



Ararat Rural City

AGENDA

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 25 June 2024

To be held in the Council Chambers, Shire Offices
(Livestreamed)

Commencing at 6.00pm

Council:

Cr Bob Sanders (Mayor)

Cr Gwenda Allgood

Cr Jo Armstrong

Cr Rob Armstrong

Cr Peter Beales

Cr Henry Burridge

Cr Bill Waterston



Ararat Rural City

A recording of this meeting is being made for the purpose of verifying the accuracy of the minutes of the Council Meeting.

The recording is being streamed live via Facebook, to improve transparency between council and the community and give more people the opportunity to view what decisions are being made. You do not require a Facebook account to watch the live broadcast, simply enter www.facebook.com/araratruralcitycouncil into your address bar.

Recordings of Council Meetings (excluding closed sessions) are made available on Council's website.

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SECTION 1 – PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1 LIVE STREAMING

Council is keen to engage with members of the community and live streams the formal Council Meetings to make them accessible. The stream is available to view on Council’s Facebook page from 6pm and on Council’s website following the Council Meeting.

1.2 TRADITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT/OPENING PRAYER/COUNCILLORS PLEDGE

Traditional acknowledgement

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, and pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.

Opening Prayer

Almighty God, we humbly ask you to help us, as elected Councillors of the Ararat Rural City Council. Guide our deliberations. Prosper what is your will for us, to your honour and glory and for the welfare and benefit of the people whom we serve in the Ararat Rural City.

Councillors Pledge

We will faithfully and impartially carry out and exercise the functions, powers, authorities and discretions invested in us under the *Local Government Act 2020* and any other Act to the best of our skill and judgement.

1.3 APOLOGIES

RECOMMENDATION

That the apology of Cr Beales be accepted.

1.4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 28 May 2024 be confirmed.

1.5 DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A Councillor who has a conflict of interest in a matter being considered at a *Council meeting* at which he or she:

- 1 is present must disclose that conflict of interest by explaining the nature of the conflict of interest to those present at the *Council meeting* immediately before the matter is considered; or
- 2 intends to be present must disclose that conflict of interest by providing to the *Chief Executive Officer* before the *Council meeting* commences a written notice:
 - (a) advising of the conflict of interest;
 - (b) explaining the nature of the conflict of interest; and
 - (c) detailing, if the nature of the conflict of interest involves a Councillor's relationship with or a gift from another person, the:
 - name of the other person;
 - nature of the relationship with that other person or the date of receipt, value and type of gift received from the other person; and
 - nature of that other person's interest in the matter,

and then immediately before the matter is considered at the meeting announcing to those present that he or she has a conflict of interest and that a written notice has been given to the *Chief Executive Officer* under this sub-Rule.

The Councillor must, in either event, leave the *Council meeting* immediately after giving the explanation or making the announcement (as the case may be) and not return to the meeting until after the matter has been disposed of.

SECTION 2 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

2.1 PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

- 1 Unless *Council* determines to consider it as an item of urgent business, no motion (other than a motion to receive the same) may be made on any petition, joint letter, memorial or other like application until the next *Council meeting* after that at which it has been presented.
- 2 It is incumbent on every Councillor presenting a petition or joint letter to acquaint himself or herself with the contents of that petition or joint letter, and to ascertain that it does not contain language disrespectful to *Council*.
- 3 Every Councillor presenting a petition or joint letter to *Council* must:
 - write or otherwise record his or her name at the beginning of the petition or joint letter; and
 - confine himself or herself to a statement of the persons from whom it comes, the number of signatories to it, the material matters expressed in it and the text of the prayer or request.
- 4 Every petition or joint letter presented to *Council* must be in *writing* (other than pencil), typing or printing, contain the request of the petitioners or signatories and be signed by at least 12 people.
- 5 Every petition or joint letter must be signed by the persons whose names are appended to it by their names or marks, and, except in cases of incapacity or sickness, by no one else and the address of every petitioner or signatory must be clearly stated.
- 6 Any signature appearing on a page which does not bear the text of the whole of the petition or request may not be considered by *Council*.
- 7 Every page of a petition or joint letter must be a single page of paper and not be posted, stapled, pinned or otherwise affixed or attached to any piece of paper other than another page of the petition or joint letter.
- 8 If a petition, joint letter, memorial or other like application relates to an operational matter, *Council* must refer it to the *Chief Executive Officer* for consideration.

SECTION 3 – REPORTS REQUIRING COUNCIL DECISION

3.1 YEAR 2024 GENERAL VALUATION

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 15817

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 27 May 2024 Council received notification from the Valuer-General, certifying the 2024 General Valuation to be generally true and correct.

The Valuer-General has reported to the Minister for Planning that the 2024 General Valuation is generally true and correct with respect to each of the bases of value.

Once the Minister has made his declaration that the valuation is suitable to be adopted and used Council can raise rates for the 2024/25 financial year.

DISCUSSION

The Valuer-General Victoria is the valuation authority responsible for revaluing all properties in the municipality each year.

The Valuer-General Victoria appointed Wigg and Partners as the valuer. Mr Peter Wigg has delivered valuations for rateable and non-rateable leviable properties to Council. The non-rateable leviable valuations are returned to enable Council to calculate the Fire Services Levy for these properties. The Valuer-General has audited the valuations to ensure they are generally true and correct. The Minister for Planning will make a declaration under the provisions of the Valuation of Land Act 1960 that allows the returned valuations to be used to raise rates for 2024/25.

	2024 Rateable Valuations	2024 Non Rateable Leviable Valuations	Total
Site Value	\$5,350,309,500	\$59,272,500	\$5,409,582,000
Capital Improved Value	\$6,697,928,000	\$473,860,500	\$7,171,788,500
Net Annual Value	\$339,708,000	\$35,457,375	\$375,165,375

The following table illustrates the change in Capital Improved Valuations (CIV) between each category of property as a result of the revaluation. The categories included in this table are based on Valuation Best Practice Guidelines which are not consistent with the classifications used for rating purposes. For example, the rural category includes urban farm land that may not necessarily be defined as farmland for rating purposes. There are several properties that are rated at the general rate but are classed as rural for the fire services levy.

Category	2024 CIV\$	2023 CIV\$	% Change
Residential	\$1,805,175,000	\$1,773,948,000	1.76%
Commercial	\$171,812,500	\$165,305,500	3.94%
Industrial	\$60,840,500	\$71,894,500	-15.38%
Rural (including Urban Farm Land)	\$4,660,100,000	\$4,742,680,000	-1.74%
Non Rateable Leviable (including Wind Farms)	\$473,860,500	\$99,425,500	376.60%
Totals	\$7,171,788,500	\$6,853,253,500	4.65%

Please note, the wind farm properties have been reclassified from industrial to non rateable leviable resulting in a decrease in the percentage change for industrial properties and a significant increase in the percentage change for non rateable leviable properties

Residential properties

In comparison to 2023 valuations, residential property valuations have increased by 1.76%.

Commercial and Industrial properties

In comparison to 2023 valuations, commercial property valuations have increased by 3.94%.

Industrial property valuations have decreased by 15.38% due to wind farm properties being reclassified as Non rateable leviable properties. Removing the effect of this movement, Industrial property valuations have increased by approximately 5% compared to 2023 valuations.

Rural properties

In comparison to 2023 valuations, rural valuations have decreased by 1.74%.

Non rateable leviable properties

In comparison to 2023 valuations, non-rateable leviable property valuations have increased by 376.60%. Wind farm properties have significantly increased in Capital Improved Value as a result of the 2024 Revaluation.

Whilst these properties are non-rateable for municipal rates, they are charged the *Fire Services Levy*. Land in this category includes properties such as Council owned properties and churches.

The table below outlines the movement in valuations over previous years:

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Residential	1.76%	12.18%	33.85%	14.73%	3.07%	4.32%	3.45%
Commercial	3.94%	12.65%	8.97%	1.17%	0.29%	1.43%	8.69%
Industrial	-15.38%	12.69%	-88.83%	0.36%	3.83%	0.09%	0.75%
Rural	-1.74%	7.33%	50.23%	39.00%	21.79%	2.72%	24.48%
Non Rateable	376.60%	8.50%	0.18%	5.67%	37.49%	3.06%	1.15%

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

6.1 Deliver responsible budget outcomes, linked to strategy, that deliver value, innovation and rating fairness

Budget Implications

The Valuer-General Victoria is now responsible for the cost of the annual general revaluation. Council is required to pay for the costs of supplementary valuations during the year and these costs are included in the budget each year.

Policy/Relevant Law

The Valuer-General Victoria is required to revalue all properties in accordance with the Valuation of Land Act 1960

Sustainability Implications

The report does not raise any sustainability implications.

Risk Assessment

Low

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Revaluing properties every year allows current land values to be used for Council Rating purposes and Land Tax purposes.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The valuation process is undertaken by the Valuer-General Victoria and widely promoted to ratepayers across various websites including the Department of Transport and Planning, State Revenue Office and the Council's.

RECOMMENDATION

That

Subject to Ministerial approval, Council adopts the General Valuation for 2024 conducted by Mr Peter Wigg for:

1. Total Site Value of \$5,409,582,000 (rateable Site Value of \$5,350,309,500 and non-rateable leviable Site Value of \$59,272,500);
2. Total Capital Improved Value of \$7,171,788,500 (rateable Capital Improved Value of \$6,697,928,000 and non-rateable leviable Capital Improved Value of \$473,860,500); and
3. Total Net Annual Value of \$375,165,375 (rateable Net Annual Value of \$339,708,000 and non-rateable leviable Net Annual Value of \$35,457,375)

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments relating to this item

3.2 ARARAT RURAL CITY COUNCIL DRAFT BUDGET 2024/2025

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 15818

OFFICER'S DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with Section 94 of the Local Government Act 2020, Council is required to prepare a budget for each financial year and the subsequent 3 financial years by 30 June each year, or any other date fixed by the Minister by notice published in the Government Gazette.

Section 96 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires Council to develop the budget in accordance with the financial management principles and its community engagement policy.

