



Ararat Rural City

AGENDA

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 25 February 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 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 be accepted.

1.4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 28 January 2025 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: 19598

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 have received a petition from the residents of Kennel Road, Ararat, requesting that the road be sealed. Kennel Road would make up part of future Capital Works Program under the Urban Gravel to Seal program.

DISCUSSION

Kennel Road, Ararat is zoned as rural residential area with 347 lineal meters of gravel road with a dead end at the eastern end of the site. The gravel road infrastructure and natural drainage is in line with similar locations within the municipality, and council provides regular tree and road maintenance. Kennel Road has eight properties and approximately 25 vehicle movements per day, which is considered low for residential roadways.



Figure 1 - Kennel Road looking west.



Figure 2 - Kennel Road looking east.



Figure 3 - Google Maps View - Kennel Road, Ararat

Following the receipt of the residents petition, council's Civil Engineer and Civil Works Coordinator have undertaken an inspection of the road and advised that it would not be suitable for an OTTA seal and would require proper design and construction works being undertaken.

The works required include:

- Design work
 - There is minimal native vegetation
 - 4 x underground power locations
- New guard rail near waterway

- Full drainage installation - currently non-existing - 8-12 culverts at property entries
- Hot mix at the turning point at the end of the road for garbage trucks etc to turn.
- Mapping has confirmed that there is no cultural heritage for the waterway as it is not an overlaid area.
- The waterway permit may still apply.

To support stronger strategic planning of future gravel to seal works council officers will work to implement a criteria and matrix process to provide a suitable framework for the prioritisation of future gravel to seal projects in line with budget allocations and compliance with the road management plan.

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

These works should be scheduled as part of the Urban Gravel to Seal program once design and estimation works have been completed.

Policy / Relevant Law

Road Management Plan

Sustainability Implications

Future sealing of Kennel Road will improve the life cycle and maintenance requirements of the road providing economic implications for Council and better road conditions and safety measures for the residents in the area.

Risk Assessment

Low risk - further assessment and mitigation will be undertaken as a part of the project development.

Innovation and Continuous Improvements

Council's gravel to seal program in a driver of continuous improvement of Council's assets and ensuring the most current technology is being used to implement the works.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

A petition for this work has been presented to Council from residents of Kennel Road, Ararat.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. **That Council consider Kennel Road, gravel to seal works in future works programs**
2. **That Council officers create a road matrix and criteria to prioritise future gravel to seal works, this matrix is to be presented to the April 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 DISABILITY DROP OFF ZONE IN BARKLY STREET, ARARAT

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 19599

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

Ensuring accessibility for all members of the community is a fundamental aspect of an inclusive and functional public space. Establishing a designated disability drop-off area in Barkly Street is crucial for improving safety, convenience, and accessibility for individuals with disabilities and their carers. This report outlines the key reasons for implementing such a space and the benefits it will provide.

DISCUSSION

A designated area for disability vans and maxi taxis to safely unload their clients is essential for reducing hazards associated with on-street drop-offs. Without a dedicated space, vehicles may be forced to stop in unsafe locations, creating potential risks for passengers, pedestrians, and other road users. A clearly marked drop-off zone will ensure that:

- Passengers can exit vehicles safely with adequate space for mobility aids.
- Transport providers can assist clients without obstructing traffic flow.
- The risk of accidents or injuries due to hurried or improper unloading is minimized.

Strategic Location: Bend Outside Quinn & Co Eyewear. This is currently designated as a motorcycle parking area but this location is ideal as a designated disability drop off zone for several reasons:

- **Visibility and Accessibility:** The bend provides a natural stopping point that is visible to approaching traffic, ensuring drivers remain cautious.
- **Ease of Use:** This location allows for easy access to the footpath, enabling a smooth transition from vehicle to pedestrian pathways.
- **Proximity to Essential Services:** The central location ensures individuals with disabilities can conveniently reach nearby shops, medical facilities, and service providers.

