

Strathbogie Shire Council

**Council Meeting
Minutes / Decisions**

Tuesday 17 February 2026

Minutes

Council Meeting

17 February 2026 at 4:00 pm

A meeting was 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 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
Gary Van Driel	Interim Director Sustainable Infrastructure
Rachael Frampton	Director Community and Planning
Sharon Rainsbury	Executive Manager Communications, Advocacy and Customer Service
Kerry Lynch	Governance Officer

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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.

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 considered in strategic planning and decision making
9. the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

5 Apologies/Leave of Absence

Cr Claire Ewart-Kennedy

6 Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

Cr Laura Binks declared a general conflict of interest relating to Item 11.1.2 - Quarterly Report Statutory Planning.

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.

MOVED: Cr Laura Binks
SECONDED: Cr Fiona Stevens

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 9 December 2025 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

25/26-35

CARRIED

8 Petitions

Nil

9 Mayor and Councillor Reports

9.1 Mayor's Report

When we were last in this Chamber for our December Council meeting, we were looking forward to Christmas celebrations, enjoying summer events and a short break to recharge ahead of what was shaping up to be a busy year. Pleasingly, we had made great progress towards recovering the Budget, improving council processes and governance, being relieved of our Municipal Monitor, and having a strong team of Councillors and Executive staff all working together towards a common goal.

At that time, I had not imagined my first address for 2026 would be about the worst bushfires to hit our Shire since 1965.

The Longwood Berrys Lane bushfire has changed our landscape and had profound, far-reaching and enduring impacts on the Strathbogie Shire, and particularly the residents of Ruffy, Longwood, Gooram, Tarcombe and Creighton's Creek.

Our hearts are broken for the loss of life; the loss of homes, properties and businesses; the loss of livestock and the broader impact on our communities and economy.

I want to acknowledge all the emergency services personnel who responded to this disaster, including particularly CFA volunteers and frontline workers for their tireless efforts. Your courage, professionalism and compassion have made a profound difference to our community and will continue to do so.

I also want to acknowledge the community-led relief operations, particularly in Ruffy which has been a herculean effort in responding to both human and animal needs, and also the communities of Creightons Creek and Gooram who have established strong support and recovery plans for their areas.

I am so proud of the way our community has come together to support one another. At times in this role, it is easy to get consumed by the targeted negativity in social media and the efforts

of night-time keyboard warriors, but it has been so heart-warming to see only the best of the great Aussie spirit rise to the top, to protect and assist our most in need. The generosity has been overwhelming, and we thank you for the outpouring of love and support that has been felt right across our Shire.

I want to specifically acknowledge the phenomenal contribution of our local Member for Euroa – Annabelle Cleeland. Despite losing much of her own farm and stock, Annabelle has been on the ground in every part of her affected electorate and beyond, advocating, organizing, connecting people, and resolving issues. She connected the best to initiate the Longwood Fodder Depot, to which we will be forever indebted to Neil and Kerrie Tubb and family, along with countless volunteers.

She has also been instrumental in ensuring her constituents can access funding through the Strathbogie Disaster Relief Fund, organized by another group of dedicated and professional community members. Regardless of political affiliation, it is hard to fault Annabelle's remarkable humanistic response to this disaster, and I look forward to continuing our advocacy, and support of our community, together.

I want to acknowledge the incredible work over the past few weeks of my fellow councillors who have been on the ground across our Shire helping our residents. Our councillors were there right from the start, assisting at the relief centres, organizing help for affected residents, even moving hay and other goods to those in need.

I would like to thank Deputy Mayor Claire Ewart-Kennedy for stepping into the Mayoral role while I fought the fires as a CFA volunteer, and subsequently fire threatening our family homes and properties in the first few days of the disaster. As expected, she didn't miss a beat, but she did break my phone!

Thank you to our CEO Rachelle Quattrocchi who, less than a year into the role, has shown absolute commitment to our organization, people, and community. We have shared unimaginable grief with residents directly affected by fire, watched with awe at the strength and resilience of our communities, and commenced the process to recovery. Rachelle has also been instrumental in planning and articulating our requirements through effective advocacy, which I will speak more about shortly, but also that I hope to be able to report on as success stories in the coming months!

Many of our staff and their families were also directly affected by the fires, but the entire team has worked tirelessly to support our communities. This included filling emergency roles when the fire was still going, to now leading the recovery efforts. The entire council team has continued to deliver business as usual while responding to the fire emergency, and I want to commend each member of staff for the dedication they have shown.

The fire's impact extended into our neighbouring shires, and we have been working closely with Murrindindi, Mansfield and Mitchell Shires as we all start on the long road to recovery. It has been uplifting to see that municipal borders have become temporarily erased, with the needs of our communities coming first and foremost.

A special thanks must go to Mitchell Shire, CEO Mary Agostino and Mayor John Dougall for hosting the Relief Centre in Seymour in the first few weeks of the disaster, and Mayor Shane Sali from the City of Greater Shepparton for organizing three semi-loads of human supplies from donations received from the good people of Shepparton.

Other Councils from across Victoria have mobilised staff with emergency response and recovery experience to assist us with our initial response and now the recovery process. Staff from Greater Shepparton, Campaspe, Mornington Peninsula, Monash, Manningham, Greater

Dandenong and Bendigo, along with the Red Cross, Victorian Council of Churches, Government Shared Services and Arborists, have come together to form the Secondary Impact Assessment teams that will be active in our devastated communities for some time to come, and we thank them for their support.

There are so many other volunteers, both individual, charitable, and business, that have contributed so much to the greater good in this response - thank you all from the bottom of my heart for what you have given and continue to give!

Council is committed to carrying on the great work our community has started, supporting rebuilding and restoring what was lost, while strengthening our communities and laying the foundation for a more resilient future.

In today's agenda, Council will introduce a condolence motion. With that motion, we recognise the resilience and strength shown by communities in the face of all we have lost and reaffirm a shared commitment to recovery and renewal.

We took an important step on our recovery journey last week with the opening of our long-term Recovery Hub at 34 Railway Street, Euroa. The Hub is a central, welcoming and trusted place designed to support our community through recovery, healing and rebuilding. It brings together key agencies, wellbeing services and recovery specialists in one accessible location.

It is designed to make it easier for individuals, families, businesses and community groups to access practical support, clear information and guidance - all in one place.

The Recovery Hub has been made possible thanks in part to the \$15 million in recovery support funding that has been pledged by the State and Federal Governments under Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Council has been actively advocating across all levels of government since the fires to ensure our community has the resources and support it needs to move forward.

