow flag
20 June	World Refugee Day	Refugee Nation flag
24 October	United Nations Day	United Nations flag
16 November	International Day for Tolerance	United Nations Flag

11.2.6 Variations and Grants Approved Under CEO Delegation November 2025

AUTHOR Manager Community and Culture

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director Community and Planning

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to inform Council and the community of community grants or variations approved under delegation by the Chief Executive Officer or relevant Director, as per Council's Community Funding Model, for the period 1 November to 30 November 2025.

The 2025-2026 Community Funding Model and associated Grant Guidelines provides authorisation for the Chief Executive Officer to determine and award Community Grants and Event Grants under delegation, following a robust eligibility and assessment process, and subject to budget availability.

Variations to Community Grants and Event Grants can also be approved via the Chief Executive Officer and/or the Director Community and Planning.

This report provides transparency to the community for decisions being made under delegation relating to the Community Funding Model 2025-2026.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Note that there was one quick response grant awarded to the total value of \$973 by the Chief Executive Officer between 1 November to 30 November 2025.**

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to inform Council and the community of community grants or variations approved under delegation by the Chief Executive Officer or relevant Director, as per Council's Community Funding Model, for the period 1 November to 30 November 2025.

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

In line with Council's approach to transparency and good governance, the grants and variations awarded under delegation report will be tabled for information purposes at each Council Meeting where there has been variations or grants awarded under delegation during the reporting period.

This report details any grant variations approved or grants awarded under delegated authority by the Chief Executive Officer or grant variations approved by the Director Community and Planning, within their approved financial threshold and in line with Council's 2025-26 Community Funding Model.

Community Grants Awarded Under Delegation

Grant	Applicant	Project	Brief Description	Amount
Quick Response	Avenel Tennis Club	Avenel Pickleball	To fund the purchase of four pickleball nets to support the establishment of pickleball through the Avenel Tennis Club following a successful initial trial demonstrating strong community support	\$973
TOTAL				\$973

In line with the Community Funding Model and Grant Guidelines 2025-26, this application was reviewed for eligibility and assessed via a comprehensive assessment process providing a recommendation to the Chief Executive Officer, to then determine grant outcomes and recipients.

Applications for the 2025-2026 Quick Response Grants opened on the 1 July 2025 and remain open until 31 May 2026 or until such time as funds are exhausted.

Following the award of this grant, the remaining funds in the Quick Response Grant budget are \$5,027.

Variations Awarded under delegation

Nil.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Inform - To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following key strategic objectives and or actions in the 2025-29 Council Plan:

Objective One: Connect
Objective Two: Sustain
Objective Three: Deliver

Regional, State and National Plans, Policies and Legislation

- Community Funding Model and Grant Guidelines 2025-26
- Council Plan 2025-29

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 grants awarded under delegation
Without grants being awarded under delegation, delays are caused, resulting in community not being able to deliver projects in a timely manner	Possible	Moderate	Low	Delegations in place and regular reporting to Council and the community on grants and variations awarded under delegation.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no significant 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

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

The Grants awarded were within the total budget allocation of \$10,000 for Quick Response Grants, contained in the Council's Budget 2025-2026, and were awarded within the relevant financial delegations.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Economic

Community Funding supports economic growth across the Shire. Local businesses benefit from an increased visitor economy with projects and events assisting in an increase in visitors as well as an increase in the average length of stay of those visitors. Applicants are also encouraged to buy from local suppliers where possible.

Social

The Community Funding Model encourages projects and events that demonstrate significant social benefit, that will support building a vibrant, inclusive and connected community.

Environmental

Environmental sustainability is promoted at various stages of the grants process. Impacts of

projects and events on the natural environment will be assessed in the assessment process and mitigation strategies included in funding agreements.

Climate Change

Community Grant and Event Grant applications must also consider climate change including minimising waste going to landfill and ensure that their project or event is minimising harmful impacts on our natural environment. Event Grant recipients must complete a Waste Wise Plan.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The change to award all grants under CEO delegation in the 2025-2026 community funding model demonstrates a continuous improvement approach streamlining the process for applicants, reducing administration time and incorporating the findings from the VAGO Fraud Control over Local Government Grants Report 2022.

COLLABORATION

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

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

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

CONCLUSION

It is important that decisions and actions taken under delegation be properly documented and transparent. This report advises Council of any grants or variations awarded under Chief Executive Officer or Director delegation as per Council's Community Funding Model and Grant Guidelines 2025-26.

There was one quick response grant awarded under CEO delegation during the reporting period from 1 November to 30 November 2025.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

11.3 Infrastructure

11.3.1 Firewood Risk Report

AUTHOR Director Sustainable Infrastructure

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director Sustainable Infrastructure

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the October 2025 Council meeting, Council considered a report relating to the provision of firewood for vulnerable community members. At the meeting, Council resolved to:

1. Note that a Strategic Risk in relation to firewood, as included in the urgent business resolution at the May 2025 Council meeting has been included on Council's updated Strategic Risk Register
2. Note that Council Officers will manage and pursue avenues of mitigating risk associated with firewood.
3. Receive a report from Council Officers no later than February 2026 discussing all risks associated with firewood, including but not limited to risk to the community (both with and without roadside collection), reputational risk to Council, legislative risks, and liability risks.

The purpose of this report is to provide a report in response to the above resolution.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the report.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to outline the key risks associated with a firewood program within the Strathbogie Shire, including community safety, health and wellbeing, legislative compliance, liability, insurance, and reputational considerations in response to the Council resolution in October 2025.

In 2023, Council discontinued the Fallen Timber Permit system due to safety, insurance, and environmental/biodiversity impacts. Since then, residents have relied on State Forest free firewood collection sites which are not always accessible for all community members. In October 2025, a report was presented to the council outlining three alternative approaches to replace the Fallen Timber Permit system.

The October report considered three options including recommencing permits, providing free firewood to vulnerable residents, and leveraging existing alternatives. A report that outlined all risks associated with firewood including, but not limited to risks to the community (both with and without roadside collection, reputational risks to Council, legislation and liability risks.

Each approach carries distinct risks and presents a different balance between community benefit, safety, and Council risk exposure. The report draws on guidance from the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and relevant legislation to ensure Council decision-making is informed by a clear understanding of safety, legal, environmental, and social factors.

It is important to note that a strategic risk in relation to firewood is now included in Council's Strategic Risk Register.

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

This section outlines the key issues and risks associated with community access to firewood and the potential approaches available to Council. Three options have been considered:

1. recommencing a roadside permit system
2. providing free or subsidised firewood to vulnerable residents
3. continuing to leverage existing state and regional alternatives.

Option	Key Risks	Overall Risk Level
1. Recommence Firewood Collection Permits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and safety risk to residents • Uninsured activity • High administrative burden to demonstrate “reasonable care”. • Environmental and legislative risks including environmental harm from habitat loss. 	High
2. Provide Free Firewood to Vulnerable Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial cost and ongoing community expectation of support. • Perceived inequity toward residents without wood-burning heaters or ineligible community members. • Environmental and OH&S obligations for supply, handling and delivery of firewood. • Health and safety risk to residents. 	Medium–High
3. Leverage Existing Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited direct support for residents unable to access forest sites. • Reliance on external programs beyond Council's control. 	Medium

The following outlines the specific risks associated with each option in further detail.

Option 1: Recommence Firewood Collection Permits

Health And Safety

Injury or accident to residents collecting firewood from roadsides: Collecting, cutting, and loading timber from roadsides exposes residents to high safety risks, including proximity to traffic, use of chainsaws, and manual handling injuries. Potential injuries may include scrapes, cuts, infection, and vehicle collisions. In extreme cases, these activities could result in serious injury or death.

Liability And Insurance

Permitting residents to collect firewood from roadsides introduces significant liability and insurance risks for Council.

Council's Liability Mutual Insurance (LMI) covers Council itself but not members of the public to collect firewood. Residents collecting firewood under a permit would be undertaking an

uninsured activity. Any injury, accident, or damage occurring during collection could expose both the individual and Council to legal liability.

To maintain insurance protection, the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) suggests that Council demonstrate reasonable care. This would involve documented risk assessments for each permit, clear safety conditions, supervision or evidence of compliance monitoring. Failure to meet these expectations could result in uninsured liability.

Furthermore, if roadside firewood removal results in habitat loss or biodiversity damage, Council may be held liable under environmental protection legislation.

Environmental

The removal of firewood from roadsides can have unintended environmental consequences if not carefully managed. Roadside collection of firewood may disturb soil structure, damage root systems, and remove valuable habitat such as fallen logs and leaf litter that support native flora and fauna. Poor handling or stockpiling may also facilitate the spread of weeds or pathogens, particularly if timber is moved between areas.

Operational

Administering permits and monitoring compliance would place additional pressure on limited staff resources, potentially impacting delivery of other Council services and projects.

Equity

This option provides little benefit to vulnerable residents who may be physically unable to collect or transport firewood.

Option 2: Provide Free Firewood to Vulnerable Residents

Providing free or subsidised firewood to at-risk residents offers direct community benefit but also creates potential risks if not carefully managed. Demand may exceed available supply, leading to frustration or perceptions of unfairness among residents who do not qualify or do not have wood-burning heaters. This program must be appropriately budgeted for and must apply transparent eligibility criteria to avoid perceptions of bias or inequity.

Financial and Operational

Any firewood assistance program may create future budget expectations or ongoing community demand that exceeds available financial resources. The cost of supply and delivery is estimated at around \$250 per load per resident supported.

Additional program costs would include staff time and administration for ensuring the program was accessible and eligibility criteria accessed per application. Coordinating supply and delivery would also require dedicated staff time and clear administrative processes.

Legislative Responsibility and Liability

Council is not legislatively mandated to provide firewood or heating assistance. However, if Council elects to support residents through a free firewood program, all activities must comply with the relevant legislation and with relevant planning, procurement, and environmental policies.

Firewood sourced by Council must comply with environmental protection and biodiversity legislation. Improper sourcing could result in breaches of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (Vic) or the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth).

Programs that provide free or subsidised firewood must apply transparent eligibility criteria to avoid perceptions of bias or unfair distribution. Failure to do so could expose Council to reputational damage or formal complaints under the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic).

Engaging local suppliers or contractors introduces obligations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic). Council must ensure all suppliers hold appropriate insurance, conduct risk assessments, and operate in accordance with safe work practices.

The safety and regular maintenance of participants wood-burning heaters may also need to be considered. This would require further investigation.

Any incident involving injury, property damage, or environmental harm during sourcing, delivery or storage could generate insurance claims or financial loss for Council.

Climate Change

Promoting wood-based heating as a primary energy source may be perceived as inconsistent with Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2022 - 2027 and broader State objectives to transition away from carbon-intensive fuels.

Option 3: Leverage Existing Alternatives

This option requires only a small extra cost of staff time, and it avoids the risks to environment and liability that come with allowing people to collect firewood in designated collection or sourcing firewood for a delivery program. However, it does not provide direct support for residents unable to access firewood for heating.

Limited access to affordable firewood may leave some residents unable to adequately heat their homes during winter, creating significant health, wellbeing, and welfare risks. Cold indoor environments can exacerbate respiratory and cardiovascular conditions, increase the likelihood of falls, and in severe cases lead to illness requiring hospitalisation.

Weighing All Options and Reputational Risks

Each option presents a different balance between community benefit, safety, and Council risk exposure.

Community sentiment is an important factor in decision-making, but it must be balanced against Council's duty to act responsibly and within its legislative framework.

Some residents have expressed disappointment that roadside firewood collection is no longer permitted and may view Council's position as restrictive. However, it is noted that reinstating the Fallen Timber Permit system would be unlikely to meaningfully assist vulnerable residents, as many lack the capacity or equipment to safely collect and transport firewood.

While this feedback reflects genuine community sentiment, it is noted that no formal complaints have been received since the discontinuation of the Fallen Timber Permit system in 2023.

If Council were to establish a program to directly supply firewood, there is potential for community expectations to shift over time. Residents may come to view Council as having an ongoing role in providing direct household or welfare support, which does not align with Council's broader service framework or financial capacity.

Programs that directly supply firewood to vulnerable residents with wood-burning heaters may also be perceived as inequitable, as they could exclude vulnerable residents who rely on heating methods such as gas or electricity.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The author of this report considers that community engagement was not required on this matter. However, if Council elects to support residents through a free firewood program Community engagement would be appropriate to help establish and evaluate the program, connect with residents requiring the service and local suppliers.

Community engagement would also be required to communicate and apply transparent eligibility criteria to avoid perceptions of bias or inequity.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following Objectives and or actions in the 2025-2029 Council Plan:

Objective One: Connect

We are committed to enhancing access for all residents, promoting healthy living, fostering connections, and providing opportunities to thrive and participate in community life.

Objective Two: Sustain

We aim to collaborate with others to foster a sustainable environment, a thriving economy and resilient communities.

Objective Three: Deliver

We are committed to delivering quality services and infrastructure that meets the needs of our community. We aim to strengthen the Council's governance and provide improved, customer-focused experiences.

Regional, State and National Plans, Policies and Legislation

Council's responsibilities regarding firewood collection would be governed by multiple Local, State and Commonwealth Acts, Policies and Plans. Any approach involving the removal, supply or management of firewood must comply with these legislative requirements to avoid breaches or enforcement action.

Strathbogie Shire Council's Local Law 2: Under the current Local Law (8.1 a) a person on Council land must not damage or interfere with that Council land, including any trees or vegetation located on it.

Strathbogie Shire Council's Tree Management Policy (2023): Only trained Council staff and or approved contractors are to undertake any physical works on Council trees including pruning and removal at end-of-life.

Strathbogie Shire Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2022 – 2027: Promoting wood-based heating as a primary energy source may be perceived as inconsistent with this action plan and broader State objectives to transition away from carbon-intensive fuels.

Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (Vic) and Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth): Require Council to protect biodiversity and prevent environmental harm. The removal of fallen timber can impact native vegetation, wildlife habitat and soil health.

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic): Requires Council to take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the health and safety of staff, contractors, and community members engaged in any Council-related activities - this would include firewood collection from Council managed roadsides.

Local Government Act 2020 (Vic): Require Council to act lawfully, transparently, and in the best interests of the community, balancing environmental, safety, and social welfare considerations.

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

The risks associated through considerations of this report have been outlined previously.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Council is not legislated to provide firewood, heating or cooling to households.

If Council were to recommence a permit system, it must comply with its responsibilities under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (Vic)* and the *Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic)* to protect biodiversity and regulate the removal of native vegetation, including fallen timber. Council also has obligations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)* to take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure that activities on Council land are safe.

To maintain liability insurance coverage, Council would be required to demonstrate “reasonable care” as outlined in Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Insurance guidance. This would necessitate documented risk assessments for each permit, clearly defined permit conditions, and active enforcement. Failure to implement these measures could expose Council to legal or financial liability.

If Council was to provide free firewood to residents in need, legal responsibilities would arise in relation to the sourcing, handling and delivery of the firewood. Council would need to comply with biodiversity protection laws, apply appropriate risk management under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)* for staff or contractors, and meet its obligations under the *Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)* to act fairly, transparently and in the best interests of the community. Clear eligibility criteria and processes would be necessary to avoid inequity or claims of bias in distribution.

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

Both reinstating the old permit system or providing free firewood to vulnerable community members would have financial viability considerations. Costs could include staff resources,

sourcing firewood, delivering firewood, along with administrative overhead costs to establish and monitor such a program.

The cost per residence, for the delivery of a load of firewood, is estimated at approximately \$250, with the total cost dependent on the number of eligible households.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Economic

Economically, any option requiring direct supply or active permit management would require significant resources and may not be financially sustainable for Council in the long term.

Social

There is a need to balance community safety and biodiversity protection with the welfare of vulnerable residents who rely on firewood for heating.

Environmental

The removal of fallen timber has impacts on habitat, biodiversity and soil health. Ideally, only trained Council staff and or approved contractors would complete this work. Improved community access to alternative energy programs may reduce some environmental pressures.

Climate Change

From a climate change perspective promoting wood-based heating as a primary energy source may be perceived as inconsistent with Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2022–2027 and broader State objectives to transition away from carbon-intensive fuels.

Supporting residents to transition towards efficient electric heating and renewable energy aligns with Council's Climate Change Action Plan and State objectives to reduce emissions.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

This issue presents an opportunity for the Council to explore innovative approaches that go beyond traditional firewood supply to support vulnerable residents heating (and cooling) their homes.

COLLABORATION

No formal collaboration was undertaken in the production of this report

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* was considered in the preparation of this report with particular consideration given to the aspects of respect, equality and dignity.

CONCLUSION

This report has provided Councillors with details of the risks involved with the former Fallen Timber Permit system and proposed alternatives. Each option presents a different balance between community benefit, safety, and Council risk exposure.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

11.4 Corporate

11.4.1 Determine 2026 Council Meeting Dates

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strathbogie Shire Council Governance Rule (22) states that the Council must annually fix the date, time and place of all Council meetings for the next twelve months. These dates and times can be altered under Rule (23) and additional meetings held under Rule (24).

Strathbogie Shire Council has historically held its Council meetings on the third Tuesday of the month.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **Adopt the schedule of Council meetings for 2026 as contained within this report**
2. **Publish the details of the Council meeting schedule on Council's website.**

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Council is to determine the date and time of Council meetings to be held from January 2026 to December 2026.

The Council Meeting schedule enables the administration to plan and ensure, as far as is practicable, that business papers are available to Councillors and the community sufficiently in advance of the relevant meeting, to be adequately informed of all relevant issues prior to a decision being taken.

The proposed dates and times for the 2026 Council meeting schedule are set out below:

Date	Time	Location
17 February 2026	4:00pm	Euroa Community Conference Centre
17 March 2026	4:00pm	Euroa Community Conference Centre
21 April 2026	4:00pm	Euroa Community Conference Centre
19 May 2026	4:00pm	Euroa Community Conference Centre
16 June 2026	4:00pm	Euroa Community Conference Centre
21 July 2026	4:00pm	Euroa Community Conference Centre

18 August 2026	4:00pm	Euroa Community Conference Centre
15 September 2026	4:00pm	Euroa Community Conference Centre
20 October 2026	4:00pm	Euroa Community Conference Centre
10 November 2026 (Statutory Meeting)	4:00 pm	Euroa Community Conference Centre
17 November 2026	4:00pm	Euroa Community Conference Centre
15 December 2026	4:00pm	Euroa Community Conference Centre

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Inform - To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following objectives and or actions in the 2025-2029 Council Plan:

Objective Three: Deliver

We are committed to delivering quality services and infrastructure that meets the needs of our community. We aim to strengthen the Council's governance and provide improved, customer-focused experiences.

Regional, State and National Plans, Policies and Legislation

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

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- Governance Rules

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

This report has identified the following risk(s):

Risk(s)	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
A defined schedule reduces risk of failing to meet required deadlines or statutory obligations (e.g. budget adoption, annual reports or other key items)	Low	Possible	Low	Adopt the 2026 Council meeting schedule.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Under the *Local Government Act 2020* (and associated governance rules), councils must conduct meetings in accordance with the rules they adopt.

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.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

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

CONCLUSION

Setting a schedule of council meeting dates is good governance — it supports transparency, community access, consistent operations, and legislative compliance.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

11.4.2 Information Communication and Technology Strategy 2026-2028

AUTHOR Manager Digital Innovation and Technology

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Developing an Information Communication and Technology (ICT) Strategy has been an action on the Management Letter for some time. Following the adoption of the 2025-29 Council Plan in June 2025, an action in line with Objective Three: Deliver, was to develop a strategy by 31 December 2025.

An ICT Strategy ensures that:

- Technology supports business objectives
- Investment is directed to the highest-value areas
- Digital projects are prioritised based on strategic need
- It stops technology being implemented in a piecemeal or reactive way.

The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed the ICT Strategy on 21 November 2025 and noted the Strategy with no amendments.

The Draft ICT Strategy 2026-2028 is attached to this report for consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the Information Communication and Technology Strategy 2026-2028.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to adopt the Information Communication and Technology Strategy 2026-2028.

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

Advice from both internal and external auditors recommended that Council should formalise and adopt a new Information Communication and Technology (ICT) Strategy that provides the overall scope and direction of the information technology function of Strathbogie Shire Council over several future financial years.

Strathbogie Shire Council's Information Communication and Technology Strategy has been developed to assist all organisational departments to harness and improve their use of technology to implement the Council Plan 2025-2029. The strategy has been developed around the below key principles, initiatives, and directions:

- Engagement – open, transparent, and frequent
- Collaboration – provide an environment which supports and promotes teamwork
- Innovation – provide easy to use digital platforms
- Mobility – enhance collaboration and productivity between field and corporate through enhanced mobile platforms

- Digital by Default – Strategy to transition away from paper records
- Secured Assets – embed cyber security in all areas of the business
- Continuous Improvement – measure performance and continually seek to improve

The Auditors recommendations noted that information technology and cyber security risks have increased significantly across the government sector in recent years, and this is also reflected in increasing Council's risk rating from low to moderate in this area.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There was no external consultation required as the development of this strategy as its primary focus is on internal operations. Internal engagement was undertaken with staff.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following objectives and or actions in the 2025-2029 Council Plan:

Objective Three: Deliver

We are committed to delivering quality services and infrastructure that meets the needs of our community. We aim to strengthen the Council's governance and provide improved, customer-focused experiences.

Regional, State and National Plans, Policies and Legislation

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

- Victorian Local Government Strategy 2021-26
- Council Plan 2025-29

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

This report has identified the following risk(s):

Risk(s)	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Not having an ICT Strategy exposes an organisation to a wide range of risks including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misalignment with organisational goals • Inefficient use of resources • Increased cybersecurity risks • Poor service delivery • Compliance and regulatory risks • Reduced innovation and future-readiness 	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	Adopt an ICT Strategy

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no significant 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

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

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Sustainability in an ICT Strategy ensures that technology choices reduce environmental impact, support social equity, maximise economic efficiency, improves governance outcomes and align with broader organisational or community sustainability goals.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Annual action plans and regular monitoring by the Executive Leadership Team will ensure the ICT Strategy remains current and relevant and meets legislative requirements.

COLLABORATION

The ICT Strategy was developed following extensive industry, sector and staff consultation and collaboration. The strategy development drew on multiple sources of information including :

- A technical audit of the technology footprint
- Online staff surveys
- Existing strategic documentation
- Industry/sector knowledge and consultation

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

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

CONCLUSION

An ICT Strategy is important because technology underpins almost every aspect of how an organisation operates, delivers services, and safeguards information.

A clear strategy ensures that technology investment and decision-making are purposeful, efficient, and aligned to the organisation's goals.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 202512 ICT Strategy 2026-2028

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Strathbogie
Shire Council

Information Communication and Technology (ICT) Strategy 2026-2028

December 2025

Strathbogie
SHIRE COUNCIL

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Information Communication and Technology (ICT) Strategy 2026-2028

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Last Review:	New
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Date Adopted by Council:	9 December 2025
Next Scheduled Review Date:	December 2028
Responsible Officer:	Director People and Governance

OFFICIAL**1. DEFINITIONS**

Term	Definition
SSC	Strathbogie Shire Council
ICT	Information and Communication Technology

2. ICT STRATEGY ON A PAGE

Strathbogie Shire Council's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) strategy has been developed to assist all organisational departments to harness and improve their use of technology to implement the Council Plan 2025-2029 (Strathbogie Shire Council). The strategy has been developed around the below key principles, initiatives, and directions.

2.1 Principles

- Engagement – open, transparent, and frequent
- Collaboration – Provide an environment which supports and promotes teamwork
- Innovation – Provide easy to use digital platforms
- Mobility – Enhance collaboration and productivity between field and corporate through enhanced mobile platforms
- Digital by Default – Strategy to transition away from paper records
- Secured Assets – Embed cyber security in all areas of the business
- Continuous Improvement – Measure performance and continually seek to improve

2.2 Initiatives

- Information Asset Governance - Drive stronger decision-making by treating data as an asset, ensuring is accurate, secure, and managed
- Business Systems – Strive for stronger capability, reporting, mobility and integration between Council systems
- Engagement Through Technology – Utilise digital mediums to promote open, transparent and efficient communication and transactions between the Shire and community
- ICT Infrastructure Continuity and Security – Implement a flexible, dynamic and secure system architecture which allows for highly available Council systems

2.3 Key Actions

- Implement organisational change management and project management frameworks
- Focus on adoption of shared and cloud services, maximising value of public funds investment in ICT
- Digital and mobile access to corporate systems
- Continue to work with other local government organisations to align systems and processes which supports adoption of shared services
- Distribute management of key business systems to relevant business units (decentralise IT)

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3. CONTEXT

3.1 Overview

Information is a key resource that underpins delivery of local government services to the community. The technology used to support the management of this information is critical to the efficiency of business operations. Strathbogie Shire Council have a desire to continue to drive innovation in its practices to assist in meeting evolving community expectations, whilst also continuing to satisfy statutory reporting obligations under the *Local Government Act 2020*. To achieve this, Council has developed several strategic plans to ensure operations are linked to the overarching direction of the Council.