Central Placement in the Main Street

Positioning the drop-off zone centrally in the main street will maximize its effectiveness. A central location means:

- **Improved Community Integration:** People with disabilities will have greater access to local businesses and public facilities, fostering inclusivity and independence.
- **Convenience for Transport Services:** Public and private disability transport services will have a designated and predictable location for drop-offs, streamlining their operations.
- **Reduced Congestion:** A designated area will help prevent impromptu stops that can disrupt traffic flow and create bottlenecks.

Implementing a designated disability drop-off area in Barkly Street, particularly at the bend outside Quinn & Co Eyewear, is a necessary step towards improving accessibility, safety, and community engagement. This initiative will not only enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities but also contribute to a more inclusive and well-organized urban environment. Stakeholders, including local government, business

owners, and transport providers, should collaborate to bring this proposal to fruition for the benefit of all community members.

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.
- 5. Enhancing Community Life

Budget implications

This work will be budgeted through the capital works program for 2025/2026.

Policy / Relevant Law

Road Management Plan
Fair Access Policy
Universal Design processes

Sustainability Implications

This will provide greater accessibility to the CBD for people with accessibility requirements providing safety for all users.

Risk Assessment

Low risk - further assessment and mitigation will be undertaken as a part of the project development.

Innovation and Continuous Improvements

Implementation of new accessible parking spaces is a continuous improvement to the CBD area of Ararat.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Engagement will be undertaken as part of the design process with property owners and other stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1. Council proceeds to the design phase for the Disability drop off zone following engagement with Barkly Street retail traders and the community**

ATTACHMENTS

A Street View image and map of suggested location in Barkly Street for the Disability drop off zone is provided as Attachment 3.1

3.2 EMERGENCY SERVICES & VOLUNTEERS FUND MAV STATE COUNCIL MOTION

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO OFFICE
REFERENCE: 19600

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

From 1 July 2025, the Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL) will be replaced by the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF). For most property sector types in the Ararat Rural City, the ESVF is close to double the existing FSPL rate (cents per \$1,000 CIV). For Primary Production properties, the rate is nearly tripled.

While Council acknowledges the importance of adequate funding for emergency services, Council proposes to condemn the ESVF for the following key reasons:

- The disproportionate impact of the ESVF on primary producers
- The obscenely steep increase imposed onto all ratepayers
- The ongoing expectation that local councils act as the collection agency for a state-imposed tax

Council also proposes to submit a Motion to the Municipal Association of Victoria’s (MAV) State Council meeting occurring on 16 May 2025 to condemn the ESVF.

DISCUSSION

Ararat Rural City Council fully recognises the need to adequately fund emergency services. We have experienced 3 major bushfires in a 12 month period in Pomonal and Buangor in February 2024 and the more recent Grampians Yarram Gap Road bushfire. Ararat Rural City also experiences severe floods and storms, and in the last 15 years we have experienced 13 declared Australian disasters.

However, the Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund (ESVF) variable rate for Primary Production properties is nearly 3 times the Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL) rate (see table below). The exorbitant impost on primary producers penalises the very people who make the biggest contribution to the emergency relief and response efforts in regional and rural areas.

Sector	Current FSPL Rates (2024-25)			Future ESVF Rates (2025-26)			\$ Increase			% Increase			
	Variable rate (cents per \$1,000 CIV)	Average Variable liability (\$)	Fixed charge (\$)	Variable rate (cents per \$1,000 CIV)	Average Variable liability (\$)	Fixed charge (\$)	Variable rate (cents per \$1,000 CIV)	Average Variable liability (\$)	Fixed charge (\$)	Variable rate (cents per \$1,000 CIV)	Average Variable liability (\$)	Fixed charge (\$)	
Residential	8.7	33	132	17.3	65	136	8.60	32.00	\$4.00	↑	99%	97%	3%
Commercial	66.4	409	267	133	797	276	66.60	388.00	\$9.00		100%	95%	3%
Industrial	81.1	302	267	133	465	276	51.90	163.00	\$9.00		64%	54%	3%
Primary Production	28.7	770	267	83	2229	276	54.30	1459.00	\$9.00		189%	189%	3%
Public Benefit	5.7	222	267	5.7	220	276	0.00	-2.00	\$9.00		0%	-1%	3%
Vacant	29	51	267	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	NA	N/A	

