



Ararat Rural City

# AGENDA

## COUNCIL MEETING

**Tuesday 28 January 2025**

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

**Commencing at 6.00pm**

**Council:**

**Cr Jo Armstrong (Mayor)**

**Cr Rob Armstrong**

**Cr Peter Joyce**

**Cr Teli Kaur**

**Cr Luke Preston**

**Cr Bob Sanders**

**Cr Bill Waterston**

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](https://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 Teli Kaur be accepted.**

### 1.4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 26 November 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.

### 2.1.1 PETITION - KENNEL ROAD, ARARAT

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO'S OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 19061

#### **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.

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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

A petition has been received from the residents of Kennel Road, Ararat and surrounding streets requesting that Kennel Road be considered for sealing.

The residents have stated that the road is gravel, is very dusty and corrugated and requires regular Council maintenance.

#### **DISCUSSION**

The petition, which lists 16 signatures, indicates that the residents of Kennel Road would like their road sealed and have noted other smaller roads within the community have been sealed.

Clause 100 of Council's Processes of Municipal Government (Meetings and Common Seal) Local Law 2007 states:

A petition or joint letter presented to the Council must lay on the table until the next ordinary meeting of the Council and no motion, other than to receive the petition or joint letter may be accepted by the Chairperson, unless Council agrees to deal with it earlier.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That:**

- 1. The petition requesting Council to seal Kennel Road, Ararat be received and lay on the table for consideration at the 25 February 2025 Council meeting**

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

A copy of the Petition from the Residents of Kennel Road is provided as Attachment 2.1.1

## SECTION 3 - REPORTS REQUIRING COUNCIL DECISION

### 3.1 COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** GOVERNANCE AND RISK LEAD  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO'S OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 19062

#### **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.

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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Under Section 139(1) of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act). Council must develop and adopt a Councillor Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct sets of the principles, values, standards of conduct and behaviours that will guide Council collectively, and as Councillors individually, in undertaking their duties and obligations as set out in the Act, and all other applicable legislation.

Council must review and adopt the Councillor Code of Conduct within the period of 4 months after a general election.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Councillors occupy a unique position as elected representatives, entrusted with participating, and representing the interest of the municipal community, in the decision making of the Council, and setting the strategic objectives of the Council and the Council's vision for the municipality. As such, the community is entitled to expect the highest standards of governance, integrity and ethical conduct from their Councillors.

Effectively from the 26 October 2024, all Councillors are required to observe the Model Code of Conduct which is prescribed in Schedule 1 to the Regulations.

The Model Code of Conduct replaces the previous statutory requirements for each Council to develop its own Councillors Code of Conduct.

The Model Code of Conduct establishes clear standards for the behaviour and responsibilities of Councillors. Its purpose is to ensure that Councillors can effectively perform their duties and functions, supporting the Council in its overriding role to provide good governance for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community. By setting these expectations, Councillors are better equipped to perform their duties in a manner that reflects the values of integrity, transparency, respect and accountability.

The Model Code of Conduct is also designed to foster a spirit of cooperation and constructive collaboration among Councillors and the Council administration. The Model Code of Conduct supports open and respectful debate, enabling Councillors to express their views freely, while maintaining civility and mutual respect. By working together effectively, Councillors can make decisions that service the best interest of the municipality as a whole, ensuring the community benefits from good governance and effective civic leadership.

Furthermore, the Model Code of Conduct serves to strengthen public confidence and trust in local government. By adhering to high ethical standards and demonstrating a commitment to servicing the public interest, Councillors contribute to a positive and transparent relationship between Council and the community it serves.



## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### **Alignment to Council Plan Strategic 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.

### **Budget Implications**

There are no budget implications to develop the Councillor Code of Conduct

### **Policy/Relevant Law**

In accordance with section 139(1) of the Local Government Act 2020 Council must develop a Councillor Code of Conduct.

Section 139(4) states that the Council must review and adopt the Councillors Code of Conduct within the period of 4 months after the general election.

The Standards of Conduct are prescribed in Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020.

### **Sustainability Implications**

All economic, social and environment implications have been taken into account when developing the Councillor Code of Conduct.

### **Risk Assessment**

Risk of breaching the Act if a Councillor Code of Conduct is not developed and approved within 4 months of a General Election.

### **Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement**

The Chief Executive Officer presented the draft Councillor Code of Conduct to Councillors at the Council briefing on the 22 January 2025 meeting.

Further to the declaration made by Councillors on the 8 November 2024, acknowledging that Councillors will abide by the Councillor Code of Conduct, Councillors will sign the Councillor Commitment as presented in the Councillor Code of Conduct, once adopted.

The Code of Conduct will be available on Council's website following its adoption by Council.

## RECOMMENDATION

**That:**

- 1. Council adopt the Councillor Code of Conduct: and**
- 2. Councillors sign the Councillors Commitment as outlined in the Councillor Code of Conduct**

## ATTACHMENTS

The Councillor Code of Conduct is provided as Attachment 3.1

### 3.2 2025/26 BUDGET AND, REVENUE AND RATING PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO's OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 19063

#### **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.

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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Council will shortly be commencing development of the 2025/2026 Budget for adoption prior to 30 June 2025. The 2025/2026 Budget will be developed consistent with the key financial drivers adopted at the July 2022 Council Meeting.

The Budget will be developed and go through a process of community engagement consistent with the requirements of Sections 94 and 96 of the Local Government Act 2020. A budget development and community engagement plan for the 2025/2026 Budget are presented for endorsement by Council. The Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-29 will also be developed and adopted alongside the Budget.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Council officers commenced the process of developing the 2025/2026 Budget in December 2024 for adoption by Council at the Ordinary Meeting of Council on Tuesday 24 June 2025.

In the Council Briefing in March 2025, Councillors will consider new initiatives or projects for inclusion in the 2025/2026 budget. The preliminary draft budget will continue to be developed by Council staff for presentation to the Council Briefing in early April 2025.