The CEO, Councillors and I have met with numerous Federal and State Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries including:

- The Premier – Jacinta Allan
- The Treasurer and Minister for Regional Development – Jaclyn Symes
- The Minister for Emergency Services – Vicki Ward, who also attended our Hub opening
- The Minister for Local Government – Nick Staikos
- The Minister for Planning - Sonya Kilkenny
- The Minister for Agriculture - Ros Spence
- The Federal Minister for Emergency Management – Kristy McBain
- The Member for Euroa Annabelle Cleeland
- The Member for Indi – Helen Haines
- The Member for Nicholls – Sam Birrell
- The Member for Northern Victoria – Ricki-Lee Tyrell
- The Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services – Sheena Watt and the Parliamentary Secretary for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention – Paul Edbrooke
- Minister Mental Health, Ageing, Multicultural Affairs and Prevention Family Violence - Hon Ingrid Stitt MP
- Shadow Treasurer and Leader of Opposition - Jess Wilson
- Shadow Minister for Women, Prevention Family Violence, Worksafe and TAC - Cindy McLeish

- Tim Wiebusch Emergency Management Commissioner
- Members for Northern Victoria – The Hon Wendy Lovell MLC and Gaelle Broad

I have also spoken at length with Her Excellency Sam Mostyn – the Governor General of Australia, who showed great interest and empathy towards our situation. I have extended the offer for Her Excellency to visit our region soon.

We are also presently working with Her Excellency, Professor Margaret Gardner, Governor of Victoria, to organise a visit to the fire-affected region, such that there is a broad appreciation of the devastation and a multi-faceted approach to Governments response.

These meetings and ongoing advocacy are critical to ensure that our politicians and decision-makers understand the context that we are living – that being Strathbogie Shire operating in a financially constrained environment, and suffering from at least three significant and consecutive natural disasters. It is absolutely essential and my strong position, that we receive support and funding that adequately covers the costs incurred by council (and thus our ratepayers and taxpayers) in responding to these events. I thank all those I have met with for the support they have shown thus far, and I look forward to working together in partnership through the recovery phase.

With all that's been going on, business as usual has continued in other parts of the Shire, and I wanted to mention the wonderful Australia Day events that took place last month. Thank you to all the organizing committee members, and those who participated in bringing many Strathbogie Shire Australians together in celebration of what makes this place so great.

I was proud to welcome some of our newest Australians at our Citizenship Ceremony, which was held on January 27. At a time when we had witnessed first-hand the very best of Australian courage, mateship, and resilience, it was wonderful to reflect on what it means to be Australian as I received the pledges of our newest citizens. Their joy and delight were infectious, and we are very fortunate to have them as part of our community.

Finally, I'd like to thank and make mention of the roughly 80% of our shire community who was not directly impacted by this disaster but has stood by us over the past nearly six weeks since the fire first started at Berrys Lane in Longwood. Your generosity of spirit, human and animal needs, and for giving us the space to stabilise the community and organization, and implement our recovery process, has been much appreciated! We anticipate more business as usual council updates from next week, with the Recovery hub running in parallel.

Thank you.

9.2 Councillor Reports

Cr Holloway

I'm not sure I have the words to do this report justice, but I'll do as best I can. I've put everything else to the side as we lost a big part of our Shire last month.

We all use words and phrases like resilience, coming together, rebuilding, support, recovering and such. Yes, these are important concepts and yes, they are even true. But they come about from the one that has defined the beginning of this year which is loss.

Loss everywhere. Wildlife, stock, farms, out buildings, homes. And when we get to people's homes, we've also lost memories, keepsakes, histories, stories.

A big part of our collective stories are now gone. I can only say that fortunately the loss of human life was minimal. But unfortunately, we may lose even more stories if people who have lost their anchor to this place decide that it's too difficult, too painful to rebuild and another place gains their story, and Strathbogie Shire loses it.

There are, and will continue to be amazing examples everywhere of resilience coming together, rebuilding, support and recovering. I don't want to sound completely without hope.

The sad facts are that Strathbogie Shire has been hit with a terrible two year drought, rising costs hitting residents, especially farmers in that time, and now the worst fire in our Shire's living memory, or as Scott said, since the 1960's.

To those people who've lost their place and their story, I can only say we are with you. We are a community who will come together, rebuild, support and recover together. It's all we have. It is supremely unfair that some amongst us have lost everything, but we will share all we have with you until our collective story can begin anew.

Cr Carlson

Thanks for the previous comments from the Mayor, I'll be brief.

I'm sure we've all got a bit to say about this because obviously we've been very busy over the last six weeks as the Mayor has mentioned in a totally unexpected way, so just a few comments.

I think the obvious one is the community response has been extraordinary and gives great faith in human nature again which is good to have both in terms of volunteering, and of course in donations which have come from basically all over eastern Australia. It's extraordinary stuff.

The impacts on our community members. I shudder sometimes when I hear people who have not been affected say they understand and that's not true. They don't, they mean well and it's not a criticism. I can say I have some understanding. I've had a house burn down around me at 1:00pm in the morning. So I understand the loss of a house and generations of memorabilia. I have shot my own livestock and many others owned by others not because of fire, but because of commodity price collapses. And we've had some small grass fires on our property over the years, but nothing that would be considered serious.

Some people in our community have been devastated and have experienced and seen things that we who have not experienced such things could never imagine in our worst nightmares. And that's the reality that some people are facing. Their hearts are broken and their souls are aching.

What I would like to say to our community is they will recover. Human spirit is incredibly resilient. They will recover, but they will never forget. Some have had experiences that will be with them for the rest of their lives. It has become part of who they are, part of their character, but they will recover, and it is in that recovery phase now the Council must step up.

We don't have the resources to address all the needs referred to required to be addressed. Our role is to facilitate the numerous programs and funding sources to be available to the community when they need them.

And that in itself is a challenge because of the complexity and fighting for those resources. This has been termed a thousand day event, and it probably will be. Therefore the Shire must remain committed to everything it can to stay the course.

Finally, while 12% of the Shire has been devastated, 88% has not. And we must take into consideration that we have to deliver normal council services to these residents as well over the next three years left in our term.

Cr Stevens

Firstly, I'd like to thank the Mayor for such a complete report. There's no need to repeat a lot of what you've covered off on, but thank you for being so thorough in your report.

Before I go into some commentary on the bush fire, I'd just like to go back to a little bit of business as usual because we have had to sort of keep representing our organisation within the community while this has all been going on.