In dollar terms, the Ararat Rural City Council collected approx. \$2.7 million of FSPL for the State Government in 2024/25. In 2025/26, the ESVF would be over \$5.5 million from the Ararat Rural City alone, an increase of \$2.8 million. Most of this (88% or approx. \$2.5 million) would be paid for by Primary Production properties.

The ESVF exemption for active emergency services volunteers and life members provides little relief for many of our local farmers. Their primary place of residence is often on a separate title to their farm or they have multiple properties that have been acquired over the years or generations.

For example, a local farmer and active emergency services volunteer paid approx. \$27,000 in total for the FSPL in 2024/25. In 2025/26 under the ESVF, this farmer would be required to pay over \$77,000. The exemption due to being an active volunteer would only save them \$1,300.

For other property sectors in Ararat Rural City, including Residential, Commercial and Industrial, the ESVF is close to double the existing FSPL variable rate.

Our ratepayers in Pomonal have been impacted by two significant bushfires in less than 12 months. First in February 2024 where the 45 homes that were lost have not yet been rebuilt, and again by the recent bushfires in the Grampians. The recent bushfires prevented the local tourism businesses from being able to trade during their busiest time of the year, meaning they lost thousands of dollars worth of stock and they missed out on building up their cash buffer for the quieter times. One of these commercial businesses will be charged over \$4,000 in ESVF charges, nearly double what they paid in FSPL in 2024/25.

The ESVF is a poorly formulated State revenue system with little regard for the financial impact and circumstances of those who will incur the greatest cost due to this change. A doubling or tripling of these charges in one year is an obscene rate of increase.

Local councils are currently tasked with collecting the FSPL and the ESVF, which creates a significant administrative burden on local government as the collection agency. Council staff bear the brunt of disgruntled ratepayers when they see the increased total bill on their rates notice, yet none of the ESVF is guaranteed to be spent in the municipality where it is collected.

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

All of the collected funds collected from the current FSPL and the upcoming ESVF are sent to the State Revenue Office, there are no budget implications to Council arising from this report.

Policy/Relevant Law

On 13 December 2024 as part of the 2024-25 State Budget Update, the Victorian Government announced that the Fire Services Property Levy will be replaced by the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund from 1 July 2025.

Sustainability Implications

The steep increase in the impost on rate payers due to the ESVF, particularly primary producers and businesses, will have a flow on effect into the local economy and community. Cashflow has already been reduced by the recent bushfires and the current severe drought. The ESVF will further reduce spending in local shops, contributions to local community groups and sporting organisations, and private investment into environmental sustainability initiatives.

Risk Assessment

The increase that will appear on the total amount payable on rates notices due to the ESVF may result in an increase in unacceptable behaviour towards Council employees, which increases the risk of workplace injuries and personal leave.

The financial stress and mental health impact on households who are burdened with the greatest increase may also be severe, particularly for people who have been impacted by bushfires in the past year.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Council has been contacted by ratepayers who are concerned about how the ESVF will affect them financially. The community are also doubtful that our local emergency services will see a fair share of funding from the ESVF.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1. While Council acknowledges the importance of adequate funding for emergency services, Council condemns the ESVF for the following key reasons:**
 - **The disproportionate impact of the ESVF on primary producers**
 - **The obscenely steep increase imposed onto all ratepayers**
 - **The ongoing expectation that local councils act as the collection agency for a state-imposed tax**
- 2. Council submits the attached Motion to the Municipal Association of Victoria's (MAV) State Council meeting occurring on 16 May 2025 to condemn the ESVF.**
- 3. Council delegates the Mayor and CEO the ability to work with alike Council's to develop a consolidated motion if required prior to final submission to MAV**

ATTACHMENTS

The draft MAV State Council Motion is provided as Attachment 3.2

3.3 REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE RULES

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 19601

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.