The 2025/2026 Budget will be developed based on the Key Financial Drivers adopted by Council at the July 2022 Council Meeting. These Key Drivers are:

##### **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.

***The 2025/2026 Budget will be developed on the basis of delivering a 0% rate rise.***

### Service standards

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

The timeframe for development of the 2025/2026 Budget is summarized in the table below:

Activity	Timeframe
Budget development by Council	December 2024 - April 2025
Public release of Draft Budget	11 April 2025
Closure of public submissions	09 May 2025
Consider any matters or submissions, as required, at the May 2025 Council Meeting	27 May 2025
Adopt 2025/2026 Budget	24 June 2025

### Community Engagement

Section 96 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires that Council undertake community engagement around its budget in a form that is consistent with its Community Engagement Policy. Community consultation is not required for the Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-29 but the draft Plan will be made available during the community consultations period for the budget.

It is recommended that Council endorse a plan for community engagement for the 2025/2026 budget. This will include several mechanisms of engagement including:

- use of the Engage Ararat website
- distribution of plain language budget summaries across the municipality
- face to face "town hall" meetings
- social media posts to encourage community engagement
- summaries be placed in local newspapers
- mainstream media engagement around major 2025/2026 Budget initiatives

The process is designed to ensure maximum engagement with key geographic locations and communities of interest across the municipality. Residents and ratepayers will be encouraged to engage with the budget process and to make submission on matters of interest or concern.

Engagement Activity	Timeframe
Posting of Council's 2025/2026 Draft Budget on Engage Ararat	By 5:00pm on Friday 11 April 2025
Development of a one-page summary of key budget deliverables - available at a number of sites across the municipality	Friday 11 April 2025
"Town Hall" meetings in the following communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ararat</li> <li>• Elmhurst</li> <li>• Tatyoon</li> <li>• Moyston</li> <li>• Lake Bolac</li> <li>• Pomonal</li> <li>• Willaura</li> </ul>	Between Tuesday 22 April- Friday 02 May 2025
Promotion of key budget elements across mainstream and social media	Ongoing during the budget consultation period

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### ***Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives***

Council's Budget is a key strategic document that resources delivery of the upcoming Council Plan 2025-29. In particular, the Budget 2025/2026 relates to the following:

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.

### ***Budget Implications***

As this item relates to the development of the 2025/2026 Budget it has no direct or significant budget implications for the 2024/2025 Budget. The 2025/2026 budget will be framed around the key financial drivers adopted by Council at the July 2022 Council Meeting.

### ***Policy/Relevant Law***

Sections 94 and 96 of the Local Government Act 2020 (LGA 2020) requires that Council prepare and adopt a budget for each financial year and the subsequent three financial years by 30 June each year. Section 96 requires that Council undertake community engagement around its budget in a form that is consistent with its Community Engagement Policy.

### ***Sustainability Implications***

N/A

### ***Risk Assessment***

The most significant risk to be managed is to ensure that the 2025/2026 Budget aligns with community expectation and Council's key strategies outlined in the upcoming Council Plan 2025-2029.

### ***Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement***

This agenda item relates directly to a process of community engagement around the development of the 2025/2026 Budget.

## RECOMMENDATION

### **That Council:**

1. Endorse the timeframe for development and adoption of the Budget 2025/2026,
2. Endorse the community engagement plan relating to the 2025/2026 Budget.

## ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

### 3.3 COMMUNITY VISION AND COUNCIL PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO's OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 19064

**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 will shortly be commencing development of the Community Vision for the next 10 years and the Council Plan for the next 4 financial years. These must be adopted by 31 October this year in accordance with section 88 and 90 of the Local Government Act 2020.

This report outlines the timeframes for development and engagement for the Community Vision 2025-2035 and Council Plan 2025-29.

**DISCUSSION**

The development and review of Community Vision 2035 and Council Plan 2025-29 began after the Council Elections in 2024, starting with ascertaining the community's aspirations for the future of the municipality through their elected representatives to Council. This initial work will produce a draft Community Vision and Council Plan which will be presented to Council and the community to shape and steer towards a shared vision to work towards.

The proposed timeframe for development and engagement for the Community Vision 2035 and Council Plan 2025-29 is summarized in the table below:

Activity	Timeframe
Development and review by Council staff	November 2024 - February 2025
Presentation Draft Community Vision 2035 and Council Plan 2025-29 to Council Meeting	25 February 2025
Posting of Draft Community Vision 2035 and Council Plan 2025-29 on Engage Ararat	26 February 2025
Consultation and engagement alongside the Budget engagement activities and "Town Hall" meetings in the following communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ararat</li> <li>• Elmhurst</li> <li>• Tatyoon</li> <li>• Moyston</li> <li>• Lake Bolac</li> <li>• Pomonal</li> <li>• Willaura</li> </ul>	Between Tuesday 22 April-Friday 02 May 2025
Closure of public submissions	09 May 2025
Consider any matters or submissions, as required, at the May 2025 Council Meeting	27 May 2025
Adopt Community Vision 2035 and Council Plan 2025-29	24 June 2025

**Community Engagement**

Section 88 and 90 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires that Council undertake community engagement around its Community Vision and Council Plan in accordance with its Community Engagement Policy.

It is recommended that Council engage the community on the Community Vision and Council Plan alongside the community engagement for the 2025/2026 budget. This will include several mechanisms of engagement including:

- use of the Engage Ararat website
- distribution of copies of the draft Community Vision and Council Plan across the municipality
- face to face “town hall” meetings
- social media posts to encourage community engagement
- summaries be placed in local newspapers
- mainstream media engagement

The process is designed to ensure maximum engagement with key geographic locations and communities of interest across the municipality. Residents and ratepayers will be encouraged to engage with the budget process and to make submission on matters of interest or concern.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### ***Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives***

7. 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.

### ***Budget Implications***

As this item gives effect to the next four financial years from 2025/2026, and it has no direct or significant budget implications for the 2024/2025 Budget.

### ***Policy/Relevant Law***

Sections 88 and 90 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires that Council develop or review and adopt a Community Vision is a period of at least the next 10 financial years, and a Council Plan for a period of at least the next 4 financial years in accordance with its Community Engagement Policy by the 31 October in the year following a general election.

### ***Sustainability Implications***

N/A

### ***Risk Assessment***

The primary objective of Council is to endeavour to achieve the best outcomes for the local community having regard to the long term and cumulative effects of decisions. Providing the timelines for development and engagement on the key strategic documents of Council helps to ensure the long term aspirations of the community are well considered and reflected in these documents.

### ***Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement***

This agenda item relates directly to a process of community engagement around the development of the Community Vision 2035 and Council Plan 2025-29.