Having a thorough and clear understanding of both the organisation and industry from a business context is critical in the development of an ICT strategy, as it ensures the use of technology is supporting Strathbogie Shire Council's objectives.

This document is intended to provide guidance to the organisation when making decisions relating to technology, and how each investment links back to its overarching business objectives. The strategy outlines how digital technology can aid the organisation in meeting its stated strategic business objectives through pragmatic improvements over the next four years.

3.1.1 Stakeholder Identification



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3.2 Council Plan 2025-2029

3.2.1 Community Vision 2035

Strathbogie Shire Council have adopted the following Community Vision in the Council Plan 2025-2029:

"We will create a thriving place to live, work, and explore – where history and Country are honoured, innovation is welcomed, our collective spirit makes us stronger, and our natural environment is sustained for future generations".

3.2.2 Key Directions

The Council Plan is built around three key directions:

- **Connect:** We are committed to enhancing access for all residents, promoting healthy living, fostering connections, and providing opportunities to thrive and participate in community life.
- **Sustain:** We aim to collaborate with others to foster a sustainable environment, a thriving economy and resilient communities.
- **Deliver:** We are committed to delivering quality services and infrastructure that meets the needs of our community. We aim to strengthen the Council's governance and provide improved, customer-focused experiences

3.3 Staff Consultation

Strategy development drew on multiple sources of information:

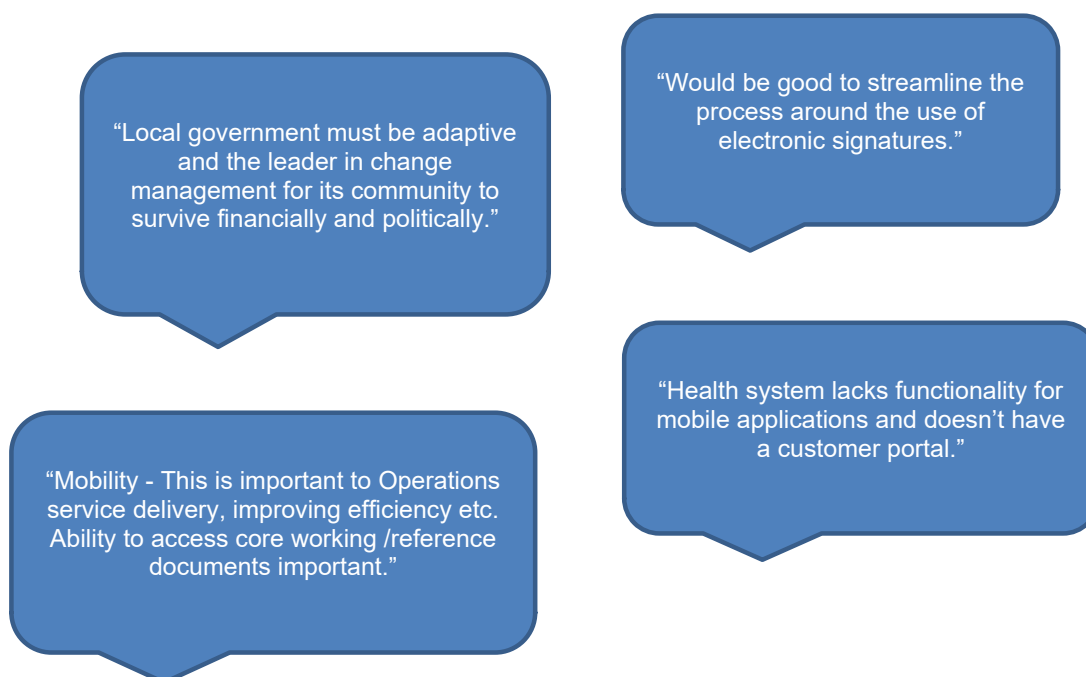
- A technical audit of the technology footprint
- Online staff surveys
- Existing strategic documentation
- Industry/sector knowledge and consultation.

The purpose of the survey was to gain a deeper understanding of:

- Roles and responsibilities of each business unit from a user perspective
- Identify platforms/systems each business unit interfaces with, and their purpose
- What is working well for each department
- Challenges faced
- Committed projects
- Gather ideas for innovation.

A summary of key feedback received from staff is included below:

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4. ICT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

4.1 Victorian Government Digital Strategy

Victorian Government Digital Strategy 2021-2026 outlines several outcomes that underpin its strategic direction:

- Better, fairer, more accessible services – Make services more personalised and consistent
- A digital-ready public sector – Improve operations, work collaboratively with partners and develop a workforce skilled for the future, now
- A thriving digital economy – Attract talent, upskill our communities and businesses, create jobs and bridge the digital divide.

An 'order of consideration' has also been developed to assist with the procurement of new or refreshed systems:

1. Share – Review existing systems already implemented for opportunities to adopt an existing shared services platform, or opportunity to transition an existing platform into a shared services model
2. Cloud – Assess cloud services where no existing suitable shared service exists
3. Buy – Procure an "off the shelf" system (avoiding customisation) with future sharing in mind.

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4. Build – Custom development of a system, should no reasonable fit be found in the above options. This should only be considered as a last resort

Using the above as a benchmark allows Strathbogie Shire Council to ensure both levels of government are aligned in their strategic principles.

4.2 Strathbogie Shire Council ICT Strategic Framework

4.2.1 Strathbogie Shire Council ICT Vision

An ICT vision statement has been developed, based on the key goals and overarching direction of the Strathbogie Shire Council:

“An environment which fosters collaboration and productivity to deliver positive community experiences”.

4.2.2 Strathbogie Shire Council Strategic Principles

The following key principles have been developed to assist the organisation in achieving the vision. These principles underpin each initiative developed:

- Engagement – Open, transparent, and frequent engagement amongst stakeholders to allow improved outcomes for business initiatives
- Collaboration – Provide an environment that supports and promotes collaboration
- Innovation – Enable access to digital platforms that are easy to use and drive innovation throughout the organisation
- Mobility – Strive towards use of systems which provide simplified mobile/remote access to information, enabling enhanced communication and productivity between field (operations) and corporate business units
- Digital by default – Aspire to make all records digital by default, removing management of paper records
- Secured assets – Build a continuous cyber security mentality across all areas of the business and implement platforms that support improved security of corporate data
- Continuous improvement – Measure performance and use this information to continually improve operations.

5. STRATEGIC SUMMARY

5.1 Overview

Four key initiatives have been developed to guide Strathbogie Shire Council to successfully achieving the objectives outlined in Council Plan 2025-2029. Each initiative has guiding principles and directions defined, which set the context of the initiative.

5.2 Link to Desired State

The following table outlines each ICT strategic principle, and the related ICT initiative:

Information Communication and Technology (ICT) Strategy 2026-2028

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ICT Strategic Principle	Related ICT Initiative(s)
Engagement	Engagement Through Technology
Collaboration	Information Asset Governance Business Systems Engagement Through Technology
Innovation	Information Asset Governance Business Systems
Mobility	Business Systems ICT Infrastructure Continuity and Security
Digital by Default	Business Systems Engagement Through Technology
Secured Assets	ICT Infrastructure Continuity and Security
Continuous Improvement	Information Asset Governance ICT Infrastructure Continuity and Security

The following table links defined ICT initiatives with goals outlined in the Council Plan:

ICT Initiative	Related Council Plan Strategy(s)
Information Asset Governance	All – Underpins success of all other ICT initiatives
Business Systems	Focus on improving our asset management processes, extending the life of our infrastructure, planning future projects, and resolving pending matters (including heritage sites). Create a responsive, customer-focused experience that ensures we effectively close the loop for our customers.
Engagement Through Technology	Build a healthy, resilient, connected and engaged community. Communicate and engage effectively with our community.
ICT Infrastructure Continuity and Security	All – Underpins success of all other ICT initiatives

5.3 Legend

The following codes are used in the below tables to provide guidance for the timing of implementation targets for each initiative direction.

Item	Description
Plan	Planning/Pre-Implementation including scoping and if feasible
Deliver	Implementation/Delivery
BaU	Ongoing/Business as Usual

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6. INITIATIVE: INFORMATION ASSET GOVERNANCE

6.1 Overview

Priority: 1	Category: Foundation	Related Council Plan Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All – Underpins success of all other ICT initiatives
Background Governance refers to the control, planning, monitoring, and enforcement of asset management. In a digital age, information is one of the (if not the most important) assets a company has; businesses are forever increasing their dependency on data analysis on to drive stronger decision-making. Ensuring this data is accurate, secure, and managed (governed) appropriately sets a solid foundation to strive for increased integration and productivity between systems, which is of growing demand within the organisation.		
Principles Information should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transparent Open Treated as an asset Secure Easily located and consumed Managed 		
Benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance understanding of business operation Ensure ICT investment is linked with Council Plan strategies Enhanced coordination of change across business units Capability to measure outcomes against a developed, known standard. 		Risks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff resistance to change Poor implementation can detract from desired outcomes Investment in change management and associated frameworks undervalued.

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6.2 Actions

Item	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Beyond
Adopt standard project management framework across organisation	Deliver	Deliver	BaU	BaU
Initialise ICT change management and adopt an appropriate ICT change management framework	Deliver	BaU	BaU	BaU
Data Governance Framework:				
Complete process mapping of business units	Plan	Deliver	Deliver	BaU
Develop performance indicators for quality and usefulness of spatial and aspatial data		Deliver	BaU	BaU
Review and update required information metadata to support improved decision-making			Deliver	BaU
Distribute operational management of key business systems to relevant business units		Plan	Deliver	Deliver
Complete and maintain an application governance matrix which outlines roles and responsibilities of each business system			Deliver	BaU
Broaden scope of ICT steering committee to focus on strategic ICT assessment from the context of all business units	Deliver	BaU	BaU	BaU
Continue to leverage system data for development of performance reporting and strategic planning	BaU	BaU	BaU	BaU
Implementation of a Corporate calendar to assist with internal governance and strategic operations	Plan	Deliver	BaU	BaU

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7. INITIATIVE: BUSINESS SYSTEMS

7.1 Overview

Priority: 2	Category: Transactions	Related Council Plan Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on improving our asset management processes, extending the life of our infrastructure, planning future projects, and resolving pending matters (including heritage sites) • Create a responsive, customer-focused experience that ensures we effectively close the loop for our customers.
Background <p>Business systems are the core of any efficient business – the platforms and processes which staff interact with in to support efficiencies in their roles. To deliver the various services that the Shire provides, council have employed many different business systems. From an ICT perspective, these platforms range in architecture; a mixture of cloud and on premises systems are in use, with varying levels of mobile support. There is significant demand throughout the organisation for stronger capability, reporting, mobility and integration between these systems.</p>		
Principles <p>Business systems should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple and easy to use – Drive uptake by simplifying compliance with digital processes • Integrated – Information efficiently flows between systems • Mobile – Designed to enable use on devices fit for the business purpose, and available for use in the field • Available – 24/7 access • Consistent – Information is gathered, processed, and stored in a consistent manner. Systems have self-auditing and exception management built into their design • Fast – Provide an efficient process from start to finish • Complete – Facilitate execution of the entire business process, without additional, manual tasks • Managed – Actively supported, maintained and improved to evolve with industry trends. <p>These principles are developed to aid better service delivery and efficient use of staff resources through digital transactions.</p>		

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Benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced integration between systems; reduction of double handing/entry of data. Increase in productivity and reduce risk of errors; easier to meet compliance requirements Access to new features, capability in platforms, leading to increased productivity Improved capability and experience for mobile/field workers. 	Risks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in systems that do not meet organisation requirements/desires Staff uptake/resistance to change in platforms and processes Budget overrun due to scope creep and/or other factors.
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7.2 Actions

Item	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Beyond
Implement 'digital and mobile by default' for all forms and procedures	Plan	Deliver	BaU	BaU
Implement device and location independent access to asset maintenance, records management, and CRM systems	Plan	Deliver	BaU	BaU
Expand on existing collaborative partnerships to further enable shared services	Plan	Deliver	Deliver	BaU
Implement systems that facilitate the efficient and consistent flow of information throughout its lifecycle, maximising single entry points for data	Deliver	Deliver	Deliver	BaU
Strive for feature parity on mobile versions of corporate systems	BaU	BaU	BaU	BaU
Investigate opportunities to consolidate business systems for improved efficiency and minimise isolated data and processes		Plan	Deliver	BaU
Implement Health and Waste Water system with integration to Finance system and Customer self-service portal	Deliver	Deliver	BaU	BaU
Support the implementation of a modern, integrated asset management system	Plan	Deliver	Deliver	BaU
Implement a compliant digital signature solution to remove the need for wet signatures	Plan	Deliver	BaU	BaU
Review Remote Sites connectivity to ensure consistent user experience across the Shire	Plan	Deliver	Deliver	BaU
Implement a fleet management solution with integration into the Asset Management system	Plan	Deliver	BaU	BaU

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8. INITIATIVE: ENGAGEMENT THROUGH TECHNOLOGY**8.1 Overview**

Priority: 2	Category: Transactions	Related Council Plan Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a healthy, resilient, connected and engaged community • Communicate and engage effectively with our community.
<p>Background</p> <p>Engagement with stakeholders is core to the purpose and value local government brings; ensuring these communication channels are open, transparent, and available on desired mediums is crucial to any modern organisation. Whilst council will be expected to retain traditional engagement methods to remain for the immediate future, the dynamic of the population is evolving, and expectations amongst the community on businesses they engage with are increasing. Digital communications and user self-service are now an expectation rather than a luxury of the community, and the Shire has a requirement to facilitate this.</p>		
<p>Principles</p> <p>The Shire should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open and engaging – Liaise with the community through mediums which facilitate healthy and dynamic communication • Efficient – Provide platforms which improve Business to Business (B2B) and Business to Consumer (B2C) for both the Shire and its stakeholders • Transparent – Provide easy access to Shire information assets • Progressive – Adapt to new ways of interacting as technology continues to evolve preferred communication methods of the population. 		
<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productivity improvements for both staff and community • Community satisfaction • Enhance revenue opportunities (e.g. tourism). 		<p>Risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community uptake/satisfaction of online platforms low • Systems not flexible to adapt as requirements change.

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8.2 Actions

Item	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Beyond
Scope integration options with external solutions to integrate with CRM system	Plan	Deliver	BaU	BaU
Provide digital self-service platforms for the community to engage and perform transactions with the Shire	Plan	Deliver	BaU	BaU
Development of AI Policy	Deliver	BaU	BaU	BaU
Explore opportunities for implementation of AI systems to improve customer experience and staff processes		Plan	Deliver	BaU
Provide staff with tools that allow for device and location independent access to information	Plan	Deliver	Deliver	BaU
Implement a 'digital by default' policy for community engagement		Plan	Deliver	BaU
Strengthen capability to gather and distribute information through collaborative platforms which support economic development and sustainability, such as the Victorian Government Open Data platform	Plan	Plan	Deliver	Deliver
Develop corporate reporting utilising PowerBI tools	Plan	Deliver	Deliver	BaU

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9. INITIATIVE: ICT INFRASTRUCTURE CONTINUITY AND SECURITY

9.1 Overview

Priority: 2	Category: Infrastructure	Related Council Plan Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All – Underpins success of all other ICT initiatives
Background <p>Ensuring Council assets are secured and highly available underpins the success of all ICT related initiatives. Industry trends are moving away from the traditional five to seven year technology cycle, shifting towards a continuous improvement lifecycle. Adopting a flexible system architecture opens capability to review and adopt new technology where suitable to the business, as well as expand and contract as the business demands. The organisation has recently replaced most of its core infrastructure hardware, putting itself in prime opportunity to begin the planning process to move from a traditional to dynamic system architecture over the coming years.</p>		
Principles <p>Infrastructure should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure – Protect the sensitivity and validity of Council assets Standardised – Maintain compliance with industry best practices as technology evolves Identity driven – Users are uniquely identified with auditable identity management Highly available – Systems design that supports 24/7 availability of resources Supported – Maintain established vendor support channels to ensure services are appropriately maintained Efficient – Infrastructure should facilitate productive operations whilst reducing operational expenses Dynamic – Scale to the needs of the business as the context and requirements change over time. 		
Benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce ICT overhead (cost and time) Increase in environment stability, availability leads to improved productivity and reduced risk Improvements to security reduces organisational risk. 		Risks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dependence on legacy systems stifles innovation Other government organisations have different strategic direction.

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9.2. Actions

	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	Beyond
Work with other local government organisations to adopt a common infrastructure platform which supports adoption of shared services	Deliver	Deliver	Deliver	BaU
Continue to reduce organisational risk through improvements which improve resiliency to disasters, and ability to recover	BaU	BaU	BaU	BaU
Utilise cloud services to enable seamless device/location experience for both staff and the community, with reduced ICT overhead	Deliver	Deliver	Deliver	Deliver
Deliver cyber security awareness training and make security conscious decisions whilst striving to not stifle innovation	BaU	BaU	BaU	BaU
Continue to review capability of current systems to identify areas for improved efficiency	BaU	BaU	BaU	BaU
Maintain all hardware and software platforms to a vendor supported state	Deliver	Deliver	BaU	BaU
Strive to be sector leaders in adopting and maintaining secure, auditable systems	BaU	BaU	BaU	BaU
Plan and implement Data Loss Prevention policies across systems to protect the security of data	Plan	Deliver	BaU	BaU
Review suitability of end user equipment to ensure hardware limitations are minimised	Deliver	BaU	BaU	BaU

10. MONITORING OF THIS STRATEGY

The progress of the strategy will be monitored and reported on to the Executive Leadership Team on a regular basis. Progress reports will outline key achievements, milestones reached, and any emerging risks or challenges that may require executive direction. This reporting process will ensure transparency, enable informed decision-making, and provide the Executive Leadership Team with clear visibility of the strategy's implementation and outcomes.

11.4.3 Appointment of Community Representative to Goulburn Valley Regional Library Corporation

AUTHOR Director People and Governance

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Goulburn Valley Regional Library Corporation provides library services for Greater Shepparton City Council, Moira Shire Council and Strathbogie Shire Council.

It is governed by a Board of nine (9) members comprising a Councillor and officer from each Council, and a community representative.

Council's current representatives are Cr Greg Carlson and Council's Director People and Governance, Amanda Tingay. With the recent resignation of Ms Kym Bailey, there was a need to recruit a new community representative.

The position was advertised, and two very strong applications were received. Interviews were conducted with all applicants and it is recommended that Stephen Mahon be appointed as the community representative for Strathbogie Shire Council on the Board of Goulburn Valley Libraries.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the appointment of Stephen Mahon as the community representative for Strathbogie Shire Council on the Board of Goulburn Valley Libraries.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The Goulburn Valley Regional Library Corporation provides library services for the City of Greater Shepparton, Moira Shire and Strathbogie Shire. It is governed by a Board of nine comprising a Councillor and officer from each Council, and a community representative.

Council's current representatives are Cr Greg Carlson and Council's Director People and Governance, Amanda Tingay, and the previous community representative was Kym Bailey. With Kym's recent resignation, there is a need to recruit for that role.

The position was advertised, and two applications were received. Interviews were conducted with both applicants and it is recommended that Stephen Mahon be appointed as the community representative for Strathbogie Shire on the Board of Goulburn Valley Libraries.

Stephen Mahon is based in the Violet Town area and has strong skill sets in the following areas:

- Local government
- Board governance
- Financial and business management
- Functions and operations of public libraries.

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

Victorian public libraries offer vital services to their local communities. They are safe, non-judgmental places that provide free access to services, programs and information technology, as well as opportunities for social interaction and inclusion.

The indirect benefits of library services include:

- improved language and digital literacy, community health and career development outcomes
- complementarity with the services of education institutions
- enhanced local area amenity and environmental sustainability.

Goulburn Valley Libraries is governed by an independent Board. The Board's responsibilities and authorities include policy development, strategic and corporate planning and service evaluation. The Board meets every two months and works to its Vision "Connected, empowered and inspire communities" and Our Purpose "To deliver library services and activities through the library network that are inclusive and respond to the social, economic and cultural needs of our communities".

The Library service operates eleven branches and a mobile library. In Strathbogie Shire, there are branches at Avenel, Euroa, Violet Town and Nagambie. The mobile library visits the townships of Longwood and Strathbogie. It is important that the Strathbogie Community representative position be filled so that local community views can inform Board deliberations.

The Goulburn Valley Libraries is currently experiencing a significant period of change. The *Local Government Act 2020* requires that regional library corporations move to alternative governance arrangements by 2030. At the August 2024 Council meeting, Council resolved to approve the adoption of the 'not-for-profit' Company Limited by Guarantee model, registered under the *Corporations Act 2001* and registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.

Since August 2024, the Goulburn Valley Libraries Board has made significant progress in developing key documents that will form the foundation for the new entity. At the September 2025 Council meeting, Council approved the Constitution and Library Agreement for the Goulburn Valley Regional Library Corporation. All three existing member Councils are working towards the new model.

It is anticipated that the new governance arrangements will commence on 1 July 2026.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The vacancy was advertised in newspapers circulating in the community and on Council's website/social media and was determined that additional community engagement was not required.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following objectives and or actions in the 2025-2029 Council Plan:

Objective Three: Deliver

We are committed to delivering quality services and infrastructure that meets the needs of

our community. We aim to strengthen the Council's governance and provide improved, customer-focused experiences.

Regional, State and National Plans, Policies and Legislation

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

The Library Service is set up under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1989*. Public libraries are primarily funded by local government with Victorian government support. Compliance with the *Local Government Act 2020* provisions, including transitional provisions providing for Regional Library Corporations to operate as they did under the *Local Government Act 1989* until 2030.

A key part of this transition is the establishment of clear governance and accountability arrangements, including a constitution and a library agreement that set out the roles, responsibilities, and financial contributions of member councils, as well as decision-making and reporting processes. Keeping these documents current ensures compliance with legislative requirements and provides a transparent and equitable framework for managing the GV Libraries' service.

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

This report has identified the following risk(s):

Risk(s)	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Considerable vacancy of board member/vacant board member position	Rare	Medium	Low	Advertising vacancy immediately

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

As indicated the *Local Government Act 2020* governs the operation, and the Library is required to operate under relevant legislation and standards including Occupational Health and Safety, Accounting Standards. The Board has overall responsibility for compliance with relevant legislation and is charged with providing good governance.

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

The community representative role on the board is a voluntary position.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Economic

According to the State Library of Victoria, libraries not only create jobs directly by employing staff, but also generate economic activity that leads to further employment. Through access to information technology, literacy-based programs and job search activities libraries directly support employment opportunities and improving economic outcomes for the community.

Social

The library service provides an opportunity for social interaction and provides a number activities which promote inclusion. It provides free access to physical and digital books and resources, information technology, literacy programs and other activities, and to a safe and welcoming space that encourages social inclusion and community engagement. The emphasis of library programs on life-long learning supports and contributes to language and digital literacy and complements other educational opportunities available to community members.

Environmental

The library service provides a range of information on this subject and Council buildings address these issues as appropriate.

Climate Change

As highlighted above, the library service provides a range of information on this subject and Council buildings address these issues as appropriate.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

One of the Board's roles in overseeing operations is to promote and assess opportunities to continuously improve the service.

COLLABORATION

The library service is a collaboration between three Councils and also works with State Government and other library services throughout the State.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The library service provides free and universal access to all members of the community and respects a range of human rights.

CONCLUSION

The recommendation addresses the need to fill a vacancy on the Library Board through the appointment of Stephen Mahon as the community representative for Strathbogie Shire Council.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

11.4.4 Councillor Staff Interaction Policy

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy provides guidance and support for Council Staff and Councillors in the performance of their duties as established by the *Local Government Act 2020* (Act).

A Councillor Staff Interaction Policy is important for several reasons. It helps ensure good governance, clear roles and responsibilities, and positive working relationships between elected representatives and staff.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Adopt the Councillor Staff Interaction Policy**
- 2. Authorise Council Officers to place the Councillor Staff Interaction Policy on Council's website, along with the publication of a notice in Council's weekly newspaper column and social media pages informing the community of the policy.**

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The objectives of this policy are to:

- recognise the respective roles and responsibilities of Councillors and Council members of staff, in particular the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), in accordance with the Model Councillor Code of Conduct
- assist Councillors and members of Council staff in respecting the roles and responsibilities of others in the organisation
- maintain transparent decision making and governance arrangements
- Support compliance with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020*
- recognise the responsibilities of the council in ensuring that it meets the responsibilities of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* to protect people from risks to their health and safety including harassment, bullying, violence, and discrimination.