In accordance with section 60 of the Act, Council is required to adopt and keep in force Governance Rules.

This report outlines the process for the Governance Rules to be vised in accordance with Council's community engagement policy.

DISCUSSION

Council adopted its Governance Rules on 27 September 2022.

The Governance Rules set out how Council meetings are conducted and how Council decisions are made. Council bases its Governance Rules on templates provided by Maddocks Lawyers which provide a "Standard" form of Governance Rules that are capable of satisfying the requirements of s60(1) of the Local Government Act 2020.

Amendments made to this version of Governance Rules were around the wording of the rules so they read more clear and concise.

Following endorsement by Council of the revised Governance Rules, a community engagement process will be undertaken in accordance with section 60(4) of the Act.

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; we measured risk management and implement of effective community engagement practices.

Budget implications

There are no budget implications arising in relation to development of the revised Governance Rules

Policy / Relevant Law

Council must develop, adopt and keep in force Governance Rules in accordance with section 60 of the Act

In accordance with section 60 (2) of the Act, the Governance Rules must provide for Council to:

- a) Consider and make decisions on any matter being considered by the Council fairly and on the merits;

- b) Institute decision making processes to ensure that any person whose rights will be directly affected by a decision of the Council is entitled to community their views and have their interest considered.

A community engagement process will be undertaken in relation to the revised Governance Rules in accordance with section 60(4) of the Act.

Sustainability Implications

Environmental, social and economic impacts have been considered in the development of the revised Governance Rules.

Risk Assessment

The development of the revised Governance Rules will ensure that Council meets its legislative requirements

Innovation and Continuous Improvements

The revised Governance Rules meet the requirement of the Act

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The Chief Executive Officer and Councillors discussed the revised Governance Rules at the briefing held on the 19 February 2025

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Endorse the revised Governance Rules for public comment;**
- 2. Commence a community engagement process via Engage Ararat for the revised Governance Rules; and**
- 3. Consider the revised Governance Rules at the 25 March 2025 Council Meeting.**

ATTACHMENTS

The Revised Governance Rules are provided as Attachment 3.3

3.4 DELEGATION FROM COUNCIL TO MEMBERS OF COUNCIL STAFF S6

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 19602

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 purpose of this report is for Council to consider adoption of the revised Instrument of Delegation form Council to Members of Council Staff.

DISCUSSION

Delegation to Council staff is necessary to enable Council to conduct business efficiently by enabling Council staff to make routine decisions under different Acts.

Various Acts, including the Local Government Act 2020, empower Council to delegate statutory functions, powers and duties. This report recommends that specific functions, powers and duties be delegated to identify staff positions in accordance with the attached S6 - Instrument of Delegation by Council to Members of Council Staff.

The instrument of Delegation has recently been updated to reflect the following changes:

- Inserted section 12(2)(b) of the *Road Management Act 2004* to provide for Council to provide consent to the Head, Transport for Victoria to discontinue a road or part of a road.
- Removed the limitation for the powers in section 19FA(1) and 19FA(3)(a)-(c) of the *Food Act 1984* being delegated "only in relation to temporary food premises or mobile food premises"; and
- Amended a typographical error in s12(1) of the *Residential Tenancies (Caravan Parks and Moveable Dwellings Registration and Standards) Regulations 2024*.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

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

Budget implications

There are no budget implications arising from the review of the S6 Instrument of Delegation - Council to Members of Council Staff.

Policy / Relevant Law

The Council is required to keep a register of delegations, and it must be made available for public inspection. This report is presented to reflect the changes in legislation and staff. The Council can amend or revoke any delegated power at any time. Council must review all delegations within a period of 12 months after a general election.

Sustainability Implications

There are no economic, social or environmental implications in relation to S6 Instrument of Delegation - Council to Members of Council Staff.