DISCUSSION

Council's 2024/2025 budget represents a continuation of Council's financially responsible approach that has been in place taken over the past six budget cycles. The headlines of the 2024/2025 Budget continue to be returning an efficiency dividend to the community through a net zero percent rate rise and an ongoing commitment to renewing the community's assets through a \$15,513,000 investment in capital works.

Council will continue to return a dividend to the community for increased organisational efficiency through a zero percent rate rise in 2024/2025. This yields an average zero percent rate rise over the seven-year period up to and including 2024/2025.

Key Budget Influences include:

- a. Ararat Rural City Council's 2024/2025 Budget has a zero percent rate rise that will maintain a zero percent rate increase for a seven-year average.

In contrast, had Council increased rates to the amount allowable under the State Government's Fair Go Rates System, over the seven-year period up to 2024/2025 this would have increased the total burden to ratepayers by 16.25%, during the same seven-year period Council has delivered a net zero percent rate rise.

- b. In July 2022, Council adopted key drivers of financial sustainability, which form the basis for developing the 2024/2025 Budget. These drivers of financial sustainability are provided below:

Rating

Maintenance of the "pie model" to provide some form of long-term rating equity and reduce rate shock across rating sectors based on annual valuation fluctuations.

Debt

Debt is only used to fund strategic infrastructure outcomes with an emphasis on intergenerational equity.

Asset Preservation

Maintain the asset renewal and upgrade ratio to at least 110% of depreciation.

Surplus Budgets

Maintain cash and operating surpluses in each financial year.

Managing Expenditure

Managing expenditure is a key driver of financial sustainability at Ararat Rural City Council.

Rate Rises

Rate rises will be kept to a minimum based on seeking organisational efficiency. These efficiencies will be returned to the ratepayer as a dividend through lower rate rises or rate cuts.

Service Standards

Expenditure savings and ratepayer dividends will not come at the price of lower service standards.

Key elements of Council's 2024/2025 Budget are:

- \$6,250,000 investment in reconstructing at least six kilometres of Mt William Road – a local road of regional significance to agriculture and tourism.
- \$100,000 commitment to delivery of young people's programs across primary and secondary schools, largely through the Crazy Ideas College.
- \$500,000 contribution to an ongoing partnership commitment to Ararat Housing Enterprise P/L.
- \$230,000 contribution to community infrastructure projects.
- \$200,000 to modernise and upgrade the Ararat Library.
- \$400,000 to upgrade footpath network
- \$100,000 to support a resident attraction program to support development of an increasingly skilled workforce for the municipality.
- \$2,143,000 to reconstruct an initial two-kilometre section of Buangor – Ben Nevis Road commencing at the Western Highway.
- \$100,000 to support the successful, ongoing business façade program.
- \$1,461,000 to reconstruct sections of Webb Street and Churchill Avenue in Ararat.
- \$80,000 Council contribution to a \$330,000 project to redevelop the Tatyoon sports oval. \$250,000 is provided through the Country Football and Netball funding stream.
- \$1,800,000 renewing rural gravel roads through resheeting or sealing treatments such as OTTA Seal.
- \$750,000 to fund Year Three of Council's five-year commitment to improve urban drainage systems.
- \$239,000 to renew kerb and channel assets.
- Ongoing commitment to developing key skills areas in the municipality through graduate and cadet appointments and development of a trades apprenticeship program in 2024/2025.
- Continuing to fund free access to Outdoor Pools.

Revenue

Council's first considerations in framing the 2024/2025 Budget are on the revenue side. Key considerations are:

- returning efficiency dividends to the community through a zero percent rate rise
- ensuring a commitment to maintaining relativities in rating burden by each identified rating sector
- attempting to ease the impact of rates rises on individual ratepayers
- avoiding where possible "rate shock" experiences of large and unexpected rate increases.

It is proposed that the best mechanism for ensuring this is to propose a rating approach in 2024/2025 that, as far as possible, provides similar revenue outcomes across each sector as 2023/2024. Council believes that the approach taken is perfectly consistent with Section 101 (1) (c) where *"the financial policies and strategic plans, including the Revenue and Rating Plan, must seek to provide stability and predictability in the financial impact on the municipal community"*.

In the 2024 valuation there have again been some shifts in valuations across the classes of properties, although these have not been as significant as 2021/2022 and 2022/2023. The 2024 valuation has again yielded some asymmetry in valuations compared to the previous year. The table below demonstrates the nature of this uneven distribution of revaluations between 2023 and 2024:

Rates Sector	Total 2023 CIV	Total 2024 CIV	Increase/Decrease in CIV - 2023 to 2024	Average % change in CIV
General	\$2,024,772,000	\$2,025,125,000	\$353,000	0.02%
Commercial	\$147,712,500	\$153,962,000	\$6,249,500	4.23%
Industrial	\$47,625,500	\$49,899,000	\$2,273,500	4.77%
Farm	\$4,536,156,000	\$4,468,650,500	-\$67,505,500	-1.49%
Total	\$6,756,266,000	\$6,697,636,500	-\$58,629,500	-0.87%

If the current 0.38 farm differential rate and 1.44 commercial/ industrial differential rates are maintained there will be a change in relativities in rates burden between farm, commercial/industrial and general rates between 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 (assuming a 0.0% rate cap increase), as shown in the table below.

Rates Sector	Rating Differential	2023/2024	2024/2025
General	1.00	51.6%	51.7%
Commercial	1.44	5.3%	5.5%
Industrial	1.44	1.7%	1.8%
Farm	0.38	41.4%	41.0%

The mechanism for maintaining relativities in rate burden between rating sectors, created through asymmetries in valuation movement is through alteration of rating differentials. The table below demonstrates the impact of a movement in farm rate differential from 0.38 to 0.385 on adjusting the relative rate burden.

Rates Sector	Rating Differential 2023/2024	2023/2024 Rates Burden	Rating Differential 2024/2025	2024/2025 Rates Burden
General	1.00	51.3%	1.00	51.6%
Commercial	1.44	5.3%	1.40	5.3%
Industrial	1.44	1.7%	1.40	1.7%
Farm	0.38	41.7%	0.385	41.4%

Council is proposing a change in the farm rate differential from 0.38 to 0.385 in order to ensure relative burden between rating sectors is maintained from 2023/2024 to 2024/2025.

A zero percent rate increase in 2024/2025

Council has budgeted for a zero percent increase to rates in 2024/2025 in order to ensure that the community receives a dividend for improved organisational efficiency and cost savings

Expenditure

The key driver of the 2024/2025 Draft Budget expenditure is to continue to deliver long-term, sustainable value to the Ararat Rural City community. This will be achieved by focussing on the following key areas:

- strategic renewal of Council's key assets
- driving organisational effectiveness through managing performance and efficiency
- implementing a digital transformation program
- implementation of key projects contained in Council's adopted advocacy program
- ongoing commitment to service review

The proposed Ararat Rural City Council Budget 2024/2025 document outlines the key expenditure areas, which are informed by Council's operational activity, key projects and the Council Plan 2021-2025.

Other considerations

The waste management kerbside collection charges for residential properties will not be increased.

The Municipal Charge will be fixed at \$96 for 2024/2025.

The budgeted operating result for 2024/2025 is a surplus of \$8.163 million, compared to a budgeted result of \$1.296 million surplus in 2023/2024.

The budgeted cash flow statement indicates an increase in cash & cash equivalents of \$2.063 million.

The following written submissions were made to Council's Budget 2024/2025.

Feedback	Notes
<p>This a submission on behalf of Ararat Landcare Group, as a result of discussion at their meeting of 10/6/24. Regarding Strategic Objective Three- 2.3.1 Services- Ararat Landcare Group would like to see a specific budget line to cover the costs associated with the planting of 200 street trees per annum. This initiative is supported by the recent study and recommendations of the Urban Trees booklet, which was supported by Council and ALG, and Council's Environmental Strategy.</p>	<p>Council has existing operational plans to replace inappropriate or damaged street tree stock with plantings recommended in the Urban Trees booklet. This will involve in excess of 200 trees in 2024/2025. This program will replace trees that cause damage to overhead power or underground water and drainage infrastructure.</p>
<p>I would like to suggest some improvements to our Barkly St Street scape and approaches into Ararat. As someone who has travelled Victoria, NSW, and SA extensively and observed how inviting their approaches and main streets are, I think we could do much better. A lot of the towns I am thinking of would have a much smaller budget than ours but are still able to beautify these area better than we do. For example, the garden beds around the post office and Westpac leave a lot to be desired, along with other areas within Barkly St. I know pedestrians take shortcuts and walk all over these areas, but in other towns they use low barricades or rocks to prevent this. Our grapevines are an asset, however I think more trees and more colourful plants, for example Nandinas need to be added rather than just grasses. There was no mention in the budget to improve these areas, which disappoints myself and many others who I know think the same. It appears little has been spent here for a long, long time. I believe this would encourage visitors to spend more time here if this was improved, and as ratepayers I believe we deserve better. As we are the Gateway to the Grampians let's beautify our entrances to our city and our main street.</p>	<p>Some operational works can be undertaken to improve Council assets such as garden beds in the areas identified. Larger scale development work of town entrances and Barkly Street will require extensive community consultation ahead of grant applications to state and federal governments to fund majors works. This work can be managed in house through our communication and engagement team and grants officer. Rather than being considered as a budget amendment this can be subject to consideration at the August 2024 Council meeting as an ongoing project if Council desires this outcome.</p>

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

- 6 Strong and Effective Governance
- 6.1 Deliver responsible budget outcomes, linked to strategy, that deliver value, innovation and rating fairness

Budget Implications

The Draft Budget has been prepared within the following parameters:

- The Draft Budget proposes the following differential rates - general rate – 100%, commercial and industrial rate – 140% of the general rate and farm rate – 38.5% of the general rate
- A 0% increase in the total amount received from general rates and charges;
- No increase in the Municipal Charge which will remain at \$96 per rateable property in 2024/2025;
- A balanced budget in terms of a cash result and an operating surplus of \$8.163 million in terms of an accrual accounting result;
- A net increase in cash and cash equivalents of \$2.063 million;
- A capital works program of \$15.513 million;
- No new loan borrowings; and
- Capital budgets have been prepared in accordance with good asset management principles.