Things like attending the Goulburn Valley Road Safety Committee in Shepparton, which I did, and the local market in Nagambie, the Australia Day event in Nagambie, the Citizenship ceremonies. All of these things still have to go on while we're trying to manage this incredible event that occurred in our Shire.

The meetings and the advocacy that the Mayor referred to are absolutely imperative. As the Community would have heard, they've been extensive and it's important that all Councillors supported the Mayor and the CEO with representation at those meetings because we are your voice in this situation, and we have been loud and we have been clear as to what our asks have been.

So please take comfort in the fact that we have heard our community and will pass those on to the areas within the State Government and Federal Government areas where we can have some effect hopefully.

Touching on the bush fire because we can speak for hours about this, but firstly I would like to acknowledge the impact that it's had on our community, and we are part of that community. Our houses may not have been affected, but our friends and our family and members of our community were significantly impacted and there is a ripple effect that comes from that. So we do feel for the people that have been directly affected, and we give them our best wishes, and our support as we move forward into our recovery phase. We are there beside you. We are there fighting for you.

When this all happened, the Councillors went into different areas of the Shire. You may have seen some of them wherever you were positioned at the time of this particular event. You may have not seen some of them. Please don't think because you didn't see their faces, they weren't out there working because they were.

My initial participation was down at the relief and recovery centre at Seymour. Some have questioned why it was put at Seymour. There are processes and experience with major

events, whether they be floods, whether they be fires. There are procedures and protocols that have value and logic to them. You don't put these centres where there's a possibility that the fire could change direction and suddenly that relief centre and that evacuation centre comes under fire. So put it in an area that is safe.

We were very fortunate, as the Mayor touched on, to have the incredible support of our neighbours, the Mitchell Shire, the Murrindindi Shire. They had a facility that was used for the floods down there, and it served the purpose of these fires absolutely brilliantly.

And I want to reassure you that working in the centre when people were coming straight out of the fires into that centre, there were people for Ruffy, Strathbogie and beyond coming to that centre. So that's what we wanted. We wanted them to know it was there for them.

We've now moved from response to recovery. This recovery is going to take us at least two years, probably three if the floods are any indication of how these things go. There are people who have come forward and rightfully so that are getting assistance and support in all sorts of areas now, but there were many people that will come forward over the next six months, 12 months, and possibly thereafter because they'll come forward at their own pace. So we need to let them know that we are there for them when they're ready to come forwards. There is no pressure.

So, I just want to say thank you to everyone that was involved in this, whether it be the local government, whether it be the community, whether it be the emergency service, whether it be the State or Federal Government, whether it be the volunteers. I mean the list goes on and on and on. I'm not going to mention individuals because I don't think that's appropriate. I just want you to know that what you did to contribute to our recovery, our response initially and our recovery is very much appreciated at a personal level and organisational level, and we will continue to work forward together.

Thank you.

Cr Binks

So much has been said and I too would just like to thank yourself Mayor Jeffery and CEO for all you did and of course extend that to Deputy Mayor Ewart-Kennedy who stepped into your role when you were very busy in your other role.

Just knowing it has been an incredible response from our community, but that community like you've said doesn't stay within the bounds of our local government boundary.

We've seen this really fantastic collaborative effort that is absolutely required in times like these across those borders and across those boundaries to have a united response to this knowing that's how our communities work. They don't see Shire boundaries as to where they are in so to speak, and the collaborative work that's been demonstrated particularly between those four councils has been remarkable, and I think it has really put us in a place for a great recovery because of that collaborative work, that sort of shared experience and that shared understanding of working with these incredible communities of Strathbogie and Tableland areas, and all the way toward Alex (Alexandra), so the area and scope of it is large.

I think you touched on it Councillor Stevens that the ongoing nature of this is something that I think as both a council and a community we are going to have to be really acutely aware of balancing that sort of ongoing recovery effort, whilst also continuing to serve the community in our substantive role as a Council, and what it is that we do.

Just the complexity of holding those two things, being the recovery organisation for our community, but also continuing to be Strathbogie Shire Council and delivering on everything

that we are legislated to under that role, and hope that as we go forward we will continue to support our community right across the Shire, but knowing that a lot of our attention right now is certainly focused on those who have been impacted by the Longwood Fire.

Cr Halsall

I just want to spread my report across a couple of different subjects. So firstly, bushfire. My heart goes out to those that lost their homes, their feed, their fencing, their day to day life.

Wonderfully though, you have the whole community to lean on. And while it might not be your usual way of life, please let your community look after you. So I am enormously proud of my community. I am enormously proud of the support movement, I am enormously proud of the feed hub, the Ruffy Recovery Hub, the Longwood community supporting the CFA, Blaze Aid moving in and getting feed on the ground, and directly volunteering goodwill in an extremely helpful way, as well as offering roles for those unable to provide fencing labour, caring for volunteers, making meals, creating activities and just generally contributing to a volunteer community.

My respect and gratitude for politicians like Annabelle Cleeland. She has performed like an Olympic athlete, and it's a long time since I've really respected and looked at a politician for leadership. Annabelle, you have my respect.

I'm a proud member of this Council who have really put in, whether visible or not. Please let me tell you that this has been an all in journey. And to quote our CEO in a very emotional speech, Strathbogie might be small, but we are mighty.

All right, that's enough for bushfires. Okay, Australia Day. I had the pleasure of attending Australia Day here in Euroa at the Third Age Club. We heard from our CEO Rachelle Quattrocchi, a local business owner Michael Tehan, and the tremendous Annabelle Cleeland. It was a special day. The quintessential essence of Australian spirit was palpable. It was the proudest I have ever been to be Australian and a Strathbogie resident.

The day was shadowed only by the absence of a citizenship ceremony. It was for that reason that the following day I did not attend the citizenship ceremony as my stand personally against the separation of Australia Day and welcoming new citizens. We have such a wonderful opportunity to share the privilege of being Australian. I'm supportive of consideration of the current date Australia Day falls on. We as Australians all deserve to be proud and to come together and celebrate all that it means to be Australian.

The third thing I wanted to chat about or report on our local pools. I think the pool is a really important place as a social meeting place. It's an educational asset. We need water safety, survival and competence for our children and our general community.

Management of this resource is really important. The atmosphere in my personal observation is cold and distant. While staff will engage if approached, I haven't experienced a warm, nurturing environment.

Twenty kilogram bag of pool chemical dumped within ten metres of small children swimming. The staff member was simply doing their job and adding chemicals prior to pool closure to enable a timely departure.