Risk Assessment

The amendment of the Instrument of delegation from Council to Members of Council Staff ensures ongoing legislative compliance for Ararat Rural City Council. It is essential that the Instrument of Delegation is kept up to date to ensure that the members of staff are properly empowered to undertake their roles.

The formal delegation of legislated powers, duties and functions via instruments of delegation, supported by consistent policies allows Council staff to perform day to day duties and make decisions that may otherwise need to be decided upon Council.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The amendments of Instruments of Delegation from Council to Members of Council staff that have been updated using Maddocks Lawyers Delegation Service and RelianSys software.

The delegation service provides two updates per year and mini updates as required when legislation changes.

Chief Executive Officer and relevant officers have reviewed this document.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

In the exercise of the powers conferred by the legislation referred to in the attached instrument of delegation, Ararat Rural City Council (Council) resolve that:

- 1. There be delegated to the members of Council staff holding, acting in or performing**
- 2. the duties of the offices or positions referred to in the attached Instrument of Delegation Council to Member of Council Staff (S6), the powers, duties and functions set out in that instrument, subject to the conditions and limitations specified in that Instrument;**
- 3. The instrument comes into force immediately the common seal of Council is affixed to the instrument**
- 4. On the coming into force of the instrument all previous delegations to members of Council staff (other than the Chief Executive Officer) are revoked;**
- 5. The duties and functions set out in the instrument must be executed, in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council that it may from time to time adopts; and**
- 6. The instrument be signed under the seal of the Council.**

ATTACHMENTS

The Instrument of Delegation from Council to Members of Council Staff S6 is provided as Attachment 3.4

3.5 INSTRUMENT OF APPOINTMENT AND AUTHORISATION (PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ACT) S11A

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 19603

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 seeks Councils endorsement of the S11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation under the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

DISCUSSION

The Local Government Act 1989 provides for the appointment of Authorised Officers for the purposes of the administration and enforcement of any Act, Regulations or local laws which relate to the functions and powers of the council.

The Chief Executive Officer, by authority conferred by instrument of delegation from Council makes these appointments. Under the Planning and Environment Act 1987, however Authorised Officers can only be appointed by Council resolutions as the Act prohibits delegation of the power to appoint Authorised Officers under the Act.

This report identifies changes since the S11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation was adopted on the 26 March 2024.

A review of current appointments to this Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation has been carried out and the wording has been amended of the S11 instrument to more closely align with the wording of section 147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

6. Strong and Effective Governance

We will work have 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 arising from the Appointment of Authorised Officers.

Policy / Relevant Law

Section 244 of the Local Government Act 1989 is a provision that remains in force and continues to be authorising provision for the S11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation.

The power to commence proceedings - Section 313 of the Local Government Act 2020

Sustainability Implications

There are no economic, social or environmental implications in relation to the appointment of Authorised Officers.

Risk Assessment

The regular updating of the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation ensures ongoing legislative compliance for Ararat Rural City Council and that staff members are properly empowered to undertake their roles.

Innovation and Continuous Improvements

The appointment of Authorised Officers is essential to the effective control and policing of the municipal district.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation has been updated by referencing the Maddocks Lawyers Delegation Services.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

In the exercise of the powers conferred by Section 147(4) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (the Act) and the other legislation referred to in the attached instruments of appointment and authorisation (S11A) (the instrument), Ararat Rural Coty Council (Council) resolves that -

- 1. The members of Council staff referred to in the instrument be appointed and authorised as set out in the instrument;**
- 2. The Instrument comes into force immediately the common seal of Council is affixed to the instrument, and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it; and**
- 3. The instrument be signed under the seal of the Council.**

ATTACHMENTS

The Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (Planning and Environment Act 1987) S11A is provided as Attachment 3.5

3.6 REVIEW OF ROAD MANAGEMENT PLAN

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 19604

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 Road Management Plan defines how Ararat Rural City Council (Council) intends to manage roads and road related assets for which it is responsible.