More detailed information is contained in the Budget document.

Policy/Relevant Law

Council is required under Section 94 of the Local Government Act 2020 to prepare a budget for each financial year. The budget contains the Financial Statements, a description of services and initiatives to be funded in the budget, service outcome indicators, and major initiatives to be undertaken during the financial year and the performance measures in relation to each major initiative.

Sustainability Implications

In developing the Draft Budget 2024/2025 all environmental, social and economic impacts have been considered.

Risk Assessment

Council must implement the principles of sound financial management, which includes managing financial risks faced by Council and ensuring that decisions are made and actions taken having regard to their financial effects on future generations. The reduction in rates and charges are not considered to affect Council's long term financial sustainability.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The Draft Budget has been prepared over a considerable period of time, with significant input from Council officers and Councillors. The Draft Budget allows Council to consider all forms of revenue that are required to fund Council services.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Councillors and the Chief Executive Officer have discussed the Draft Budget 2024/2025 at briefings held on 9 April, 14 May and 18 June 2024.

Consultation on the Draft Budget 2024/2025 was carried out over a 4-week period, which included:

- Engage Ararat website – Council sought community feedback through this platform; and
- Community information sessions held in Tatyoon, Moyston, Elmhurst, Ararat, Willaura, Pomonal and Lake Bolac between 27 May 2024 and 29 May 2024
- Drop-in sessions on 30 May 2024 at the Council offices

RECOMMENDATION

That Council, having considered the draft Budget 2024/2025 and having distributed the budget for community consultation, resolves as follows:

- 1 To adopt the Budget 2024/2025, comprising the 2024/2025 financial year plus the subsequent three financial years 2025/2026 to 2027/2028, pursuant to Section 94 of the Local Government Act 2020
- 2 To declares Rates and Charges for the 2024/2025 financial year as follows
 - a. An amount of \$17,197,816 be declared as the amount which Council intends to raise by General Rates, Municipal Charge and Annual Service Charges which amount is calculated as follows:

	Amount
General Rates	
Residential	\$7,102,113
Commercial	\$755,953
Industrial	\$245,004
Farm	\$6,032,678
Municipal Charge	\$638,976
Annual Service Charges	
Kerbside Collection Charges	\$2,423,092
TOTAL	\$17,197,816

- b. A general residential rate of 0.3507 cents in the dollar of the Capital Improved Value be declared for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
- c. A commercial/industrial differential rate of 0.4910 cents in the dollar of the Capital Improved Value be declared for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
- d. A farm differential rate of 0.1350 cents in the dollar of the Capital Improved Value be declared for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
- e. Council resolves to adopt a municipal charge of \$96 per rateable assessment for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
- f. Annual Service Charge be declared for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 on properties where the service is provided, as follows:
 - i. Kerbside collection – 4 bin system \$462
 - ii. Kerbside collection – 3 bin system \$410
 - iii. Kerbside collection – additional 140 litre garbage \$162
 - iv. Kerbside collection – additional 240 litre recycling \$139
 - v. Kerbside collection – additional 240 litre organics \$139
 - vi. Kerbside collection – additional 80 litre glass \$22
- 3 To declare the Fees and Charges for the 2024/2025 financial year, contained in Section 6- Schedule of Fees and Charges of the Budget document.

ATTACHMENTS

The Draft Budget 2024/2025 is included as Attachment 3.2

3.3 NORFOLK ISLAND PINE TREES ON BARKLY STREET, ARARAT

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 15819

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the Council resolution at the February 2024 Council Meeting, community consultation has been undertaken through the Engage Ararat platform regarding the Norfolk Island pine trees along Barkly Street, Ararat. The feedback overwhelmingly endorses the removal of the current trees, along with a few suggestions on replacement species selection.

Council have previously worked with the Ararat Landcare Group to identify a list of suitable species for planting throughout urban Ararat. The species included in the Ararat Landcare Group Urban Trees booklet are indigenous, climate appropriate and will not impact utilities. Replacements for the Norfolk Island pines, where appropriate for the urban landscape, are proposed to be drawn from this booklet.

This report seeks Council's endorsement to remove the Norfolk Island pine trees on Barkly Street to enable the process of re-landscaping to commence.

DISCUSSION

The table below contains the feedback received from the community in relation to the Norfolk Island pine trees on Barkly Street, Ararat. Information that relates to potentially personal information as been removed.

Submissions Received (edited to remove personal information)
The Norfolk Island pine trees look dead and don't provide a welcoming aspect to the town. They need to be replaced by native trees adapted to the new climate ie climate change.
Perhaps it's time to get rid of these trees as they are dangerously and often drop large limbs. Also get rid of the trees in Barkly Street West as they drop large and unsightly leaves. Replace all these trees with something safer and more practical.
There are replacement trees already growing on the nature strips. Remove the Norfolk pines and let the other trees thrive.
I have only lived to the region as of last year. In my honest opinion Ararat isn't the most aesthetic town. The grape vines and fairy lights are the saving grace. It's a big suggestion but what about installing a median strip along Barkly Street? With the possibility of High and Moore streets also. This could be lined with trees which provide autumn colour and provide shade in the summer. Suggestions such as pin oak, sawtooth oak, red maple, alder, liquidambar. As long as the plantings are consistent it should look very colourful.
Due to the condition of the Norfolk Pines they need to be replaced with an attractive deciduous tree. If it is possible a Norfolk Pine seedling could be planted at the gardens with a plaque to show where they once were and why the shift.

<p>The council need to engage someone with the knowledge of what would look the best, what would be most suitable for the area, and not just rely on locals who may not have the expertise as the professionals, would be money well spent in the long run.</p>
<p>This a submission on behalf of Ararat Landcare Group, as a result of discussion at their meeting of 10/6/24. Regarding Strategic Objective Three- 2.3.1 Services- Ararat Landcare Group would like to see a specific budget line to cover the costs associated with the planting of 200 street trees per annum. This initiative is supported by the recent study and recommendations of the Urban Trees booklet, which was supported by Council and ALG, and Council's Environmental Strategy.</p>
<p>The Norfolk Island Pine in front of our house has been dead a considerable time. We have alerted council officers of this. There have been a number of inspections and numbers left on the trees meaning what we are not sure. It is our opinion that the tree in front of our house needs removing as do a number of others. It offers a risk with fallen limbs. The trees are not suitable for Ararat with the changing climate. It will be an expensive exercise but needs to be done. There are more suitable trees already planted in Barkly Street nature strip. More may be required.</p>
<p>These trees provide home to many magpies (a family which have lived in them for 15+ years), crows, cockatoos, black birds and starlings just to name a few. Removal would no doubt upset the life span of these birds that rely on them for living. Would new trees be planted in their place to accommodate this? (Instead focus on doing something about the crime rate and youth gangs that are forming in town causing chaos)</p>
<p>Maybe dig back all the asphalt, mulch and give them a really good drink with some seaweed solution! Easy</p>
<p>Unfortunately I think they are beyond saving and now need to be replaced with a more appropriate indigenous option to the area that is suitable to the local climate.</p>
<p>Perhaps the Norfolk Island Pines were not the best choice in the first place and it certainly seems time to choose a new species. Many of the Oaks around Ararat are doing well and certainly there are many Quercus species which are drought and heat tolerant. Above all there just needs to be lots of trees planted. There are some streets which look not only beautiful (like the lower end of Barkly with its overarching Elms) but benefit from the heat reduction that trees bring. There are however, many streets which are underplanted. Fast growing, heat resistant trees of varied species is what is needed - the bigger the better. it is a race against climate change. The council needs to be prepared to water the trees -heat resistance is more important then drought resistance. Eucalypts which close their stomata early do not do a great job of cooling. I would recommend Quercus palustris, Koelruteria, Ginkgo, Lagerstroemia, Fraxinus, Gleditsia, Pyrus ussuriensis, Pistacia chinensis and Ulmus parvifolium.</p>
<p>Ararat is a beautiful town and could be more beautiful still plus be a shelter for our future summers if many more trees could be planted.</p>

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

4.3 Deliver infrastructure outcomes that support economic growth, promote community wellbeing and safety, and align with Council's financial sustainability.

Budget Implications

The removal of the Norfolk Island pine trees is expected to have a minimal impact on the overall Council Budget, and will eliminate the public safety risks associated with trees that are already deceased or in poor condition.

Policy/Relevant Law

The Road Authority for Barkly Street, Ararat, where the Norfolk Island pine trees are located is VicRoads.

The Council's Tree Asset Management Plan excludes roadside trees pursuant to Section 107 of the Road Management Act 2004, which states that Council does not have a statutory duty or a common law duty to perform road management functions in respect of a public highway which is not a public road or to maintain, inspect or repair the roadside of any public highway (whether or not a public road).

Sustainability Implications

The potential replacement tree species will be better adapted to the local climate and deliver improved environmental sustainability outcomes for the community.

Risk Assessment

The removal of the existing trees will support a reduction in risk from falling branches and other potential hazards associated with trees in poor or very poor condition. The replacement of trees that are better suited to urban Ararat will reduce future risks and provide environmental and amenity benefits.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The process of consultation with the community has seen an increase in engagement with the Engage Ararat website. This will contribute towards continued innovation and improvement of the Council's community consultation and engagement processes into the future.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Community and stakeholder consultation and engagement has occurred following the Council resolution at the February 2024 Council Meeting. Notification of this engagement was shared via social media, media release, and the Council's Focus Page in the local newspapers. Feedback was collected via the Council's Engage Ararat platform, which provided a simple and easy to use form for respondents to have their say.

Twelve submissions were received between 24 May and 14 June 2024. It is noted that this topic has received the highest volume of responses to an issue on Engage Ararat thus far. It is hoped that this represents an overall greater use of the platform by the community.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Council endorse the removal the Norfolk Island pine trees on Barkly Street; and
2. Replacement trees, where appropriate, will be sourced from the Ararat Landcare Group's Urban Trees booklet.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments in relation to this item

3.4 DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 2024-2035

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 15820

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council's most recent Environmental Sustainability Strategy became outdated as of 2020. An updated Environmental Sustainability Strategy is proposed to provide a clear direction for the sustainable development and environmental management of the Ararat municipality. This report presents the new draft 10-year strategy for acceptance by Council prior to release for community consultation.