A small child was being held by their ankles and dumped in the water to the shoulder by an older child, possibly known by that child. My first awareness of this incident was the child crying loudly at the end of the pool. It was then reported to me by an adult walking along the pool that the lifeguard was in the vicinity but did not act in what they thought was appropriate of a lifeguard.

The water quality I've been told directly that the white fibres in the pool are undissolved salt. I don't accept this. It looks far more like fibres of duck poo through the pool which fit the persistent duck poo around the edges of the pool which is very disappointing.

The pool covers remain rolled up at the edge of the pool, unused. The water temperature should be much higher than it is at the moment, and children are getting cold in swim lesson halfway through February which I find enormously disappointing.

What this points to me is that local management of pools is essential, and while our current view as a Council is to outsource management of pools, I think we should be doing more to bring it in-house. And by in-house I mean community managed and hopefully more people in the community actually report their experiences in the pool so that this isn't my personal experience being shared in this manner, but it is many community members being shared because my experience isn't on its own.

Thank you.

Deputy Mayor Ewart-Kennedy was a late apology for the meeting, and Mayor Cr Jeffery read the Councillor's report on her behalf.

Cr Ewart-Kennedy

Acting Mayor – Fire Emergency Period

For the first days during the height of the recent fires impacting Longwood and surrounding communities, I undertook the role of Acting Mayor during the a very critical phase of the emergency response.

- During this period, responsibilities included:
- Representing Council at Incident Control Centre briefings
- Liaising directly with CFA, Victoria Police, SES and other emergency services
- Engaging with State and Federal representatives to advocate for immediate and ongoing support
- Visiting relief and recovery centres, including the Longwood Football Netball Club staging area, Ruffy and Longwood Hay Depot
- Supporting affected residents and families who experienced loss
- Providing media engagement to ensure accurate and timely community communication
- Working at the relief centre triaging many misplaced residents
- Working closely with Council's CEO and Executive to maintain operational continuity

The resilience of our community was evident throughout this period. Volunteers, local businesses, emergency personnel and residents demonstrated extraordinary strength, generosity and leadership.

Community Engagement and Representation

In addition to emergency responsibilities, duties as Deputy Mayor included:

- Attendance at community meetings and recovery forums
- Advocacy for recovery funding and support at State and Federal levels
- Supporting disaster relief initiatives and community-led recovery efforts
- Engaging with affected landholders regarding clean-up and infrastructure restoration
- Participating in governance and strategic meetings to ensure legislative compliance

Governance and Council Responsibilities

Throughout this period, I have continued to uphold the obligations of the Councillor Code of Conduct and the Local Government Act. Despite emergency circumstances, Council has maintained sound governance, transparent communication and strategic decision-making aligned with community need.

Moving Forward

The focus now shifts from response to recovery and rebuilding. Council's role is to ensure residents are supported through rebuilding processes, funding pathways remain accessible, mental health and wellbeing supports are visible, and infrastructure and environmental restoration is prioritised.

I acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of my fellow Councillors, emergency services, Council staff, volunteers and community members during this challenging time. Strathbogie has demonstrated strength, compassion and unity, and we will continue to stand alongside our community throughout recovery and renewal.

10 Public Question Time

Our Reference RW - 01/2026 and 09/2026

The recent catastrophic bushfire emergency has made one thing clear: Strathbogie Shire Council has failed to protect our community. As the primary authority responsible for our safety and health, the council must be held accountable.

Catastrophic fire days happen roughly every 10 years, yet the Shire has lost huge amounts of farmland and property, especially east of the Hume Freeway. This disaster was worsened by the council's lack of support for the CFA, which has led to the loss of important fire management policies that, 30 years ago, made sure every road had cleared vegetation to protect homes and farms.

Instead of maintaining these vital fire buffers, Strathbogie's road and fire management policies have allowed young trees and dense vegetation to crowd right up to the roads — with little effort to clear them. This negligence puts all of us at risk.

We've also seen the proud fire protection spirit of Longwood CFA disappear over time, replaced by green policies that prioritize vegetation over safety.

It's time for the council to wake up, take responsibility, and overhaul their fire and road management practices to protect our community. We deserve better.

Will Council listen?

Will Council do better?

How? PLEASE EXPLAIN

Response

Robin, thank you for your first question.

The Longwood Berrys Lane Fire has caused widespread and significant loss and damage across our municipality. The event has had profound, far-reaching, and enduring impacts on individual, families and communities, as well as on livelihoods, natural and agricultural landscapes, critical infrastructure, and local and regional economics.

In line with our Municipal Emergency Management Plan a review and debrief of the fire will be undertaken. Furthermore, the Municipal Emergency Management Plan and the Municipal Fire Management Plan will also be reviewed and updated this year.

The Parliamentary Inquiry into the 2026 summer fires across Victoria will provide Council, and anyone, with the opportunity to make a submission that considers 11 key areas including the preparation and planning by government, emergency services agencies and the community ahead of the fire season, including management of public and private land and roadsides.

We have also undertaken and will continue to advocate to the state government to ensure that roadsides are appropriately managed.

Question Two

Congratulations, our Sale-yard state of the Art truck wash has been opens for business for one week. At a cast of more than \$1m exceeding the \$500000 sustainable budget, open for one week.

Will Council disclose the full electronic bank able receipts for week one of its operations?

Response

Thank you for your question, Robin.

The operation of the truck wash has been welcomed, and we have received good feedback from users. The increased prediction for income will be monitored as part of regular budget reviews, and confirmation of actual income can be provided at quarterly budget reviews.

The next questions were similar questions therefore, under Clause 35.11 of the Strathbogie Shire Council Governance Rules, the questions were answered together.

Our Reference NB - 02/2026 and KW 03/2026 and 04/2026

Question Three

Question to Strathbogie Mayor and some Shire Councillors on Frost street Pedestrian Underpass.

When will the shire mayor and some of the Councillors start thinking about community safety and lives before money? If we have a major bushfire on the northwest side of Euroa and all roads are blocked, frost street pedestrian underpass would be a quick escape route for the community safety, so that's one of the reasons it must be reinstated for the safety of Euroa community.

Thank you

Response

Thank you for your question Neil.

In answering your question and other like questions:

Pedestrian access across the railway corridor is not identified for emergency access but rather general community use. Specifically, regarding the Frost Street Underpass, Council made the decision on 17 June 2025 to permanently close this underpass.