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

This policy is pursuant to section 46(3)(c) of the Act that states that the Chief Executive Officer is responsible for:

“managing interactions between members of Council staff and Councillors and ensuring that policies, practices, and protocols that support arrangements for interaction between members of Council staff and Councillors are developed and implemented”

The policy establishes the protocols for staff in regard to their interactions with Councillors, while also supporting Councillors in complying with the Model Councillor Code of Conduct and the Staff Code of Conduct CEO Directive.

The Councillor Staff Interaction Policy has been reviewed and the following minor changes identified:

All	Minor formatting and editing updates
Item 6	Changes to table - Regulatory/Governance matters including: Confidential or sensitive matters relating to a Councillor Operational requests/complaints from residents Matters to be considered at Council meetings
Item 14	More concise languages and inclusion of a flow chart to reflect managing correspondence and community requests and inclusion of a flowchart

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Inform - To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following objectives and or actions in the 2025-2029 Council Plan:

Objective Three: Deliver

We are committed to delivering quality services and infrastructure that meets the needs of our community. We aim to strengthen the Council's governance and provide improved, customer-focused experiences.

Regional, State and National Plans, Policies and Legislation

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

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- *The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
- *Environment Protection Act 2017*
- *Food Act 1984*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- *Road Safety Act 1986.*

Other Related Council Documents

- Model Councillor Code of Conduct
- Model Councillor Social Media Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct CEO Directive
- Governance Rules
- Customer Service Charter
- Complaints Policy

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

This report has identified the following risk(s):

Risk(s)	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Failure to have a robust policy in place may result in unclear and/or undefined boundaries between Councillors and Staff	Low	Possible	Low	Adopt the Councillor Staff Interaction Policy

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Many state/local government frameworks expect councils to have policies that guide Councillor conduct and interactions with staff, aligning with codes of conduct and governance standards.

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.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Policies are reviewed regularly to ensure they promote best practice and meet current legislative requirements.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

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

CONCLUSION

Councillors set the strategic direction and make decisions; staff implement those decisions. The policy clarifies this separation to avoid blurred boundaries and role confusion.

ATTACHMENT

1. 202511 Councillor Staff Interaction Policy

Strathbogie Shire Council Councillor/Staff Interaction Policy

OFFICIAL

November 2025

Strathbogie
SHIRE COUNCIL

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Councillor/Staff Interaction Policy

Document ID:	398807
Effective Date:	19 July 2016
Last Review:	March 2023
Current Review:	November 2025
Date Adopted by Council:	TBC
Next Scheduled Review Date:	November 2027
Responsible Officer:	Director People and Governance

PART 1 POLICY

1. PURPOSE

This policy provides guidance and support for Council staff and Councillors in the performance of their duties as established by the *Local Government Act 2020* (Act).

This policy is pursuant to section 46(3)(c) of the Act that states that the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for:

“managing interactions between members of Council staff and Councillors and ensuring that policies, practices, and protocols that support arrangements for interaction between members of Council staff and Councillors are developed and implemented”

This document establishes the protocols for staff in regard to their interactions with Councillors, while also supporting Councillors in complying with the Model Councillor Code of Conduct and the Staff Code of Conduct CEO Directive.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The objectives of this policy are to:

- recognise the respective roles and responsibilities of Councillors and Council members of staff, in particular the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the Strathbogie Shire Council Model Councillor Code of Conduct
- assist Councillors and members of Council staff in respecting the roles and responsibilities of others in the organisation
- maintain transparent decision making and governance arrangements

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- ensure regular reports to Council Briefings and via the weekly Council Connect to enable informed review and discussion of Council's performance in servicing Councillor Requests.
- Support compliance with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020*
- recognise the responsibilities of the council in ensuring that it meets the responsibilities of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* to protect people from risks to their health and safety including harassment, bullying, violence, and discrimination.

3. APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

This policy applies to all Councillors and all Council employees. It applies to all forms of interaction between Councillors and staff at all times.

The functions of the Chief Executive Officer are defined in Section 46 of the *Local Government Act 2020* which provides that the Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the day-to-day operations of Council. This means that Councillors are not responsible for implementing Council decisions, and do not have authority to direct Council employees (other than the Chief Executive Officer).

This section of the Act supports the facilitation of effective administration and avoids staff being subject to conflicting directions. Clear lines of managerial authority are critical. This does not prohibit Councillors from expressing their views about administration matters or implementation, however this must be undertaken through the Chief Executive Officer.

All Councillors are to ensure that all communication with Council staff is in accordance with the protocols of this policy at all times. This is reinforced in section 46(3)(c) of the Act which provides that the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer is to manage interactions between Councillors and staff.

Channels of contact may include, but are not limited to, phone (including text), in person, by email or online and through digital and social media platforms.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibilities
Chief Executive Officer	is responsible for the adoption, application, and operation of this Policy
Councillors	Are responsible for understanding and abiding by this policy at all times and reporting issues to the Chief Executive Officer and Director People and Governance when they believe this policy has not been adhered to
Member of Council staff	Are responsible for understanding and abiding by this policy at all times and reporting issues to the Chief Executive Officer or Director People and Governance when they believe this policy has not been adhered to
Mayor/Deputy Mayor	Are responsible for ensuring Councillors are supported in the implementation of this policy and that any behaviour that is contrary to this policy and the Model Councillor Code of Conduct in relation to the implementation of Council policies are identified and

OFFICIAL

	dealt with in accordance with the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> and Model Councillor Code of Conduct.
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5. POLICY PRINCIPLES

Chief Executive Officer

The Council employs the Chief Executive Officer, and the Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the organisation. Therefore, Councillors' primary point of communication is via the office of the Chief Executive Officer.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the determination of the appropriate allocation of Council resources required to best support the Mayor and Councillors to undertake their roles. This includes the nomination of Council staff to provide support to the Mayor and Councillors.

The Chief Executive Officer manages interactions between members of Council staff and Councillors and ensuring that policies, practices, and protocols that support arrangements for interaction between members of Council staff and Councillors are developed and implemented.

Director(s)

Councillors have direct contact with the relevant Director to seek advice, information, and support to assist them in carrying out their official Councillor duties.

In contacting a Director, Councillors are encouraged to use electronic means, such as email, and the Chief Executive Officer must be copied into the email/correspondence.

If a request from a Councillor relates to matters which are of a whole of Council significance or relevance, then a reply will be sent to all Councillors.

Director People and Governance

Communication with the Director People and Governance is critical to assist the Mayor and Councillors perform their role, along with ensuring the integrity of Council.

Councillors can engage with the Director People and Governance to seek advice on governance related matters, including, but not limited to the following:

- Conflict of Interest
- Model Councillor Code of Conduct
- Governance Rules
- Interpretation and adherence to legislation, such as the *Local Government Act 2020*.
- Interpretation and adherence to Council Policies.

Communications and Engagement

The Mayor is the public face of Council and therefore communication with the community through Council's media platforms is an important component of their role. It is essential that the Mayor has access to work with the Communications, Advocacy and Customer Service Team in respect to media statements, requests, and responses.

All media and communication requests from other Councillors can be made to the Executive Manager Communications, Advocacy and Customer Service via email preferably.

Councillor/Staff Interaction Policy Document 398807

OFFICIAL**Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer**

It is appropriate for Councillors to contact the Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer in relation to their roles and responsibilities and general enquiries and calendar invitations/management.

Council Staff

Except for general and polite conversation, Councillors should not be approaching Council staff directly to raise issues or seek information.

Councillors are prohibited from directing or seeking to influence the decision of a member of Council staff.

Councillors

Under section 124 of the *Local Government Act 2020* Councillors are not to improperly direct or interact with Council staff.

The Council appoints and reviews the performance of the Chief Executive Officer. The Act establishes that all staff are accountable to the Chief Executive Officer who is responsible for appointing, directing, or terminating Council employees.

Councillors must:

- accept that their role is one of strategy and policy development and leadership, as opposed to management or administration
- acknowledge that they do not have a role to instruct, direct or approach staff on any matters pertaining to the performance of their duties
- acknowledge that they are not responsible for implementing Council actions
- acknowledge that under the *Local Government Act 2020* they have no capacity to individually direct Council officers to perform or not perform particular functions
- not use their position to improperly influence members of staff in their duties or functions to gain advantage for themselves or others or to cause detriment to others
- respect the role of members of staff and treat them in a way that engenders mutual respect at all times
- acknowledge the professional obligation members of staff have to give advice based on their knowledge and experience and to write reports and recommendations in a professional, objective, and unbiased way
- act with courtesy towards all Council employees and avoid intimidatory behaviour

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- refrain from publicly criticising Council staff in a way that casts doubt on their professional competency or credibility.

Councillors should advise the Chief Executive Officer in a timely fashion of any concerns that they may have with any member of staff officers.

6. APPROPRIATE COUNCILLOR/STAFF INTERACTIONS

Subject	CEO	Executive Assistant to CEO	Director	Manager Digital Innovation and Technology	Communication Advocacy and Customer Service
Council Plan, strategies, and policy			✓		
Civic and ceremonial	✓	✓	✓		
Operational matters/requests	✓		✓		
Media and communications	✓				✓
ICT support			✓	✓	
Planning matters	✓		✓		
General requests	✓	✓	✓		
Regulatory/Governance matters including Confidential or sensitive matters relating to Councillor Operational requests/complaints from Matters to be considered at Council	✓		✓		
Code of Conduct	✓		✓		
Works requests	✓		✓		

7. COMMUNICATIONS WITH COUNCILLORS DURING AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

During a declared emergency, Council will operate under the relevant emergency management framework and protocols. Council may not be the lead agency or be authorised to initiate activities and release information.

Councillors are not authorised to seek information or updates directly from Council staff.

The Chief Executive Officer will authorise communication to Councillors to provide information that is in addition to that available to the general public.

8. ENFORCEMENT RELATED MATTERS

In compliance with Sections 123 and 124 of the Act, involvement by elected representatives in any stages of matters concerning investigation and enforcement must not occur:

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- Section 123(3)(c) relates to misuse of position including directing or improperly influencing, or seeking to direct or improperly influence, a member of Council staff; and
- Section 124 states that a Councillor must not intentionally direct, or seek to direct, a member of Council staff.

Council makes delegations and authorisations to various Council staff who must, without fear or favour, investigate and enforce various legislation including (but not limited to):

- *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
- *Environment Protection Act 2017*
- *Food Act 1984*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- *Road Safety Act 1986.*

Enforcement

Involvement by elected representatives in any stages of matters of investigation and enforcement must not occur. Delegated and authorised officers must be able to perform investigation, determination of response, management of infringements and prosecutions in a manner that is free of improper direction or improper influence.

Consideration of appeals against the infringement notices will be reviewed in accordance with the relevant guidelines published by the Attorney-General and the internal appeals procedure. Councillors must therefore not involve themselves in matters of investigation and enforcement in a manner that may give rise to a conduct breach.

Where members of the community seek support in relation to such matters, they should be referred to the documentation already provided, including relevant staff identified and available to be contacted.

The provision of related information will be applied in accordance with Privacy Principles.

9. INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) SUPPORT

All ICT issues regarding timing of service delivery, equipment failure, or technical support are to be raised by Councillors with the Manager Digital Innovation and Technology, the Director People and Governance or the Chief Executive Officer.

The Director People and Governance is responsible for the approval of replacement items for lost or faulty ICT equipment.

10. PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ACT ISSUES

Council has significant responsibilities under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. It is important that Councillors are not excluded from participation and that the decision making of the Council is not tarnished by perceptions of bias, predetermination, inappropriate direction, or inappropriate influence.

11. AREAS OF COUNCIL'S BUSINESS WHERE COUNCILLOR INVOLVEMENT IS INAPPROPRIATE

Public Liability Claims

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Any requests relating to legal matters, claims, insurance matters or disputes must be sent directly to the Chief Executive Officer or Director. Councillors should refrain from providing any comment or opinion that may prejudice these matters.

Employment And Staffing Matters

Councillors must avoid engaging on matters relating to employment and staff management. All staffing matters should be referred directly to the Chief Executive Officer.

12. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

If a member of Council staff considers that a Councillor has breached the requirements of this protocol, they are to:

- a. advise the Councillor that they are uncomfortable with the interaction and recommend the Councillor speak with either the Chief Executive Officer or relevant Director if they require any further information, and
- b. report what has occurred to the Chief Executive Officer or Director People and Governance.

If a Councillor considers that a member of Council staff has breached the requirements of this protocol, they are advised to:

- a. have no further contact with the member of Council staff, and
- b. should report what has occurred to the Chief Executive Officer or the Director People and Governance.

The Chief Executive Officer and/or Director People and Governance will assess the matter and determine what further action should be taken.

13. PERSONAL INTERACTION BETWEEN COUNCILLORS AND STAFF

While this Policy governs the interactions between Councillors and Council Staff, it does not prevent Councillors and Council Staff from communicating generally.

From time to time, Councillors and staff may be present at social and community events. In such situations, both parties must refrain from discussing matters relating to Council business.

If a Councillor and a member of Council staff have a pre-existing personal relationship, they must be mindful of this and ensure any conflicts of interest which arise are declared in accordance with the Act and Council's Governance Rules.

14. MANAGING CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNITY REQUESTS

Councillors are regularly contacted by members of the community regarding a variety of matters. Some contact is in relation to Councillors role as elected representatives while other types of contact will relate to operational matters, service requests and complaints.

Strathbogie Shire Council has established a Customer Service Charter which ensures all service requests are actioned in a timely, consistent, empathetic, accessible and simple manner.

The Charter sets out a commitment by Council to provide a highly valued customer experience for the community ensuring all requests are actioned in an agreed time frame.

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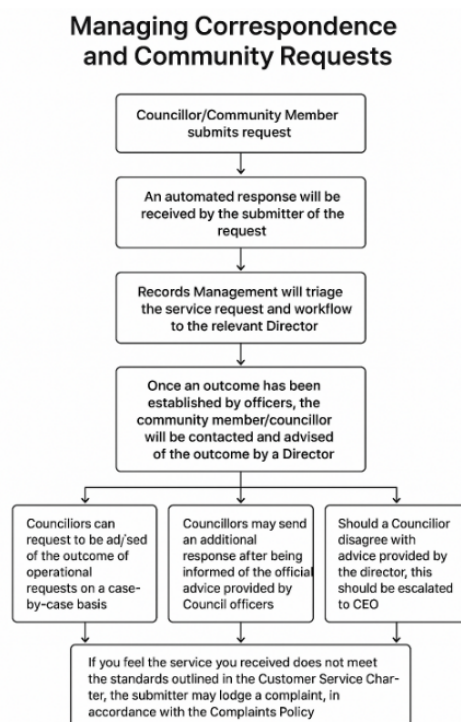
Councillors should, in the first instance, encourage community members to contact Council directly (via the Service Centre, website or Snap, Send, Solve) to register service requests or operational matters (e.g. reporting a pothole, raising a local issue or discussing a localised consultation activity).

Councillors should log requests for service through Council directly – info@strathbogje.vic.gov.au

Councillors should include sufficient information to enable Council staff to respond, for example, the name and contact details of a resident.

Councillors should acknowledge requests received from members of the public and let the person know a member of Council staff will respond to them as appropriate.

Councillors are required to treat all information provided by staff appropriately and to adhere to any confidentiality requirements. If a Councillor is unsure whether a document or advice contains confidential information, they should contact the CEO or relevant Director for clarification prior to releasing the information to the public.



15. UNREASONABLE REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Where the Chief Executive Officer or Director determines that a request for information to be unreasonable, or the information cannot be provided, they must state to the Councillor the reasons for the decision if access is refused. Examples of what is unreasonable may include:

- Information that is not readily available and would require significant officer resource to gather
- Is not required for the Councillor to perform their civic duty and is operational in nature

Councillor/Staff Interaction Policy Document 398807

OFFICIAL

- Information that is protected by privacy provisions or legislation – for example the number of freedom of information requests in action may be provided on request, but Officers would not disclose the name of the applicant or the details of the information being sought, or where a Councillor wishes to know details of a personal affair nature of a complainant or any information that may unreasonably disclose someone's identity
- Information relating to staff personnel files
- Information relating to Public Interest Disclosure matters that Council's Public Interest Disclosure Officer is managing through direct receipt, or via an IBAC or Victorian Ombudsman enquiry.

If a Councillor is seeking information that is unable to be provided by the Chief Executive Officer, the following mechanisms can be used to seek information or for a decision to be determined by Council:

- Calling of a special council meeting
- Admission of urgent business
- A notice of motion.

All of the above can be enacted provided that they meet the requirements of the Strathbogie Shire Council Governance Rules and do not breach any state or commonwealth legislation i.e. *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*, the *Local Government Act 2020*, *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012* or the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* by way of example.

16. DEFINITIONS

Term	Meaning
The Act	means <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>
CEO	means Chief Executive Officer and includes acting Chief Executive Officer
Council	means Strathbogie Shire Council
Councillor	means a person who holds the office of member of a Council
Governance Rules	means the governance rules adopted by Council under section 60 of the Act, as amended from time to time
Member of Council Staff	Under the Act a member of Council staff means a natural person appointed by the Chief Executive Officer (other than an independent contractor under a contract for services or a volunteer) under section 48 to enable- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The functions of the Council under this Act or any other Act to be carried out, and (b) The Chief Executive Officer to carry out their functions Note: The Chief Executive Officer is also a member of Council Staff - sec 44(5).
Worksite	An area where any council works are taking place or services are delivered. This includes permanent and temporary locations as well as online and social media platforms.

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17. RELATED POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

The following Council, state, regional and national plans, and policies are relevant to this

Legislation

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- *The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
- *Environment Protection Act 2017*
- *Food Act 1984*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- *Road Safety Act 1986.*

Other Related Council Documents

- Model Councillor Code of Conduct
- Model Councillor Social Media Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct CEO Directive
- Governance Rules
- Customer Service Charter
- Complaints Policy

18. POLICY REVIEW

Council may review this policy at any time and at least two years from the date of adoption.

Minor amendments to the policy may be authorised by the Chief Executive Officer at any time where such changes do not alter the substance of the policy (e.g. a change to the name of a related document, or a change in legislation).

12. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006 AND THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ACT 2010

The Council acknowledges the legal responsibility to comply with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* is designed to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. The Charter gives legal protection to twenty fundamental human rights under four key values that include freedom, respect, equality, and dignity.

11.4.5 Councillor Professional Development Policy

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Councils benefit from ensuring councillors are well trained in their legislative obligations, principles of good governance, compliance with codes of conduct, conflicts of interest and other transparency disclosures and accountabilities.

Councillor professional development commences prior to nomination and continues throughout the four-year term as an elected representative, with a combination of mandatory training prescribed by legislation and discretionary training identified as necessary to the council or councillor.

This is a new policy and sets the parameters for supporting councillor professional development.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Adopt the Councillor Professional Development Policy**
- 2. Authorise Council Officers to place the Councillor Professional Development Policy on Council's website, along with the publication of a notice in Council's weekly newspaper column and social media pages informing the community of the policy.**

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of the Councillor Professional Development Policy is:

1. To set out the arrangements for supporting councillor professional development and compliance with the induction and professional development obligations of the *Local Government Act 2020*
2. To strengthen good governance across councils through high quality learning and development programs for councillors
3. To encourage the professional leadership development of councillors and improve individual knowledge and skills.

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires that all councillors undertake candidate training prior to election (s256(7)), induction training upon their election (s32) and ongoing professional development training throughout their term.

Further, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are required to undertake additional training upon their appointment to that role. The Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020 prescribe the matters that must be included in this training.

For the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, the prescribed matters are:

- roles and responsibilities
- chairing meetings
- engagement and advocacy
- leadership, and
- any other matter relating to the role of the mayor which the chief executive officer has determined should be addressed.

For all councillors (for both induction and ongoing professional development), the prescribed matters are:

- working together in a council
- decision making, integrity and accountability
- community representation
- strategic planning and financial management
- conduct
- land use planning
- any other matter relating to the role of a councillor which the chief executive officer has determined should be addressed.

This is a new policy and sets the parameters for supporting councillor professional development.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Inform - To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following objectives and or actions in the 2025-2029 Council Plan:

Objective Three: Deliver

We are committed to delivering quality services and infrastructure that meets the needs of our community. We aim to strengthen the Council's governance and provide improved, customer-focused experiences.

Regional, State and National Plans, Policies and Legislation

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

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Local Government Act 1989*
- *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- Council Expenses Policy
- Model Councillor Code of Conduct

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

This report has identified the following risk(s):

Risk(s)	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Failure to have a robust policy in place may result in poor integrity and governance outcomes	Low	Possible	Low	Adopt the Councillor Professional Development Policy

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, councils must:

- support Councillors to understand and fulfil their statutory responsibilities
- ensure induction, ongoing training and capability development.

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.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Policies are reviewed regularly to ensure they are promote best practice and meet current legislative requirements.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

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

CONCLUSION

A Councillor Professional Development Policy is important if Council is to meet legislative obligations, ensure informed decision-making, provide fair access to training, uphold good governance and support councillors to deliver better outcomes for their community.

ATTACHMENT

1. 202512 Councillor Professional Development Policy

OFFICIAL

Strathbogie Shire Council Councillor Professional Development Policy

November 2025

Strathbogie
SHIRE COUNCIL

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Councillor Professional Development Policy

Document ID:	SSCEDOC-43802981-63
Effective Date:	TBC
Last Review:	New
Current Review:	November 2025
Date Adopted by Council:	TBC
Next Scheduled Review Date:	November 2027
Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer

OFFICIAL**PART 1 POLICY****1. PURPOSE**

To set out the arrangements for supporting councillor professional development and compliance with the induction and professional development obligations of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

To strengthen good governance across councils through high quality learning and development programs for councillors

To encourage the professional leadership development of councillors and improve individual knowledge and skills.

2. INTRODUCTION

Councils benefit from ensuring councillors are well trained in their legislative obligations, principles of good governance, compliance with codes of conduct, conflicts of interest and other transparency disclosures and accountabilities.

Councillor professional development commences prior to nomination and continues throughout the four-year term as an elected representative, with a combination of mandatory training prescribed by legislation and discretionary training identified as necessary to the council or councillor.

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires that all councillors undertake candidate training prior to election (s256(7)), induction training upon their election (see s32) and ongoing professional development training throughout their term (see s33A). Further, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are required to undertake additional training upon their appointment to that role (see s27A).

The Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020 prescribe the matters that must be included in this training.

For the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, the prescribed matters are:

- roles and responsibilities;
- chairing meetings;
- engagement and advocacy;
- leadership; and
- any other matter relating to the role of the mayor which the chief executive officer has determined should be addressed.

For all councillors (for both induction and ongoing professional development), the prescribed matters are:

- working together in a council
- decision making, integrity and accountability
- community representation
- strategic planning and financial management
- conduct
- land use planning
- any other matter relating to the role of a councillor which the Chief Executive Officer has determined should be addressed.

3. APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

This policy applies to all Councillors of Strathbogie Shire Council.

Councillor Professional Development Policy Document 928816

OFFICIAL**4. DEFINITIONS**

In this policy:

- candidate support program means a program of preliminary training designed to educate potential local government candidates about council election processes, local government legislative and policy fundamentals and life as a councillor.
- councillor induction program means the program of professional development activities provided to all councillors upon election
- councillor professional development program means the program of professional development activities provided annually to all councillors
- mayoral induction program means the program of professional development activities provided to the mayor and deputy mayor.
- training certification statement means the statement prepared by the chief executive officer and presented to councillors for signing
- training program means the mayoral induction program, councillor induction program and/or councillor professional development program.

5. MAYORAL INDUCTION PROGRAM

Upon election to the office of Mayor or Deputy Mayor, the Chief Executive Officer shall provide the mayor and deputy mayor with a program of professional development activities which, if completed within four months of taking the oath or affirmation, will satisfy each councillor's obligation under section 27A(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The mayoral induction program may be the same for both councillors, or may differ between councillors depending on identified learning needs.

The mayoral induction program is subject to change and may be altered by the Chief Executive Officer with reasonable notice provided to councillors.

Participation in the mayoral induction program is mandatory for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

6. MANDATORY CANDIDATE TRAINING

Prior to the opening of nominations for local council elections, the Chief Executive Officer will ensure information is provided on the council website about the process of nomination for election as a councillor, including the requirement all candidates undertake mandatory candidate training prior to nomination.

