



ARARAT RURAL CITY COUNCIL'S COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025



Ararat Rural City

1. GROWING OUR PLACE

We will create the settings to support growth across our municipality through an improved planning scheme, actively pursuing new housing options and exploring models for in-migration.

- 1.1 Develop a new planning scheme for Ararat Rural City that is clear in its intention, supports growth and builds confidence and certainty around land use.
- 1.2 Support innovative housing models that work to overcome market failure and create the capacity to increase the population of Ararat Rural City.
- 1.3 Work with other levels of government, business, and not-for-for profits to develop programs to increase in-migration to Ararat Rural City to grow our population.

2. BUILDING ROBUST LOCAL ECONOMIES

We will develop strong relationships to build and strengthen a diverse local economy, focussed on creating jobs and wealth through adding value to existing strengths in agriculture, manufacturing, tourism and hospitality.

- 2.1 Partner with Federation University Australia to deliver the Ararat Jobs and Technology Precinct.
- 2.2 Work with other levels of government, local business, and private investors to develop a business park within Ararat Rural City, focused on agricultural value adding and advanced manufacturing, potentially leveraging "behind the meter" power.
- 2.3 Engage with Grampians Tourism and local businesses to drive growth in high yield tourist outcomes.



3. PRESERVING OUR 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.

- 3.1 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.
- 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.

4. DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING KEY ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE

We will ensure that we plan, fund and develop new infrastructure in ways that delivers strong public value. Existing infrastructure will be managed, renewed, and maintained to ensure that it continues to serve identified public needs.

- 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.

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.

- 5.1 Open up Council's arts and culture assets to greater community participation, ownership and engagement in decision-making.
- 5.2 Develop models of volunteering that recognise, support and properly utilise the skills that community volunteers bring to community life.
- 5.3 Partner with community groups, not-for-profits, and traditional owner organisations to develop Ararat Rural City as a more inclusive and diverse community.

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.

- 6.1 Deliver responsible budget outcomes, linked to strategy, that deliver value, innovation and rating fairness.
- 6.2 Ensure appropriate risk management is applied to Council and organisational decisions. Council's internal function is applied to areas of perceived risk.
- 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.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS



GROWING OUR PLACE

- Completion of new planning scheme by 30 June 2023.
- New planning scheme supports commercial and industrial land provision for growth.
- Available residential land increased by 600 lots by 30 June 2025.
- Residential housing stock increased by 300 properties by 30 June 2025.
- Total population of the municipality increased by 750 by 30 June 2025 (6.3%).

BUILDING ROBUST LOCAL ECONOMIES

- Increase in jobs in local economy by 15% by 30 June 2025.
- Ararat Jobs and Technology Precinct fully functional with 8 PhD scholars in place.
- Business park developed and lead tenants established in agricultural value add sector.
- Ararat Rural City Council identified as the tourism leader in the Grampians Region.
- Tourism visitation and stays in Ararat Rural City increased by 50% by 30 June 2025.

PRESERVING OUR ENVIRONMENT

- Fully implemented new waste plan, aligned with circular economy outcomes by 30 June 2022.
- Local processing of waste recyclables in place by 31 December 2022.
- All energy used by Ararat Rural City Council is from renewable sources, with a preference for local solutions such as rooftop solar/battery by 30 June 2024.
- Industrial bio-mass power plant, utilising straw waste in final pre-construction phase by 30 June 2025.
- Environment Working Group has produced draft Environmental Strategy by 31 December 2021.

DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING KEY ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE

- Aradale planning project funded and completed by 30 June 2023.
- Planning and funding models for rural roads "spine" developed and endorsed by Rural Roads Group by 30 June 2022.
- Negotiations with government and utility providers to ensure future industrial, commercial and residential development is supported by essential trunk infrastructure by 30 June 2023.
- Policy in place regarding sealing of urban gravel roads and sealing of significant urban laneways by 31 December 2021.
- Implementation of key infrastructure projects from the Asset Plan 2021-2031 during the planning period.

ENHANCING COMMUNITY LIFE

- Increase annual visitation to the Ararat Art Gallery by 30% p.a.
- Increase community use of the Town Hall by 20% p.a.
- Increase audience sizes at commercial and funded performances at the Town Hall by 20% p.a.
- Increase Ararat Rural City Council's volunteer numbers by 20% per annum.
- Explore a model for improving the viability of Gum San by 31 December 2021.

STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

- Council budgets continue to deliver public value and return efficiency dividends where appropriate.
- Risk management processes continue to be effective and approved by Audit and Risk Committee.
- Community engagement process show longitudinal signs of improvement.