Our Reference TM - 05/2026 and 06/2026

Question Four

1. ROADS

Harry's Creek Road

I have been asking about this road for many years always told an excuse after another, and since 2022 to 17th February 2026 this road is a death trap.

Why is there LIES told about this road., as this was not damaged due to flooding?

Response

Thank you for your question Tom.

Council has secured TAC funding for implementation of safety improvements along Harry's Creek Road. Works include installation of protective guardrail together with a speed reduction along the road.

Additionally, Council has secured funding to undertake repairs of the road slip which is due out to contract shortly. Maintenance along the road will also be reviewed in line with concerns raised with Council

Question Five

2. Shire of Strathbogie "municipal fire prevention plan"

Does this shire have an updated document. If so where is it, and if not why not?

Response

Thanks for your question Tom, there are two documents that may interest you, the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) 2023-2026, and the Municipal Fire Management Plan 2023-2026, a sub-plan of the MEMP.

These two Plans are due for review in May 2026 and updated 2027-2030 plans will be developed.

The Plans are developed by the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee, a cross-agency Emergency Management partnership required under the Emergency Management Act 2013, and the Plans have been submitted in accordance with the requirements of this Act.

A copy of each of these Plans can be found on the Council's website.

Our Reference MM - 07/2026 and 08/2026

Question Six

To the CEO

Councillors have been elected by the ratepayers who take a seat at the council table. Sadly, we have a councillor sitting at the council table that speaks rude and give nasty looks to the people in the gallery. What are you going to do about this?

Response

Thank you for your first question Maree. I would encourage you to speak directly with myself about your concern.

Question Seven

Rates

Why does this council continue to have a major problem in the rates department.

Response

Thank you for your second question Maree. I encourage you to speak with Director Tingay to raise the specifics of your concern.

11.1 Condolence and Commendation Motion, Community Recognition and Preparedness – Longwood Berrys Lane Fire

AUTHOR Director People and Governance

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Chief Executive Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The January 2026 Longwood Berrys Lane Fire, which commenced on 7 January 2026, caused widespread and significant loss and damage across our municipality.

The event has had profound, far-reaching, and enduring impacts on individuals, families, and communities, as well as on livelihoods, natural and agricultural landscapes, critical infrastructure, and local and regional economies.

Beyond the immediate destruction, the effects of the fire have disrupted social, environmental, and economic systems that underpin community wellbeing. The consequences of this disaster will continue to be felt for many years, where recovery can be inherently complex, multi-staged, and resource-intensive, requiring sustained effort, coordination, and long-term commitment from all levels of government and the community.

While the full impacts are still to be realised, the Initial impact assessments indicate that at least 417 properties within the Strathbogie Shire Council area have been impacted. This includes Fire Rescue Victoria's assessment of 115 damaged residential dwellings that are uninhabitable and damage to 294 other structures. Agriculture Victoria also notes the following losses to date:

- 29,593 hectares of land impacted
- 165 hectares of grape vines lost
- 25,177 hectares of grazing pasture impacted
- 88 hectares of private business impacted
- 11,821 tonnes hay/silage lost
- 2.21 tonnes stored grain lost
- Upwards of 2,291 kilometres of fencing destroyed
- In excess of 25,000 head of livestock lost including sheep, cattle, pigs, goats, horses, chickens and other domestic animals.

Sources: Fire Rescue Victoria and Agriculture Victoria

The devastation experienced by affected communities has been significant and deeply felt.

Homes, businesses, farms, and cherished landscapes were lost or damaged, and many residents continue to experience significant emotional, social, and economic hardship as a result. This will continue for many years to come.

In the face of this loss, we recognise the resilience and strength shown by communities and reaffirm a shared commitment to recovery and renewal. Working together with all stakeholders, Council are committed to supporting recovery that not only restores what was lost but also strengthens communities, laying the foundations for a more resilient future.

MOVED: Cr Scott Jeffery

SECONDED: Cr Vicki Halsall

That Council:

- 1. Expresses its sincere condolences to all residents, families, businesses, community organisations and council staff affected by the recent devastation within our municipality and surrounding districts**
- 2. Acknowledges the scale and impact of the devastation, noting the significant personal, environmental, and economic loss suffered by our community**
- 3. Recognises and commends the extraordinary resilience, generosity, and leadership of our local community, including volunteers, service organisations, council staff, and emergency services, whose collective efforts protected lives and supported those in need**
- 4. Affirms Council's strong ongoing commitment to recovery, state and federal advocacy, and partnership with affected communities and agencies**
- 5. Request a report from Officers within twelve months that reviews councils' response and recovery to the Longwood Berrys Lane Fire event capturing lessons learnt to improve future events**
- 6. Recognise that Strathbogie Shire Council, Mitchell Shire Council, Mansfield Shire Council and Murrindindi Shire Council have worked collectively throughout response, relief and recovery, and that this will continue through the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), pending the resolution of item 11.4.1 of this agenda.**

25/26-36

CARRIED

11 Officer Reports

11.1 Strategic and Statutory Planning

11.1.1 Quarterly Report - Statutory Planning

AUTHOR Manager Planning and Investment

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director Community and Planning

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides listings of all Planning Applications Received and Planning Applications Determined for the period 1 October 2025 to 31 December 2025 (Quarter 4). The latest available Planning Permit Activity Performance figures were also attached to this report.

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

It is noted that there were thirty five (35) new planning applications received, and twenty (20) planning applications decided during the reporting period.

MOVED: Laura Binks
SECONDED: Cr Vicki Halsall

That Council:

- 1. Receive the report**
- 2. Note that there were thirty five (35) new planning applications received, and twenty (20) applications decide during the period 1 October 2025 to 31 December 2025**

25/26-37

CARRIED

11.2 Community

11.2.1 Variations and Grants Approved Under CEO Delegation December 2025 and January 2026

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 December 2025 and 31 January 2026.

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.

MOVED: Cr Gregory Carlson

SECONDED: Cr Fiona Stevens

That Council:

- 1. Note that there was one quick response grant awarded to the total value of \$987 by the Chief Executive Officer between 1 December 2025 to 31 January 2026.**
- 2. Note that there was one event grant awarded to the total value of \$4,500 by the Chief Executive Officer between 1 December 2025 to 31 January 2026.**

25/26-38

CARRIED

11.3 Infrastructure

11.3.1 Quarterly Report - Capital Works

AUTHORS Projects Coordinator
Manager Capital Infrastructure and Strategic Projects

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director Sustainable Infrastructure

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Note: All amounts mentioned within this report are exclusive of GST.