## RECOMMENDATION

### **That Council:**

1. **Endorse the timeframe for development, community engagement and adoption of the Community Vision 2035 and Council Plan 2025-29**

## ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

### 3.4 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO'S OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 19065

**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.

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The financial statements and performance indicators have been prepared for the period ended 31 December 2024.

Based on the information provided by responsible officers and managers Council's overall financial performance is in line with budget. It has been determined that a revised budget is not required at this stage.

#### DISCUSSION

Council must establish and maintain a budgeting and reporting framework that is consistent with the principles of sound financial management.

#### Key Financial information:

##### Income Statement (Attachment 1)

The Income Statement measures how well Council has performed from an operating nature. It reports revenues and expenditure from the activities and functions undertaken, with the net effect being a surplus or deficit. Capital expenditure is excluded from this statement, as it is reflected in the Balance Sheet.

Attachment 1 shows that Council generated \$27.841 million in revenue and \$17.647 million in expenses to 31 December 2024. This has resulted in an operating surplus of \$10.194 million for the six months ended 31 December 2024.

##### Income

**Rates and charges** account for 50% of the total budgeted income for 2024/25. Rates and charges are recognised when the rates have been raised, not when the income has been received. An amount of \$17.670 million has been recognised as income for the six months ended 31 December 2024.

**User fees** account for 4% of the total budgeted income for 2024/25 and \$0.963 million has been received to 31 December 2024. The majority of this relates to transfer station fees, fitness centre income and commercial waste management charges.

**Recurrent Operating Grants** total \$7.936 million to 31 December 2024, including \$4.402 million from the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission for general purpose grants and \$2.856 million for the local roads grants.

**Non-recurrent Operating Grants** total \$0.246 million to 31 December 2024. Council has been successful in obtaining several grants that had not been budgeted for, as detailed in the table below. The amounts shown as unearned income will be treated as income in future accounting periods once the performance obligations of the grant have been met.



<b>Non-Recurrent Operating Grants</b>	<b>Budget 2024/25 \$'000</b>	<b>Income 2024/25 \$'000</b>	<b>Unearned Income \$'000</b>
Ararat Housing Transition	-	-	300
Digital Twin Victoria	-	-	954
Free Public WiFi Services	-	-	1,196
Supported Playgroups	65	16	-
Ararat Rural City Sport, Active Recreation & Open Space Strategy	-	-	36
Tiny Towns Fund - Pomonal Community Hub	-	-	200
Tiny Towns Fund - Buangor Recreation Reserve Pavillion Redevelopment	-	-	25
Natural Disaster Relief	-	98	-
Other Minor Grants (under \$30,000)	-	67	-
	<b>65</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>2711</b>

**Non-recurrent Capital Grants** have not been received in the six months to 31 December 2024, as detailed in the table below. The amounts shown as unearned income will be treated as income in future accounting periods once the performance obligations of the grant have been met.

<b>Non-Recurrent Capital Grants</b>	<b>Budget 2024/25 \$'000</b>	<b>Income 2024/25 \$'000</b>	<b>Unearned Income \$'000</b>
Mt William Road reconstruction	5,000	-	-
Buangor-Ben Nevis Road reconstruction	843	-	-
Pedestrian Infrastructure Program	-	-	70
Tatyoan Oval Upgrade Grant	-	225	-
	<b>5,843</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>70</b>

#### Note

It is important to note the following:

1. Unearned revenue received in prior years has been adjusted between the Original Budget and Current Budget with an additional \$2.936 million for Grants Operating (non-recurrent), \$0.366 million for Grants Capital (recurrent) and \$0.070 million for Grants Capital (non-recurrent) included in the Current Budget on the assumption that each of the grant projects will be completed during the 2024/25 financial year.
2. These changes in the budget, plus the note reported under expenses, create a change in the reported surplus position from a projected surplus of \$8.163 million to a surplus of \$9.205 million for 2024/25. The year-end variance is a deficit of \$1.320 million when the actual year to date expenses are compared to the year to date budget.

#### Expenses

**Employee Costs** account for approximately 40% of the total budgeted expenditure for 2024/25. For the six months ended 31 December 2024 Council has incurred \$6.071 million in employee costs, which includes additional wages of \$0.090 million for emergency management relief and recovery. Workcover premiums have increased by \$0.104 million compared to 2023/24.

**Materials and Services** account for approximately 29% of the total budgeted expenditure for 2024/25. For the six months ended 31 December 2024, Council has incurred \$6.371 million in materials and services costs. There are a number of projects, including those carried forward from 2023/24 that are expected to be completed before the end of the financial year.

**Depreciation** totals \$4.873 million to 31 December 2024. The higher than budgeted depreciation has resulted from increased asset valuations being received as at 30 June 2024 after the budget was finalised.



**Note**

It is important to note the following:

There has been an increase in expenditure on materials and services from \$8.259 million in the Original Budget to \$10.589 million in the Current Budget for 2024/25. This has resulted from a carry forward amount of \$2.330 million from the 2023/24 financial year surplus and unspent grant funds which will be used for additional activity in 2024/25.

**Balance Sheet (Attachment 2)**

The Balance Sheet is one of the main financial statements and reports Council’s assets, liabilities and equity at a given date, in this case 31 December 2024. Comparative figures have been provided as at 30 June 2024.

Council’s current assets have increased by \$8.145 million from \$11.732 million as at 30 June 2024 to \$19.877 million as at 31 December 2024. Cash and cash equivalents have increased by \$0.629 million from \$3.049 million to \$3.678 million. Trade and other receivables have increased by \$10.895 million from \$5.212 million as at 30 June 2024 to \$16.107 million as at 31 December 2024.

Total liabilities have decreased from \$8.777 million in 2023/24 to \$7.226 million in 2024/25. Trade and other payables have decreased by \$0.525 million and trust funds and deposits have decreased by \$0.215 million. Unearned income/revenue decreased by \$0.591 million, which includes grants received by Council, where in accordance with accounting standards, they are held as a liability until grant-related performance obligations have been met.

**Statement of Cash Flows (Attachment 3)**

The Statement of Cash Flows shows how changes in the Statement of Financial Position and Income Statement affect Cash and Cash Equivalents, and breaks down the analysis to operating activities, investing activities and financing activities.

The Cash and Cash Equivalents at the beginning of the financial year of \$3.049 million have increased by \$0.629 million to \$3.678 million as at 31 December 2024.