The Plan sets inspection intervals and response times for defects that exceed the stated intervention levels in relation to roads and road related assets to ensure that Council's responsibilities under the Road Management Act 2004 (the Act) are met.

In order that Council's duty of care has been satisfactorily exercised, it is required to be able to demonstrate that it has a systematic approach to inspecting roads and road related assets and has an appropriate regime for planning and undertaking repairs where defects exceeding the stated intervention levels have been identified.

Council is required to review its Road Management Plan in the period following the election of Council. An amended Road Management Plan has been made available for public review and comment.

DISCUSSION

The Road Management Plan may be amended in accordance with section 54 Road Management Act.

Any proposed amendment to the Road Management Plan that relates to the determination of the standard of construction, inspection, maintenance or repair of the road or associated infrastructure shall provide notice of the proposed amendment in the Government Gazette and a local newspaper, and shall allow submissions in relation to the proposed amendments to be received.

Amendments to the current Road Management Plan include:

- 1 amendments to the structure of the document;
- 2 changes to the defect classifications; and
- 3 changes to standards for inspection, maintenance and repair, including inspection frequencies, compulsory intervention levels and response times.

Once Council adopts the Road Management Plan, notice of it having been adopted will be published in the Victorian Government Gazette and in a local newspaper.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

4.0 *Developing and Maintaining Key Enabling Infrastructure*

Budget implications

There are no budget implications arising

Policy / Relevant Law

The Road Management Plan is amended in accordance with section 54 of the Road Management Act 2004.

Sustainability Implications

There are no economic, social or environmental implications in relation to the item

Risk Assessment

The Road Management Plan is one of the principle risk management measures in relation to the management of roads and pathways. There is no significant risk in amending the Road Management Plan. Council officers will ensure that the Plan is implemented across the organisation.

Innovation and Continuous Improvements

Council is committed to innovation to effectively manage its assets implementing new technologies and strategies to ensure long term sustainability and renewal of the asset portfolio

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

This policy was presented to key staff involved in the implementation of the Road Management Plan

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1. Council adopt the Road Management Plan 2025**

ATTACHMENTS

The Road Management Plan 2025 Draft is provided as Attachment 3.6

3.7 MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 19605

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 financial statements and performance indicators have been prepared for the period ended 31 January 2025.

Based on the information provided by responsible officers and managers Council's overall financial performance is in line with budget.

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 \$28.193 million in revenue and \$19.879 million in expenses to 31 January 2025. This has resulted in an operating surplus of \$8.314 million for the seven months ended 31 January 2025.

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 \$17.847 million has been recognised as income for the seven months ended 31 January 2025.

User fees account for 4% of the total budgeted income for 2024/25 and \$1.049 million has been received to 31 January 2025. The majority of this relates to transfer station fees, fitness centre income and commercial waste management charges.

Recurrent Operating Grants total \$7.967 million to 31 January 2025, 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 \$0.282 million to 31 January 2025. 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.

Non-Recurrent Operating Grants	Budget 2024/25 \$'000	Income 2024/25 \$'000	Unearned Income \$'000
Ararat Housing Transition	-	-	300
Digital Twin Victoria	-	-	954
Free Public WiFi Services	-	47	1,196
Supported Playgroups	65	40	-
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	-	128	-
Other Minor Grants (under \$30,000)	-	67	-
	65	282	2711

Non-recurrent Capital Grants total \$0.212 million to 31 January 2025, 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.

Non-Recurrent Capital Grants	Budget 2024/25 \$'000	Income 2024/25 \$'000	Unearned Income \$'000
Mt William Road reconstruction	5,000	-	-
Buangor-Ben Nevis Road reconstruction	843	-	-
Pedestrian Infrastructure Program	-	-	70
Tatyoan Oval Upgrade Grant	-	212	13
	5,843	212	83

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 \$1.322 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 seven months ended 31 January 2025 Council has incurred \$7.116 million in employee costs, which includes additional wages for emergency management relief and recovery and organisation restructure costs. 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 seven months ended 31 January 2025, Council has incurred \$6.691 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 \$5.683 million to 31 January 2025. 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 January 2025. Comparative figures have been provided as at 30 June 2024.