Council adopted the 2025-26 Capital Works Budget at the Council Meeting held on 17 June 2025. The approved program represents a total investment of \$14.291 million. This includes \$3.596 million in carried-forward financial commitments from 2024-25 financial year capital projects that are not completed.

The Capital Works Program is structured across three key categories:

Category	25-26 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

This report provides an update on the status of the Capital Program as of 31 December 2025.

Throughout the first and second quarters of the 2025-26 financial year, several adjustments were identified because of tender awards, contract finalisations, and scope refinements that will be reflected as revised forecasts for applicable projects. These variations, along with additional carry-forward allocations from the end of the 2024-25 financial year (after the budget was displayed), have been further reviewed during the mid-year budget process in the second quarter of 2025-26.

The recommendations provided on first quarterly capital report have been adopted and officers have taken necessary steps to progress related works.

Council officers have also evaluated opportunities to introduce additional infrastructure and facility projects within the 2025-26 program, using savings identified from existing allocations which are further explained within this report.

MOVED: Cr Clark Holloway
SECONDED: Cr Gregory Carlson

That Council:

- Note the status of the Capital Works Program for the period to 31 December 2025.**

- 2. Approve the changes to the budget allocation for each of Councils Capital Works Programs for 2025-2026, as set out within Attachment 2 to this report**
- 3. Approve the conditional re-allocation of \$1 million from deferred projects and other savings as Council's contribution to the Kirwans Bridge Rectification Grant application, noting that this allocation will only be committed if the grant application is successful and will otherwise remain available for other Council priorities.**

25/26-39

CARRIED

11.4 Corporate

11.4.1 Final Municipal Monitor Report

AUTHOR Director People and Governance

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Chief Executive Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 4 November 2024, the Minister for Local Government appointed Ms Marg Allan, under Section 179(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) as the Municipal Monitor for Strathbogie Shire Council (the Council) from 6 November 2024 until 6 November 2025. The State Government announced monitors to support good governance as new Councillors entered office and to help prevent the recurrence of issues that led to the Councils dismissal in City of Casey, Whittlesea Council and Strathbogie Shire Council.

The Terms of Reference of the appointment included supporting the Council in its governance responsibilities, and specifically the recruitment processes and working relationship with the Chief Executive Officer, and Asset Management Practices.

Following Monitor Allan's tenure, a report has been provided detailing her findings. In summary Monitor Allan encourages Council to continue to progress Councillor positive work noted in the report specifically around:

- Working to generate reliable information and establish systems for informed asset management decisions
- Consider adopting the Model Governance Rules when they are available
- Continue the good practices that support collaboration between councillors and councillors and the executive team, including regular team development workshops, council meeting evaluations, and Councillor-only time to further develop their competency as a Councillor team
- Follow through implementing the Monitor's advice to undertake training on Working through Complex Community Issues.

The Final Municipal Monitors report was attached to this report.

MOVED: Cr Gregory Carlson

SECONDED: Cr Fiona Stevens

That Council:

1. **Note the final report from the Municipal Monitor, Ms Marg Allan provided to Strathbogie Shire Council on 10 February 2026 by the Minister for Local Government, The Hon Nick Staikos MP**
2. **Respond to the Minister for Local Government, The Hon Nick Staikos MP confirming Council's commitment to continue the work outlined**
3. **Authorise officers to upload the Final Municipal Monitors Report onto Councils website.**

11.4.2 Memorandum of Understanding - Strathbogie, Murrindindi, Mansfield and Mitchell Shires 2026 Bushfire Recovery

AUTHOR Director People and Governance

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Chief Executive Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to establish a coordinated, collaborative framework for relief, early recovery, long-term recovery, and advocacy arising from the January 2026 Longwood Berrys Lane Fire event.

It is recommended that Council endorse the Memorandum of Understanding – January 2026 Bushfire Relief, Recovery and Advocacy Partnership.

MOVED: Cr Fiona Stevens
SECONDED: Cr Clark Holloway

That Council endorse the Memorandum of Understanding January 2026 Bushfire Relief, Recovery and Advocacy Partnership.

25/26-41

CARRIED

11.4.3 ALGA - Financial Sustainability Inquiry Submission

AUTHORS Director People and Governance and Chief Financial Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) invited Councils to contribute submissions to the National Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Fiscal Sustainability.

ALGA's submission will present a united voice for councils, highlighting the need for untied funding for all councils, including through federal Financial Assistance Grants.

The inquiry will examine the financial relationship between local government and other levels of government in Australia, with a particular emphasis on funding mechanisms and fiscal sustainability.

Submissions closed on 3 February 2026.

MOVED: Cr Vicki Halsall
SECONDED: Cr Gregory Carlson

That Council:

Note the Strathbogie Shire Council submission to the National Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Fiscal Sustainability.

25/26-42

CARRIED

11.4.4 Australian Local Government Association Motions (ALGA) for National General Assembly 23-25 June 2026

AUTHOR Director People and Governance

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) is convening its 32nd National General Assembly of Local Government, to be held in Canberra from the 23-25 June 2026.

The National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA) provides an opportunity for councils to influence the national policy agenda, through the submission of motions.

NGA motions should focus on how local governments can work in partnership with the Australian Government to address the challenges our communities face or seize the opportunities that are national priorities.

Councils are encouraged to submit only their highest-priority motions and ensure they meet the specified criteria. Multiple motions on a similar topic may be re-written into a single strategic motion, and councils will be invited by the Secretariat to put their council name to the proposal.

Each motion requires a contact officer, a clear national objective, a summary of the key arguments in support of the motion, and endorsement from the submitting council.

Motions are to be lodged using the online portal available and should be received no later than 11:59pm AEST on Friday 27 February 2026.

It is proposed that Strathbogie Shire Council submit five motions which encompass the advocacy of financial sustainability, disaster response capacity, emergency management, reliable power supply infrastructure and equitable digital and telecommunications infrastructure.

MOVED: Cr Vicki Halsall

SECONDED: Cr Laura Binks

- 1. That Council submit the motions contained within this report, motions one to five inclusive, to the Australian Local Government Association for the 2026 National General Assembly of Local Government**
- 2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to make any necessary minor administrative amendments to the motion(s) to comply with Australian Local Government Association requirements.**

25/26-43

CARRIED

11.4.5 Prevention and Management of Sexual Harassment Policy

AUTHOR Manager People and Culture

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sexual harassment is unlawful and prohibited by both the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (VIC) and the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth). Strathbogie Shire Council is committed to providing a safe, flexible and respectful environment that is free from all forms of sexual harassment

The Sexual Harassment Policy was first adopted by Council in May 2021 following the Victoria Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) tabling of the *Sexual Harassment in Local Government* audit report on 9 December 2020. The audit involved five councils and included a survey of seventy-five councils across Victoria.