**ARARAT RURAL CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL PLAN
2021-2025**

ANNUAL PLAN 2024/2025



Ararat Rural City

1. Growing Our Place

1.1 Develop a new planning scheme for Ararat Rural City that is clear in its intention, supports growth and builds confidence and certainty around land use.	Complete a review of Council's Planning Scheme as required under Section 12B of the <i>Planning Environment Act 1987</i> .	30/06/2025
	Recruit a community reference group to provide community input to the planning scheme review process.	31/12/2024
	Develop an Ararat East Development Zone Structure Plan.	30/06/2024
1.2 Support innovative housing models that work to overcome market failure and create the capacity to increase the population of Ararat Rural City.	Continue to develop the Ararat Housing Enterprise P/L, delivering the first four houses in Ararat during 2023/2024.	30/06/2025
	Work with key stakeholders to work towards implementation of the key recommendations of the Aradale Development Strategy.	Ongoing
	Develop an application to the Community Enabling Infrastructure (CEI) to support trunk infrastructure for a major private sector housing development.	30/08/2024
	Develop an Ararat Housing Strategy.	28/02/2025
1.3 Work with other levels of government, business, and not-for-profits to develop programs to increase in-migration to Ararat Rural City, growing our population.	Work with the Wyndham Community Education Centre to implement the Job Skills Program to increase the number of people from the Communities of Burma relocating to Ararat.	30/06/2025
	Implement the Resident Attraction Program funded in the 2024/2025 Budget.	31/03/2025

2. Building Robust Local Economies

2.1 Partner with Federation University Australia to deliver the Ararat Jobs and Technology Precinct (AJTP).	Develop a report on existing partnership and engagement activities with Federation University Australia at the AJTP.	31/08/2024
	Develop an annual schedule of events, highlighting the work of the partnership between Federation University Australia, Council and AJTP.	30/08/2024
	Build stronger connections between AJTP and local industry, including promotion of industry internships for research students.	Ongoing
	Develop an ARCC Economic Development and Innovation Strategy that supports development of agriculture, circular economy, advanced manufacturing, and high yield tourism.	31/08/2024
	Develop an implementation plan for ARCC as a “smart rural city”.	31/03/2025
2.2 Work with other levels of government, local business, and private investors to develop a business park within Ararat Rural City, focused on agricultural value adding and advanced manufacturing, potentially leveraging “behind the meter” energy.	Work with Invest Victoria, Regional Development Victoria and private sector partners to develop plans for the ARCC Circular Economy Precinct.	Ongoing
	Attract one new circular economy industry to Ararat during 2024/2025.	30/06/2025
	Continue to support Valorify P/L to develop a biogas plant in Ararat which uses straw as the major input.	Ongoing
2.3 Engage with Grampians Tourism and local businesses to drive growth in high yield tourist outcomes.	Partner with local wine makers Grampians Wine Incorporated and Grampians Tourism to seek funding to develop an annual fine wine and food event within the municipality.	31/03/2025
	Work with operators and Grampians Tourism to establish three new tourism businesses in the municipality during 2024/2025.	30/06/2024

3. Preserving Our Environment

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 use of renewable energy for Council purposes.	Develop and adopt an ambitious business based on key partnerships and production of higher value outputs, that views municipal “waste” as an economic resource.	31/12/2024
	Explore a model for collaborating with community asset committees to use rooftop solar to increase use of renewable energy at community facilities.	31/12/2024
	Develop and adopt an implementation plan for Council’s Electrification Policy.	31/12/2024
3.2 Develop innovative energy solutions utilising locally produced waste.	Continue to support Valorify P/L to develop a biogas plant in Ararat which uses straw as the major input.	Ongoing
	Work with Federal and State Government and private sector partners to plan, fund and develop a circular economy industrial precinct.	30/06/2025
	Support Pomonal Power to implement community-based energy solutions for the community.	31/12/2024
3.3 Partner with local organisations and scientific experts to develop an appropriate and pragmatic local government Environment Strategy focused on the circular economy, emission reduction through renewable energy and management of Council assets.	Continue quarterly meetings of the Environment Working Group during implementation of the Strategy.	Ongoing
	Adopt an Annual Implementation Plan for Council’s Environment Strategy.	31/12/2024
	Produce an annual scorecard outlining Council’s progress on environmental outcomes.	30/06/2024

4. Developing and Maintaining Key Enabling Infrastructure

4.1 Ensure that asset development and renewal during the planning period matches that identified in Council's Asset Plan 2021-2031.