Net cash of \$3.209 million was provided by operating activities, \$2.326 million was used in investing activities, and \$0.253 million was used in financing activities.

Investing activities includes payments for property, plant and equipment, and infrastructure.

**Financial Performance Indicators (Attachment 4)**

The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework requires Councils to report various performance indicators at the end of each financial year.

A full list of financial performance indicators is included in Attachment 4.

Indicator	30/6/2024	30/9/2024	31/12/2024
<p><b>Working capital</b>  <i>Measure - Current assets compared to current liabilities.</i>                      Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework 100% to 400%                      Indicator of the broad objective that sufficient working capital is available to pay bills as and when they fall due. High or increasing level of working capital suggests an improvement in liquidity</p>	162%	392%	350%

Indicator	30/6/2024	30/9/2024	31/12/2024
<p><b>Loans and borrowings</b>  <i>Measure - Loans and borrowings compared to rates.</i>                      Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - 0% to 70%                      Indicator of the broad objective that the level of interest-bearing loans and borrowings should be appropriate to the size and nature of a council's activities. Low or decreasing level of loans and borrowings suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations</p>	1.71%	1.53%	1.30%
<p><b>Indebtedness</b>  <i>Measure - Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue</i>                      Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - 2% to 70%                      Indicator of the broad objective that the level of long-term liabilities should be appropriate to the size and nature of a Council's activities. Low or decreasing level of long-term liabilities suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations</p>	7.49%	8.48%	8.14%
<p><b>Rates concentration</b>  <i>Measure - Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue</i>                      Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - 30% to 80%                      Indicator of the broad objective that revenue should be generated from a range of sources. High or increasing range of revenue sources suggests an improvement in stability</p>	73.82%	66.99%	64.04%
<p><b>Expenditure level</b>  <i>Measure - Expenses per property assessment</i>                      Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework \$2,000 to \$10,000                      Indicator of the broad objective that resources should be used efficiently in the delivery of services. Low or decreasing level of expenditure suggests an improvement in organisational efficiency</p>	\$4,592	\$1,238	\$2,374
<p><b>Indicator - Revenue level</b>  <i>Measure - Average residential rate per residential property assessment</i>                      Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - \$700 to \$2,000                      Indicator of the broad objective that resources should be used efficiently in the delivery of services. Low or decreasing level of rates suggests an improvement in organisational efficiency</p>	\$1,993	\$2,001	\$2,001

Indicator	30/6/2024	30/9/2024	31/12/2024
<p><b>Indicator - Percentage of total rates collected</b></p> <p>The internal audit conducted in 2019 on Rates Revenue and Rate Debtor Management found no routine or regular reporting of large and long outstanding rates debtors.</p> <p>The outstanding Rates Debtors is reported in the Annual Financial report.</p> <p>As at 31 December 2024 the outstanding Rates Debtors totalled \$13.704 million compared to \$2.320 million as at 30 June 2024, an increase of \$11.384 million. In percentage terms 31.9% of the rates raised have been collected at 31 December 2024 compared to 31.5% up to 31 December 2023.</p> <p>Outstanding rates are currently charged 10% interest. Council issues approximately 7,900 rate notices. In 2024/25 there are 2,158 assessments paying by instalments compared with 2,640 assessments in 2023/24.</p>	88.1%	18.1%	31.9%
<p><b>Indicator - Asset Renewal &amp; Upgrade</b></p> <p><i>Measure - Asset renewal &amp; Upgrade compared to depreciation</i></p> <p>Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - 40% to 130%</p> <p>Assessment of whether council assets are being renewed or upgraded as planned. It compares the rate of spending on existing assets through renewing, restoring, replacing or upgrading existing assets with depreciation. Ratios higher than 1.0 indicate there is a lesser risk of insufficient spending on Council's asset base.</p>	124.63%	108.83%	108.50%

The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework provides "Expected ranges" for each indicator. The framework has been developed to consider results at the end of the financial year so some results during the year are outside the expected range due to the timing of receipts and payments.

Explanations are provided in Attachment 4 for those indicators that are outside the "expected ranges".

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

*Alignment to Council Plan Strategic 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

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

### **Budget implications**

Council's financial performance is in line with expectations. Council's cash position was expected to reduce in the first quarter to pay for the outstanding accounts at year end. Lump sum payment of rates are due on 15 February 2025.

### **Policy / Relevant Law**

Section 97 - Quarterly Budget Report of the Local Government Act 2020 states:

1. As soon as practicable after the end of each quarter of the financial year, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a quarterly budget report is presented to the Council at a Council meeting which is open to the public.
2. A quarterly budget report must include–
  - a. a comparison of the actual and budgeted results to date; and
  - b. an explanation of any material variations; and
  - c. any other matters prescribed by the regulations.
3. In addition, the second quarterly report of a financial year must include a statement by the Chief Executive Officer as to whether a revised budget is, or may be, required.

### **Sustainability Implications**

This report does not raise any sustainability implications.

### **Risk Assessment**

Council is required to establish and maintain a budgeting and reporting framework that is consistent with the principles of sound management and this report assists Council in meeting that requirement.

### **Innovation and Continuous Improvements**

The content of the Quarterly report is continually reviewed to ensure meaningful data is provided.

### **Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement**

Council's financial performance reports will now be published monthly.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the:**

- 1 Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Financial Performance Indicators for the period ended 31 December 2024 be received and adopted.**

### **Attachments**

Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Financial Performance Indicators are provided as Attachment 3.4

### 3.5 MCCROWS ROAD BRIDGE

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CIVIL ENGINEER  
**DEPARTMENT:** ENGINEERING  
**REFERENCE:** 19066

**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.

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### DISCUSSION

Following routine inspections conducted in September and October, it was identified that McCrows Bridge required further assessment by a specialist bridge engineer to evaluate its condition. Closer examination showed signs of additional structural deterioration observed beneath the bridge. These findings raise concerns about the overall integrity of the bridge, necessitating further evaluation and potential remediation to ensure safety and functionality.