The completion of mandatory candidate training is a prescribed requirement under s 256(7) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

7. CANDIDATE SUPPORT PROGRAM

Councils may provide a candidate support program to assist new and potential candidates in developing an introductory understanding of the following matters:

- The local government election process
- Processes and procedures of nomination
- Local government legislative and policy fundamentals
- Codes of Conduct and other forms of accountability
- Professional Development Mandatory Training requirements
- Day to day life as a councillor

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Councils may determine that to encourage candidate diversity and inclusion, that special measures are taken to provide tailored candidate support training to people under-represented on councils including but not limited to:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people
- LGBTIQA+ people
- People with Disabilities
- Women and non-binary people
- Young people

8. COUNCILLOR INDUCTION PROGRAM

Upon election, the Chief Executive Officer shall provide all councillors with a program of professional development activities which, if completed within four months of taking the oath or affirmation, will satisfy each councillor's obligation under section 32(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The councillor induction program may be the same for all councillors or may differ between councillors depending on identified learning needs.

The councillor induction program is subject to change and may be altered by the Chief Executive Officer with reasonable notice provided to councillors.

Participation in the councillor induction program is mandatory.

9. REGULAR COUNCILLOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Early in each calendar year, the Chief Executive Officer shall provide all councillors with a program of professional development activities which, if completed during that calendar year, will satisfy each councillor's obligation under section 33A(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The councillor professional development program must include:

- Any training that is outlined under the Act as mandatory
- At the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer any additional professional development training or activities that they determine to be relevant and important to the professional development needs of their individual council
- training on the matters prescribed at r6A(a) to (f) of the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020, and
- any matters determined by the Chief Executive Officer under r6A(g) of the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020.

The councillor professional development program may be delivered by:

- in-house training to a councillor group (by an external subject matter expert, training provider or by a council officer who is a subject matter expert in that area)
- completion of online training modules
- self-directed learning by way of webinars, videos, podcasts or similar
- attendance at an external training event, seminar or conference
- completion of a recognised qualification and/or
- other activities deemed suitable by the Chief Executive Officer.

The councillor professional development program may be the same for all councillors or

Councillor Professional Development Policy Document 928816

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may differ between councillors depending on identified learning needs.

The councillor professional development program is subject to change and may be altered by the Chief Executive Officer with reasonable notice provided to councillors.

10. RESOURCING COUNCILLOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The councillor professional development plan will be funded within the council's annually adopted Budget.

11. COUNCILLOR PARTICIPATION

Participation by councillors in the mayoral induction program, councillor induction program and councillor professional development program is required to satisfy sections 27A(1), 32(1) and 33A(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* respectively. Every effort shall be made by councillors to participate in the training programs.

The Chief Executive Officer must provide reasonable assistance to a councillor to enable them to access the training programs.

Councillors shall notify the Chief Executive Officer without delay if they are unable to participate in any component of the training programs. The Chief Executive Officer will, to the extent practicable, make alternative arrangements to enable the training program to be completed (for example, by arranging a make-up training session to be offered to that councillor).

12. CERTIFICATION

Following each training program, the Chief Executive Officer will prepare a training certification statement which sets out the training undertaken by each councillor during that calendar year. The statement shall include for each element of the training program:

- the date(s) the training was undertaken
- the prescribed matters included, with reference to regulation 4A, 6 or 6A(2) of the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020
- the detailed matters addressed and
- the manner of delivery.

If the training certification statement shows that all required elements have been completed, it shall be presented to each councillor for certification. The councillor must then make a written declaration that they have completed the training program by signing and dating the training certification statement in the presence of the Chief Executive Officer.

If the training certification statement shows that not all required elements have been completed, it may not be presented to the councillor for certification until such time as the outstanding elements are completed.

If a councillor fails to make the written declaration by:

- for the councillor induction program, four months from the taking of the oath or affirmation of office (subject to s32(4A) of the *Local Government Act 2020*)
- for the mayoral induction program, one month from election as Mayor or Deputy Mayor
- for the councillor professional development program, 31 December each year except for an election year when it must be completed by 1 September (subject to s33A(6) of the *Local Government Act 2020*)

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The Chief Executive Officer shall withhold the payment of the Mayoral, Deputy Mayoral or councillor allowance (until such time as both the training program has been completed and the written declaration has been made.)

The failure to make the written declaration by the deadline for any of the applicable training programs results in the withholding of the entire mayoral, deputy mayoral or councillor allowance (ie.– a mayor who fails to complete the mayoral induction declaration but does complete the councillor induction and councillor professional development declarations will have their full allowance withheld – they do not ‘revert’ to receiving the councillor allowance.

Upon the completion of the training program and the making of the declaration, payment of allowances shall resume, and any amounts withheld shall be paid.

13. ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibilities
Chief Executive Officer	is the owner of policy
Director People and Governance	provides advice and administration of this policy

14. RELATED POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

The following Council, State, regional and national plans, and policies are relevant to this policy under each subtitle.

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Local Government Act 1989*
- *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- Council Expenses Policy
- Model Councillor Code of Conduct

15. POLICY REVIEW

Council may review this policy at any time and at least two years from the date of adoption.

Minor amendments to the policy may be authorised by the Chief Executive Officer at any time where such changes do not alter the substance of the policy (e.g. a change to the name of a related document, or a change in legislation).

16. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006 AND THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ACT 2010

The Council acknowledges the legal responsibility to comply with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* is designed to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. The Charter gives legal protection to twenty fundamental human rights under four key values that include freedom, respect, equality, and dignity.

11.4.6 Civic Flag Flying Policy

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The flying of flags is a visible symbol of respect and acknowledgement, and Council is committed to ensuring appropriate national respect and acknowledgement is demonstrated through the flying of flags on Council's primary civic buildings.

This policy identifies the basis upon which the Council will fly flags in Civic areas. Official flags are flown as an expression of Council's governance responsibilities and will be flown permanently outside on designated flagpoles at 109a Binney Street, Euroa, and 352 High Street Nagambie.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Adopt the Civic Flag Flying Policy**
- 2. Authorise Council Officers to place the Civic Flag Flying Policy on Council's website, along with the publication of a notice in Council's weekly newspaper column and social media pages informing the community of the policy.**

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of the Civic Flag Policy is to outline Council's approach to the flying of flags at Council's primary civic buildings. The policy ensures that flags are flown in accordance with the federal and state government flag flying protocols and the *Flags Act 1953*.

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

This Policy applies only to Council's primary civic buildings located at the Council offices at:

- 109a Binney Street, Euroa
- 352 High Street, Nagambie

The order of precedence of flags flown on Council's primary civic buildings must align with the Australian National Flag Protocols, which provide that the Australian National flag takes precedence in Australia over all other flags when it is flown in company with other flags.

Council recognises the significance of certain flags and will utilise the four designated flagpoles at the 109a Binney Street, Euroa to permanently fly the following flags:

- Australian National Flag
- Torres Strait Islander Flag
- Taungurung Flag
- Australian Aboriginal Flag

The Australian Flag is flown in accordance with the *Flags Act 1953* and the 'Australian Flag Booklet – Part 2: The Protocols' at 352 High Street Nagambie.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Inform - To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following objectives and or actions in the 2025-2029 Council Plan:

Objective One: Connect

We are committed to enhancing access for all residents, promoting healthy living, fostering connections, and providing opportunities to thrive and participate in community life.

Objective Three: Deliver

We are committed to delivering quality services and infrastructure that meets the needs of our community. We aim to strengthen the Council's governance and provide improved, customer-focused experiences.

Regional, State and National Plans, Policies and Legislation

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

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Flags Act 1953*
- 2025-2029 Council Plan
- Australian Flag Booklet – Part 2: The Protocols'
- Community Flag Flying Policy and Procedure

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

This report has identified the following risk(s):

Risk(s)	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Not having a policy in place increases the risk of accidental protocol breaches and non-compliance with national and state flag protocols, ceremonial guidelines and legislative requirements	Possible	Low	Low	Adopt a Civic Flag Flying Policy

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

This policy has considered the guidelines regulated under the *Flags Act 1953* and 'Australian Flag Booklet – Part 2: The Protocols'

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.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* was considered in the preparation of this report with particular consideration given to the aspects of respect, equality and dignity.

CONCLUSION

A Civic Flag Flying Policy provides Council with clarity, consistency, and accountability in how flags are displayed.

ATTACHMENT

1. 202512 Civic Flag Flying Policy

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Strathbogie Shire Council Civic Flag Flying Policy

November 2025

Strathbogie
SHIRE COUNCIL

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Civic Flag Flying Policy

Document ID:	SSCEDOC-43802981-507
Effective Date:	TBC
Last Review:	New
Current Review:	November 2025
Date Adopted by Council:	TBC
Next Scheduled Review Date:	November 2027
Responsible Officer:	Director People and Governance

OFFICIAL**PART 1 POLICY****1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Civic Flag Policy (the Policy) is to outline Council's approach to the flying of flags at Council's primary civic buildings. The policy ensures that flags are flown in accordance with the federal and state government flag flying protocols and the *Flags Act 1953*.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy identifies the basis upon which the Council will fly flags in Civic areas. Official flags are flown as an expression of Council's governance responsibilities and will be flown permanently outside on designated flagpoles at 109a Binney Street, Euroa, and 352 High Street Nagambie.

3. APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

This Policy applies only to Council's primary civic buildings located at the Council offices at:

- 109a Binney Street, Euroa
- 352 High Street, Nagambie

4. POLICY PRINCIPLES

The flying of flags is a visible symbol of respect and acknowledgement, and Council is committed to ensuring appropriate national respect and acknowledgement is demonstrated through the flying of flags on Council's primary civic buildings.

The order of precedence of flags flown on Council's primary civic buildings must align with the Australian National Flag Protocols, which provide that the Australian National flag takes precedence in Australia over all other flags when it is flown in company with other flags.

Council recognises the significance of certain flags and will utilise the four designated flagpoles at the 109a Binney Street, Euroa to permanently fly the following flags:

- Australian National Flag
- Torres Strait Islander Flag
- Taungurung Flag
- Australian Aboriginal Flag

The Australian Flag is flown in accordance with the *Flags Act 1953* and the 'Australian Flag Booklet – Part 2: The Protocols' at 352 High Street Nagambie.

When a flag needs to be removed to accommodate an approved Community request as stipulated in the Community Flag Flying Policy and Procedure, the locations of which flags can be changed are civic flag poles located in the roundabout at the intersection of Binney and Brock Streets, Euroa and 352 High Street, Nagambie.

This Policy does not apply to interior flagpoles or portable flagpoles. These will be managed operationally in accordance with the Australian National Flag Protocols.

Half-Mast

Council will fly flags at half-mast as a sign of mourning on appropriate occasions in accordance with advice received by the Department of Premier and Cabinet (Victoria), the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), and the Australian National Flag Protocols.

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5. DEFINITIONS

Term	Meaning
Civic flags	means a flag that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is flown from flagpoles on Council owned properties (limited to: 109a Binney Street, Euroa, 352 High Street, Nagambie) • Serves to symbolise the identity of a Community, nation or local council
Community Member(s)	means an individual whose primary place of residence is in Strathbogie Shire
Half mast	means a position of which the top of the flag is a third of the distance down from the top of the flagpole as a sign of mourning
Primary Civic Building(s)	109a Binney Street Euroa 352 High Street Nagambie
Council	means Strathbogie Shire Council
Councillor	means a Councillor of Strathbogie Shire who has taken the Oath or Affirmation of Office under Section 5 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> after being duly elected as a Councillor, including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor
Council Employee	means permanent, part-time, and casual employees including contractors, of Council

6. ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibilities
Council Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May apply the Policy to guide the process for assessment of submissions
Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May consider half-masting flags beyond Australian Government Directions
Director people and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will oversee review of this policy

7. RELATED POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Flags Act 1953*
- Strathbogie Shire Council 2025-2029 Council Plan
- Australian Flag Booklet – Part 2: The Protocols'
- Community Flag Flying Policy and Procedure

OFFICIAL**8. POLICY REVIEW**

Council may review this policy at any time and at least four years from the date of adoption.

Minor amendments to the policy may be authorised by the CEO at any time where such changes do not alter the substance of the policy (e.g. a change to the name of a related document, or a change in legislation).

9. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006 AND THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ACT 2010

The Council acknowledges the legal responsibility to comply with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* is designed to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. The Charter gives legal protection to twenty fundamental human rights under four key values that include freedom, respect, equality, and dignity.

11.4.7 Audit and Risk Committee Charter

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under section 54 (1) of *the Local Government Act 2020* Council must prepare and approve an Audit and Risk Committee Charter.

The Audit and Risk Committee last reviewed and endorsed the Charter at the meeting held on 6 October 2023, and the Charter was adopted by Council in October 2023.

The annual review of the Charter suggests only minor changes to the existing document.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the Audit and Risk Charter, as attached to this report.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of the report is for Council to adopt the Audit and Risk Committee Charter.

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

The Charter is an important document as it sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Audit and Risk Committee including to:

- monitor compliance of Council policies and procedures with the overarching governance principles the Act, its regulations and any Ministerial directions, other relevant laws and regulations
- monitor Council financial and performance reporting
- monitor and provide advice on risk management and fraud prevention systems and controls
- oversee internal and external audit functions
- monitor the achievement of the highest standards of corporate governance including monitoring compliance with Council's Code of Conduct.

The Charter was reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee on 21 November 2025, and only minor changes were suggested which are highlighted in yellow in the attached Charter.

The changes are summarised below:

Front Cover	Changes to dates to reflect current Charter
Section 3.1	Language changes to reflect generic representation rather the listing specific officers to be present (as this may change from meeting to meeting)
Section 13	Updated to reflect appointment of incoming Independent Member Leon Sargeant

Section 13	To be updated to reflect Council representatives to Audit and Risk Committee following Statutory Meeting 18 November 2025
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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Inform - To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following objectives and or actions in the 2025-2029 Council Plan:

Objective Three: Deliver

We are committed to delivering quality services and infrastructure that meets the needs of our community. We aim to strengthen the Council's governance and provide improved, customer-focused experiences.

Regional, State and National Plans, Policies and Legislation

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

- *Local Government Act 2020*

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

This report has identified the following risk(s):

Risk(s)	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Poor governance outcomes may result if a current Audit and Risk Committee Charter is not in place	Low	Medium	Low	Adopt the Audit and Risk Committee Charter.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Under section 54 (1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* Council must prepare and approve an Audit and Risk Committee Charter.

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.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Audit and Risk Committee Charter is reviewed annually ensuring it is complaint and reflects best practice.

COLLABORATION

The Audit and Risk Committee, Councillors and the Executive Leadership Team have all reviewed the Audit and Risk Committee Charter prior to it being received by Council for adoption.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

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

CONCLUSION

The Audit and Risk Committee Charter is important because it provides a formal, documented framework for the committee that oversees audit, risk and control systems, and aligns with legislative requirements under the *Local Government Act 2020*.

ATTACHMENT

1. 202511 Audit and Risk Committee Charter 2025

Strathbogie Shire Council Audit and Risk Committee Charter November 2025

Endorsed by Audit and Risk Committee 21 November 2025
Adopted by Council 9 December 2025



Strathbogie
SHIRE COUNCIL

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Strathbogie Shire Council has established an Audit and Risk Committee (the Committee) in compliance with section 53(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act).

1 Purpose

Council is committed to good governance, public transparency and accountability to its community. The Audit and Risk Committee is established to achieve the overarching governance principles of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) and has a focus on strengthening Council's governance and risk management frameworks, monitoring the organisation's financial management and to help drive continuous improvement.

The Committee is designated as an advisory committee under section 53(2) of the Act and does not have any delegated powers, executive powers, management functions or delegated financial responsibilities.

The Committee's role is to:

- monitor compliance of Council policies and procedures with the overarching governance principles the Act, its regulations and any Ministerial directions, other relevant laws and regulations
- monitor Council financial and performance reporting
- monitor and provide advice on risk management and fraud prevention systems and controls
- oversee internal and external audit functions
- monitor the achievement of the highest standards of corporate governance including monitoring compliance with Council's Code of Conduct.

The Committee will engage with management in a constructive and professional manner in discharging its responsibilities and formulating its advice to the Council.

The Committee operates to advise the Council on how best to fulfil its responsibilities and facilitate decision making by providing a forum for improving communication between the Council members and senior management, finance, risk and compliance managers, internal auditors and external auditors.

2 Authority

The Council authorise the Committee, within its responsibilities, to:

- perform its activities within the scope of this Charter
- obtain any information it requires from any Council, management, or other external party (subject to any legal obligation to protect information)
- discuss any matters with the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO), or other external parties (subject to confidentiality considerations)
- request the attendance of any official, including Councillors and Council Officers, at Committee meetings
- obtain legal or other professional advice at the entity's expense, as considered necessary to meet its responsibilities
- seek resolution on any disagreements between management and the external auditors on financial reporting

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- seek resolution of any disagreement between management and the internal auditors on internal audit recommendations.

3 Membership

The Committee is comprised of six voting members appointed by Council - two Councillors and four independent external members. One of the Councillor representatives will be the Mayor. A third Councillor representative shall be nominated by Council to act as a substitute representative should any of the permanent Councillor representatives be unable to attend a meeting(s).

In accordance with the Act the Members must:

- include members who are Councillors of the Council
- consist of a majority of members who are not Councillors of the Council and who collectively have:
 - expertise in financial management and risk
 - experience in public sector management
- not be a member of Council staff
- aim to increase gender diversity of its membership.

The Council will appoint the Chair of the Committee, who in accordance with section 53 of the Act:

- must not be a Councillor
- must not be a member of Council staff.

In the absence of the Chair, the Committee will elect a temporary Chair for the meeting from the remaining independent members who are present.

Voting members of the Committee will act in accordance with the Councillor Code of Conduct.

3.1 Other Committee Attendees

The Chief Executive Officer and other Directors and Officers may attend meetings as advisers or observers but will not be members of the committee and will require copies of committee papers. Councillor(s) may attend meetings as observers; however, committee papers will be circulated upon request.

A representative(s) of the VAGO will be invited to attend meetings of the Committee as an observer and to build a constructive and open relationship with the Office. Such a representative will be required to act in accordance with the governance principles in addition to the obligations of confidentiality (Section 125) and conflict of interest (Part 6, Division 2) as outlined within this Charter and the Act.

A representative(s) of the appointed internal audit contractor will be invited to attend meetings of the Committee, as an observer. Such a representative will be required to act in accordance with the governance principles in addition to the obligations of confidentiality (Section 125) and conflict of interest (Part 6, Division 2) as outlined within the Act.

3.2 Term of Membership

Independent members of the committee will be reviewed at least every three years by the Council with the aim of ensuring an appropriate balance between continuity of membership, the contribution of fresh perspectives and a suitable mix of qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience.

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Councillor members will be appointed for a one-year term of office with their term expiring at the Annual Statutory Meeting of Council (each November) when Councillor representatives are nominated for various committees and bodies. They may be reappointed; however, rotation of Councillor membership is encouraged for Councillors to experience the Committee.

The initial appointment of independent Committee members shall be for a three-year period.

The position for an independent member(s) will be publicly advertised at the end of each term. This does not preclude existing members from being re-appointed through a competitive process.

Council may reappoint current independent members if exceptional circumstances are considered to exist.

Where possible, the end of the terms of Independent Members will be staggered to avoid losing continuity in the Committee's membership.

3.3 Induction and Training

New members will receive relevant information and briefings on their appointment to assist them to meet their committee responsibilities.

The Committee will adopt and maintain a program of induction, training and awareness-raising for its members, with the objective of enabling the Committee to keep abreast of contemporary developments and leading practices in relation to its functions.

An annual training program will also be prepared and delivered to ensure ongoing professional development for the Committee. The program will be delivered as part of the quarterly meeting process or through attendance at workshops/training sessions arranged for times outside of the normal meeting schedule as agreed by the Committee.

3.4 Payment of a Stipend

Pursuant to section 53(6) of the Act, the Council will pay a stipend to independent committee members. This stipend will be based on a per annum amount, determined by the Council, which will be indexed in alignment with the rate cap percentage each 1 July.

Once every three years the Chief Executive Officer will benchmark the stipend paid to Independent Members against other small rural councils in the Hume region to inform the review of stipend amounts by the Council. The first benchmarking exercise will be undertaken at the start of the new Audit and Risk Committee's term.

3.5 Notice Requirements

Twenty eight (28) day's written notice must be given:

- By Council to a member of its intention to propose to remove them from the Committee and provide that member with the opportunity to be heard at a Council meeting which is open to the public, if that member so requests
- By a committee member should they wish to resign from the committee
- By a committee member should they not be seeking a further term.

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Functions

In accordance with section 54(2) of the Act, the functions and responsibilities of the Committee include:

Monitor the compliance of Council policies and procedures with the overarching governance principles and the *Local Government Act 2020* and the regulations and any ministerial directions (section 54(2a))

4.1.1 Monitor Council processes for compliance of Council policies and procedures.

- 4.1.2 Monitor reimbursements of expenses of councillors and members of a delegated committee as required under Section 40(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*
- 4.1.3 Assess the Council's procurement framework with a focus on the probity and transparency of policies and procedures/processes.
- 4.1.4 Assess the Council's policy framework and procedures to ensure the embedding of the governance principles.
- 4.1.5 Monitor the implementation of financial management policies, including they are aligned with the achievement of the Act's financial management principles.
- 4.1.6 Monitor work by the council to mitigate and plan for climate change risk.
- 4.1.7 Monitor the achievement of the highest standards of corporate governance including monitoring compliance with Council's Code of Conduct,
- 4.1.8 Review issues relating to national competition policy and Local Government Performance Reporting Framework.

4.2 Monitor Council Financial And Performance Reporting (section 54(2b))

- 4.2.1 Review the appropriateness of the systems and procedures in place for collecting and analysing information and data for the purposes of measuring the performance of individual programs and activities to monitor progress in implementing the Council Plan and Community Vision.
- 4.2.2 Review management's processes for ensuring and monitoring compliance with legislation and other requirements on the external reporting by the Council of financial and non-financial information, performance reporting under the Act, and other relevant legislation.
- 4.2.3 Assess whether a comprehensive process has been established for the purposes of legislative disclosure reporting requirements.
- 4.2.4 Assess internal control systems covering the public release of information.
- 4.2.5 Assess any changes to Council's accounting policies and procedures and the methods of applying them, with the input of management, external and internal auditors, ensuring that they are in accordance with the stated financial reporting framework.
- 4.2.6 Review the appropriateness of accounting policies and disclosures to present a true and fair view.
- 4.2.7 Review the financial reporting provided to Council and monitor the financial performance and sustainability of Council.

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- 4.2.8 Assess reports from internal and external auditors that make recommendations about the quality of financial reports such as actual and potential material audit adjustments, financial report disclosures, non-compliance with legislation and regulations, internal control issues.
- 4.2.9 Recommend to the Council whether the financial report including the performance statement section of the Annual Report should be approved based on the Committee's assessment of them.

4.3 Monitor And Provide Advice On Risk Management And Fraud Prevention Systems And Controls (section 54(2c))

- 4.3.1 Monitor the implementation of the Risk Management Strategy and progress in managing risk identified on the risk register priorities. The progress against these documents will be reported to the Committee at each meeting.
- 4.3.2 Review and recommend enhancements to Council's policy for the oversight and management of business risks.
- 4.3.3 Review management's overall risk profile, risk management framework and implementation strategy and advise Council of any concerns regarding the appropriate resourcing of the required actions.
- 4.3.4 Receive regular risk reports, which:
 - provide an overview of management of each strategic risk by strategic risk owners
 - identify key risks, the status and the effectiveness of the risk management systems to ensure that identified risks are monitored and new risks are identified, mitigated and reported.
- 4.3.5 Assess Council processes for management's identification and control of material risks, including business, financial and legal compliance risks in accordance with Council's identified tolerance for risk particularly in the following areas:
 - potential non-compliance with legislation regulations and standards and Council's policies
 - important accounting judgements or estimates that prove to be wrong
 - litigation and claims
 - fraud and theft
 - significant business risks recognising that responsibility for general or specific risk areas, for example, environmental risk, occupational health and safety, and how they are managed by the Council.
- 4.3.6 Assess adequacy of Council process to manage insurable risks.
- 4.3.7 Review whether the Council has a current and active business continuity plan and disaster recovery plan which is tested periodically as determined by the plan.
- 4.3.8 Review whether the Council has current and active emergency planning and recovery response frameworks in place which are tested periodically as determined by the internal audit workplan.

OFFICIAL

- 4.3.9 Ascertain whether fraud risks have been:
- identified, analysed, evaluated, have an appropriate treatment plan which has been implemented, communicated, monitored and there is regular reporting and ongoing management of fraud risks
 - included in the assessment of the risk profile of the Council and have been appropriately addressed.
- 4.3.10 Receive summary reports from management on all suspected and actual frauds, thefts and material breaches of legislation, ensuring reporting to the Council and/or relevant authorities.
- 4.3.11 Monitor the Council's fraud prevention and detection framework, including any action taken with respect to actual and suspected instances of fraud.
- 4.3.12 Monitor management's efforts to create and maintain a strong internal control environment, including the design and implementation of anti-fraud strategies and programs, conduct of fraud awareness seminars or training courses to increase staff awareness of activities that amount to fraud.