Review Council's Asset Plan 2021-2031.	31/03/2025
Adopt a Capital Works Plan 2025-2029.	31/03/2025
Undertake a full external valuation of Council assets that meets the requirements of the external auditor and the Victorian Auditor General's Office.	31/12/2024
Maintain an asset valuation system that effectively manages valuations and depreciation that meets the requirements of the external auditor and the Victorian Auditor General's Office.	31/12/2024
Re-engage with the Department of Transport and Planning to complete preliminary planning for the North-South Heavy Vehicle Route.	31/12/2024
Lobby for funding for the North-South Heavy Vehicle Route.	31/12/2024
Complete 2024/2025 Capital Works Program.	30/06/2025
Adopt key road sealing, gravel resheeting, drainage, footpath and cycleway, and community projects relating by the 2024/2025 Capital Works Program at the August 2024 Council Meeting.	31/08/2024
Undertake the road-related elements of the Advocacy Program adopted by Council.	30/06/2025

4. Developing and Maintaining Key Enabling Infrastructure (continued)

4.2 Work directly with asset users to manage and develop new and existing assets.	Re-establish the Rural Roads Group and hold meetings at least quarterly.	31/12/2024
	Conduct an annual asset forum that provides an opportunity to engage the community in development and review of key asset plans.	31/03/2025
	Review the 10-year Capital Works Strategy to inform 2025/2026 Budget.	31/03/2025
	Develop a detailed two-year Capital Works Plan 2025/2026 - 2026/2027 to inform 2025/2026 Budget.	31/03/2025
4.3 Deliver infrastructure outcomes that support economic growth, promote community wellbeing and safety, and align with Council's financial sustainability.	Deliver key outcomes from Council's Asset Plan 2022-2032 during the planning period.	30/06/2025
	Complete concept plans and costing for the development of basketball, gymnastics, and aquatic facilities in Ararat.	31/12/2024
	Complete plans for development and implementations of walking/cycling tracks as an element of the Ararat on the Move strategy.	31/12/2024
	Seek funding and undertake renovation and extension of the Buangor Recreation Reserve kitchen.	30/06/2025
	Complete resurfacing, drainage, and irrigation project at the Tatyoon Recreation Reserve.	31/12/2024
	Plan upgrades of the Lake Bolac Memorial Hall.	31/03/2025

5. Enhancing Community Life

5.1 Open up Council's arts and culture assets to greater community participation, ownership, and engagement in decision-making.	Develop an Arts and Culture Reference Group comprising a representative from each of Ararat Town Hall, TAMA, Willaura Modern, Langi Morgala, J Ward, and Gum San to meet at least quarterly.	31/12/2024
	Conduct a series of community focus groups to provide feedback and direction to Council on improving participation in Town Hall and TAMA activities.	31/12/2024
	Review resourcing of Council's cultural assets in the 2025/2026 Budget process.	30/06/2025
	Consider the value of arts and cultural assets as an element of Council's economic development model.	31/03/2025
5.2 Develop models of volunteering that recognise, support, and properly utilise the skills that community volunteers bring to community life.	Promote the benefits and achievements of volunteers, to encourage participation.	Ongoing
	Work with community groups to conduct a Volunteer Expo.	30/06/2025
	Develop an ARCC Volunteers Network.	31/03/2025
5.3 Partner with community groups, not-for-profits, and Traditional Owner organisations to develop Ararat Rural City as a more inclusive and diverse community.	Work with community stakeholders to facilitate a series of community cultural events.	31/12/2025
	Engage with key stakeholders to redevelop Council's Access and Inclusion Policy.	31/03/2025
	Develop an engagement plan to work with the Barengi Gadjin Land Council in implementation of the Recognition and Settlement Agreement.	31/12/2024
	Commence a process of establishing respectful and productive relationships with Traditional Owner organisations.	31/12/2024

6. Strong and Effective Governance

6.1 Deliver responsible budget outcomes linked to strategy, which deliver value, innovation, and rating fairness.	Review Community Vision 2021-2031.	31/03/2025
	Adopt a Council Plan 2025-2029.	31/03/2025
	Adopt a Rating and Revenue Strategy 2025-2029.	31/03/2025
	Develop a 2025/2026 Council Budget that delivers public value and returns dividends to the community where appropriate. The budget will conform to Council's financial sustainability criteria.	30/06/2025
	Provide monthly reporting on Capital Works Program implementation, including cost against budget information.	Ongoing
	Provide monthly financial reporting to Council and the community commencing in December 2024.	31/12/2024
6.2 Ensure appropriate risk management is applied to Council and organisational decisions and apply Council's internal audit function to areas of perceived risk.	Review the Audit and Risk Committee Charter.	31/12/2024
	Undertake an annual review of Council's Business Continuity Plan and Disaster Recovery Plan.	31/03/2025
	Undertake an annual review of Council's Risk Management Policy and Framework.	31/03/2025
	Ensure appropriate analysis of all inquiry and investigation reports relevant to Council operations and recommendations implemented.	Ongoing
	Respond to all issues raised through Council's external auditor and the Victorian Auditor General's Office.	30/06/2024
	Respond to all issues raised through Council's Internal Audit function.	30/06/2024
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.	Review Council's Deliberative Engagement Strategy.	31/12/2025
	Review Council's approach for informing the community of development and progress of major projects.	30/11/2025