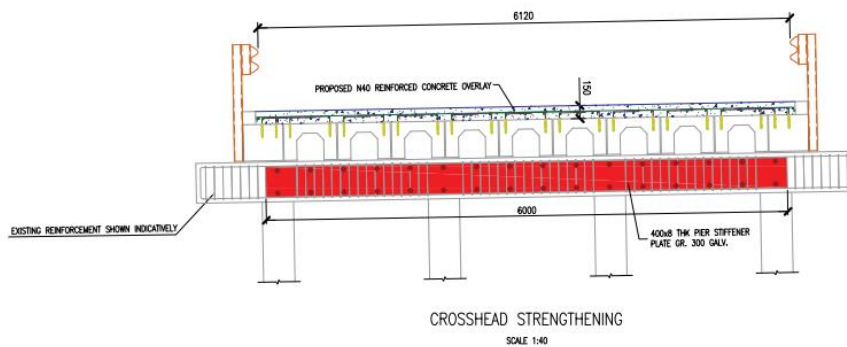
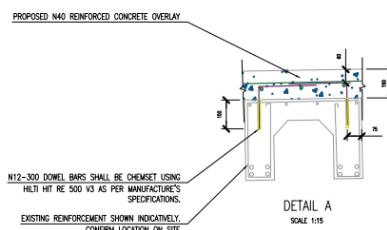
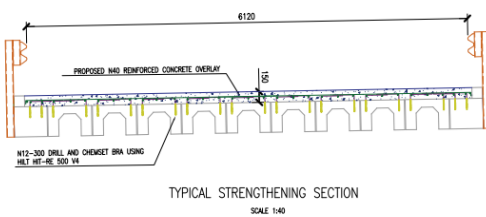
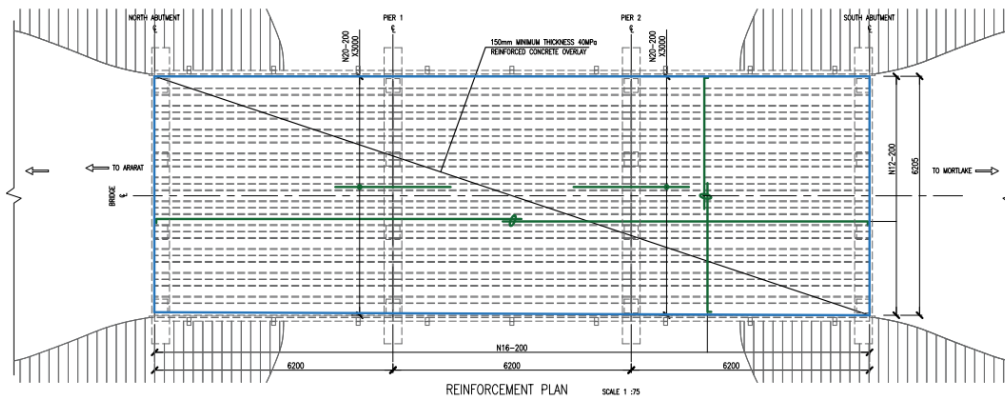
Advanced Structural Consultancy (ASC) is a specialist in Level 3 Bridge Inspections, which have had a number of high priority results implemented which include:

- Council should implement a 15 tonne load limit to reduce further risk of damage to the bridge. (This was mainly due to the U-slab deck system not able to distribute the weight of vehicles evenly across the bridge.)
- Council monitor concrete spalling until rectification of the pier crossheads and the edge beams.
- Reposition U-slab to its original position
- Repair all concrete spalling and corroded reinforcement
- Reinstate stopper by dowelling into the existing crosshead.
- Damaged Guard Rail should be replaced in accordance with VicRoads Standards.

To improve the bridge up to the standard that the community requires, two bridge design options have been provided by ASC which include:

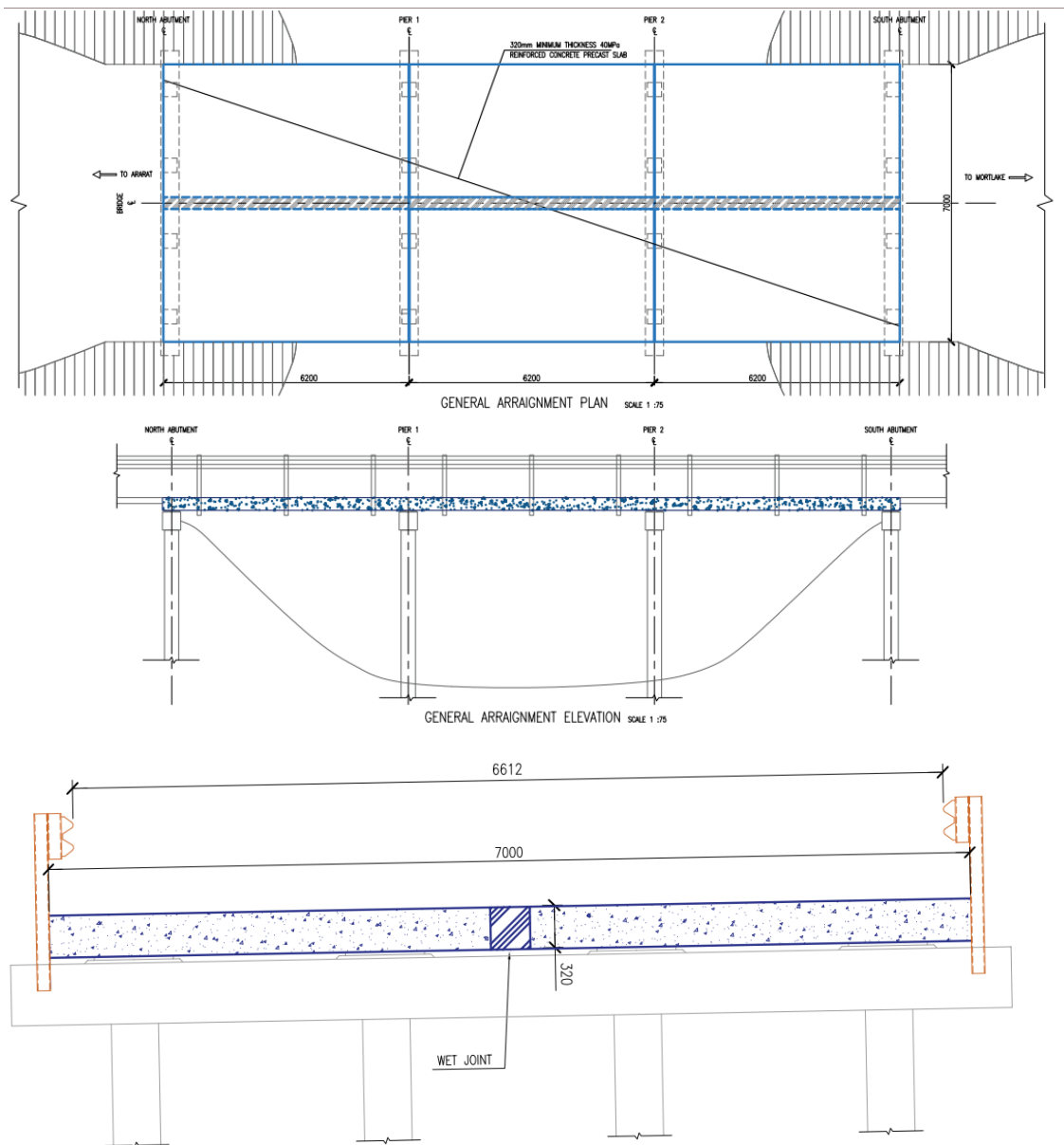
#### **Option 1: Bridge deck overlay with crosshead bracing**