DISCUSSION

The environment of the Ararat Rural City is vast and diverse, encompassing the agricultural land which is a pillar of the local character and economy, the parks and gardens that provide space for recreation and connection, and the natural reserves and corridors which home many iconic and threatened species and ecological communities.

Council has undertaken significant work in recent years towards environmental sustainability:

- Increasing local renewable energy production through the development of the biofuel plant.
- Updating data on threatened species and communities and revising protection measures in the planning scheme.
- Reducing waste and improving local recycling and reuse through the implementation of the 4-bin system, and local green waste and glass recycling facilities.

However, a comprehensive and unified strategy is required to ensure that environmental actions are informed by the most up-to-date scientific information available, are consistent across all facets of Council functioning, and progress towards objectives and targets that reflect local, state, and national targets. The proposed strategy details:

- Council's objectives for the municipality's environment and natural resources.
- The risks posed to the municipality from environmental threats (such as climate change, land-use practices, and pollution) and how Council seeks to mitigate them.
- Council's capacity and role in meeting these objectives, and how they are prioritised.

The proposed strategy contains ten objectives, pertaining to three key themes of environmental sustainability:

Theme 1: Climate change

- 1.1 We will contribute to climate change mitigation.
- 1.2 We are prepared for the impacts of climate change.
- 1.3 Council infrastructure, businesses and the community are adaptive and resilient to a changing climate.

Theme 2: Natural Landscapes and Biodiversity

- 2.1. The environment is well monitored and understood, and conditions are maintained above legislatively required standards.
- 2.2. Threats to our environment are identified and controlled.
- 2.3. Native species, populations, and communities are enhanced.

Theme 3: Sustainable living

- 3.1. The municipality is energy efficient, supported largely by renewable sources.

- 3.2. Water is used and reused effectively.
- 3.3. Waste generation is avoided. Reusable, recyclable and compostable products are diverted from landfill.
- 3.4. Our waste and energy needs are managed locally.

The proposed strategy will be supported by measures of success to ensure continual alignment and progress towards these objectives.

In addition to providing greater clarity and consistency within Council's internal functioning, the proposed Environmental Sustainability Strategy will also communicate Ararat Rural City's priorities for future State and Federal funding across the municipality.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

This strategy directly addresses the Council Plan 2021-2025 objective to:

3. Preserving our natural environment:

We will take pragmatic approaches to ensuring that Ararat Rural City Council takes a regional lead in responsible environmental management and engagement with the circular economy.

- 3.3** Partner with local organisations and scientific experts to develop an appropriate and pragmatic local government Environment Strategy, focussed on the circular economy, emission reduction through renewable energy and management of Council assets.

This strategy also assists in addressing the other objectives of theme 3:

- 3.1** Position Ararat Rural City Council as a prime mover in driving circular economy policy in waste management, including local processing and management of recyclables, and in use of renewable energy for Council purposes.
- 3.2** Develop innovative energy solutions utilising locally produced waste.

Budget Implications

Implementation of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2024-2034 will be incorporated into the Council's annual budget development and forecasting processes to ensure the measures of success are achieved whilst ensuring Council's financial position.

Policy/Relevant Law

The development of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2024-2034 aligns with the Local Government Act 2020, section 9 (2) (c), which states "the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted".

The proposed strategy aligns with several internal documents which are currently adopted, as well as State and Federal environmental legislation. Key examples include:

Internal policies:

- Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025: Develop environmentally positive health and wellbeing initiatives.
- Waste and Resource Recovery Plan 2021-2025: Reduce community waste production and increase in waste diverted from landfill.
- Ararat Residential Land Use Strategy 2005-2035: Ecologically sustainable design is a base position, and housing will be integrated consistently with the protection of the environment.
- Ararat Sustainable Growth Future Strategy 2014: Protect and enhance environmental and landscape values.

State:

- Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988
- Local Government Act 1989 & 2020
- Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994

- Climate Change Act 2017
- Environmental Protection Act 2017
- Planning and Environment Act 2018
- Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021
- Victorian Planning Provisions

Federal:

- Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999
- Renewable Energy (Electricity) Act 2000
- Recycling and Waste Reduction Act 2020
- Nature Repair Act 2023

Sustainability Implications

As detailed above, the proposed strategy will guide positive environmental, economic, and social sustainability impacts across the municipality.

Risk Assessment

The strategy seeks to mitigate risks incurred through inconsistent approaches to sustainability across all areas of Council, and the risk of environmental harm caused by Council activities.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

In implementing the proposed strategy and monitoring the measures of success, Council will better align with best-practice recommendations for environmental sustainability and ensure greater accountability to the community. The measures of success will also ensure actions and targets are continually reviewed and aligned with scientific consensus, the needs and values of the community, and state and national targets.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The Environmental Working Group, comprised of representatives from local Landcare, scientific experts, and land developers, was engaged with at with at all stages of this strategy's development. The composition of the Environmental Working Group was as follows:

- Ararat Rural City Council Chief Executive Officer, or Nominee (Chair)
- Dr Anthea Nicholls
- Dr Ayesha Burdett
- Marion Da Costa
- Russell Pearse
- Martin Purcell
- Janene Trickey, Regional Manager Community and Partnerships Programs, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
- Prof Peter Gell, Professor of Environmental Management, Federation University
- Lauren Jakob, Ecology PhD Candidate, Federation University

Upon acceptance of this draft strategy, both will be made available for broader community comment using the Engage Ararat Portal.

RECOMMENDATION

That

1. Council accepts the draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2024-2034 and releases these for consultation purposes and review the feedback at the September 2024 Council meeting.

ATTACHMENTS

The Draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2024-2034 is provided as Attachment 3.4

3.5 PUBLIC TRANSPARENCY POLICY

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: GOVERNANCE AND RISK LEAD
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 15822

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Local Government Act 2020 Act requires all Councils in Victoria to adopt and maintain documents to give effect to good governance and transparency principles.

In accordance with the *section 57 of the Local Government Act 2020* Council is required to adopt re periodically review the Public Transparency Policy.

DISCUSSION

The Public Transparency Policy formalises Council's commitment to open and transparent decision making. A Public Transparency Policy covers both documentary information, process information and how information will be made available to the public and is an integral part of Council's Governance Framework.

The Policy follows the public transparency principles of:

- (a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act;
- (b) Council information must be publicly available unless—
 - (i) the information is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act; or
 - (ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest;
- (c) Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community;
- (d) public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated.

The changes made were to section 5.1 to better define what "Information" represents and some minor administrative changes

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

6. Strong and Effective Governance

6.2 Ensure appropriate risk management is applied to Council and organisational decision. Council's internal function is applied to areas of perceived risk

Budget Implications

There are no budget implications in relation to the development of the Public Transparency Policy.

Policy/Relevant Law

Council must adopt and maintain a Public Transparency Policy under section 57 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act). This policy gives effect to the *Public Transparency Principles* outlined in section 58 of the Act

Sustainability Implications

Environmental, social and economic impacts have been considered in the development of the Public Transparency Policy.

Risk Assessment

The development of the Public Transparency Policy provides clarity and transparency for Councillors and delegated committee members.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The development of the Public Transparency Policy will ensure public transparency, good governance and community engagement is consistent.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

This policy was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee on the 4 June 2024 and the Councillor briefing held on 18 June 2024

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Adopt the Public Transparency Policy; and
2. Place the Public Transparency Policy on the Council website.

ATTACHMENTS

The Public Transparency Policy is provided as attachment 3.5

3.6 INTERNATIONAL AND INTERSTATE TRAVEL POLICY

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: GOVERNANCE AND RISK LEAD
DEPARTMENT: CEO's OFFICE
REFERENCE: 15823

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a direct or indirect interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council continues to work within legislative requirements which includes Council policies being updated as part of an ongoing policy review process. The International and Interstate Travel Policy have been reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee and are presented to Council for consideration.

DISCUSSION

Council policies are a major component of the governance framework which supports the Council to make good decisions and will create positive outcome and guides the organisation decision making process. The International and Interstate Travel Policy has been reviewed within the schedule timeframes.

Along with a general review of the content, the main changes/additions to the policies are as follows:

Rewording and new paragraph for inclusion of rental car agreement:

“In the event that a rental car is required, the most appropriate car is to be arranged bearing in mind cost and travel requirements. Any infringements incurred during the use of a rental car will be at the personal responsibility of the driver. The Councillor or employee is responsible for ensuring they hold the appropriate licenses to drive the vehicle in the location of hire and that they adhere to the local laws in relation to driving.”

This policy will be updated on the Council website following adoption.

All forms referenced in these policies will be updated to reflect any necessary changes.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

6. Strong and Effective Governance

6.2 Ensure appropriate risk management is applied to Council and organisational decision. Council's internal function is applied to areas of perceived risk.

Budget Implications

Councillors and employee conferences and travel expenses are allocated in the 2023/2024 budget.

Policy/Legal/Statutory

Section 10(g) of the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 outlines the Councillors expenses which should be included in the Annual Report.

R12(a) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2015 in relation to the keeping and maintaining of an Overseas and Interstate Travel Register.

Risk Assessment

Clarity and transparency of Council Policies.

Stakeholder Consultation and Communication

These policies were presented to the Audit and Risk Committee on the 4 June 2024 and the Councillor briefing held on 18 June 2024

RECOMMENDATION

That

Council adopt the International and Interstate Travel Policy.

ATTACHMENTS

The International and Interstate Travel Policy is provided as Attachment 3.6

3.7 COUNCIL EXPENSES AND SUPPORT POLICY

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: GOVERNANCE AND RISK LEAD
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 15824

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) requires all Councils in Victoria to adopt and maintain documents to give effect to good governance and transparency principles.

DISCUSSION

Section 41(1) of the Act – Council expenses policy, states that Council must adopt and maintain an expenses policy in relation to the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for Councillors and members of delegated committees.