4.4 Oversee Internal Audit Function (section 54(2d))

- 4.4.1 Review the Internal Audit Strategic Plan regularly to determine that it provides an appropriate functional and organisational framework to enable Council's internal audit function to operate effectively and without limitations.
- 4.4.2 Recommend to Council the appropriate method for the provision of the internal audit function including the evaluation criteria and the appointment of the contractor.
- 4.4.3 Monitor the performance and ongoing effectiveness of the contractor, which can include making a recommendation to Council to terminate the contractor should performance not meet the standards set out in the contract.
- 4.4.4 Monitor the implementation of a three-year internal audit improvement plan. The progress against this plan will be reported to the Committee at each meeting.
- 4.4.5 Review the allocation of internal audit resources through the Strategic Annual Internal Audit Plan, against Council's Audit Universe, three-year Audit Plan, Assurance Map and Council's strategic risks.
- 4.4.6 Assess if there has been any obstruction to the work reported through to the Committee.
- 4.4.7 Review the planning and scope for each internal audit to ensure that the audit objectives and scope are fit for purpose.
- 4.4.8 Provide the opportunity for Committee members to meet with the internal auditors without management being present.
- 4.4.9 Review the reporting on completed internal audits, seeking clarification through critical analysis to assure the Committee that management is responding adequately to the findings and key risks are mitigated.
- 4.4.10 Monitor the progress of the strategic annual internal audit plan and work program and consider the implications of internal audit findings for the control and operating environment.

OFFICIAL

- 4.4.11 Monitor the implementation of internal audit's findings and recommendations.
- 4.4.12 Require internal audit contractor to conduct periodic testing of whether audit actions reported as completed by management have been effectively implemented.

4.5 Oversee External Audit Function (section 54(2d))

- 4.5.1 Seek information from the external auditor to outline the external audit plan including proposed audit strategies and how they might relate to identified risk areas, discuss audit results and consider the implications of the external audit findings for the control environment.
- 4.5.2 Ask the external auditor if there have been any significant resolved or unresolved disagreements with management.
- 4.5.3 Monitor and critique management's response to the external auditor's findings and recommendations.
- 4.5.4 Sight all representation letters signed by management and consider the completeness and appropriateness of the information provided.
- 4.5.5 Provide the opportunity for committee members to meet with the external auditor and/or officers of the VAGO as the need arises without management being present.
- 4.5.6 Maintain an awareness of local government performance audits undertaken by the VAGO and ensure recommendations are brought to the attention of the Council for action/implementation where appropriate.
- 4.5.7 Provide advice to management on action to be taken on significant issues raised in relevant VAGO reports or better practice guides.
- 4.5.8 Provide feedback to the VAGO on draft strategies, reports and opportunities for improvement.

4.6 Monitor Internal Controls

- 4.6.1 Review the effectiveness of the Council's internal control system with management and the internal and external auditors.
- 4.6.2 Assess whether management has controls in place for unusual types of transactions and/or any potential transactions that might carry more than an acceptable degree of risk.
- 4.6.3 Should the need arise, meet periodically with key management, internal and external auditors, and compliance staff, to understand and discuss any changes in the Council's control environment.

4.7 Monitor Compliance With Relevant Laws And Regulations

- 4.7.1 Monitor Council's processes regarding compliance with legislation and regulations.
- 4.7.2 Comply with legislative and regulatory requirements imposed on audit committee members, including not misusing their position (section 123 of the Act) to gain an advantage for themselves or another or to cause detriment to the Council and disclosing conflicts of interest (section 125 of the Act)
- 4.7.3 Monitor ethical standards and related party transactions by determining whether the systems of control are adequate.

OFFICIAL**4.8 Meetings with Council**

A joint meeting between the Independent Committee Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and the elected Council at least annually, with a focus on presenting the Committee's performance report to the Council.

Officers will not be present unless otherwise invited to participate.

5 Authority of the Committee

The Committee does not have any delegated powers from Council or any delegated financial responsibilities.

All recommendations of the Committee shall be referred to the Council for review and noting, other than the:

- three-year Internal Audit Plan
- planning and terms of reference for internal audits that do not require the approval of the Council
- management responses to audit recommendations arising from Internal Audit Reports.

The Committee has the authority to review the Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement and provide advice to the Council. The Committee can recommend to Council its approval 'in principal', the signing of the Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement.

6 Evaluating the Committee's Performance and Reporting**6.2 Annual Committee Performance Report**

The Committee will undertake an annual assessment of its own performance against the Audit and Risk Committee Charter in accordance with section 54(4a) of the Act. This assessment will be reported in accordance with section 4.8 of this Charter.

This report will be provided to the Chief Executive Officer for presentation to Council in accordance with Section 54(4b) of the Act. This report will be made available to the public via Council's website.

The Chair of the Committee, or a representative on behalf of the Committee, will present this Annual Committee Performance Report to an informal Councillor briefing prior to the report being presented to Council.

The Chief Executive Officer will assist the Committee in undertaking a broader 360 degree self-assessment of its performance every three years. This review will invite feedback from the Council, each Committee member, Council's Executive Leadership Team, Council's appointed Internal Auditors, the VAGO, and any other relevant stakeholders. The self-assessment will be reported through the Annual Committee Performance Report.

6.3 Review of Independent Member's Performance If Seeking Additional Terms

The Chair, in conjunction with the Chief Executive Officer, will undertake formal reviews of the performance and independence of Independent Members in the event that the member wishes to seek reappointment for an additional term in response to expressions of interest being called from the wider community for the Committee vacancy.

OFFICIAL**6.4 Six Monthly Audit and Risk Report**

The Committee will prepare a six-monthly audit and risk report that describes the activities of the Audit and Risk Committee and includes the Committee's findings and recommendations in accordance with section 54(5a) of the Act, along with the agreed actions. This report will be provided to the Chief Executive Officer for reporting to Council twice a year in July and January.

The Chair of the Committee, or a representative on behalf of the Committee, will present the Annual Internal Audit Plan to a Councillor Briefing prior to commencement of the financial year.

7 Administrative Arrangements**7.2 Meetings**

The Committee must meet at least every quarter.

A meeting dedicated to strategic planning and another to focus on policy review shall be held each year at a date determined by the Committee.

One or more additional meetings may be held to review the Council's annual financial statements and performance statement, or to meet other responsibilities of the committee.

All committee members are expected to attend each meeting, in person or virtually. Failure to attend a meeting may result in non-payment of members' fees for the associated quarter but this will be at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer and Committee Chair.

The Chair has discretion to decide if a meeting will be held following the receipt of a request by another Independent Member, internal auditor, or the VAGO.

7.3 Planning

The Committee will develop a forward meeting schedule that includes the dates and location for each meeting for the forthcoming year.

In accordance with section 54(3) of the Act the Committee will develop an annual work program that includes the timing of reporting for all of the responsibilities outlined in this Charter.

7.4 Quorum

A quorum will consist of a majority of Committee members, with a minimum of two (2) independent members and one (1) Councillor. The quorum must be in attendance at all times during the meeting. If a quorum cannot be achieved at the commencement of the meeting, or maintained during a meeting, the Chair will call a meeting at the earliest possible time to deal with the unfinished business on the agenda.

7.5 Minutes and Agendas

In accordance with section 54(6a) of the Act, the CEO will appoint a Council Officer to provide support to the Committee to ensure:

- the agenda for each meeting is approved by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Committee Chair

OFFICIAL

- the agenda and supporting papers are circulated, at least one week before the meeting
- the minutes of the meetings are prepared and maintained.

Once an agenda has been sent to Audit and Risk Committee members, the order of business for that meeting may be altered with the consent of the Committee.

Minutes must be reviewed by both the Director People and Governance of Council and the Committee Chair and circulated within two weeks of the meeting to each member and committee observers, as appropriate.

In accordance with the Act, Council's Governance Rules and Public Transparency Policy, summary minutes from each Committee meeting are to be presented to Council for review and noting after each Committee meeting summarising progress, matters discussed and any issues the Committee wishes to share with all Councillors.

Internal audit reports and external audit reports will not be made public unless a recommendation from the Committee is passed by Council to do so.

Pursuant to section 54(6b) of the Act, the Chief Executive Officer is required to table reports upon request by the chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee.

7.6 Voting

All members shall have full and equal voting rights unless a member is unable to vote due to a conflict of interest. The Chairperson shall be an independent member of the Committee and shall have a casting vote on occasions where there is an equal tally of votes on a matter. In the absence of the appointed Chairperson from a meeting, the meeting will appoint an acting Chairperson from the independent members present.

8 Conflicts of Interest

Committee recommendations must be transparent and accountable, protect the public interest, maintain the integrity of the Committee and Council, and enable the public to be confident that the Committee is performing its duties properly.

If a conflict of interest exists, it must be declared and managed.

Division 2 of Part 6 of the *Local Government Act 2020* applies to Independent Members in the same way it does to members of any delegated Committee. An independent member has a conflict of interest if they have:

- a general conflict of interest within the meaning of section 127 of the Act
- a material conflict of interest within the meaning of section 128 of the Act.

In accordance with Section (133) of the *Local Government Act 2020* Committee members are required to provide written declarations relating to their material personal interests to Council by completing a Personal Interest Return. This declaration and information is summarised for publication on Council's website.

External members should consider past employment, consultancy arrangements, and related party issues in making these declarations and the Council, in consultation with the Chair, should be satisfied that there are sufficient processes in place to manage any real or perceived conflict.

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At the beginning of each committee meeting, members will be required to declare any material personal interests that may apply to specific matters on the meeting agenda.

Where the Independent member believes, after consultation with the Chair, that the conflict cannot be appropriately managed the member must leave the meeting prior to any discussion or debate on the matter in which they have declared an interest.

The time of exit will be noted in the minutes, along with the reason for the Independent Member's temporary absence from the meeting. The Chair will ask for the Independent Member to re-join the meeting when the matter has been finalised. The time of re-entry to the meeting will be noted in the minutes.

The Chair is also responsible for deciding if they/them should excuse themselves from the meeting or from the committee's consideration of the relevant agenda item(s).

If a quorum cannot be maintained due to declarations of conflict of interest, the provisions of clause 27 of the Strathbogie Shire Governance Rules will apply.

9 Misuse of Position

Section 123 of the *Local Government Act 2020* applies to Independent Members in that the Independent Member must not intentionally misuse their position -

- (a) to gain or attempt to gain, directly or indirectly, an advantage for themselves or for any other person
- (b) to cause, or attempt to cause, detriment to the Council or another person.

10 Confidential Information

Section 125 of the *Local Government Act 2020* applies to Independent Members, and the requirements include:

- (1) Unless subsection (2) or (3) applies, a person who is, or has been, an Independent Member must not intentionally or recklessly disclose information that the person knows, or should reasonably know, is confidential information.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not apply if the information that is disclosed is information that the Council has determined should be publicly available.
- (3) A person who is, or has been, an Independent Member may disclose information that the person knows, or should reasonably know, is confidential information in the following circumstances:
 - (a) for the purposes of any legal proceedings arising out of this Act
 - (b) to a court or tribunal in the course of legal proceedings
 - (c) pursuant to an order of a court or tribunal
 - (d) in the course of an internal arbitration and for the purposes of the internal arbitration process
 - (e) in the course of a Councillor Conduct Panel hearing and for the purposes of the hearing
 - (f) to a Municipal Monitor to the extent reasonably required by the Municipal Monitor
 - (g) to the Chief Municipal Inspector to the extent reasonably required by the Chief Municipal Inspector

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- (h) to a Commission of Inquiry to the extent reasonably required by the Commission of Inquiry
- (i) to the extent reasonably required by a law enforcement agency.

11 Recruitment

A position description for independent members will be established and maintained for each of the four independent member positions. The position description will include a matrix skills assessment that identifies the particular blend of skills and experience required for each particular role.

12 Review of the Committee Charter

At least once a year the Committee will review this charter. This review will include consultation with the Council.

Any substantive changes to the charter will be recommended by the Committee and must be formally considered and adopted by the Council.

13 Members**Independent Community Representatives**

Representative	Audit and Committee Appointment Term End
Sophie Lukeis	4 December 2026
Paul Ayton (Chair)	1 June 2027
John Tanner AM	5 December 2027
Leon Sargeant	1 December 2028

Council Representatives

Representative	Audit and Committee Appointment Term End
Mayor Cr Scott Jeffery	10 November 2026
Cr Clark Holloway	10 November 2026
Cr Vicki Halsall (substitute)	10 November 2026

11.4.8 Confirmation of Minutes - Audit and Risk Committee Meeting 5 September 2025**AUTHOR** Governance Officer**RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR** Director People and Governance**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report presents the confirmed minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 5 September 2025 and endorsed by the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting held 21 November 2025.

The Audit and Risk Committee considered the following items at the meeting held on 5 September 2025 :

- Draft 2024-25 Annual Financial Statement Report
- Draft 2024-25 Performance Statement and Governance Management Checklist
- Draft Final Management Letter
- Draft Closing Report to Audit and Risk Committee
- Fair Value Assessment at 30 June 2025
- CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy
- For Information - Climate Change Action Plan Update
- For Information - Parliamentary Inquiry into Fraud and Corruption Control in Local Government
- For Information - Facility Management Report
- Internal Audit Updates - RSD Audit
- External Audit Updates - Crowe Australasia
- Outstanding Internal Audit Action Items
- Policy Review
- Risk Management
- Audit and Risk Committee 2025-2026 Work Program
- Human Resources Update - Including Business Continuity Plan, Staff Engagement and Alignment Survey and Culture at Council
- Councillor Expenses and Reimbursements
- CEO Purchasing Card and Other Expenses/Reimbursements
- Fraud and Risk Management
- Investment and Borrowings
- Confirmation of Minutes Audit and Risk Committee Meeting 4 July 2025

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the confirmed minutes of the Strathbogie Shire Council Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held on 5 September 2025.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

To confirm the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 5 September 2025.

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

The Strathbogie Shire Council Audit and Risk Committee is an independent Committee appointed by Council and pursuant to section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The Audit and Risk Committee is established to achieve the overarching governance principles of the *Local Government Act 2020* with particular focus on strengthening Council's governance and risk management frameworks, monitoring the organisation's financial management and to help drive continuous improvement.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Inform - To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following objectives and or actions in the 2025-2029 Council Plan:

Objective Three: Deliver

We are committed to delivering quality services and infrastructure that meets the needs of our community. We aim to strengthen the Council's governance and provide improved, customer-focused experiences.

Regional, State and National Plans, Policies and Legislation

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

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- Audit and Risk Committee Charter

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

This report has identified the following risk(s):

Risk(s)	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Failure to meet the requirements of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> Division 8 – Audit and Risk Committee	Unlikely	Major	Medium	Internal systems in place to support requirements for the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> and the requirements of the Audit and Risk Committee

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Audit and Risk Committee has been constituted and established under sections 53 and 54 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, which requires all Councils to appoint an Audit and Risk Committee under a Charter.

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.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

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

CONCLUSION

This report recommends that Council receives and note the confirmed minutes of the Strathbogie Shire Council Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 5 September 2025.

ATTACHMENT

1. 20250905 Confirmed Minutes Audit and Risk Committee Meeting 5 September 2025

Strathbogie Shire Council

Audit and Risk Committee Meeting Minutes

Friday 5 September 2025

At 9:30 am

Euroa Community Conference Centre

Strathbogie
SHIRE COUNCIL

A meeting of the Strathbogie Shire Council Audit and Risk Committee was held on 5 September 2025 commencing at 9:30 am at Euroa Community Conference Centre.

Present

Paul Ayton (Chair)	Community Member
Alister Purbrick AM	Community Member
Sophie Lukeis	Community Member
John Tanner AM	Community Member
Mayor Cr Claire Ewart-Kennedy	Councillor Representative
Cr Clark Holloway	Councillor Representative
Marg Allan	Municipal Monitor

Officers

Rachelle Quattrocchi	Chief Executive Officer
Amanda Tingay	Director People and Governance
Oliver McNulty	Director Sustainable Infrastructure
Andrew Davis	Chief Financial Officer
Heike Manet	Manager People and Culture
Michelle Bromley	Coordinator Governance and Record Management
Kerry Lynch	Governance Officer (Minutes)

Auditors

Paul Harrison	Internal Auditors – RSD Audit
Danielle McKenzie	External Auditors – Crowe Australasia

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1 Welcome

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 Apologies

Kathie Teasdale, RSD Audit

4 Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

Nil

5 Confirmation of Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 4 July 2025

MOTION

Moved: John Tanner
Seconded: Alister Purbrick

That the Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 4 July 2025 be confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.

CARRIED

6 Business

6.1 Briefing from the Chief Executive Officer

Chief Executive Officer Quattrocchi provided a verbal update to the Committee. The following topics were covered:

- Parliamentary Inquiry into Fraud and Corruption Control in Local Government
- Plant and Equipment and Asset Registers
- Climate Change Action Plan
- Internal Controls and Business Continuity Testing
- Asset Planning and Capital Works
- Corporate Systems and Project CODI
- Improved meeting schedule to accommodate increased workplan obligations.

The Audit and Risk Committee expressed their disappointment in the late issue of the draft financial statement and performance statements prior to the meeting. It was discussed whether this is a systemic issue and if there were any underlying issues contributing to delays.

It was explained that there is no ongoing systemic issue, however there were delays due to external audits still being undertaken at the time the draft papers were issued.

6.2 Draft 2024-25 Annual Financial Statement Report

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) states it is essential there is a legislative framework that provides for councils to be accountable to their local communities in the performance of functions and the exercise of powers and the use of resources.

The Annual Financial Statements for 2024-25 have been prepared and submitted to Crowe Australasia, the appointed auditors for the Victorian Auditor General's Office, for an independent audit opinion.

Overall, the Financial Statements underline that Council's financial position remains sound.

The Act specifically requires that Council pass a resolution giving its approval in principle to the Annual Financial Report prior to formally submitting it to the Auditor-General Victoria. This will occur at the Council meeting to be held on 16 September 2025.

Having been audited and reviewed by external auditors Crowe (Australasia), the draft 2024-25 Annual Financial Statement were considered by the Audit and Risk Committee who noted the following:

- Asset renewal and prioritising funding to cover planned and unplanned renewal works to maintain the asset base
- There is a significant amount of capital works to come into this financial year from the previous year, and approximately 60% of work is underway
- Improving transparency around how Council manages long term projects
- Opportunities to prioritise funding for current capital works programs and future projects
- Trying to better understand the timing allocation and timing of receipt of Grants
- Sought advice as to whether there is anything in the financial statements that needs to be brought to the attention of the Audit and Risk Committee

Action:

The Audit and Risk Committee to receive a report on the work underway in the capital works program.

MOTION

Moved: Paul Ayton

Seconded: Clark Holloway

That the 2024-25 Draft Annual Financial Statement be endorsed by the Audit and Risk Committee for presentation to Council for adoption.

CARRIED

6.3 Draft 2024-25 Performance Statement and Governance Management Checklist

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework is a mandatory system of performance reporting for all Victorian councils. It ensures that councils are measuring and reporting on their performance in a consistent way to promote transparency and accountability in the local government sector.

The Performance Statement and Governance and Management Checklist will form part of Council's 2024-25 Annual Report to be considered by Council at the meeting to be held on 21 October 2025.

Having been audited and reviewed by external auditors Crowe (Australasia), the draft Performance Statement 2024-25 and Draft Governance and Management Checklist 2024-25 were considered by the Audit and Risk Committee, noting the following:

- Council was making a concerted effort to rebuild financial reserves so as to improve its ability to respond to emergencies and impacts of natural disaster, and to make co-contributions to grant/financial opportunities as they arise
- The indicators show a sound financial position however future revenue may be impacted by the emergency services and volunteers fund
- When considering the performance report it is more relevant to look at trends, rather than yearly figures
- Local and State stakeholders continue to advocate for improved financial sustainability
- The uncertainty around grant funding and timeframes has greater impact on smaller Councils

Action

Clarify the percentage increase (published at 14%) relating to Governance Satisfaction in the performance Statement

MOTION

Moved: Paul Ayton
Seconded: Clark Holloway

That the Audit and Risk Committee endorse the following reports for presentation to Council for adoption:

- 1. Draft Performance Statement 2024-25**
- 2. Draft Governance and Management Checklist 2024-25**

CARRIED

6.4 Draft Final Management Letter

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Having been audited and reviewed by external auditors Crowe (Australasia), the draft Final Management Letter was considered by the Audit and Risk Committee.

The Committee acknowledged the good work closing out outstanding audit items, noting that some outstanding items were aligned with future systems upgrades.

MOTION

Moved: Paul Ayton
Seconded: Clark Holloway

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the draft Final Management Letter as tabled.

CARRIED

6.5 Draft Closing Report to Audit and Risk Committee

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Having been audited and reviewed by external auditors Crowe (Australasia), the Closing Report to the Audit and Risk Committee was considered by the Audit and Risk Committee.

Action:

The Audit and Risk Committee to receive a final copy of the Closing Report when the VAGO audit is completed.

MOTION

Moved: Paul Ayton
Seconded: Alister Purbrick

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the draft Closing Report as tabled and receive the final report when it is complete.

CARRIED

6.6 Fair Value Assessment at 30 June 2025

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement establishes the framework for measuring fair value, defined as the price received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

The assessment requires an entity to use market participant assumptions, maximise observable inputs, and use valuation techniques like the market, cost, or income approaches when observable prices aren't available.

The assessment applies when other Australian Accounting Standards require or permit fair value measurements and focuses on a market-based, not an entity-specific, measurement.

Having been audited and reviewed by external auditors Crowe (Australasia), the AASB 13 Fair Value Assessment Measurement Position Paper was considered by the Audit and Risk Committee.

Action:

The Audit and Risk Committee to receive a final copy of the Fair Value Assessment at 30 June 2025, with changes highlighted, when the VAGO audit is completed

MOTION

Moved: Paul Ayton
Seconded: Alister Purbrick

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the draft AASB 13 Fair Value Assessment Measurement Position Paper, as tabled, and receive a final report when it is complete.

CARRIED

6.7 CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under Section 45 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, councils are required to adopt and maintain a CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy that outlines:

- The recruitment and appointment process for the CEO
- CEO performance monitoring and review mechanisms
- The CEO's remuneration structure and contract conditions

Additionally, the Act requires the CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy must provide for the Council to obtain independent professional advice in relation to the matters dealt with in the Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy.

This policy has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and will:

- remain in force until it is revised or revoked by a resolution of Council
- shall be reviewed within the six (6) months following each Council election.

The policy has been recently reviewed by the CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee, and relevant Officers and the following changes are proposed:

- Minor grammatical and formatting changes
- Policy clarifications and updated terminology for better understanding
- Clarification of the duties for the independent member
- Clarification regarding the appointment of a recruitment consultant including (review and provide any recommendations for the position description and manage the position advertising)
- Policy Review – deleted the need for the Audit and Risk Committee to undertake an annual review of the policy. Inclusion that the Policy will be reviewed at least every four years by the Committee and within six months after each Council election, and the Committee will make a recommendation to Council with respect to any suggested changes.

The draft CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy will be received by Council on 16 September 2025 for adoption.

MOTION

Moved: Paul Ayton

Seconded: Alister Purbrick

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the updated Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy.

CARRIED

6.8 For Information - Climate Change Action Plan Update

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director Sustainable Infrastructure

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the implementation of Strathbogie Shire Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2022–2027.

At the end of the 2024-25 financial year, 50% of the Plan's fifty-four actions have been marked green as ongoing or completed, with Council on track to deliver the plan substantially by 2027.

While the target of Net Zero corporate emissions by 2025 has not been met, Council has achieved a 34% emissions reduction since 2021 - a significant achievement that demonstrates clear progress and commitment to climate action.

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the following:

- Council was not looking to achieve the more aspirational activities in the action plan
- Council will be looking at obtaining more accurate information regarding emissions at the Violet Town Landfill
- Council needs to consider offsets and more authentic ways to achieve them
- Officers were working with the community to generate credits
- Officers are working with other Councils to obtain benefit from collaborative arrangements
- The Committee acknowledged the high level of work being achieved in this area with limited resources.

Councillors received a briefing on 26 August 2025 and have committed to a workshop to review the actions in the later part of 2025.

MOTION

Moved: Paul Ayton
Seconded: Clark Holloway

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the Climate Change Action Plan 2022-2027 Update.