- Cost estimate \$125,000 (20% margin from actual calculated)
- Estimate 3-4 weeks work for crew of 2-3 (varying depending on activities)
- Can achieve 75% of SM1600 standard loads (will be able to accommodate B-double, cranes, etc)
- Bridge deck width unchanged



### Option 2: Deck replacement with precast panels

- Cost estimate \$ 200,000 (20% margin from actual calculated, with potential for lower costs through local precast suppliers)
- Estimate 3 weeks work for crew of 2-3 (varying depending on activities)
- Can achieve 100% of SM1600 standard loads
- Bridge deck width can be increased by between 0.5m - 1m (to be confirmed at detailed design).
- Will require crane to assist with removal of existing beams and installation of new panels.
- Longer service life due to elimination of deteriorated bridge beams and use of engineered concrete components.



The recommended design and repair option is option 2 which will upgrade the bridge to a full SM1600 load rating and increasing the life of the bridge with the elimination of deteriorated bridge beams and use of engineered concrete components

The bridge is on the National Heavy Vehicle Register and is a vital route economically for the region. The community around the area use this route as it accesses the Glenelg Highway between Westmere and Lake Bolac creating a much more efficient route to GrainCorp in Westmere or CHS Broadbent in Lake Bolac.

These works are able to be undertaken as a part of Council's Roads to Recovery funding stream, and require Council approval to proceed.



## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

*Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives*

### **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.

### ***Budget implications***

Works for the McCrows Road Bridge to be funded through Council's Road to Recovery Program

### ***Policy/Relevant Law***

ARCC Road Management Plan

### ***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***

It is considered low risk that the bridge will fail under b-double loading, however, due to the safety factors of all the new standards it is recommended the load limit and speed reduction be implemented until the upgrade works can be completed.

### ***Innovation and Continuous Improvement***

The design option offered uses up to date technology and engineering processes.

### ***Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement***

Repair timeframes have been considered in consultation with the surrounding landowners and community representatives.

## RECOMMENDATION

**That:**

- 1. Council approve implementation of Option 2 for the upgrade of McCrows Road Bridge**
- 2. Council approve the expenditure for works on McCrows Road Bridge through the emergency provisions of the Roads to Recovery funding program**

## ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments relating to this item



### 3.6 NON-CURRENT ASSETS ACCOUNTING & VALUATION POLICY

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** FINANCIAL SERVICES COORDINATOR  
**DEPARTMENT:** FINANCE  
**REFERENCE:** 19067

#### **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.

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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Ararat Rural City Council has a responsibility to financially represent its network of assets to fair value. This policy updates the existing Valuations Policy – Major Asset classes, and outlines the valuation approach taken to value Non-Current Assets including land, buildings, roads, bridges and major culverts, pathways, drainage, kerb and channel, and plant and equipment.

This report will detail the policy requirements to complete the valuation requirements of Council across the financial year and provides guidelines for meeting the compliance requirements of the current legislation and the Australian Accounting Standards, and requires Council approval for implementation.

#### **DISCUSSION**

The objective of the Non-Current Asset and Accounting and Valuation Policy are as follows:

- Ensure compliance with prescribed legislation and Accounting Standards.
- Prescribe the financial Non-Current Asset classifications that will be adopted for financial statement reporting.
- Prescribe accounting treatment for acquisition (including purchase, self-construction and contribution), depreciation, amortisation, impairment and disposal and write off for financial accounting purposes.
- Prescribe accounting treatment for subsequent expenditures on Non-Current Assets after initial recognition; including when to expense or capitalise Non-Current Asset maintenance, enhancements or renewal.
- Prescribe the valuation methodology to be used in valuing Non-Current Assets for financial accounting purposes.
- Prescribe the circumstances including accounting treatment when to derecognise a Non-Current Asset
- Prescribe the disclosure requirements for financial statement reporting.
- Prescribe the responsibilities of custodians in terms of security and physical control of Non-Current Assets, including Non-Current Asset stock take requirements.
- Prescribe the requirements to ensure Asset Management registers are complete, accurate and up to date.
- Prescribe the requirements of actively managing work in progress (WIP) and capital projects.
- Formalise the conceptual relationship between the corporate Non-Current Asset accounting register and underlying asset management systems and miscellaneous Non-Current Asset registers.
- Prescribe generic Non-Current Asset hierarchy.

#### **KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

##### ***Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives***

*6. Strong and Effective Governance.*

### **Budget Implications**

There are no budget implications in relation to the adoption of the Non-Current Asset Accounting and Valuation Policy.

### **Policy/Relevant Law**

- Local Government Act 2020
- Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014
- Australian Accounting Standards:
  - AASB 5 Non-current Assets Held for Sale and Discontinued Operations
  - AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement
  - AASB 16 Leases
  - AASB 101 Presentation of Financial Statements
  - AASB 116 Property, Plant & Equipment
  - AASB 136 Impairment of Assets
  - AASB 137 Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets
  - AASB 138 Intangible Assets
  - AASB 1031 Materiality
  - AASB 1051 Land Under Roads
  - AASB 1059 Service Concession Arrangements
- Asset Management Plans
- Risk Management Policy

### **Sustainability Implications**

The Non-Current Asset Accounting and Valuation Policy will ensure compliance with economic requirements and financial reporting.