The Councillor Expenses and Support Policy reflects the legislative requirements of *the Act*.

The Policy incorporates the following:

- 1 As per section 41(2) of *the Act* the policy includes;
 - (a) specific procedures to be followed in applying for reimbursement and in reimbursing expenses; and
 - (b) requirements prescribed by the regulations in relation to the reimbursement of expenses; and
 - (c) provides for the reimbursement of childcare costs where the provision of childcare is reasonably required for a Councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform their role; and
 - (d) have particular regard to expenses incurred by a Councillor who is a carer in a care relationship within the meaning of section 4 of the **Carers Recognition Act 2012**.
- 2 The policy applies to both Councillors and delegated committee members.
- 3 Quarterly reporting of Councillor expenses to Council's Audit and Risk Committee; and
- 4 Policy monitoring and review section, which will allow for periodic review as required.

A review of this policy has seen an addition of a paragraph outlining a set of principals: to commit to as well as some minor administrative changes.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

6. Strong and Effective Governance

6.2 Ensure appropriate risk management is applied to Council and organisational decision. Council's internal function is applied to areas of perceived risk

Budget Implications

Councillor expenses have been allocated in the Budget 2024/2025

Policy/Relevant Law

The *Local Government Act*, section 41 – Council expenses policy

Sections 40 and 41 of *the Act* outlines what out-of-pocket expenses may be claimed. The policy outlines the procedure to make these reimbursement claims.

The Policy also outlines the resources and facilities available for the Mayor and Councillors.

Sustainability Implications

Environmental, social and economic impacts have been considered in the development of the Council Expenses and Support Policy.

Risk Assessment

The development of the Policy provides clarity and transparency for Councillors and delegated committee members.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

None identified.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

These policies were presented to the Audit and Risk Committee on the 4 June 2024 and the Councillor briefing held on 18th June 2024

RECOMMENDATION

That

the Council Expenses and Support Policy be adopted.

ATTACHMENTS

The Council Expenses and Support Policy is provided as attachment 3.7

SECTION 4 – INFORMATION REPORTS

4.1 COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY 2024

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 15825

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council has received the results from the 2024 Annual Community Satisfaction Survey. The Survey provides insight on how the community views the performance of Council. Council's overall performance against small rural and state-wide averages has yet again demonstrated consistency across the board.

There are still opportunities for substantial service improvement in all areas of Council's operations that will again be a focus of activity in the next twelve months.

DISCUSSION

The Department of Government coordinates the survey, which this year has been conducted by the independent research group, JWS Research. The 2024 survey was conducted through interviews with 400 randomly selected households during the period of 29th January to 18th March 2024.

Of Victoria's 79 Councils, 62 have participated in the 2024 survey, providing data benchmarked against state-wide results and the 18 Councils within the small rural Council group.

The results of the 2024 Local Government Satisfaction Survey were provided on Thursday 6 June 2024. Overall, the results again show that Council is moving in the right direction in terms of meeting community expectations around performance. In terms of relativity with like Councils and the state average, Ararat Rural City is performing well.

As always it is important to understand that there is still plenty of room for improvement and we are still a long way in some cases from reaching excellence in service delivery. A private sector measure of excellence in service provision would be ranking of at least 85. It needs to be acknowledged that ranking of services in a public sector environment has a greater number of social and political complexities than the private sector.

The 2024 Survey yielded a number of Council service areas with satisfaction scores over 70. These were Customer Service (75), Arts Centres and Libraries (78), Emergency and Disaster Management (74), Waste Management (74), Recreational Facilities (73) and Appearance of Public Areas (72).

The table below shows the spread of services areas that had improved, the same of decreased levels of customer satisfaction from the 2023 Survey.











Changes in satisfaction ranking	Number
Improved on 2023 results	15
Stayed the same	2
Decreased on 2023 results	5

The table below demonstrates Council’s sustained performance against like Councils and the state average for 2023 and 2024.

ARCC performance	2024		2023	
	Small rural	State-wide	Small rural	State-wide
Better than	21	22	19	21
Same as	0	0	2	1
Worse than	1	0	2	1

In a number of cases, Ararat Rural City Council rankings were around ten points higher than state and small rural averages. Examples are Overall Council Directions, Emergency Management, Community Decisions, Lobbying, Sealed Local Roads and Unsealed Roads.

The tables below show results in key measured areas.

Services	Ararat 2024	Ararat 2023	Small Rural 2024	State-wide 2024
 Overall performance	65	63	53	54
 Value for money	53	55	47	48
 Overall council direction	55	60	44	45
 Customer service	75	72	66	67
 Art centres & libraries	78	75	73	73
 Emergency & disaster mngt	76	72	66	65
 Waste management	74	66	67	67
 Recreational facilities	73	71	67	68
 Appearance of public areas	72	70	71	68
 Elderly support services	68	66	65	63

Services	Ararat 2024	Ararat 2023	Small Rural 2024	State-wide 2024
 Community & cultural	67	65	69	66
 Bus/community dev./tourism	66	65	59	57
 Environmental sustainability	63	63	59	60
 Community decisions	61	60	50	50
 Informing the community	61	60	56	56
 Lobbying	60	61	50	50
 Consultation & engagement	59	60	51	51
 Local streets & footpaths	57	55	51	52
 Sealed local roads	54	51	41	45
 Planning & building permits	54	54	43	45
 Slashing & weed control	48	52	46	45
 Unsealed roads	45	42	35	36

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

This report links to the following Council Plan objectives:

6 Strong and Effective Governance

We will work hard to build models of governance that place delivering public value at the centre through effective financial management; well measured risk management; and implementation of effective community engagement practices.

- 6.3** Continuously improve Council's community engagement process and practices, while acknowledging the need for a range of different techniques to ensure effective engagement.

Budget Implications

No budget implications.

Policy/Relevant Law

The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework includes three measures taken directly from the Community Satisfaction Survey data.

Sustainability Implications

Nil.

Risk Assessment

Nil.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Careful analysis of the full 2024 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey Report will provide significant data to base further continuous improvement activity in each service area.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

This report is based on a survey of Ararat Rural City Council Residents seeking to measure their satisfaction with service delivery in several key service areas.

RECOMMENDATION

That

the Community Satisfaction Survey 2024 Report be received.

ATTACHMENTS

The Final Community Satisfaction Survey 2024 and Comparison Results chart is provided as 4.1

4.2 COMMUNITY ASSET COMMITTEES' HALF YEAR REPORT

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 15826

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Community Asset Committee (CAC) is a committee with powers of the Council, established and with members appointed by Council. Powers are delegated by the Chief Executive Officer, subject to the terms and conditions specified by the Chief Executive Officer, for the purpose of managing a community asset in the municipal district

Section 47(6) of the Local Government Act 2020 states that a Chief Executive Officer must submit an annual report to the Council in relation to the activities and performance of a Community Asset Committee in respect of which the members have been given a delegation under this section.

This report outlines the activities of the CACs in the last four months.

DISCUSSION

Chief Executive Officer Update

I have attended a variety of different meetings of Council's CACs over the past four months since the last report to Council. These include but are not limited to:

- Ordinary Committee and Annual General Meetings;
- Meetings to discuss the future of the Community Asset Committees and the way forward; and
- Discussion relating to the redevelopment or develop of current facilities.

The February bushfires in and around our towns of Pomonal, Buangor, Warrak, Mt Cole and Elmhurst highlighted the importance of community assets and good community relationships within our smaller communities.

In March the Pomonal and Elmhurst Halls were used for community meetings following the fires. The Buangor Community Sports Centre is currently being used as the "Buangor Basecamp" for Blazeaid.

The Pomonal Hall continues to be used as the Pomonal Community Relief Hub with Council and community groups working together to support residents through the recovery process.

I will continue to work with Committees to ensure that the standard of facilities are maintained for future generations. Council has a project management budget to upgrade these facilities as required.

Our CAC members perform a brilliant service to our communities. Their contribution to the health and wellbeing of communities is huge and without their passion, hard work and energy our community life would be greatly diminished. I enjoy working with our CACs and wish to express my admiration for their work.

I provide the following report in relation to the activities of CACs.

1 Community Asset Committee - Meetings Minutes

The following table outlines the recent meetings held by the Community Asset Committees.

Minutes provided show that the Committee members have been very busy over the past four months, with general maintenance requirements, event preparation and future planning for their facilities.

Community Asset Committee	Meetings held during the report period	Meetings scheduled advised
Alexandra Hall	15 February 2024, 23 May 2024 (minutes not supplied)	25 July 2024 (AGM & Ordinary).
Buangor Community Sports Centre	7 February 2024, 6 March 2024, 10 April 2024, 15 May 2024, 12 June 2024 (minutes not supplied)	Monthly meetings scheduled
Elmhurst Public Hall	No meetings held	14 August 2024, 13 November 2024 (AGM)
Lake Bolac Memorial Hall	No meetings held.	No meetings scheduled.
Maroona Recreation Reserve	No meetings held.	No meetings scheduled.
Mininera Recreation Reserve	7 March 2024 (ordinary & AGM)	No meetings scheduled.
Moyston Public Hall	20 February 2024, 14 May 2024	13 August 2024, 12 November 2024 (AGM)
Pomonal Hall and Recreation Reserve	1 May 2024, 4 June 2024 (minutes not supplied)	Monthly meetings scheduled.
Streatham Memorial Hall	No meetings held.	No meetings scheduled.
Tatyoorn Hall and Recreation Reserve	26 February 2024.	June 2024.
Warrak Public Hall	19 February 2024, 29 April 2024	24 June, August, November 2024
Wickliffe Recreation Reserve	11 April 2024 (AGM)(minutes not supplied)	No meetings scheduled.
Willaura Memorial Hall	29 February 2024, 4 April 2024, 6 June 2024 (minutes not supplied)	Bi-monthly meetings scheduled.
Willaura Recreation Reserve	26 March 2024, 17 April 2024, 21 May 2024	Monthly meetings scheduled.
Yalla-Y-Poora Community Centre	No meetings held.	No meetings scheduled.

A copy of minutes received of Community Asset Committees are included as an attachment to this report.