CARRIED

6.9 For Information - Parliamentary Inquiry into Fraud and Corruption Control in Local Government

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On Monday 28 July 2025 Council was invited to give evidence to the Public Accounts and Estimate Committee's inquiry into Fraud and Corruption Controls in Local Government. Our invitation was as one of six Councils who participated in the no. 40: Fraud and Corruption Control—Local Government (2019) audit.

The Committee was conducting a follow-up inquiry into the Victorian Auditor-General's reports relating:

- no. 40: Fraud and Corruption Control—Local Government (2019)
- no. 316: Fraud Control Over Local Government Grants (2022).

Under sections 14(1) and 33(3) of the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003* (Vic), the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee will inquire into, consider, and report by no later than 20 November 2025 on:

1. The 2019 report of the Auditor-General on fraud and corruption control in local government
2. The 2022 report of the Auditor-General on fraud control over local government grants
3. The actions taken by Victorian integrity and government agencies to address the issues raised in the findings and recommendations of the two audits.

Deputy Mayor Councillor Scott Jeffery and Chief Executive Officer Rachelle Quattrocchi gave evidence to the Committee and a written submission was provided to the Committee.

MOTION

Moved: Paul Ayton

Seconded: Alister Purbrick

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the written submission to the Public Accounts and Estimate Committee's Inquiry into Fraud and Corruption Controls in Local Government report.

CARRIED

6.10 For Information - Facility Management Report**AUTHOR** Governance Officer**RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR** Director Sustainable Infrastructure**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Hodges Facility Management (Consultant) was engaged to provide guidance and advice on compliance and operational considerations related to Council's property portfolio (buildings only) of community used facilities and civic operations.

This advice was informed by a sample of site inspections conducted on 3 July 2025, along with a review of relevant documentation including policies, reports, registers, and stakeholder input. The aim was to highlight key areas for improvement, offer strategic recommendations, and support informed decision-making of the ongoing management of the property portfolio.

The advice outlines a number of areas where enhancements could be made, including essential safety measures, occupational health and safety practices, and asset condition monitoring. It also notes broader challenges such as outdated tenancy agreements, fragmented asset data, limited inspection records, and resource constraints.

To address these issues, the advice proposes a phased, risk-informed approach to inspections, remediation, and stakeholder engagement. This would be supported by strengthened documentation practices, improved contractor coordination, and enhanced strategic oversight. Priority attention is recommended for higher-risk areas to support legal compliance and lay the foundation for a more sustainable property and facilities management framework.

The Audit and Risk noted that work has been undertaken in the following areas:

- An intensive review of Council's lease and licences
- A budget allocation of \$150k has been made to help resolve safety concerns
- An annual review of buildings will be undertaken with emphasis on essential safety inspections
- An education programme will be undertaken with User Groups to ensure they understand and are compliant with building codes.

A further update will be provided to the Audit and Risk Committee in 2026.

MOTION**Moved:** Paul Ayton**Seconded:** Cr Clark Holloway**That the Audit and Risk Committee note the Facilities Management Report.****CARRIED**

7 Standing Agenda Items

7.1 Internal Audit Updates - RSD Audit

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the reporting period the Internal Auditors RSD Audit have commenced/completed the listed audits in line with the 2024-2026 Strategic Internal Audit Program:

Audit	Status
Fleet Management	Underway – Final Report Due 28 November 2025

As proposed in the forward audit timeframes the following audits will be undertaken prior to June 2026:

- Finance General Controls
- Civic Asset Management
- ICT General Security Controls

The Audit and Risk Committee noted:

- the complexity of the fleet management audit being undertaken
- the process undertaken to establish the scope, fees and final approval of internal audits

The recommendations from the previous audits have been updated in the Outstanding Internal Audit Action Items and were reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team on 4 August 2025.

Action:

Clarify if the Payroll Audit completed in June 2025 included Superannuation.

MOTION

Moved: Paul Ayton
Seconded: Alister Purbrick

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the:

1. Internal Audit Status Report - September 2025
2. Strategic Internal Audit Plan
3. Internal Audit Update - Q4 FY25- Local Government

CARRIED

7.2 External Audit Updates - Crowe Australasia

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

External auditors Crowe (Australasia) are completing the audit of the 2024-25 Financial Statements and Performance Statement, and the following draft documents were provided in detail earlier in this agenda for consideration by the Audit and Risk Committee:

- Item 6.1** Draft 2024-25 Annual Financial Statements
- Item 6.2** Draft 2024-25 Performance Statement and Governance Management Checklist
- Item 6.3** Draft Final Management Letter
- Item 6.4** Draft Closing Report to Audit and Risk Committee

The final audited financial and performance statements will be reported in the 2024-25 Annual Report to be received by Council for adoption on 21 October 2025.

MOTION

Moved: Paul Ayton

Seconded: Cr Clark Holloway

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the report.

CARRIED

7.3 Outstanding Internal Audit Action Items

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Executive Leadership Team met on 4 August 2025 and reviewed the outstanding internal audit recommendation actions.

An update on the progress of the outstanding actions was attached for review by the Audit and Risk Committee.

The Audit and Risk Committee sought clarification of items relating to security at the Nagambie office, which have been implemented.

MOTION

Moved: Paul Ayton

Seconded: Alister Purbrick

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the Outstanding Internal Audit Action Items report as at 29 August 2025.

CARRIED

7.4 Policy Review

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the last reporting period the following policies are under review by Councillors and will be received by Council for adoption at the September and October Council Meetings:

- Draft Community Flag Flying Policy
- Draft CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy
- Draft Events Policy
- Draft Planning Permit Application Referral Policy

Governance Rules

In 2023, IBAC released the Operation Sardon Special Report into allegations of corrupt conduct involving councillors and property developers at Casey City Council. The report contained 18 recommendations directed to the Minister for Local Government to ensure that the public can have confidence in council decisions. Seven of these recommendations have been fully acquitted through recent reforms to the *Local Government Act 2020* and the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020.

Local Government Victoria has commenced work to address the recommendations that Local Government Victoria develop and introduce:

- Model Governance Rules to promote best practice council meeting procedures
- A Model Transparency Policy to promote council openness and transparency.

A Local Government Steering Committee made up of representatives nominated from peak bodies and council representative groups has been convened to guide this work.

These include:

- Rural Councils Victoria (RCV)
- Peri-Urban Councils Victoria
- Victorian Local Government Association (VLGA)
- Australian Local Government Women's Association (Vic)
- The Local Government Inspectorate (LGI)
- Regional Cities Victoria
- Outer Melbourne Councils (formerly Interface Councils)
- Melbourne 9
- Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)
- Local Government Professionals (LGPro)

A Technical Working Groups comprising specialist advisers within local government has been established to support the Steering Committee and contribute to the development and drafting of the Model Governance Rules and Model Transparency Policy. Strathbogie Shire Council has a representative on the Technical Working Group.

The Technical Working Groups will provide sector specific expertise and advice on a range of existing policies, good practice and guidance to meet legislative and regulatory requirements.

All councils have had the opportunity to contribute to this work through consultation being carried out throughout 2025.

Council will continue to engage in this process with the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Model Governance Rules via submissions which close on 31 October 2025.

Existing policies continue to be reviewed in a timely manner and new policies developed as required to meet operational or legislative requirements

MOTION**Moved: Paul Ayton****Seconded: Cr Clark Holloway****That the Audit and Risk Committee note the policy review update.****CARRIED**

7.5 Risk Management

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with the governance principles in *the Local Government Act 2020* the Audit and Risk Committee will provide:

- Independent review and oversight of Council's risk management framework and control activities, with a focus on monitoring the Strategic Risk Register

At each Audit and Risk Committee Meeting the Committee will receive a report which addresses key performance indicators relating to Strategic and Project Risk. The report identifies any occurrence or increased likelihood of strategic risk events, any mitigations undertaken, and progress on actions scheduled to mitigate strategic Risks.

- There have been no new strategic risks identified
- Strategic risk controls have been updated following recommendations from the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 4 July 2025.

In the strategic risk register and in terms of interruption to business, the Audit and Risk Committee sought clarification as to what could be the worst case scenario and identifying maximum costs after major events.

The Committee discussed having suitable financial contingency planning in place, and working with insurers to address worst case scenarios.

It was identified that Councils should advocate collectively across the State to ensure Councils return to business as usual more quickly following major emergencies or climate events.

MOTION

Moved: Paul Ayton

Seconded: John Tanner

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the Risk Management update.

CARRIED

7.6 Audit and Risk Committee 2025-2026 Work Program

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Audit and Risk Committee develop an annual work program in accordance with Sec 54(3) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The plan is a live document and is updated at each future meeting to note the progress of completion on the Audit and Risk Committee annual statutory and legislative obligations.

The Annual and Biannual Audit and Risk Performance Reports also note the outcomes of the annual work program and are reported through to Council every six months.

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the volume of work in the workplan and whether there was sufficient time in the meeting schedule to accommodate the workplan. It was recommended that the scheduled strategic workshop meeting in July may be better used to hear ordinary business.

MOTION

Moved: Paul Ayton

Seconded: Clark Holloway

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the progress of the 2025-26 Audit Work Program under Sec 54(3) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

CARRIED

7.7 Human Resources Update - Including Business Continuity Plan, Staff Engagement and Alignment Survey and Culture at Council

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report notes there appears to be a higher number of headcounts lost than is explained by the comparable small reduction in FTE.

This discrepancy arises due to a timing mismatch between when a terminating staff member is removed from the headcount and when they are reflected as inactive in the FTE. It results from data being pulled from two separate sources—Human Resources and Payroll modules—that are updated at different intervals and do not automatically synchronise with each other.

The report also shows a further decrease of 13% of excess annual leave compared to the last reporting quarter. However, there is a significant increase of excess Time in Lieu (TIL) due to one employee showing up in the report that previously had not been picked up. A plan to reduce the excess is already in place.

Disregarding the employee, there is a 7% decrease in Excess TIL (Value) and 15% decrease in Excess TIL (Hours) figures compared to last Audit and Risk report in June 2025.

The report was noted.

Business Continuity Plan Update

- The Business Continuity Management Policy was adopted by Council in April 2025
- A significant review of the Business Continuity Plan (and review of sub-plans) was completed and endorsed by the Executive Leadership Team in July 2025.
- An active Business Continuity Management Team has been reinstated and meets quarterly, the most recent meeting being 27 August 2025.
- A business continuity test was undertaken by JLT Public Sector on 3 September 2025, and a verbal update on the outcome of the test was provided to the Audit and Risk Committee at the meeting on 5 September 2025.

The report was noted.

Staff Engagement and Alignment Survey

A staff Alignment and Engagement Survey 2024 was undertaken in November 2024 by independent consultant Insync.

The results of the survey have been assessed by the Executive Leadership Team and all staff were able to participate in a number of face-to-face sessions earlier in the year to review the outcomes of the survey.

The Survey was positively received by the Audit and Risk Committee for the complexity of the content in the report. It was acknowledged that some work had been done internally as to how management can progress the outcomes of the engagement and alignment survey to improve

and/or make a more positive culture at Strathbogie Shire Council, however this needed to be supported with actions and outcomes.

It was identified that the Committee would like to see more frequent “pulse checks” relating to staff engagement and culture.

Action:

The Audit and Risk Committee to receive an annual report noting trends in staff culture and staff engagement.

MOTION

Moved: Paul Ayton

Seconded: Alister Purbrick

That the Audit and Risk Committee note Human Resources Report and Staff Engagement and Alignment Survey

CARRIED

7.8 Councillor Expenses and Reimbursements

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section (40) of the *Local Government Act 2020* states that legitimate expenses incurred by Councillors during their duties can be reimbursed in accordance with a council expenses policy. Section (37) of the Councillor Expenses Policy requires quarterly reports on Mayoral and Councillor allowances and expenditure to be forwarded to Council's Audit and Risk Committee, reported to Council through the Committee's minutes and published on Council's website on a quarterly basis after the information is available.

The Mayoral expense reimbursement was for fuel purchased at a location that didn't accept the Council's fleet card.

The report was noted.

MOTION

Moved: Paul Ayton
Seconded: John Tanner

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the Councillor Expenses Report for the period 6 June 2025 to 29 August 2025

CARRIED

7.9 CEO Purchasing Card and Other Expenses/Reimbursements

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Clause (11) of Council's Purchasing Card Policy requires a quarterly report on transactions for the CEO purchasing card to be provided to the Committee. Currently the CEO does not hold a Council issued credit card, therefore there are no transactions to report.

Additionally, there were no reimbursements made to the Chief Executive Officer for expenses incurred on her personal credit card in the course of her duties during the reporting period.

The report was noted.

MOTION

Moved: Paul Ayton
Seconded: Clark Holloway

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the CEO Purchase Card and other Expenses/Reimbursement report.

CARRIED

7.10 Fraud and Risk Management

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with Clause 11.7 of Council's Fraud and Corruption Policy and Procedures, the Audit and Risk Committee provide a key role in monitoring the Council's fraud control processes.

Any incident of fraud will be reported to the Committee as part of the regular risk review report at the quarterly meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee. There are no incidents to report in the current period.

The report was noted.

MOTION

Moved: Paul Ayton
Seconded: Clark Holloway

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the Fraud and Risk Management report.

CARRIED

7.11 Investment and Borrowings

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with its financial framework, Council's Investment and Cash Management Policy requires that investments and borrowings are reported to the Audit and Risk Committee quarterly.

It was noted that more rigorous negotiations could be undertaken to achieve higher rates of interest, especially relating to CBA and NAB investment accounts.

MOTION

Moved: Paul Ayton

Seconded: Alister Purbrick

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the Investment and Borrowings updates as at 31 July 2025.

CARRIED

8 Items Raised by Committee Members

Nil

9 Confidential Briefing with Chief Executive Officer

Nil

10 Next Meeting and Closure of Meeting

The next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting will be held on 21 November 2025 at the Euroa Community Conference Centre - date pending.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12:35 pm.

Audit and Risk Committee – actions from the meeting held on 5 September 2025						
Meeting Date	Item Number	Action	Responsible	Due Date	Status	Comment
2 December 2022	7.2 Outstanding Internal Audit Items Update	Director People and Governance to present a draft ICT Strategy to the Audit and Risk Committee in March 2023.	People and Governance	31 December 2025	Underway	Draft ICT Strategy to be received by Audit and Risk 21/11/25 and to be received by Council 9/12/25 for adoption
5 September 2025	6.2 Draft 2024-25 Annual Financial Statement Report	The Audit and Risk Committee to receive a report on the work underway in the capital works program.	People and Governance	October 2025	Complete	Final reports emailed to Audit and Risk Committee 22/9/25
5 September 2025	6.3 2024-25 Performance Statement and Governance Checklist	Clarify the percentage increase (published at 14%) relating to Governance Satisfaction in the performance Statement	People and Governance	October 2025	Complete	Final reports emailed to Audit and Risk Committee 22/9/25
5 September 2025	6.5 Draft Closing Report to Audit and Risk	The Audit and Risk Committee to receive a final copy of the Closing Report to the Audit and Risk Committee when the VAGO audit is completed.	People and Governance	October 2025	Complete	Final reports emailed to Audit and Risk Committee 22/9/25
5 September 2025	6.6 Fair Value Assessment at 30 June 2025	The Audit and Risk Committee to receive a final copy of the Fair Value Assessment at 30 June 2025, with changes highlighted, when the VAGO audit is completed	People and Governance	October 2025	Complete	Final reports emailed to Audit and Risk Committee 22/9/25
5 September 2025	7.1 Internal Audit Updates	Clarify if the Payroll Audit completed in June 2025 included Superannuation.	People and Governance	Immediate	Complete	RSD Audit confirmed that that the Payroll audit included consideration of superannuation as part of the

						payroll processing scope objectives <div> Payroll Processing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficient controls exist over payroll and superannuation processing and release of funds from the bank account. Procedures are in place to ensure that payments are timely, accurate and complete; including the transfer of payroll information to the ATO to meet Single Touch Payroll and SuperStream requirements. Appropriate processes and controls are in place to ensure that employees are paid in accordance with the enterprise agreement, including the correct application of allowances, and employees engaged under the special engagement clause of the agreement. </div>
5 September 2025	7.7 Human Resources Update	The Audit and Risk Committee to receive an annual report noting trends in staff culture and staff engagement.	People and Governance	September 2026	Complete	Presented to Audit and Risk 21 November 2025 (included in CEO Update)

11.4.9 Record of Informal Meeting of Councillors November 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 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 November 2025 to 30 November 2025 are included in the attachments below.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors from 1 November 2025 to 30 November 2025.

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.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 20251105 Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors
2. 20251107 Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors
3. 20251111 Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors
4. 20251118 Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors
5. 20251122 Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors
6. 20251125 Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors

Staff Only

Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors

Meeting Details	Title	Councillor Briefing	
	Date	5 November 2025 at 9:00 am	
	Location	Euroa Community Conference Centre	
Present	Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Ewart Kennedy • Cr Jeffery • Cr Carlson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Holloway • Cr Stevens • Monitor Allan
	Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rachelle Quattrocchi – Chief Executive Officer • Amanda Tingay – Director People and Governance • Rachael Frampton – Director Community and Planning • Oliver McNulty – Director Sustainable Infrastructure • Leanne Carbonneau – Manager Community Safety • Kerry Lynch – Governance Officer 	
	Guest Speakers	Adam Wiseman – Inland Rail – Stakeholder Engagement Lead Caitlin Riley – Inland Rail – Project Manager, Benalla and Euroa Mark Davies – Mach 2 Consulting	
	Apologies	Cr Vicki Halsall Cr Laura Binks	

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	Inland Rail Update	None
2	Final meeting and closing remarks from Municipal Monitor Allan	None
3	Financial Sustainability Review	None
4	Staff Engagement Survey Improvement Plan	None
5	Domestic Animal Management Plan	None

The meeting concluded at 4:30 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	Cuppa with a Councillor
	Date	7 November 2025 at 10:00 am
	Location	Strathbogie General Store
	Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Ewart Kennedy • Cr Holloway
Present	Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharon Rainsbury – Executive Manager Communications, Advocacy and Customer Service • Katherine Crosbie – Advocacy and Government Relations Officer
	Guest Speakers	Various Strathbogie Shire Residents
	Apologies	Cr Binks, Cr Stevens, Cr Halsall, Cr Jeffery, Cr Carlson

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	Planning and land use application	None
2	Roads and unfinished flood recovery works, pothole management	None
3	Shipping containers on private land	None
4	Roadside native tree management and fall tree removal, fallen trees and responsibility for clean up	None
5	Roadside and public signage	None
6	Revise 'New Residents Packs'	None
7	Improved telecommunications	None

The meeting concluded at 12:00 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	11 November 2025 at 9:00 am	
	Location	Euroa Community Conference Centre	
Present	Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Ewart Kennedy • Cr Binks • Cr Carlson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Holloway • Cr Stevens (online) • Cr Halsall (present in part)
	Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rachelle Quattrocchi – Chief Executive Officer • Amanda Tingay – Director People and Governance • Rachael Frampton – Director Community and Planning • Oliver McNulty – Director Sustainable Infrastructure • Sharon Rainsbury – Executive Manager Communications, Advocacy and Customer Service • Kate McKernan – Manager Community and Culture • Kate Petersen – Facilities, Sport and Recreation Officer • Kerry Lynch – Governance Officer 	
	Guest Speakers	Mark Hayes – Maddocks Lawyers	
	Apologies	Cr Jeffery	

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	Training Workshop – Conflict of Interest and Integrity and Accountability	None
2	Sports Strategy and Master Planning	Director People and Governance
3	Capital Works Update	None
4	Draft Biannual Community Report	None

The meeting concluded at 5:30 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	18 November 2025 at 9:00 am	
	Location	Euroa Community Conference Centre	
Present	Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Ewart Kennedy • Cr Binks • Cr Carlson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Holloway • Cr Jeffery • Cr Stevens • Cr Halsall
	Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rachelle Quattrocchi – Chief Executive Officer • Amanda Tingay – Director People and Governance • Rachael Frampton – Director Community and Planning • Oliver McNulty – Director Sustainable Infrastructure • Sharon Rainsbury – Executive Manager Communications, Advocacy and Customer Service • Kerry Lynch – Governance Officer 	
	Guest Speakers		
	Apologies		

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	Budget Briefing 2026-27 Planning	None
2	Euroa Railway Precinct Masterplan	None
3	Statutory Meeting	None

The meeting concluded at 3:15 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	Cuppa with a Councillor
	Date	22 November 2025 at 9:00 am
	Location	Graytown Community Centre
	Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Jeffery • Cr Stevens
Present	Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharon Rainsbury – Executive Manager Communications, Advocacy and Customer Service • Katherine Crosbie – Advocacy and Government Relations Officer
	Guest Speakers	Various Graytown Residents
	Apologies	Cr Binks, Cr Ewart-Kennedy, Cr Halsall, Cr Carlson, Cr Holloway

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	Graytown Community Centre Facility Management Agreement	None
2	Change the area named of <i>Graytown</i> to <i>Spring Creek</i>	None
3	Roads	None
4	The Community Centre's Solar Grid	None
5	Overhanging trees on roads and public facilities	None
6	Smarty Grants application feedback	None
7	Chinaman's Bridge	None
8	Landholders and rural residential land-use subdivisions	None
9	Community Engagement projects on the Share Strathbogie Engagement Platform website	None

The meeting concluded at 11:00 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	25 November 2025 at 9:00 am	
	Location	Euroa Community Conference Centre	
	Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Ewart Kennedy • Cr Binks • Cr Carlson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Holloway • Cr Jeffery • Cr Stevens • Cr Halsall
	Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rachelle Quattrocchi – Chief Executive Officer • Amanda Tingay – Director People and Governance • Rachael Frampton – Director Community and Planning • Oliver McNulty – Director Sustainable Infrastructure • Sharon Rainsbury – Executive Manager Communications, Advocacy and Customer Service • Kerry Lynch – Governance Officer • Dan Maloney – Senior Strategic Planner • Jack Francis – Senior Planner • Awais Sadiq – Manager Planning and Investment 	
	Guest Speakers	Julie Reid – Chief Executive Officer LGeX Pty Ltd Peter Sagar, Claire Ferres Miles - Curiosity Co	
Present	Apologies		

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	Councillor Training Workshop – Managing Community Expectations	None
2	Planning Workshop	None
3	Review (first) draft Agenda Council Meeting 9 December 2025	None

The meeting concluded at 5:30 pm

Record completed by	Officer Name - Officer Title	Kerry Lynch – Governance Officer
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11.5 Communications, Advocacy and Customer Service

11.5.1 Biannual Community Report - Incorporating 2025-29 Council Plan Action Plan Update

AUTHOR Executive Manager Communication, Advocacy and Customer Service

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Executive Manager Communication, Advocacy and Customer Service

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council is committed to transparency, accountability and open communication with its communities and is pleased to provide its first Biannual Community Report.

The Biannual Community Report 1 July 2025 to 30 November 2025 provides residents and stakeholders with a clear overview of Council's progress, performance, and priorities over the previous six months.

The Biannual Community Report 1 July 2025 to 30 November 2025 incorporating the 2025-26 Council Plan Action Plan 1 July to 31 December 2025 is attached to this report for consideration by the Council and Community.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the Biannual Community Report from 1 July 2025 to 30 November 2025.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of the report is to provide the community with an update on Council's actions and progress against targets set in the 2025-29 Council Plan and other strategic and operational areas.

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

The Biannual Community Report to the community serves to inform residents, stakeholders, and partners about Council's progress, performance, and priorities over the preceding six months.

The purpose of the report is to:

1. **Promote transparency and accountability** – showing how we are spending budgeted funds and how decisions are delivering community outcomes
2. **Report on progress against strategic goals** – outlining achievements, milestones, and challenges in implementing the Council Plan or other strategic documents
3. **Demonstrate performance** – presenting key metrics such as service delivery, capital works, financial health, and community satisfaction

4. **Build community trust and engagement** – keeping residents informed and connected to council activities
5. **Support continuous improvement** – helping councillors, officers, and the community track performance and identify areas needing attention before the next formal annual report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Biannual Community Report is an operational document and community engagement was not sought. However, by making the report available to the public, it keeps communities informed on the Council's activities and operational and strategic progress against the 2025-29 Council Plan.

Community engagement has previously occurred to guide the development of the strategies that we are reporting on including (but not limited to):

- Council Plan 2025-2029
- Advocacy
- 2025-2026 Budget
- Customer Service Charter.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plan

This report is consistent with the following objectives and or actions in the 2025-2029 Council Plan:

Objective One: Connect

We are committed to enhancing access for all residents, promoting healthy living, fostering connections, and providing opportunities to thrive and participate in community life.