### **Risk Assessment**

If the Non-Current Assets Accounting and Valuation Policy is not updated Council is at risk of not meeting the compliance requirements of legislation and the Australian Accounting Standards.

### **Innovation and Continuous Improvement**

None Identified

### **Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement**

The revised Non-Current Asset Accounting and Valuations Policy has been created through collaboration with Council's Asset Management operations and the Finance Department and Council's Asset Valuations Contractor.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That:**

- 1 Council adopts the Non-Current Assets Accounting and Valuation Policy**

## **ATTACHMENTS**

The Non-Current Assets Accounting and Valuation Policy is provided as Attachment 3.6

## SECTION 4 - INFORMATION REPORTS

### 4.1 COMMUNITY ASSET COMMITTEE HALF YEARLY REPORT

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO's OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 19068

#### **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.

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#### **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.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Chief Executive Officer Update:

I have attended a variety of different meetings of Council's CACs over the past six 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 development of current facilities.

The bushfires in the Grampians National Park in December have again impacted the community of Pomonal as well as Moyston and Willaura and have highlighted the importance of community assets and facilities and relationships within our smaller communities.

Bushfire Community Information sessions were held at the Moyston Hall, Moyston Recreation Reserve, Willaura Hall and Pomonal Hall. Moyston Recreation Reserve has served as the staging area for CFA & FFMV as they continued to work on the fire still burning into January.

The Pomonal Hall continues to be used as the Pomonal Community Relief Hub for the February 2024 fires and now the December 2024/January 2025 fires. Council and community groups continue to work 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 as an attachment show that the Committee members have been very busy over the past six months, with general maintenance requirements, event preparation and future planning for their facilities.

Community Asset Committee	Meetings held during the report period	Meetings advised	scheduled
Alexandra Hall	25 July 2024 (AGM & ordinary), 21 November 2024	27 March 2025, 24 July 2025	(AGM & Ordinary)
Buangor Community Sports Centre	10 July 2024, 14 August 2024, 11 September 2024, 9 October 2024 (AGM & ordinary), 6 November 2024, 4 December 2024 (minutes not supplied)	Monthly meetings	scheduled.
Elmhurst Public Hall	13 November 2024 (AGM minutes not supplied)		
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	13 August 2024, 12 November 2024 (AGM & ordinary)		
Pomonal Hall and Recreation Reserve	4 September 2024 (AGM), 6 November 2024	Monthly meetings	scheduled
Streatham Memorial Hall	No meetings held.	No meetings	scheduled
Tatyoorn Hall and Recreation Reserve	24 July 2024, 11 September 2024 (AGM)		
Warrak Public Hall	2 December 2024 (AGM)	No meetings	scheduled
Wickliffe Recreation Reserve	No meetings held.	No meetings	scheduled
Willaura Memorial Hall	3 October 2024 (AGM & ordinary)	Bi-monthly meetings	scheduled
Willaura Recreation Reserve	15 July 2024 (AGM), 21 October 2024, 16 December 2024	Monthly meetings	scheduled
Yalla-Y-Poorra Community Centre	No meetings held.	No meetings	scheduled

## 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
- 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).

**Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement**

The Chief Executive Officer has attended the majority of Community Asset Committees since the last report in June 2024.

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

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That:**

- 1. the Community Asset Committee Half Year Report be received.**

**ATTACHMENTS**

Community Asset Committee Meeting Minutes provided as Attachment 4.1

## 4.2 2024/2025 CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM - DECEMBER 2024

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO'S OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 19070

### **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.

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Council has approved its 2024/2025 Capital Works Program as a pivotal component of the current budget. With a substantial capital works investment totaling \$15.513 million, the budget primarily targets infrastructure enhancements.

Key initiatives include:

- Mount William Road Stage Two Construction - supported by Federal Government funding.
- Buangor Ben Nevis Road Stage One Construction - beginning from the Western Highway section for approximately 1.5 kilometres
- Urban Gravel to Seal Road Upgrades continuing to upgrade accessibility across urban areas.
- Maintenance of Footpaths, Drainage, and Kerb and Channel

These projects underscore the Council's commitment to improving local infrastructure and fostering community development in the 2024/2025 fiscal year.

### **DISCUSSION**

Council's 2024/2025 Capital Works Program marks a significant shift from previous years, reintroducing larger road and bridge construction projects post-pandemic. The program's budget has increased by \$6 million, with substantial state and federal funding, alongside smaller targeted works.

The focus for 2024/2025 remains on renewing and updating Council assets, leveraging in-house capabilities, and supporting local employment and contractors.

Key areas include:

- Enhanced road reseal program
- Urban drainage improvements
- Footpath network upgrades
- Major urban road gravel to seal program
- Stage two of Mt William Road Reconstruction
- Three Roads to Recovery funded projects (Churchill Avenue, Webb Street, Buangor Ben Nevis Road bridge)

Budget Status:

As of 31 December, 2025, 32% of the budget is spent, with end-of-month invoices pending.

Buangor Ben Nevis Road plans are complete, and commencement of stage two of Mt William Road are ready to commence, pending cultural heritage and flora and fauna reports.

With the Yarram Gap Road fires it is likely that our capital works budget will again be affected with emergency works being a priority in early 2025. Construction on Churchill Avenue has commenced this month.