Governance

A review of the Community Asset Committee Governance Manual was conducted mid-way through 2022. This was completed and forwarded to all Community Asset Committees in August 2022 and includes all the information and forms to assist Committee members. Council officers will continue to work with Committee members to support them in their committee roles.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

The report supports the strategic objectives of the Council Plan 2021-2025:

4 Developing and Maintaining Key Enabling Infrastructure

4.2 Work directly with asset users to manage and develop new and existing assets.

5 Enhancing Community Life

We will work with the communities of Ararat Rural City to maintain social cohesion, support community activity and cultural life, and enhance safety.

5.2 Develop models of volunteering that recognise, support and properly utilise the skills that community volunteers bring to community life.

Budget Implications

All Community Asset Committee projects or maintenance funding are allocated in the current Council budget.

Community Asset Committees report on their finances at their meetings.

Policy/Relevant Law

The Local Government Act, section 47(6) states that a Chief Executive Officer must submit an annual report to the Council in relation to the activities and performance of a Community Asset Committee in respect of which the members have been given a delegation under this section.

Sustainability Implications

All economic, social and environmental implications were considered when writing this report.

Risk Assessment

Not reporting the Community Asset Committees activities and performance to Council would breach the legislative requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 in particular section 47(6).

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Council has been proactive in ensuring the Community Asset Committee halls and recreation reserves are identified for infrastructure improvements. This has included significant building and reserve surface works being carried out through tender processes.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The Chief Executive Officer has attended the majority of Community Asset Committees since the last report in January 2023.

The Community Asset Committees consist of Committee members who volunteer their time to manage the facilities on Council's behalf.

RECOMMENDATION

That

the Community Asset Committee Half Year Report be received

ATTACHMENTS

Community Asset Committee Meeting Minutes provided as Attachment 4.2

4.3 TRIALLING NEW ROAD SEALING ALTERNATIVES

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 15827

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ararat Rural City Council is dedicated to exploring innovative solutions to enhance our road network's longevity by trialling new sealing applications designed to extend the life of our roads. This initiative aligns with our broader commitment to optimising resources, ensuring the long-term sustainability of our infrastructure, and delivering the highest quality services to our community. By investing in these innovative techniques, we aim to reduce maintenance costs, improve road safety, and provide a more reliable and durable transportation network. Our ongoing efforts reflect our dedication to sustainable development and responsible resource management, ensuring that our infrastructure can meet current needs and future demands.

This report will provide an update on our use of OTTA seals and Terra pave applications within the municipality.

DISCUSSION

Over the past two months Council's has been trialling OTTA seals and Terra pave on a number of roads within the urban and rural areas of the municipality. OTTA seals are a cost-efficient road treatment best suited to rural and urban roads where traffic volumes are less than 200 vehicles per day, on a straight section of road with minimal turning or screwing on the surface.

The principle behind the design of the graded seals is different to that of a single sized aggregate spray seal and more like that of an asphalt or slurry mix. The intent of the seal is to provide a surfacing layer which achieves its strength through the interlock of the different stone sizes in the graded aggregate, and only requires the road to be graded and shaped before application.

The contractor is using a precoated aggregate mix on the nominated roads following a test of both the coated and non-coated mix being trialled on Elizabeth Street East, Ararat. The non-coated mix appeared to cause more dust in the area, and the overall look of the precoated mix is preferred. Approximately two months after the application on Elizabeth Street East, you can see that the road his continuing to compact and look more like a asphalt surface. The rural works have been completed in the last week of May and first week of June and will continue to be monitored. The application will reduce the ongoing maintenance grading and resheeting works on these.

LGPRF data shows that reseal cost per square meter is approximately \$6, this cost can be following the cost of a full road reconstruction, or the cyclic resealing program undertaken by Council. The approximate cost for the urban OTTA seal (under 10,000m²) is \$10.66/m² and the rural OTTA seal (over 10,000m²) is \$8.51/m², these prices include the preparation work to have the road ready to seal.

To date more than 90,000m² of OTTA seals have been completed on:

- Elizabeth Street East, Ararat
- Young Street, Ararat
- Thomas Street, Ararat

- Andrews Lane, Maroona/Willaura North
- Tatyoon Extension Road, Tatyoon
- Rockies Hill Road, Tatyoon
- Mt William Road, Tatyoon

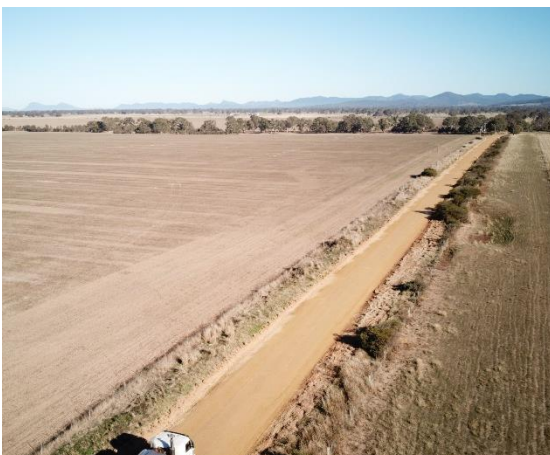
The cost per square meter for OTTA seals are comparable if not better than traditional resheeting, with roads that have been completed and invoiced as below.

	Expenditure	Depot Wages	Total	m2	\$/m2
OTTA SEALS					
Andrews Lane (Moyston Dunkeld to Muirhead) OTTA	\$ 238,188.80	\$ 12,074.23	\$ 250,263.03	27764	\$ 8.98
Mt William Road (Tatyoon North to Tatyoon) OTTA	\$ 197,054.13	\$ 2,092.03	\$ 199,146.16	26593	\$ 7.49
Tatyoon Extension Road (Tatyoon to Helendoite) OTTA	\$ 68,849.21	\$ 5,876.73	\$ 74,725.94	7270	\$ 10.28
Rockies Hill Road (off Helendoite) OTTA	\$ 30,140.41	\$ 24.80	\$ 30,165.21	2850	\$ 10.58
RESHEETING					
Back Bushie Creek Road	\$ 117,736.79	\$ 15,768.25	\$ 133,505.04	11000	\$ 12.14
Gordons Bridge Road	\$ 90,114.18	\$ 6,992.00	\$ 97,106.18	11500	\$ 8.44
Williamsons Road	\$ 70,803.65	\$ 13,572.32	\$ 84,375.97	8250	\$ 10.23
Langji Logan Road	\$ 140,285.91	\$ 12,329.77	\$ 152,615.68	17000	\$ 8.98

Elizabeth Street East, Ararat



Andrews Lane





Tatyoan Extension Road



Mt William Road



In an Australian first, the Ararat Rural City has trialled the ultimate circular road solution for their gravel road network – with recycled tyre rubber being used as both a bitumen binder modifier and an aggregate substitute. The yet to be named new treatment has the potential to increase the amount of waste tyres being used on our rural road network by 10 times.

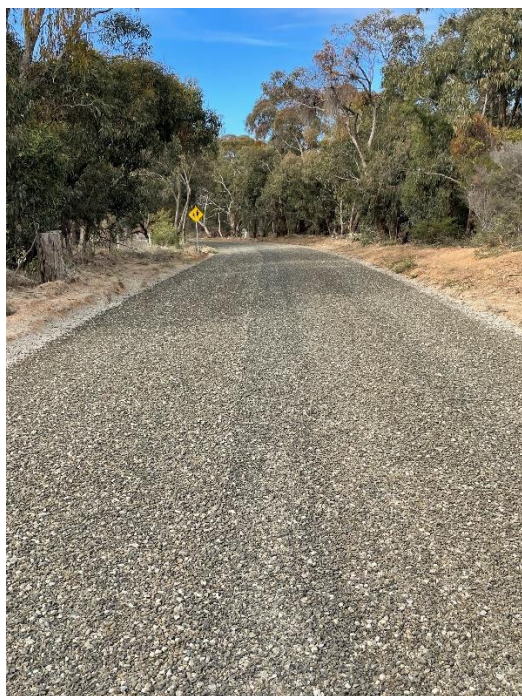
In conjunction with Inroads, using rubber as a substitute for both raw virgin materials have been applied to a 500m section of Garden Gully Road from the end of seal at the Western Highway end to Council’s boundary with Northern Grampians Shire.

Whilst the use of crumbed rubber derived from waste tyres has been used for many years on our rural road network, as a bitumen enhancer for improved aggregate retention and pavement waterproofing, the recent surfacing works undertaken by Ararat is unique in that waste tyre chips have been blended with traditional quarry aggregates as the roads wearing surface. The new treatment replaces 10% of the bitumen used with crumbed rubber and replaces 25% of the aggregate used with 14mm rubber chips. The 500m of new treatment applied has used 12 tonne of rubber crumb and chips, diverting 2000 old tyres from landfill.

The waste tyre chips were sourced by a Tyre Stewardship Australia (TSA) Accredited tyre recycler in Victoria and provided to Inroads for the development of the new treatment. Laboratory work was first conducted to see how the tyre chip would adhere to hot bitumen and to test the wear rate of the rubber. Initial testing confirmed that the rubber chip has great bitumen holding characteristics and when blended with virgin aggregate, from Western Quarries in Ararat, the resultant blend had no signs of reduced wear when subjected to wheel track testing.

Prior to undertaking the works the rubber chips was delivered to Western Quarries and mixed with precoated aggregate at the nominated ratio. The onsite quarry laboratory tested the combined product to ensure consistency. Once confirmed the rock/rubber blend was delivered to the jobsite.

Inroads, on behalf of the Ararat Rural City Council, has applied for a funding grant from Tyre Stewardship Australia (TSA) for the sealing of a further two kilometres of gravel roads in 2024 so that ongoing monitoring and testing of the innovative treatment can be undertaken.



Terra Pave

The application of Terra pave on a one kilometre section of Warrayatkin Road was undertaken from 28-30 May 2024. The existing site conditions before the trial consisted of a severely corrugated and potholed unsealed road, which had been regraded only six weeks earlier. The rapid deterioration and damage to this section are attributed to its use as a shortcut from the Western Highway to the Ararat Prison. Current traffic data indicates an average of 174 vehicles per day with 11.9% being heavy vehicles. The combination of high speeds and significant heavy vehicle traffic contributes to the accelerated deterioration of the pavement.