The audit report provided eleven recommendations to Victorian local councils, focusing on identifying and addressing risk factors, regularly collecting data on the prevalence of sexual harassment, and developing consistent methodologies for ongoing data collection.

This policy aims to foster a workplace culture in which staff feel empowered to report unacceptable behaviour and confident that all complaints will be properly investigated. It establishes a safe environment by clearly defining what constitutes sexual harassment and outlining the steps that will be taken to respond to all disclosures. Staff should not only feel safe in their workplace but also trust that organisational leaders will provide appropriate support and manage issues effectively.

It is recommended that Council adopt the Prevention and Management of Sexual Harassment Policy.

MOVED: Cr Fiona Stevens
SECONDED: Cr Clark Holloway

That Council:

- 1. Adopt the Prevention and Management of Sexual Harassment Policy**
- 2. Make the Policy publicly available through the Council's website.**

25/26-44

CARRIED

11.4.6 Audit and Risk Committee Annual Performance Report

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with section 54(4a) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the Audit and Risk Committee will undertake an annual assessment of its own performance against the Audit and Risk Committee Charter.

The Audit and Risk Committee Annual Committee Performance Report January 2025 to December 2025 outlines the meetings held during the year, attendance by Committee members, key matters considered by the Committee and an analysis of performance against the Committee's Work Plan.

The Report was reviewed and endorsed by the Audit and Risk Committee on 21 November 2025. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee briefed Councillors on 27 January 2026, prior to this report being presented to Council.

The Audit and Risk Committee Annual Committee Performance Report January 2025 to December 2025 was attached to this report for noting.

MOVED: Cr Clark Holloway

SECONDED: Cr Vicki Halsall

That Council:

Receive and note the Audit and Risk Committee 2025 Annual Performance Report January 2025 to December 2025.

25/26-45

CARRIED

11.4.7 S11A and S11B Instruments of Appointment and Authorisation

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Regular reviews are required to be made to the S11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (Planning and *Environment Act 1987*) and the S11B Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (*Environmental Protection 2017*) to ensure alignment with current organisational structures and legislation.

The *Local Government Act 1989* is still active in relation to the appointment of authorised officers, not the *Local Government Act 2020*. These Instruments give specified officers the ability to enforce legislation and ensure any enforcement action is undertaken on behalf of Council in a legal and efficient manner. The Instruments also appoint officers to key roles and positions including (but not limited to) Senior Strategic Planner, Senior Environmental Health Officer, and Community and Planning Compliance Officer.

The instrument comes into force immediately the Council's Chief Executive Officer signature is affixed to the instrument and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it.

MOVED: Cr Gregory Carlson

SECONDED: Cr Fiona Stevens

That Council:

In the exercise of the powers conferred by section 224 of the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act) and the other legislation referred to in the attached instruments of appointment and authorisation (S11A and S11B), Strathbogie Shire Council (Council) resolves that:

- 1. The members of Council staff referred to in the instruments be appointed and authorised as set out in the instruments**
- 2. The S11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (*Planning and Environment Act 1987*) endorsed by Council at its meeting on 19 August 2025 be revoked and replaced by the Instrument dated 17 February 2026**
- 3. The S11B Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (*Environment Protection Act 2017*) endorsed by Council at its meeting on 19 August 2025 be revoked and replaced by the Instrument dated 17 February 2026**
- 4. The Instruments be executed by the Chief Executive Officer**
- 5. The Instruments come into force immediately when the Chief Executive Officer executes the Instruments, and the Instruments remain in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it/them.**

11.4.8 S6 Instrument of Delegation to Members of Staff

AUTHOR Governance Officer

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Director People and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Local Government Act 2020* expressly provides for a Council to delegate power, duty or function to the Chief Executive Officer and/or Council Officers, to act on behalf of Council.

The S6 is an Instrument of Delegation from Council to members of Council staff relating to Council duties, powers and functions within various Acts and Regulations (or specific parts of those Acts or Regulations), which contain a specific power of delegation.

The S6 Instrument of Delegation delegates certain powers directly from the Council to Council staff due to the legislation referring to containing specific powers of delegation. This instrument provides for delegations that cannot be sub delegated by the Chief Executive Officer, that is, they must be directly delegated from Council to the subject matter experts.

The changes proposed in the current version reflect corrections to the officers delegated and legislative changes.

MOVED: Cr Gregory Carlson
SECONDED: Cr Fiona Stevens

That Council:

In the exercise of the powers conferred by the legislation referred to in the attached S6 Instrument of Delegation to Members of Council Staff, Strathbogie Shire Council (Council) resolves that:

- 1. There is delegation to the members of Council staff holding, acting in or performing the duties of the officers or positions referred to in the attached Instrument of Delegation to members of Council staff, the powers, duties, and functions set out in that instrument, subject to the conditions and limitations specified in the Instrument**
- 2. The Instrument be executed by the Chief Executive Officer**
- 3. The Instrument comes into force immediately when the Chief Executive Officer executes the Instrument of Delegation**
- 4. On the coming into force of the Instrument, the Instrument endorsed at its meeting of 19 August 2025 be revoked and replaced by the 17 February 2026 Instrument**
- 5. The duties and functions set out in the Instrument must be performed, and the powers set out in the Instruments must be executed, in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council that it may from time to time adopt.**

11.4.9 Record of Informal Meeting of Councillors December 2025 and January 2026

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 December 2025 to 31 January 2026 are attached to this report..

MOVED: Cr Vicki Halsall
SECONDED: Cr Fiona Stevens

That Council note the Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors from 1 December 2025 to 31 January 2026.

25/26-48

CARRIED

11.5 Communications, Advocacy and Customer Service

11.5.1 Advocacy Update

AUTHOR Executive Manager Communications, Engagement and Advocacy

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Chief Executive Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2025 Strathbogie Shire Council adopted its Advocacy Strategy 2025-2029. The overarching advocacy theme in the strategy is “Investing in Tomorrow”. The theme provides a unifying message and reflects Council’s proactive approach to economic development, infrastructure investment and community resilience.

This advocacy premise is critical in Strathbogie Shire Council’s recovery from the Longwood Berrys Lane Fire, and the Mayor, Cr Scott Jeffery, Deputy Mayor Claire Ewart-Kennedy and Councillors and Chief Executive Officer Rachelle Quattrocchi have been proactive in their efforts to advocate to State and Federal Ministers and other key stakeholders during and following the fire event in January 2026.