Objective Two: Sustain

We aim to collaborate with others to foster a sustainable environment, a thriving economy and resilient communities.

Objective Three: Deliver

We are committed to delivering quality services and infrastructure that meets the needs of our community. We aim to strengthen the Council's governance and provide improved, customer-focused experiences.

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.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Biannual Community Report is an important opportunity for continuous improvement. It helps identify gaps, challenges, and achievements in our strategic and operational planning in a timely manner, and implement changes as required.

COLLABORATION

Council Officers across all directorates in the organisation contributed to the production of the Biannual Community Report.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The recommendation does not limit any human rights under the Victorian *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

CONCLUSION

Council is pleased to present its first Biannual Community Report. The report documents Council's progress against specific targets set out in the Council Plan 2025-2029, as well as helping Councillors, officers, and the community track performance and identify areas needing attention before the next formal annual report.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Biannual Community Report 1 July 2025 to 30 November 2025



Biannual Community Report

1 July to 30 November 2025

Acknowledgement of Country

Strathbogie Shire Council acknowledges the Taungurung and Yorta Yorta people as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Strathbogie Shire. We pay our respect to their rich cultures and to Elders, past and present, as well as other First Nations people who live, work and play in the area.





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A Message From the CEO



Rachelle Quattrocchi

Chief Executive Officer
Strathbogie Shire Council

It is with great pride that I present Strathbogie Shire Council's first Biannual Community Report, a new way of sharing our progress, performance and priorities with you — our community.

This report is part of our ongoing commitment to openness, accountability and partnership. Over the past five months, we have achieved significant milestones across strategic planning, service delivery, infrastructure and community engagement. We have also strengthened our advocacy efforts, built stronger partnerships and taken important steps to ensure that Council is well positioned to meet the needs of today while planning for tomorrow.

This period has also been one of listening and learning. Through consultations, conversations, and community-led insights, we are shaping strategies that reflect local priorities and aspirations — from how we plan for growth and manage land use, to how we deliver services and engage with our residents.

As this inaugural report shows, Strathbogie is a connected, forward-thinking and resilient Shire.

I thank our Councillors, staff, volunteers and community members for your continued collaboration and contribution to building a thriving future together.

A Message From the Mayor



Cr Scott Jeffery

Mayor
Strathbogie Shire Council

During the first 12 months of our new council, we have been focused on building the foundations of good governance that will guide our planning and progress over the coming years.

This inaugural Biannual Community Report provides a snapshot of our achievements over the past six months, and I'm very pleased we can now share this with the community.

Transparency is vital to rebuild confidence and trust in the work of council, after what was a tumultuous period for the Shire of Strathbogie. Your Councillors and council staff work hard for the community every day, and we're committed to putting our residents, ratepayers and businesses at the heart of everything we do.

This report also includes an update on our new Customer Service Charter and renewed commitment to engagement. Additionally, it includes a breakdown of our adopted budget and investment in major projects and capital works. Our budget puts us on a path to long-term sustainability; balancing service delivery with community expectation.

I am also very proud of our first Advocacy Strategy, which is designed to make sure our community's voice is heard clearly where it matters most. Key focus areas include infrastructure renewal, digital connectivity and reliable power supply. We're knocking on doors across all levels of government so that Strathbogie Shire receives a fair share of Federal and State Government funding.

Our work is only just beginning, and I look forward to sharing our next progress report with you in June 2026.

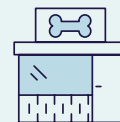
Facts and Figures

4766



Phone calls to customer service
- 1 July - 27 October

55



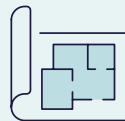
Domestic animals impounded

7



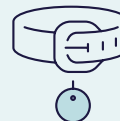
Permits issued under the
local law

29



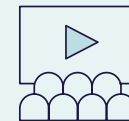
Planning applications decided
as at 2 October

19



Domestic animals reunited
with their owners

1363



Total patrons who attended
cinema (1 July - 21 September)

42



Compliance team out-of-hours
call-outs

12



Domestic animals rehomed

180



Key age and stage maternal
and child health consultations
(July to September)

Community Highlights

Seniors Week

Celebrating older residents with activities, events and services designed to promote connection and wellbeing.

Children's Week

Engaging families and young people with creative, educational and play-based events.

ArtBox

Showcasing local creativity and storytelling through rotating exhibitions and community-led art projects.

Here and Now Youth Festival

Celebrates the creativity, leadership and community spirit of young people across the state.

Comedy for a Cause

A free event bringing laughter and connection to Euroa while raising awareness about mental health.

Strathbogie Shire 2025 Community Leadership Program

This free, engaging program is open to anyone over the age of 18 with an interest in leadership.

Citizenship Ceremony

Strathbogie Shire Council was proud to officially welcome eight new Australian citizens at a heartwarming ceremony held in July.

Women's Health Week

As part of Jean Hailes Women's Health Week, the Violet Town Community House hosted a special event celebrating women's health and wellbeing. This year's theme, Say Yes to You, encouraged women to prioritise their health, speak up and take time for self-care.

Avenel Home Energy Expo

Residents gathered in Avenel in August to explore practical, science-based ways to make homes more energy-efficient and sustainable – helping households save money and reduce their environmental impact.

Battle of the Bands – EuroaDaBoat

Euroa hosted a heat of the North-East Battle of the Bands, showcasing emerging youth talent from across the region.

Strategic and Operational Planning

Planning For Our Future Together

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council is proud to share that we've completed and adopted a comprehensive suite of strategic plans that will guide our community's future.

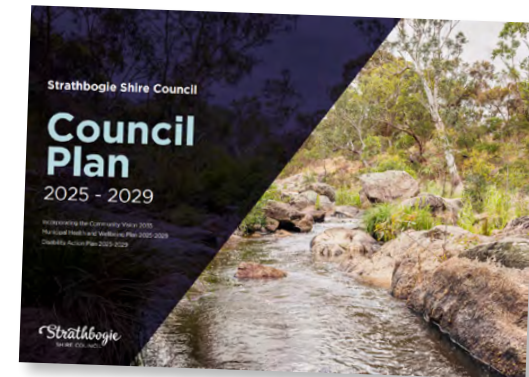
At the Council Meeting on 17 June 2025, we adopted the following key documents:

- **Community Vision 2025** – shaped by community input, this sets out our shared aspirations for the future
- **Council Plan 2025-2029** – outlines the priorities and actions Council will take to deliver on the Community Vision
- **Financial Plan 2025-2035** – ensures long-term financial sustainability and responsible investment
- **Asset Plan 2025-2035** – guides how we manage and maintain community assets like roads, buildings, and parks.

At the same meeting, Council also adopted:

- **2025-26 Budget** – detailing how we'll fund services and projects over the next financial year
- **Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-26** – explains how Council will generate income to deliver services
- **Rates and Charges for 2025-26** – sets out the rates and charges for the year ending 30 June 2026.

By adopting these important plans well ahead of the 31 October 2025 deadline, Council has demonstrated its commitment to strong governance and forward planning.



Tracking Our Progress

We're also pleased to present the first progress report on the Council Plan Annual Action Plan 2025-26, covering the period from 1 July to 30 November 2025. This report card highlights the actions we've taken so far and how we're tracking against our goals.

Annual Action Plan 2025-2026

Report Card 1 July 2025 to 30 November 2025

The Action Plan 2025-26

The purpose of the Annual Action Plan is to communicate the actions Council will deliver each financial year to implement the strategies and initiatives in the Council Plan 2025-2029. The Council Plan is focused on achieving the community's long-term aspirations described in the Community Vision 2035.

Actions are measurable and assigned to the responsible Directorate to complete during the respective financial year. Some actions may require more than one year to complete. In these circumstances these actions will be continued and updated in the following year's Annual Action Plan.

Each action connects back to one or more of the major initiatives in the Council Plan. Progress reports will be provided to Council six-monthly.



Objective One: Connect

● Complete ● In progress ● Not started

Action	Council's role	Initiative	Measure	Responsibility	Due date	Status update
Attract grant funding and support community grant writing	Deliver	Connect 1.3 and 1.5	Total dollars received/committed through grants provided by other levels of government or philanthropic organisations for community co-contributed projects Success rate of competitive grant applications	Community and Planning	31 Dec 2025	Grant writing workshops delivered Further workshop scheduled for 25 October 2025 As at 30/09/25: - one grant applied for \$1500 - one grant received \$1500 Two advocacy initiatives in progress with Goulburn Valley Water for Greening Euroa. \$5M Grant Application in progress for Kirwans Bridge SLRIP submission due 30/9 Grant applications supported in community One grant writing workshop delivered and another scheduled for 14 November 2025
Health, Wellbeing and Disability Network established to advance local programs and advocacy	Deliver Partner	Connect 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4	Network established and a minimum of two meetings held	Community and Planning	30 June 2026	Planning underway
Deliver 2025-26 actions in the Health, Wellbeing and Disability Action Plan	Deliver	Connect 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4	Annual Health, Wellbeing and Disability Action Plan progress report presented to Council	Community and Planning	30 June 2026	Annual Action Plan Progress report to be presented to Council in July 2026
Deliver Councillor and community engagement opportunities	Deliver	Connect 1.6	Minimum of five engagement opportunities delivered throughout the municipality	People and Governance	31 Dec 2025	Cuppa with a Councillor sessions delivered July-November 2025 Three industry forums delivered

Action	Council's role	Initiative	Measure	Responsibility	Due date	Status update
Review existing Memorandum of Understanding with Taungurung Land and Waters Council	Deliver	Connect 1.1	Review complete	Community and Planning	30 June 2026	Work on Walking Together Statement has occurred through the TLaWC Local Government Forum
Seek opportunities to collaborate with Taungurung Land and Waters Council and Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation on initiatives of mutual benefit	Deliver	Connect 1.1	Two opportunities for collaboration undertaken	Community and Planning	30 June 2026	Participation in TLaWC Local Government Forum August 2025 Participation in two ongoing TLaWC LG Working Groups- Partnerships and Cultural Heritage One quarterly meeting between Officers and TLaWC occurred TLaWC briefed Councillors 19 August 2025 Yorta Yorta - exploring an "on country" opportunity early 2026
Participate in the Taungurung Local Government Forum	Partner	Connect 1.1, Connect 1.8	Participation at all meetings	Chief Executive Officer	30 Oct 2025	CEO and Councillor Halsall attended Taungurung Local Government Forum in September 2025
Develop an annual Communications Strategy with supporting tactical plans provided quarterly	Deliver	Connect 1.6	Development of strategy completed, and one quarterly tactical plan delivered	Executive Manager Comms. Advocacy and Customer Service	31 Dec 2025	In progress
Develop a Strathbogie Shire Sports Strategy	Deliver	Connect 1.7	Sports Strategy adopted by Council	Community and Planning	30 June 2026	Consultant engaged and draft completion by 25 November 2025 for adoption in early 2026 Sports Strategy and Masterplans Workshop for Councillors scheduled 5 November 2025

Objective Two: Sustain

● Complete ● In progress ● Not started

Action	Council's role	Initiative	Measure	Responsibility	Due date	Status update
Review and adopt Council's Advocacy Strategy 2025-2029	Deliver	Sustain 2.1	Strategy is reviewed and adopted by Council	Chief Executive Officer	Oct 2025	Adopted 16 September 2025
Determine Council's priority advocacy projects and develop an annual advocacy plan	Deliver	Sustain 2.1 and 2.4	Priority projects are identified and adopted by Council	Chief Executive Officer	30 June 2026	Continuous and determined as funding opportunities arise Joint submission MAV motion led by Strathbogie on behalf of HRLGN
Implement the annual advocacy plan	Deliver Advocate	Sustain 2.1 and 2.4	Commence implementation of the annual advocacy plan	Chief Executive Officer	30 June 2026	As opportunities arise
Commence review of the Strathbogie Planning Scheme including the Municipal Planning Strategy in accordance with <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i>	Deliver	Sustain 2.6	Statement is reviewed	Community and Planning	30 June 2026	Funding received, initiation meeting complete
Commence implementation of a priority action from the Rural Residential and Land Use Strategy and Urban Growth Strategy	Deliver	Sustain 2.2	One action underway from each strategy	Community and Planning	30 June 2025	Pending adoption of RRLUS and UGS Strategic work program 2025-29 in draft Briefings and workshops with Councillors commenced and ongoing

Action	Council's role	Initiative	Measure	Responsibility	Due date	Status update
Implement the interim and permanent flood controls in Nagambie	Deliver	Sustain 2.7	Submit planning scheme amendment to the Minister	Community and Planning	30 June 2026	Funding received Project control group established
Determine the sequence of strategic planning documents required to update the Strathbogie Planning Scheme	Deliver	Sustain 2.13	Sequence is developed	Community and Planning	30 June 2025	Draft strategic planning work program created
Review and update Council's current Climate Action Plan 2022-2027	Deliver	Sustain 2.7	Annual progress reporting to Council	Sustainable Infrastructure	31 Dec 2025	Council noted update of status of Climate Action Plan at Council meeting 16 September 2025
Review and adopt a new Stormwater Strategy	Deliver	Sustain 2.7	Strategy adopted by Council	Sustainable Infrastructure	30 June 2026	Draft Stormwater strategy to be presented to Council Meeting February 2026 for adoption
Commence the development of a Transfer Station Optimisation Plan	Deliver	Sustain 2.10	Plan commenced	Sustainable Infrastructure	30 June 2026	Commences March 2026
Consolidate tracks, trails and footpaths and strategies	Deliver	Sustain 2.11 and 2.3	Commence the process	Community and Planning and Sustainable Infrastructure	30 June 2026	On track for completion June 2026
Develop an (economic development) Infrastructure Investment Prospectus for Strathbogie Shire	Deliver	Sustain 2.8	Infrastructure Investment Prospectus developed	Community and Planning	30 June 2026	Draft documents created undergoing internal review

Objective Two: Sustain (continued)

● Complete ● In progress ● Not started

Action	Council's role	Initiative	Measure	Responsibility	Due date	Status update
Partner with the community to support the development of Local Emergency Action Plans (LEAP) to build the resilience of local community in an emergency	Deliver	Sustain 2.7	Develop two community Local Emergency Action Plans	Community and Planning	30 June 2026	Kirwans Bridge – LEAP drafted pending final community sign-off Ruffy – Engagement complete
Deliver waste education	Deliver	Sustain 2.10	Minimum of two community education events	Sustainable Infrastructure	31 Dec 2025	On track for completion December 2025
Review, engage and deliver Local Law No 2	Deliver	Sustain 2.9	Local Law No 2 adopted by Council	Community and Planning	30 June 2026	Update provided to Councillor Briefing 9 September 2025 On track for adoption June 2026

Objective Three: Deliver

● Complete ● In progress ● Not started

Action	Council's role	Initiative	Measure	Responsibility	Due date	Status update
Develop a Customer-focused Service Charter	Deliver	Connect 3.4	Charter is adopted by Council	Comms. Advocacy and Customer Service	30 June 2026	Draft Customer Service Charter developed and Councillors briefed September 2025 and endorsed by Council on 21 October 2025 for community consultation
Develop the Asset Management Framework	Deliver	Deliver 3.2	Framework developed	Sustainable Infrastructure	30 June 2026	On track for completion June 2026
Review and implement the internal project management process and procedures	Deliver	Deliver 3.1	Process and procedures developed	Sustainable Infrastructure	30 June 2026	On track for completion June 2026
Commence the implementation of asset management system	Deliver	Deliver 3.2	Procure and undertake user acceptance testing	Sustainable Infrastructure	31 Dec 2025	For commencement June 2026
Workforce Plan developed	Deliver	Deliver 3.7	Chief Executive Officer endorses plan	People and Governance	30 June 2026	Work underway on development of plan
Current Gender Equality Action Plan reported on, and new plan developed	Deliver	Deliver 3.8	Progress reporting is submitted to Gender Equality Commission in December 2025 and new plan submitted in May 2026	People and Governance	31 Dec 2025	Underway
Develop the Information Technology Strategy	Deliver	Deliver 3.4	Strategy is adopted by Council	People and Governance	31 Dec 2025	Strategy to be presented to Council Meeting 9 December 2025 for adoption

Objective Three: Deliver (continued)

● Complete ● In progress ● Not started

Action	Council's role	Initiative	Measure	Responsibility	Due date	Status update
Local Government Performance Reporting Framework management reporting and collection of data completed annually	Deliver	Deliver 3.9	Reporting completed and Annual Report adopted by 31 October 2025	People and Governance	31 Oct 2025	Adopted by Council 21 October 2025
Annual Councillor mandatory training program delivered	Deliver	Deliver 3.9	Mandatory training requirements as per regulations are delivered	People and Governance	31 Dec 2025	Partially complete and ongoing Mandatory induction training complete Mayoral and Deputy Mayor training complete Leadership and Team Building workshop completed October 2025 Integrity and Accountability, high level Planning and OHS scheduled 11 November 2025 Dealing with high level community expectations and consultation TBC Nov/Dec 2025
Cyber Security Policy developed	Deliver	Deliver 3.4	Cyber Security Policy adopted by Council	People and Governance	30 June 2026	On track
Occupational Health and Safety Strategy developed	Deliver	Deliver 3.3 and 3.7	Strategy prepared and approved by CEO	People and Governance	30 June 2026	On track



Biannual Community Report

Action	Council's role	Initiative	Measure	Responsibility	Due date	Status update
Investigate customer-focused improvements to our online communications platforms	Deliver	Deliver 3.3 and 3.4	System options investigated	People and Governance	31 Dec 2025	Participation in Digital Transformation Project Development of new customer management system – go live 24 November 2025
Undertake a community satisfaction survey	Deliver	Deliver 3.9	Survey undertaken and results provided to Council	People and Governance	31 Dec 2025	2025 Customer Service Survey conducted and results noted by Council 19 August 2025
Strengthen the sustainability of long-term Financial Plan	Deliver	Deliver 3.9	Report annually to Council through the budget document and performance statement	Chief Executive Officer	30 June 2026	Councillors briefed 5 November 2025 ahead of commencing the 2026-2027 planning and budgeting cycle

Strathbogrie Shire Council

Annual Report and Financial Reporting

Council officially adopted the 2024-25 Annual Report on 21 October 2025. We're pleased to share that our audited financial statements and performance reports were completed and certified by the end of September. This was an important milestone that reflects our commitment to transparency and accountability.

This report is the result of a whole-of-organisation effort, and we're proud to present it to our community. It highlights the work we've done together over the past year and sets the foundation for future planning and service delivery.

The Annual Report can be viewed in full on our website (www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au) including the fully audited financial and performance statements for 2024-25.

Planning for the Future: Strategic Land Use

Our Planning Team has been focused on shaping the future of our Shire through the development of two key strategic documents:

- Urban Growth Strategy
- Rural and Residential Land Use Strategy.

These strategies are being finalised following extensive community consultation and briefings with Councillors and will be formally adopted later this year.

In early October, Councillors took part in a dedicated workshop to explore these strategies in depth, and a second workshop is scheduled for November.

Planning for growth - both from a State perspective (Plan for Victoria) and a local lens (Strathbogie Shire's own strategic planning) - continues to be a priority, with regular updates provided to Councillors to support informed decision-making.

Supporting Good Governance: Farewell to Our Municipal Monitor

As this report is released, we mark the conclusion of Ms Marg Allan's 12-month appointment as Municipal Monitor to Strathbogie Shire Council.

Appointed by the Minister for Local Government under Section 179(2) of the Local Government Act 2020, Ms Allan commenced her role on 6 November 2024, with her term concluding on 6 November 2025.

The role of a Municipal Monitor is to support and strengthen governance across Victorian councils. Ms Allan's presence has been a significant asset to Strathbogie Shire, helping to reinforce sound decision-making, transparency and compliance with legislative obligations.

Throughout her time with us, Ms Allan:

- attended all Council meetings and weekly briefing sessions
- held regular one-on-one discussions with the Mayor, Councillors, CEO, Executive Directors and other staff
- provided valuable guidance and feedback to enhance our governance practices.

Her insights and support have helped ensure that Council continues to meet its statutory responsibilities and uphold the highest standards of leadership and accountability.

We thank Ms Allan sincerely for her contribution and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.



Operational Management and Service Delivery

Major Projects and Capital Works

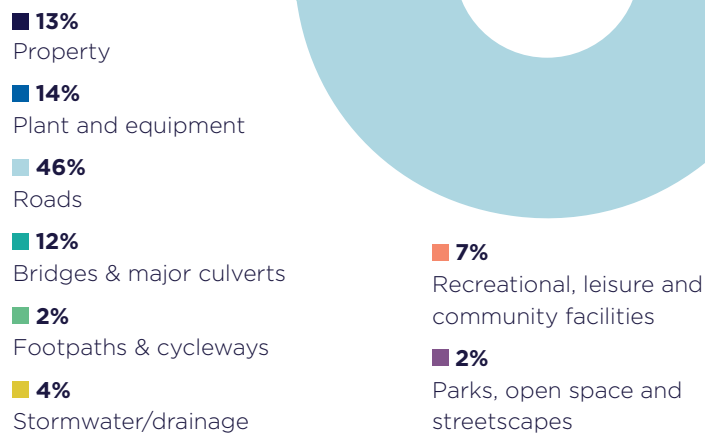
Council adopted the 2025-26 Capital Works Budget at its Ordinary Council Meeting held on 17 June 2025. The approved program represents a total investment of \$14.291 million, including \$3.596 million in carried-forward commitments from the previous financial year.

The Capital Works Program is structured across three key categories.

Category	2025-26 Budget (\$'1000)	Carried Forward (\$'1000)	Total Adopted (\$'1000)
Property	1,710	175	1,885
Plant and Equipment	1,420	600	2,020
Infrastructure	7,565	2,821	10,386
TOTAL	10,695	3,596	14,291

The program incorporates both new initiatives and carry-forward projects from the 2024-25 financial year. The figure below shows the breakdown of adopted budget breakdown into major budget categories.

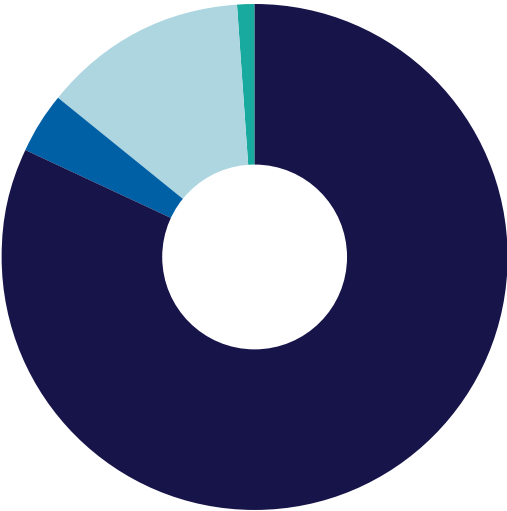
Adopted Budget 2025-2026



The graph below shows the overall project status summary representing all capital works.

**Capital Program 2025-2026
- Status Overview**

■ 1%	■ 82%
Complete	On track
■ 4%	■ 13%
Deferred	At risk



Highlights of Works and Progress to Date

Footpath Renewal/Upgrade

- Contracts awarded for four sections across priority sites.
- Additional request for quotes currently open for further locations, with awards expected in the next quarter.

Road Reseal Program

- Tender evaluation process is in progress.
- Contract award anticipated in November, with works scheduled for commencement during the peak sealing season (February 2026).

Road Rehabilitation Program

- Tender evaluation is underway.
- Contract award scheduled for November, with construction activities to commence in December.

Essential Safety Measures (Kindergartens)

- Safety compliance works currently underway to address audit requirements and maintain regulatory standards.

Euroa Caravan Park

- Installation of concrete pads completed, providing improved amenity and site infrastructure.

Euroa Lions Park Play Space

- Contract awarded for construction of the new play space, with delivery to commence in February 2026, followed by structured community consultation process.

Tenders in Progress

- Pagets Road – Major culvert remediation.
- Vineyard State – Rectification of drainage issues to improve stormwater management.
- Road Safety Improvements – Euroa–Strathbogie Road, Harrys Creek Road and Longwood–Ruffy Road.

Chinaman's Bridge Demolition

- Preparation of required documentation and reports for submission to Heritage Victoria is ongoing, ensuring compliance with statutory heritage requirements.

Kirwans Bridge Pedestrian Upgrade

- Preliminary scoping and project development in progress.

Kirwans Bridge has been identified as a key priority in the new Advocacy Strategy. Council is seeking \$7.5 million to restore the iconic bridge, which was damaged in the 2022 floods and remains closed. The bridge is a critical link for the local community and broader region, supporting tourism and agricultural supply chains and emergency access. The Council will be applying for a grant to restore the bridge under the Federal Government's Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program.

Plant and Equipment Procurement

- Procurement processes are underway for key fleet renewals, including:
 - one new grader
 - two replacement trucks
 - new ride-on mowers.