The Terra pave application is used on different roads to those suitable for OTTA seals. Terra pave is a road stabilising process as well as a sealing process for existing gravel roads which digs 150-200mm below the road surface, not just providing a top layer seal. The product is an alternative to the traditional stabilisation concrete lime and asphalt pavements which produce greenhouse gas and carbon dioxide. Terra Pave is non-petroleum-based and eco-friendly. The application requires minimal equipment for the entire process, using a grader/scarifier, water truck and a rubber and steel roller. Due to the product and the speed of application, over two days the carbon emissions emitted are greatly reduced in comparison to other methods.

The methodology supplied by the Terra pave representative was followed and the results are still being investigated. The product so far does not look as the product was prescribed however the surface seems to be hardening up in some places, and continued.

The cost of the full Terra pave process is three times as expensive as the traditional resheeting and OTTA seal works but as described the stabilising work is more complex and therefore more expensive. As an alternative for sealing only, Terra pave is approximate a quarter of the square meter cost shown below being \$8.41/m². Terra pave also potentially provides a more robust surface, capable of carrying higher traffic volumes, heavier vehicles and cope better with turning and screwing. It is recommended that Council continue to work with Terra pave to explore suitable uses.

	Expenditure	Depot Wages	Total	m ²	\$/m ²
TERRA PAVE					
Warrayatkin Road	\$ 200,987.00	\$ 730.14	\$ 201,717.14	6000	\$ 33.62


Warrayatkin Road (Warrak Road end for 1km)







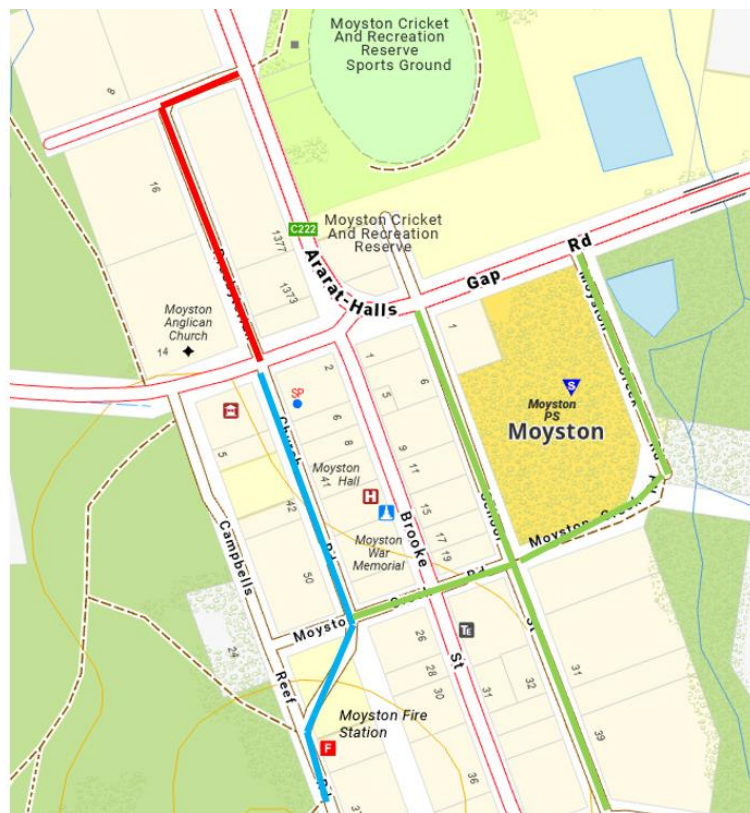
An additional Project – Moyston Township

Following early positive outcomes from the use of OTTA Seal an additional trial is being undertaken in Moyston Township to treat three key, currently unsealed, elements of the unsealed urban road network. The road sections are shown below:

 Priority 1 – BUS ROUTE
Presbyterian Church Rd
from Ararat Halls Gap Rd
to Moyston Dunkeld Rd.

 Priority 2 –
Presbyterian Church Rd
from Moyston Dunkeld Rd.
To Moyston Creek Rd then
up to Fire Station

 Priority 3 –
Moyston Creek Rd from
Ararat Halls Gap Rd to
Presbyterian Church Rd.
And School Road from
Ararat Halls Gap Rd to
Moyston Rocky Point Rd.



The road sections were identified through consultation with the Moyston Community through the Moyston Progress Association. It is expected that the works will be completed as an element of the 2023/2024 urban gravel to seal program and delivered in full prior to the end of this financial year. Works have commenced on road preparation with OTTA sealing to be undertaken in the week commencing 24 June 2024.

The estimated costs are provided in the table below:

Road Section	Length (m)	Width (m)	Area (m2)	Cost (\$) @ \$9.90 m2
Priority One	271	5.5	1490.50	14,756
Priority Two	385	5.5	2117.50	20,963
Priority Three	913	5.5	5021.50	49,713
Total	1569	5.5	8629.50	85,432

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

- 4 Developing and Maintaining Key Enabling Infrastructure
4.3 Deliver infrastructure outcomes that support economic growth, promote community wellbeing and safety and align with Council's financial sustainability.

Budget Implications

These projects make up part of Council's 2023/2024 Capital Works Budget.

Policy/Relevant Law

- ARCC Procurement Policy – Resealing Contract

Sustainability Implications

The new trial of the road sealing solution for our gravel road network, with recycled tyre rubber being used as both a bitumen binder modifier and an aggregate substitute has the potential to increase the amount of waste tyres being used on our rural road network by 10 times. This is a significant step towards circular economy road solutions.

Risk Assessment

Nil.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Trialling of new processes and products enable Council to make informed decisions about the best outcomes for ongoing maintenance of its road network. Use of these innovative processes brings Council to the forefront of sustainable practices and continuous improvement.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Collaboration has been undertaken within the operations and engineering departments of the organisation to understand the desired outcomes of these trials.

RECOMMENDATION

That

Council receive this information report.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments in relation to this item

4.4 2023/2024 CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM – JUNE 2024

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 15828

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council adopted its 2023/2024 Capital Works Program as a key element of the 2023/2024 Budget. The 2023/24 budget has a strong focus on infrastructure with a \$9.5 million investment in capital works.

Major works including the following:

- Stage one of Mount William Road construction,
- Urban gravel to seal road upgrades, and
- Maintaining and repairing rural and urban roads and drainage.

DISCUSSION

Council's 2023/2024 Capital Works Program continues to be substantially different to previous years, the program does not have a number of major road and bridge construction projects and will continue to undertake a "small targeted" capital works program.

The emphasis for 2023/2024 is on renewal and updating Council assets, undertaking a larger number of smaller projects of lower value to avoid the impacts of price volatility in the market. Using this approach will also provide opportunities to leverage in-house capability, support local employment and engagement of local contractors.

The capital works program has had an emphasis on the following areas:

- An enhanced road reseal program.
- Improvement to urban drainage.
- Upgrades to the footpath network.
- A major urban road gravel to seal program.
- Commencement of Mt William Road Reconstruction works.

Capital Works Budget Status:

As of 19 June, 2024, the capital works budget is 87% spent, with end of month invoices still to be processed. This has slowed on other earlier months due to the two bushfires in the municipality in February which has put significant pressure on our workforce, causing priorities to shift towards areas of urgent need. This amount does not include employment oncosts for the last quarter of the 23/24 financial year and allocation of plant hire rates.

Ongoing Projects

- The Urban gravel to seal project is ongoing, Moyston Township works are being undertaken this month along with commencement of kerb and channel works on a number of projects.
- Mt William Road reconstruction has commenced, with tree trimming completed and ground works currently being undertaken, stabilisation works will commence in the week commencing 24 June 2024. The majority of works are expected to be complete by the end of financial year allowing us to meet funding obligations.

- Road resheeting has seen substantial progress with 113% of the budget expended, this includes a number of rural OTTA seals completed on Andrews Lane, Tatyoon Extension Road, Rockies Hill Road and Mt William Road.
- Small property capital projects has been fully expended with 121% of the budget expended.

	Budget	Committed/ Contracted	Expended	%	Notes
PROPERTY -CAPITAL					
Property Capital	\$400,000	\$63,337	\$421,213	121%	These works are made up of a series of smaller projects across the municipality.
					This amount does not include payments for the funded playground project completed in 2023.
					This budget has been fully expended.
Alexandra Oval Resurfacing			\$237,720		This was an unbudgeted project. Works on the Alexandra Oval are completed.
Ararat Fitness Centre Stage 1	\$950,000		\$29,222	3%	This project has been halted due to age and compliance issues. Further information was provided at the April Council meeting.
TOTAL PROPERTY		\$63,337	\$688,155		
PLANT & EQUIPMENT					
Plant and Vehicles			\$346,146		These unbudgeted items include four new passenger vehicles and a new mower that was purchased at the start of the financial year.
Book stock - Library Book Replacement	\$40,000		\$31,217	78%	Quarter 4 payment is due in June 2024. This will be fully expended by the end of financial year.
TOTAL PLANT & EQUIPMENT			\$377,363		
ROADS					
Gravel Road Sheeting & Gravel Road Widening	\$2,800,000	\$187,281	\$2,967,037	113%	The 23/24 Resheeting and Road Widening program is fully expended. The committed component of the budget is for OTTA Sealing of a number of rural roads that have consistent resheeting work undertaken on them. These works are expected to be completed in June 2024.
Reseal Program	\$1,000,000	\$28,600	\$898,299	90%	Design works are complete for Rhydney Rd.