Council have met with and continue to meet with Federal and State Ministers and Parliamentarians and external stakeholders to ensure short-term recovery from disaster results in the long-term financial, and economic sustainability of Strathbogie Shire.

MOVED: Cr Gregory Carlson
SECONDED: Cr Vicki Halsall

That Council:

Note the Ministerial visits and advocacy resulting from the Longwood Berrys Lane Fire in January 2026.

An amendment was put forward.

MOVED: Cr Vicki Halsall
SECONDED: Cr Laura Binks

That Council:

Note the Ministerial visits and advocacy resulting from the Longwood Berrys Lane Fire in January 2026 as listed:

- **The Premier – Jacinta Allan**
- **The Treasurer and Minister for Regional Development – Jaclyn Symes**
- **The Minister for Emergency Services – Vicki Ward, who also attended our Hub opening**
- **The Minister for Local Government – Nick Staikos**
- **The Minister for Planning - Sonya Kilkenny**
- **The Minister for Agriculture - Ros Spence**

- **The Federal Minister for Emergency Management – Kristy McBain**
- **The Member for Euroa Annabelle Cleeland**
- **The Member for Indi – Helen Haines**
- **The Member for Nicholls – Sam Birrell**
- **The Member for Northern Victoria – Ricki-Lee Tyrell**
- **The Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services – Sheena Watt and the Parliamentary Secretary for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention – Paul Edbrooke**
- **Minister Mental Health, Ageing, Multicultural Affairs and Prevention Family Violence - Hon Ingrid Stitt MP**
- **Shadow Treasurer and Leader of Opposition - Jess Wilson**
- **Shadow Minister for Women, Prevention Family Violence, Worksafe and TAC - Cindy McLeish**
- **Tim Wiebusch Emergency Management Commissioner**
- **Member for Northern Victoria – The Hon Wendy Lovell MLC and Gaelle Broad**

25/26-49

CARRIED

The amendment became the substantive motion.

MOVED: Cr Vicki Halsall
SECONDED: Cr Laura Binks

That Council:

Note the Ministerial visits and advocacy resulting from the Longwood Berrys Lane Fire in January 2026 as listed:

- **The Premier – Jacinta Allan**
- **The Treasurer and Minister for Regional Development – Jaclyn Symes**
- **The Minister for Emergency Services – Vicki Ward, who also attended our Hub opening**
- **The Minister for Local Government – Nick Staikos**
- **The Minister for Planning - Sonya Kilkenny**
- **The Minister for Agriculture - Ros Spence**
- **The Federal Minister for Emergency Management – Kristy McBain**
- **The Member for Euroa Annabelle Cleeland**
- **The Member for Indi – Helen Haines**
- **The Member for Nicholls – Sam Birrell**
- **The Member for Northern Victoria – Ricki-Lee Tyrell**
- **The Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services – Sheena Watt and the Parliamentary Secretary for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention – Paul Edbrooke**
- **Minister Mental Health, Ageing, Multicultural Affairs and Prevention Family Violence - Hon Ingrid Stitt MP**
- **Shadow Treasurer and Leader of Opposition - Jess Wilson**
- **Shadow Minister for Women, Prevention Family Violence, Worksafe and TAC - Cindy McLeish**
- **Tim Wiebusch Emergency Management Commissioner**
- **Member for Northern Victoria – The Hon Wendy Lovell MLC and Gaelle Broad**

25/26-50

CARRIED

11.5.2 Quarterly Report - Customer Service

AUTHOR Customer Service Coordinator

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR Executive Manager Communications, Advocacy and Customer Service

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The quarterly Customer Service Report summarises Council's customer service performance, key metrics and outcomes for the period 1 November 2025 to 31 January 2026. It informs Council and the community of progress in improving service quality and responsiveness.

MOVED: Cr Clark Holloway
SECONDED: Cr Vicki Halsall

That Council:

Note the Quarterly Customer Service Report from the period 1 November 2025 to 31 January 2026

25/26-51

CARRIED

12 Notice of Motion

12.1 Notice of Motion - Council Meeting 17 February 2026 - Lodged by Councillors Clark Holloway and Vicki Halsall (Notice of Motion Reference 02/2026)

A Notice of Motion was received from Councillors Clark Holloway and Vicki Halsall.

In accordance with Section 41 of the Governance Rules, the Chief Executive Officer accepted the motion, deeming it valid.

The motion calls for Officers to prepare an internal Councillor Briefing relating to Council's emergency management policy framework.

MOVED: Cr Laura Binks
SECONDED: Cr Fiona Stevens

That Standing Orders be suspended at 6:42 pm due to a power outage.

MOVED Cr Fiona Stevens
SECONDED: Cr Greg Carlson

That Standing Orders be resumed at 6:56 pm following the resumption of power.

MOVED: Cr Clark Holloway
SECONDED: Cr Vicki Halsall

That Council requests Council Officers prepare an internal briefing to Council outlining Council's Emergency Management Policy framework, including but not limited to the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP), which provides the overarching structure for emergency prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery within Strathbogie Shire.

That the briefing includes:

- 1. A review of how existing emergency management policy framework was implemented during the Longwood and Berrys Lane Fire**
- 2. An outline of Strathbogie Shire's operational response to these incidents, including coordination with emergency service, activation processes, and emergency response arrangements**
- 3. Recommendations for strengthening Council's internal readiness, cross-agency cooperation, and community-facing emergency preparedness measures, with reference to local emergency action plans and community resilience initiatives already developed within the Shire**
- 4. Strathbogie Shire's operational response to potential future small-scale and/or developing emergencies where emergency management is still being coordinated by local responders**
- 5. A summary of the meeting with emergency services as a part of the Municipal Fire Prevention Sub Committee including an authorised representative from Fire Rescue Victoria.**

DIVISION		
FOR	AGAINST	
Cr Holloway	Cr Jeffery	
Cr Halsall	Cr Carlson	
	Cr Stevens	
	Cr Binks	
25/26-52		LOST

13 Notice of Rescission

Nil

14 Confidential Business

Nil

15 Urgent Business

Nil

16 Next Meeting

The next monthly meeting of the Strathbogie Shire Council is to be held on 17 March 2026 at Euroa Community Conference Centre commencing at 4:00pm.

17 Close of Meeting

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7:02 pm.

.....

Chair Date