These acquisitions will enhance service capacity and efficiency across operations.

Asset Management

Council owns and manages an estimated \$600M worth of assets on behalf of the community. These assets include roads and road-related infrastructure, buildings and facilities, parks, public open space as well as items such as plant and equipment that support the maintenance of these assets. Asset management is an internationally recognised approach to the sustainable management of built infrastructure and services.

Good asset management maintains an understanding of the cost, risk and performance trade-offs in the short,

medium and long-term, when making decisions regarding community owned infrastructure assets.

Asset management is critical to the development of Council's annual Capital Works Program. Through asset management systems we track the condition of all assets, and it supports the prioritisation and development of Council's asset renewal program.

Council continues its focus on improving and supporting Asset Management functions and systems. Some of the key activities completed include:

- the adoption of the Asset Plan 2025-2035
- reinstating the Asset Management Steering Committee
- going out to market for Consultants to complete a condition inspection of Council's bridges and major culverts
- the process to have all of Council's sealed roads assessed has commenced.

Glass Bin Rollout

The rollout of the fourth kerbside bin, the purple glass bin, is now complete. Every household that currently has a yellow recycling bin has now received its accompanying glass bin, marking a significant milestone in our waste management strategy. We're also seeing early uptake from local businesses, with several beginning to order their own glass bins.

The rollout was a success across the shire and was proudly supported by local sporting clubs. These clubs played a key role in delivering the bins to households and, in return, received well-deserved cash donations from the kerbside contractor for their time and effort - supporting both community engagement and local sport.

In the first five months of glass collections, residents recycled an impressive 53 tonnes of glass through the kerbside service. July saw 8.52 tonnes collected, August was 8.38 tonnes, September 10.42 tonnes, October 12.2 tonnes and November 14.4 tonnes. This strong start reflects the community's enthusiasm and commitment to sustainable practices.

Transition to New Contractors

On 1 July 2025, Council commenced several major new contracts that will shape our waste and resource recovery services for years to come. These include:

- Foott Waste is now responsible for both kerbside and transfer station collections, as well as co-mingled recycling processing
- Hume Regional Landfill site accepting our landfill
- Veolia is handling the processing of glass products
- Western Composting is managing the processing of organic waste.

Each of these contracts has a term of 7.5 years, with the option to extend for a further 7.5 years. This long-term approach ensures stability and allows for strategic planning in our waste and environmental services.

Climate Change Action Plan 2022-2027

Council's current Climate Change Action Plan continues to make strong progress, with more than 50% of the actions now marked as either completed or in progress. This reflects our ongoing commitment to addressing climate change through practical, measurable initiatives. An update on the plan was presented to Councillors at the September meeting.

As the plan approaches its conclusion in 2027, preparations are already underway for its successor. To support this, an internal Steering Committee has been established to help shape the next iteration. Councillors will be invited to participate in a series of workshops throughout 2026 to ensure the new plan reflects both community values and emerging environmental priorities.

2025 Tidy Towns and Cities – Sustainability Awards

We're proud to share that Strathbogie Shire received an Honourable Mention in the prestigious 2025 Tidy Towns and Cities - Sustainability Awards.

This recognition is especially meaningful given that the majority of finalists were large councils with significant populations, budgets and community partnerships.

Strathbogie stood out for its grassroots impact and practical sustainability efforts, demonstrating that small communities can lead with innovation and heart. The judges noted our Shire as "punching well above its weight class".

Waste App

Promotion of the BinRight Strathbogie waste app is ongoing. Since 1 July 2025, we've welcomed 497 new users, bringing the total to 1103. The app continues to be a valuable tool for residents to manage their waste services more effectively.

Education and Use of Social Media

We've also celebrated our consistently low contamination rates in green kerbside bins.

Recent social media highlights include the International Day for Awareness of Food Waste and a promotion of our Tip Shop, among other initiatives.



Solar Savers

Goulburn Murray Solar Savers is a local government initiative that gives residents and businesses access to fully vetted providers and installers of solar PV systems, battery storage, hot water heat pumps, EV chargers, reverse cycle air conditioners and home energy assessments. Residents of Strathbogie Shire are beginning to utilise this fantastic service, with five quotes now in the system.

Strategic Service Planning

Council continues to review and refine service delivery models to ensure they remain responsive, efficient and aligned with community expectations. This work will inform future prioritisation and resourcing decisions.

We're Backing Local Business – Here's How

At Strathbogie Shire Council, we know that thriving local businesses are the heart of a strong, connected community. That's why we're rolling up our sleeves and taking real action to support business owners across the Shire.

Making it Easier to do Business

We've kicked off the Business-Friendly Council Initiative – a fresh approach to how we work with local businesses. It's all about cutting through red tape, improving communication and making Council processes simpler and more supportive.

We've already held a workshop with staff to better understand the challenges businesses face. Next up, we're hosting two more workshops in November, bringing together teams from across Council to come up with practical solutions and action plans.

The goal is to:

- help existing businesses grow and thrive
- attract new investment to the region
- create more local jobs
- build a stronger, more resilient economy.

We're committed to creating a business environment that's not only easier to navigate, but one that genuinely supports success.

Standing by Small Business

Since signing the Small Business Friendly Council Charter back in 2021, we've been working hard to live up to that promise.

We've built strong relationships with local business groups like the Euroa Chamber of Business and Commerce and Go Nagambie, and we're proud to be a founding partner of the Goulburn Region Tourism Visitor Economy Partnership.

Here's what we've been doing:

- making permit approvals quicker and easier
- supporting small suppliers with fast payments
- keeping communication flowing through newsletters, bulletins and events
- providing financial support and listening to business feedback.

And we're not stopping there. We're planning to work even more closely with the Victorian Small Business Commission (VSBC) - promoting their services, creating referral pathways and giving local businesses more chances to connect directly with them.

These efforts are all part of our bigger vision: a fairer, more resilient and business-friendly Strathbogie Shire.

People Leadership: A Culture of Collaboration and Care

Strathbogie Shire Council is proud of its highly engaged workforce and the positive, energetic culture that drives our organisation forward.

Reflecting on the past six months, CEO Rachelle Quattrocchi shared some key observations about our people and workplace culture:

"Strathbogie really is a wonderful place. There's a genuine sense of pride and connection here that you don't find everywhere."

"We work best when we work together – when we breakdown silos and collaborate across teams. I've seen great examples of this, but I've also heard your feedback that we can be more consistent."

"We need to improve our systems, technology, equipment and facilities to do your jobs well. We need to modernise to provide our staff with the right tools."

"Our culture is strong – safe, inclusive, and flexible – but we can continue to improve how we communicate, how we connect with each other and how we celebrate the wins along the way."

"Our teams are committed to putting our community first. That came through in every conversation."

These reflections highlight the strength of our people and the shared commitment to continuous improvement, collaboration and community service.

Listening to Our People: Staff Engagement and Alignment Survey

In late 2024, Council undertook a Staff Engagement and Alignment Survey to better understand how our people feel about their work, culture and the organisation as a whole.

The survey was facilitated by independent research firm JWS, who later presented the findings to staff across the organisation. This open and transparent approach ensured everyone had the opportunity to hear the results firsthand.

Since then, each business area within Council has held workshops and meetings to explore the survey outcomes and identify opportunities for improvement.

The focus has been on enhancing efficiency, collaboration and service delivery across the organisation.

In September, the Audit and Risk Committee also received a detailed update on organisational culture and the survey results. The Committee acknowledged the depth and complexity of the data and commended the work being done to respond to staff feedback.

Caring for Our Workforce: Health, Wellbeing and Safety

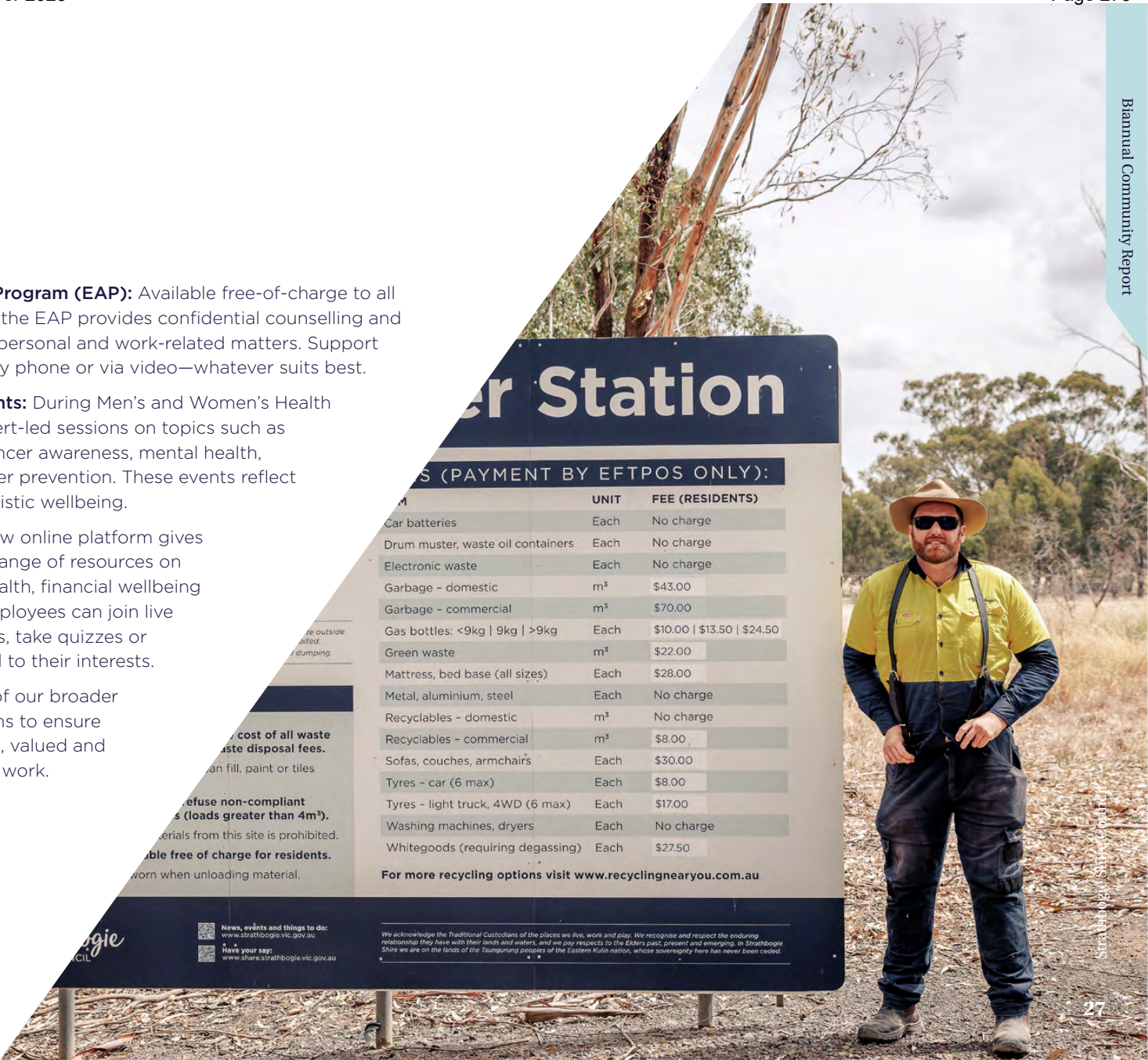
Strathbogie Shire Council is committed to creating a safe, healthy and supportive workplace for all employees – starting from day one.

Here are some of the ways we're supporting our team.

- **Soft Tissue Therapy:** In partnership with Work Healthy Australia, we offer weekly appointments to help staff manage common physical issues like neck and shoulder tension, lower back pain and repetitive strain injuries.

- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** Available free-of-charge to all staff and their families, the EAP provides confidential counselling and mediation services for personal and work-related matters. Support is available in person, by phone or via video—whatever suits best.
- **Health Awareness Events:** During Men's and Women's Health Weeks, we hosted expert-led sessions on topics such as prostate and breast cancer awareness, mental health, nutrition and skin cancer prevention. These events reflect our commitment to holistic wellbeing.
- **Wellbeing Hub:** Our new online platform gives staff access to a wide range of resources on physical and mental health, financial wellbeing and lifestyle topics. Employees can join live classes, watch webinars, take quizzes or explore articles tailored to their interests.

These initiatives are part of our broader Workforce Plan, which aims to ensure our people feel supported, valued and equipped to do their best work.



Customers at the Centre of What We Do

Customer Service: Strengthening Connections

We're excited to share our refreshed Customer Commitment Charter, which outlines the standards and values that guide how we serve our community. It also highlights the important role our residents play in fostering respectful and constructive interactions.

This Charter is a reflection of our ongoing commitment to trust, accountability and strong relationships. Shaped by community feedback, the draft Charter is now open for further input to ensure it truly reflects local expectations.

Together, we're building a shared understanding of what great customer service looks like in Strathbogie Shire.

Community Satisfaction on the Rise

The 2025 Victorian Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey revealed Strathbogie Shire's biggest improvement in six years, with overall performance jumping 12 points to 48.

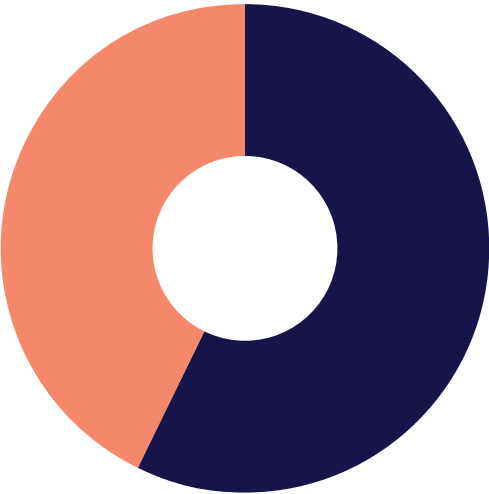
Highlights included strong results for public spaces, waste management and customer service. These results show that Council's renewed focus on listening, transparency and service delivery is making a difference — but we know there's still work to do on roads and communication.



Quarterly Customer Service Report from the period 1 July – 27 October 2025

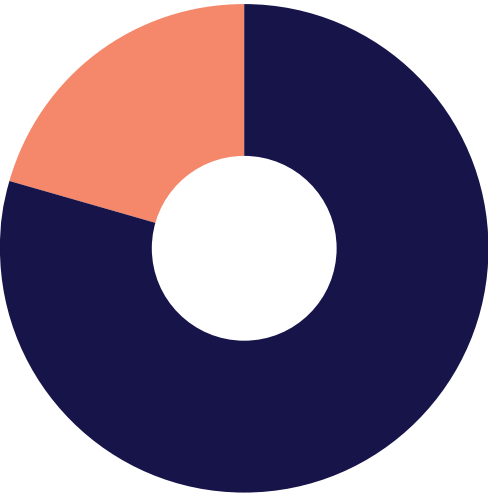
CUSTOMER SERVICE COMPLETED
COMPARED TO TOTAL CALLS

■ 4766 ■ 3550
Total Customer Service



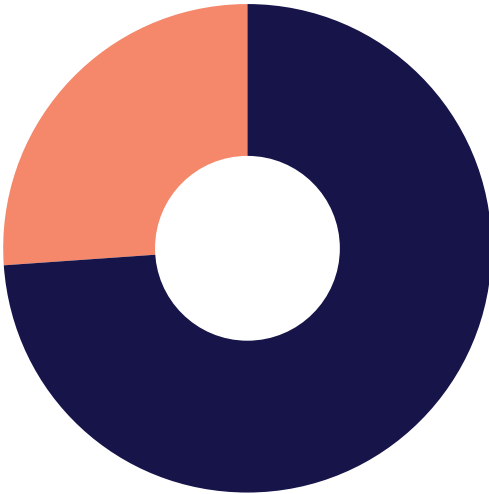
DEPARTMENT COMPLETED COMPARED
TO TOTAL CALLS

■ 4766 ■ 1216
Total Customer Service



CALLS COMPLETED
COMPARISON

■ 26% ■ 74%
Departments Customer Service



Relationship Management and Engagement

Building Strong Connections: Working Together for Strathbogie

Strathbogie Shire Council has focused on strengthening relationships within our community, across the region and with state and federal partners during the past six months.

These connections help ensure that Strathbogie's voice is heard, our priorities are championed and our community is supported to thrive.

Whether it's a conversation at a local event or a strategic meeting with government and industry, every connection plays a role in shaping a stronger, more resilient future for our Shire.

Community Engagement

Council has been actively listening to residents, community groups and local businesses. Through events like "Cuppa with a Councillor", community committee meetings and grassroots gatherings, we've heard what matters most and celebrated the vibrant spirit of Strathbogie.

Some highlights include:

- Euroa Bowls Club Open Day
- Euroa Cattle Sale
- Longwood Community Committee
- Euroa Connect
- Go Nagambie
- Greening Euroa
- Kirwans Bridge updates
- local business visits.

We've participated in more than 15 community-focused events and meetings, each one helping us stay connected and responsive.

Regional and State Partnerships

Council has strengthened ties with key regional organisations, including:

- Goulburn Regional Tourism
- Rowing Victoria
- Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Regional Development Victoria
- Regional Development Australia
- Rural Councils Victoria
- Commonwealth Government
- State Government Departments
- Local Members of Parliament.

These partnerships are opening doors for investment, tourism growth and regional visibility, helping Strathbogie Shire thrive in a broader context.

Advocacy and Government Relations

We continue to advocate for the needs of our community at every level of government. Key focus areas include:

- drought resilience
- infrastructure investment
- digital connectivity
- health services.

Whether it's a conversation at a local event or a strategic meeting with government and industry, every connection plays a role in shaping a stronger, more resilient future for our Shire.

Council deepened its advocacy efforts with state and federal representatives to ensure local priorities remain front of mind:

- Mayor Claire Ewart-Kennedy and CEO Rachelle Quattrocchi met with the Member for Euroa, Annabelle Cleeland MP, to discuss drought relief and broader advocacy priorities
- Council also spoke with Dr Helen Haines MP, continuing calls for greater on-the-

ground support for drought-affected communities

- work also began on a series of meetings with local industry leaders, laying the foundation for stronger partnerships and long-term regional growth.

Council continued its collaborative approach by engaging with key decision-makers and regional partners:

- meetings were held with Federal Members Dr Helen Haines and Sam Birrell to advocate for fairer funding opportunities and highlight the financial pressures faced by rural councils
- Mayor Ewart-Kennedy met with representatives from 12 Hume region councils to agree on shared advocacy priorities and develop motions for the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council
- Council also worked to make advocacy more transparent and accessible, producing new explainer videos on how we represent community needs to government.

Supporting local business and listening to community voices remains a key focus:



- Council hosted a series of industry forums bringing together leaders from agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, retail and healthcare to discuss challenges, opportunities and practical solutions for a stronger regional economy
- the "Cuppa with a Councillor" sessions continued, giving residents the chance to speak directly with councillors and share what matters most to them
- Council's advocacy also reached a wider audience, with Mayor Ewart-Kennedy appearing on ABC Shepparton Radio to discuss the impact of drought and floods, and new mayoral videos calling for action on key issues including fairer rates, mental health support and infrastructure priorities
- engagement also continued with Federal Member Sam Birrell, ensuring our community's needs were front and centre in Canberra.

Advocacy Engagements in Canberra in October

We took our priorities to Canberra in October. CEO Rachelle Quattrocchi and Mayor Cr Claire Ewart-Kennedy joined a delegation that included Charlie Bird from Regional Development Victoria (RDV), Brett Luxford from RDA, and Hume Deputy Chair Linda Niewenhuizen to advocate for targeted federal investment and policy reform. Our delegation met with key federal ministers, senators and local MPs to ensure the needs of Strathbogie Shire and the broader Hume Region were heard at the highest levels.

This advocacy trip was a vital step in building momentum for meaningful change and long-term investment in our region's future. Meetings included:

- Chief of Staff for Minister for Early Childhood Education and Minister for Youth
- Federal Health Adviser to Shadow Minister Anne Ruston
- Dr Helen Haines MP, Member for Indi

- Advisors to Anika Wells MP Minister for Communications and Minister for Sport
- Policy Adviser to the Minister for the Environment and Water
- Shadow Minister Dr Anne Webster MP
- Sam Birrell MP Member for Nicholls
- Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner
- Tim Wilson MP, Shadow Minister for Small Business.

Emergency Management and Resilience

Council has worked closely with emergency service partners, community groups and volunteers to prepare for the fire season and future drought challenges. These partnerships are essential to keeping our community safe and well-supported.

Engagement Snapshot

July to November

Community-focused events and meetings **15**

Stakeholder and partner meetings **20**

Including engagement with:

- Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Rowing Victoria
- Goulburn Regional Tourism Board
- Regional Development Victoria
- Regional Development Australia
- MAV advocacy workshop
- Inland Rail
- Department of Transport and Planning
- LGPro panel
- Rural Councils Victoria conference
- Taungurung Local Government Forum
- Federal and State MP meetings
- Hume Regional Local Government Network
- Go Nagambie
- DEECA
- Parks Victoria.

Community Consultations: Your Voice Matters

Strathbogie Shire Council is committed to creating meaningful opportunities for residents to have their say on the issues that matter most.

Through our online engagement platform, Share Strathbogie, community members can provide feedback, complete surveys and stay informed about key projects.

Over the past six months, we've invited community input on a range of important topics, including:

- Draft Customer Service Charter
- Planning for Australia Day celebrations

- Domestic Animal Management Plan
- Road Management Plan
- Euroa Railway Precinct Master Plan
- Local Laws
- Rural Residential Land Use Strategy (RRLUS) and Urban Growth Strategy (UGS)
- Kirwans Bridge Local Emergency Action Plan
- Sports Strategy
- 2026-27 Council budget.

Across these consultations, we received more than 200 submissions from the community - each one helping shape Council's decisions and ensuring our strategies reflect the values, needs and aspirations of the people who live here.



Strathbogie Shire Council

Risk and Compliance: Ensuring Accountability and Transparency

Council takes its responsibility for good governance seriously. Through strong oversight and regular audits, we ensure our operations are transparent, compliant and aligned with community expectations.

Audit and Risk Committee

Established under Section 53 of the Local Government Act 2020, the Audit and Risk Committee provides independent oversight of Council's financial management, governance practices, internal controls and risk management framework.

So far this year, the Committee has met five times, including:

- a detailed review of the 2025-26 Budget
- a dedicated workshop to develop the 2025-26 Workplan and Risk Management Framework.

In July, Council adopted the Audit and Risk Committee's Biannual Performance Report, reflecting our commitment to good governance, continuous improvement and accountability.

Internal Audits

Council's internal audit function is delivered by RSD Audit, an external provider offering independent assurance that our systems and processes are effective and well-managed.

A risk-based, three-year Internal Audit Plan is reviewed annually to ensure resources are focused on priority areas. Recent and ongoing audits include:

- Cyber Security
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Payroll
- Fleet Management.

These audits help us identify opportunities for improvement and ensure we're operating efficiently and responsibly.

External Audits

Council is externally audited by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office, with the annual audit conducted by Crowe Australasia.

External auditors attend Audit and Risk Committee meetings to present the Annual Audit Plan and Independent Audit Reports.

In September, Council received the fully audited and certified Financial Statements and Performance Reports for inclusion in the 2024-25 Annual Report.

Risk Management: Planning for a Safe and Resilient Future

Strathbogie Shire Council continues to build a strong culture of risk awareness and preparedness across the organisation. Council continues to embed a strong risk culture, introducing a new Risk Management Policy, Framework and Business Continuity Plan.

To support this, staff have participated in mandatory training and simulation exercises, helping build confidence and capability across the organisation. These activities strengthen our resilience and ensure we're well-prepared to protect our community, assets and operations.

Council's commitment to proactive risk management means we're not only responding to risks - we're anticipating them and planning ahead.

Looking Ahead

As we look toward 2026, our focus remains on delivering the priorities outlined in the 2025-29 Council Plan. This includes strengthening community connections, driving sustainable growth, enhancing liveability and ensuring that Strathbogie Shire continues to be a thriving place to live, work and explore.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this progress so far.

Together, we're shaping a bright and resilient future for our Shire.



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VIC 3666 Australia

Open Monday to Friday
9am to 5pm

NAGAMBIE CUSTOMER SERVICE

352 High Street, Nagambie
VIC 3608 Australia

Open Monday to Friday
9am to 4pm

12 Notice of Motion

13 Notice of Rescission

14 Confidential Business

15 Urgent Business

16 Next Meeting

The next meeting of Strathbogie Shire Council will be held on 17 February 2026 at Euroa Community Conference Centre at 4:00 pm.

17 Close of Meeting

There being no further business the meeting closed at