					<p>Geotechnical Investigation and design works are nearing completion for the Buangor Ben Nevis Rd. This work is being completed with funding from LRCI and Council. These works will be completed as a part of the 24/25 capital works program.</p> <p>Road reseal program commenced in September 2023 and was completed in December 2023.</p> <p>Line Marking works were completed in April 2024.</p> <p>This budget is expected to be underspent by the end of financial year with Rhymney Road works on hold due to cost estimates. This allocation will be redirected to other projects including Helendoite Road Bridge and McLellan Street reconstruction.</p>
Mt William Road	\$1,000,000	\$190,409	\$107,644	30%	<p>Work have commenced.</p> <p>The works have been set out, tree works completed and stabilising contractors will commence in the week of 24 June 24, and stone ordered as part of the project.</p> <p>The majority of works will be complete by the end of financial year in line with the requirements of Roads to Recovery funding.</p>
Urban Road Gravel to Seal	\$2,200,000	\$765,388	\$635,287	64%	<p>Designs are now ready to commence including Currajong Avenue/McLellan Street, Bailey Lane, Mulcahy Road & King Street.</p> <p>The OTTA seal has been completed on Elizabeth Street East, Thomas and Young Streets, Ararat. Terra Pave</p> <p>Planning works for the 24/25 program is currently being undertaken, with design quotation awarded and will provide design for roads to be completed in coming financial years.</p> <p>This budget is expected to be underspent with the works being completed costing significantly less than estimated.</p>

Contribution to Moyne Shire			254,531		This is a 10% contribution to the construction works on the Chatsworth Bolac Boundary Road.
Major Patching			\$98,010		This line item is unbudgeted. Major patching works for this financial year have been completed.
Footpath Renewal Program	\$400,000	\$6,900	\$515,480	130%	Several footpath works have been completed this year within Ararat and rural townships. Works have been completed this year at the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albert Street, Ararat • Main Street Willaura • Warranooke Street, Willaura • McGibbony Street, Ararat • Ford Street, Ararat • Wileman and Walkerville Street, Willaura The committed works are for funded works on Tunnel Track in Pomonal.
Urban Drainage Works	\$750,000	\$219,322	\$342,371	75%	Works have been completed in Golf Links Road and are nearing completion in Thompson and Kneale Streets, Ararat. A number of small works are expected to be complete by the end of financial year including works in Alfred Street and near the Ararat Cemetery. One significant project is also to be undertaken with connection of drainage from Queen Street to Cemetery Creek, with the tender awarded to Butler Excavations.
TOTAL INFRASTRUCTURE		\$1,397,900	\$5,818,659		
TOTAL CAPITAL WORKS		\$1,461,237	\$6,584,177		

There are also recreation facilities projects that were funded in the 2021/2022 budget that have extended beyond the single financial year. The committed expenditure includes contracts entered for construction of various elements of the projects. The table below provides a summary of these projects:

Capital Work Element	Committed expenditure	% complete	Notes
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Gordon St Recreation Reserve	\$4,704,609	100%	<p>The pavilion has reached practical completion with an Occupancy Permit being provided in mid March 2024.</p> <p>Fencing and seeding works have been completed in the third week of June and are the final works to be completed and invoiced. Tidying and landscaping of the site will be undertaken in house and will see the completion of the works in this financial year.</p> <p>The Ministerial opening for the redevelopment is to be held on Friday 31 August 2024.</p>
Buangor Recreation Reserve Kitchen Extension	\$53,849	20%	<p>The project has been out to the market and came in with a significant price difference between the cost plan and the pricing received from the tenderers.</p> <p>Funding opportunities are being looked at to progress this project further.</p>
Lake Bolac Golf Club Kitchen	\$200,496	92%	<p>Works were undertaken by Build Forth, from Ballarat, this project is complete.</p>

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

The key financial drivers align strongly with the thrust of the Council Plan 2021-2025, particularly the following:

- 4.1 Ensure that asset development and renewal during the planning period matches that identified in Council's Asset Plan 2021-2031.
- 4.2 Work directly with asset users to manage and develop new and existing assets.
- 4.3 Deliver infrastructure outcomes that support economic growth, promote community wellbeing and safety and align with Council's financial sustainability.
- 6.1 Deliver responsible budget outcomes, linked to strategy, that deliver value, innovation, and rating fairness.

Budget Implications

The 2023/2024 Capital Works Program represents a significant element of Council's 2023/2024 Budget. In the current civil construction market, it is essential that Council manages capital works expenditure carefully to ensure budget outcomes are met.

Policy/Relevant Law

The 2023/2024 Capital Works Program complies with the program funded in the 2023/2024 Budget.

Sustainability Implications

There are no environmental sustainability implications. Council is mindful of considering new innovative approaches to improve its sustainability and environmental footprint as a part of the Capital Works program.

Risk Assessment

The 2023/2024 Capital Works Program was developed as a mitigation of the financial risks associated with market volatility currently being experienced in the civil and building construction sectors.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Development of the 2023/2024 Capital Works Program represented an agile response to market conditions. A capacity to rework strategy based on a changing environment is a critical element in developing an innovative organisation.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The 2023/2024 Capital Works Program has been developed as an element of the 2023/2024 Budget. There was extensive community engagement undertaken prior to adoption.

RECOMMENDATION

That

Council receive this information report.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments in relation to this item

SECTION 5 – COMMITTEE MINUTES/REPORTS

5.1 AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE MEETING

AUTHOR'S TITLE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 15829

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report contains the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 4 June 2024

DISCUSSION

Minutes of Audit and Risk Committee meetings are provided to Council at the first available opportunity after clearance by the Audit and Risk Committee Chairperson. The report contains the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held on 4 June 2024.

Council Committees	Councillor representative	Current meeting (as presented)	Next scheduled meeting/s
Audit and Risk Committee	Cr Jo Armstrong	04 June 2024	03 September 2024
Audit and Risk Committee	Cr Bob Sanders	04 June 2024	03 September 2024

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

The report supports the strategic objective of the Council Plan 2021-2025:
6 Strong and Effective Governance

Budget Implications

No budget impact for the receiving of minutes.

Policy/Legal/Statutory

Section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020* states that Council must establish an Audit and Risk Committee.

Section 6.1 of the *Audit and Risk Committee Charter* states that minutes of Committee meetings will be provided to Council at the first available opportunity after clearance by the Committee Chairperson following each Committee meeting.

Risk Assessment

Council needs to be aware of issues raised in the minutes.

Stakeholder Consultation and Communication

Audit and Risk Committee members.
Councillor representation on Council Committees.
Chief Executive Officer and relevant Council officers.

RECOMMENDATION

That

1. the Audit and Risk Committee Meetings minutes of 04 June 2024 be received

ATTACHMENTS

The Audit and Risk Committee minutes as listed above are provided as Attachment 5.1

SECTION 6 – INFORMAL MEETINGS

6.1 COUNCIL BRIEFINGS

AUTHOR'S TITLE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 13039074

OFFICER'S DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Governance Rules state that if there is a meeting of Councillors that:

1. is scheduled or planned for the purpose of discussing the business of *Council* or briefing Councillors;
2. is attended by at least one member of Council staff; and
3. is not a *Council meeting*, *Delegated Committee* meeting or *Community Asset Committee* meeting, the *Chief Executive Officer* must ensure that a summary of the matters discussed at the meeting are:
 - a. tabled at the next convenient *Council meeting*; and
 - b. recorded in the minutes of that *Council meeting*.

DISCUSSION

As a requirement of the Governance Rules, a summary of matters discussed at the Council Briefings held since the last Council Meeting are presented to Council and will be recorded in the minutes.

INFORMAL MEETINGS
Council Briefing held on 18 June 2024

Issues discussed at the briefing:

- International and Interstate Travel Policy
- Public Transparency Policy
- Council Expense and Support Policy
- Landfill remediation update
- Terrapave and OTTA seal trials
- Industrial Park advocacy
- Innovation and Economic Development Strategy
- Environment Strategy 2024-2034
- Norfolk Pine feedback – Engage Ararat
- Budget feedback – Engage Ararat
- Community Engagement Strategy Review
- Road funding
- Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Bill 2024
- State and Federal government reviews of local government sustainability
- Council Budget 2024/2025 adoption
- Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey 2024 Results

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

The report supports the strategic objective of the Council Plan 2021-2025:

- 6.3 Continuously improve Council’s community engagement process and practices in line with deliberative engagement practices, while acknowledging the need for a range of different techniques to ensure effective engagement.

Financial

There are no financial impacts for the receiving of Informal Meetings of Councillors.

Policy/Relevant Law

Reporting of Informal Meetings is in line with the requirements of the Governance Rules.

Risk Assessment

Following the requirements of the Governance Rules will ensure that Council meets its legislative requirements.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

A summary of matters discussed at the Council Briefings are presented for community information.

RECOMMENDATION

That

1. the Informal Meetings of Councillors Report be received.

ATTACHMENTS

The Summary of Council Briefings are provided as Attachment 6.1.

SECTION 7 – NOTICES OF MOTION

A notice of motion must be in writing signed by a Councillor and be lodged with or sent to the *Chief Executive Officer* no later than 12.00pm (noon) and at least six (6) days prior to the Council Meeting to allow sufficient time for the *Chief Executive Officer* to include the *notice of motion* in agenda papers for a *Council meeting*.

SECTION 8 – URGENT BUSINESS

Items cannot be admitted as urgent business other than by resolution of *Council* and only then if it:

- 1 relates to or arises out of a matter which has arisen since distribution of the *agenda*; and
- 2 cannot safely or conveniently be deferred until the next *Council meeting*.

SECTION 9 – CLOSE SESSION (CONFIDENTIAL)

In accordance with section 66(2)(a), 3(1) *Confidential Information* (a) of the Local Government Act 2020, the following agenda items are listed for consideration in the confidential section:

- Item 9.1 – Ararat Renewable Energy Park

CLOSURE OF COUNCIL MEETING TO THE PUBLIC

The Open Council Meeting will now be closed, but members of the public are welcome to rejoin the Council Meeting following the recommencement of the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That the meeting be closed to members of the public pursuant to section 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020 to consider confidential reports.

OPEN COUNCIL MEETING RECOMMENCEMENT

RECOMMENDATION

That the Open Council Meeting recommence.

Gallery invited to return to Council Chamber.

LIFTING OF CONFIDENTIALITY OF CLOSED SESSION RESOLUTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

That the:

1. Decision in relation to Confidential Agenda Item 9.1 be lifted on adoption of the motion; and
2. The report of Confidential Agenda Item 9.1 not be lifted on adoption of the motion