	Budget	Committed/ Contracted	Expended	%	Notes
<b>PROPERTY - CAPITAL</b>					
Property Capital	<b>\$270,000</b>		\$150,859	57%	Works have been completed for the resurfacing of the Pomonal Tennis Courts, replacement of windows at the Town Hall in the Arts & Crafts Room, painting of the Maroona Rec Reserve and new touch screen kiosks.
Ararat Library Upgrade	<b>\$200,000</b>	\$82,875	\$95,053	48%	All ordering has been completed for the works of the Library Upgrade works are expected to be undertaken in February 2025.
Tatyoan Oval, Drainage, Irrigation & Resurfacing	<b>\$333,500</b> <b>\$83,500</b> <b>Council</b> <b>\$250,000</b> <b>CFNP</b>	\$88,230	\$235,750	71%	Aqualines Irrigation Pty Ltd are currently completing the works with all trenches and irrigation installed and the connection of a new tank and pump, works are expected to be complete in late January 2025.
<b>TOTAL PROPERTY</b>		<b>\$200,921</b>	<b>\$481,662</b>	<b>60%</b>	
<b>PLANT &amp; EQUIPMENT</b>					
Book stock - Library Book Replacement	<b>\$40,000</b>	-	\$20,422	51%	
<b>TOTAL PLANT &amp; EQUIPMENT</b>			<b>\$20,422</b>	<b>51%</b>	
<b>ROADS</b>					
Gravel Road Sheeting, Widening & Alternative Sealing	<b>\$1,800,000</b>	-	\$1,176,564	65%	Resheeting, widening and alternative seal works have been completed on a number of roads including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tatyoan North Road</li> <li>• Mt William Road</li> <li>• Webbs Road</li> <li>• Rockies Hill Road</li> <li>• Coopers Road</li> <li>• Astons Road (Shoulders)</li> <li>• Tunnel Road</li> <li>• Moyston Township</li> </ul>
Reseal Program	<b>\$1,000,000</b>	-	\$847,113	85%	Reseal works are 85% complete for the current financial year.
Mt William Road (24/25 - HSVPP Funding)	<b>\$6,250,000</b>	-	\$2,216	-	These works will commence on receipt of final cultural heritage management plan reporting.
Buangor Ben Nevis Road	<b>\$2,143,000</b>	\$68,522	\$102,860	5%	Plans and technical reporting have been completed. Council is working with Australian Cultural Heritage Services to complete CHMP Due Diligence and plan requirements. The complex site testing has been completed with a meeting with traditional owners expected by the end of the month. This should then move the final approval of the plan.  Construction in segmented areas should be able to progress once that area has been documented and approved.



Weighbridge Place, Lake Bolac		\$74,900	\$691		Asphalting works at Weighbridge Place are to be undertaken by SHS Civil, works will not commence until the completion of grain season.  The intersection with Mortlake Ararat Road is in poor condition and require the upgrade to withstand the heavy vehicle that use the area.
Churchill Avenue, Ararat	<b>\$800,000</b>	\$2,750	\$32,595	4%	Design works have been completed, footpath are expected to commence at the start of December on footpath works.
Webb Street, Ararat	<b>\$700,000</b>	\$3,700	\$9,997	1%	Design works are complete, and work will be completed in-house. Discussions are being undertaken with GWM Water with relation to the water main and the ability to replace this as a part of the reconstruction works.
Urban Road Gravel to Seal	<b>\$700,00</b>		\$852,717	122%	Works are currently being completed at various urban locations with kerb and channel and drainage being installed including Bailey Lane, Currajong Ave/McLellan Street, Mulcahy Road and Young Street.  Multiple design works are being finished for the coming years programs.
Major Patching	<b>\$100,000</b>	\$	\$68,453	68%	Priority works have been completed in November 24. Additional works are being prepared for the next works to be undertaken.
Bridges	<b>\$80,000</b>	\$13,927	\$84,081	105%	Investigations into the works required for the Buangor Ben Nevis Road Bridge 1 project are underway. Other bridge strengthening works are being investigated and estimated for upcoming programs.
Footpath Renewal Program	<b>\$400,000</b>	\$250,754	\$159,063	40%	Council's footpath program has commenced with Barkly/Queen Street Asphalt Path, and Maude Street Path, both under construction. Other costs within this budget include works on Tunnel Track, Pomonal which was a funded project. Internal concreting works have been commenced in December 24.
Urban Drainage Works	<b>\$750,000</b>		\$359,552	48%	Drainage works are progressing with works currently completed at Ararat Cemetery and Thompson and Kneale Street. Works on the main drain are being compiled for completion.  The Queen Street Stormwater Project has also been completed.
Kerb and Channel	<b>\$239,000</b>		\$80,368	34%	Works on the Walkerville and Wileman Street project in Willaura have recommenced with following works undertaken by GWM Water replacing a asbestos pipe in the works area.



Miscellaneous			\$127,387		These works include finalisation of works at Gordon Street Reserve and small projects carried over from previous years.
<b>TOTAL INFRASTRUCTURE</b>		<b>\$494,710</b>	<b>\$4,565,128</b>	31%	
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL WORKS</b>		<b>\$695,631</b>	<b>\$5,067,212</b>	32%	

There are also projects that were funded in the 2023/2024 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:

	Budget	Previous y Expende d Funds	Committed /Contracte d	Total Expended	%	Notes
Mt William Road	<b>\$1,000,000</b>	\$313,911	\$110,727	\$852,277	83%	Work commenced in late May 2024.  The works have been set out, tree and stabilising works have been completed. There was significant soft spots found within the area and these have been remedied.  Final works include class A stone and sealing works.
Buangor Recreation Reserve Kitchen Extension		\$53,849		\$167		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.  Funding has been received as part of the Tiny Towns Funding Program which will help progress Stage 1 of this project.  Council is currently undertaking quotation works with a local commercial builder to try to progress these works.

## 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 2024/2025 Capital Works Program represents a significant element of Council's 2024/2025 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 2024/2025 Capital Works Program complies with the program funded in the 2024/2025 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 2024/2025 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 2024/2025 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 2024/2025 Capital Works Program has been developed as an element of the 2024/2025 Budget. There was extensive community engagement undertaken prior to adoption.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That**

- 1. Council receive the Capital Works Program - December 2024 report.**

**ATTACHMENTS**

There are no attachments relating to this item

## SECTION 5 - INFORMAL MEETINGS

### 5.1 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.

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#### 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 22 January 2025

#### Matters discussed at the briefing:

- December 2024 fires
- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Transfer Stations
- 2025/2026 Budget, and Revenue and Rating Plan Development and Engagement Plan
- Community Vision and Council Plan Development and Engagement Plan
- Quarterly Performance Report
- Kennel Road Gravel to Seal - Community Petition
- McCrows Road Bridge
- Capital Works Report - December 2024
- Compliance issues update
- Planning issue update
- Green Hill lake Management
- Orchid House
- Planning approvals under delegation
- Building approvals
- Federal Government Housing Support Program Grant
- Community Asset Committee Half yearly report
- Non-current Assets Accounting & Valuation Policy

## 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**

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 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**

**the Informal Meetings of Councillors Report be received.**

## ATTACHMENTS

The Summary of Council Briefings are provided as Attachment 5.1.

**SECTION 6 - COMMITTEE MINUTES/REPORTS**

No Committee Minutes/Reports received

## **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:

**No Confidential Agenda Items**