Council's current assets have increased by \$6.821 million from \$11.732 million as at 30 June 2024 to \$18.553 million as at 31 January 2025. Cash and cash equivalents have increased by \$0.653 million from \$3.049 million to \$3.702 million. Trade and other receivables have increased by \$9.540 million from \$5.212 million as at 30 June 2024 to \$14.752 million as at 31 January 2025.

Total liabilities have decreased from \$8.777 million in 2023/24 to \$7.145 million in 2024/25. Trade and other payables have decreased by \$0.810 million and trust funds and deposits have decreased by \$0.029 million. Unearned income/revenue decreased by \$0.537 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 \$0.653 million to \$3.702 million as at 31 January 2025.

Net cash of \$3.463 million was provided by operating activities, \$2.486 million was used in investing activities, and \$0.324 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	31/01/2025
Working capital <i>Measure - Current assets compared to current liabilities.</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework 100% to 400%	162%	333%

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>Loans and borrowings <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%	1.08%
<p>Indebtedness <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%	8.17%
<p>Rates concentration <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%	63.84%
<p>Expenditure level <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	\$2,669
<p>Indicator - Revenue level <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	\$1,999
<p>Indicator - Percentage of total rates collected 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. The outstanding Rates Debtors is reported in the Annual Financial report. As at 31 January 2025 the outstanding Rates Debtors totalled \$12.692 million compared to \$2.320 million as at 30 June 2024, an increase of \$10.372 million. In percentage terms 37.0% of the rates raised have been collected at 31 January 2025 compared to 31.9% up to 31 December 2024. Outstanding rates are currently charged 10% interest.</p>	88.1%	37.0%

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>Indicator - Asset Renewal & Upgrade <i>Measure - Asset renewal & Upgrade compared to depreciation</i> Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - 40% to 130% 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%	95.86%

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 January 2025 be received and adopted.**

ATTACHMENTS

Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Financial Performance Indicators are provided as Attachment 3.7

3.8 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 19606

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 policies are updated as part of an ongoing policy and procedure review process.

The Social Media Policy was presented to the 16 March 2021 Council Meeting, where Council adopted the Policy.

DISCUSSION

This Social Media Policy applies to all Councillors, employees, volunteers and contractors.

This policy will also apply to agencies and individuals who provide services to Council and will be included in all relevant external supplier contracts.

The policy outlines requirements for compliance with confidentiality, governance, legal, privacy and regulatory parameters when using social media to conduct Council business.

An annual review of the policy content has been undertaken, resulting in the following proposed changes:

Additional wording to the section "Policy" on page 2 -

These changes better reflect current digital platforms and channels that Council engages with.

Current wording with proposed changes highlighted below:

The policy applies to those digital spaces where people may comment, contribute, create, forward, post, upload and share content, including but not limited to:

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, **X/Twitter**, Instagram, SnapChat, MySpace, Google+, Bebo, Friendster, LinkedIn, TikTok, Reddit, **BeReal, RedNote**);
- Video and photo sharing sites (e.g. Flickr, YouTube, **Pinterest**);
- Blogs;
- Bulletin boards;
- Citizen journalism and news sites which facilitate public comment;
- Forums and discussion boards;
- Instant messaging facilities; (**e.g. WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook Messenger, WeChat, Discord**)
- Online encyclopaedias (e.g. Wikipedia);
- Podcasts;
- Video podcasts;
- Wikis;

Updated wording to the section "2.4.23 Be responsive" on page 8 -

Current wording with proposed changes highlighted below:

2.4.23 Be Responsive

Councillors, Council staff, volunteers or **and** contractors should specify the type of comments and feedback that will receive a response and clearly communicate a target response time. **are only to engage with social media commentary where appropriate and in a timely manner.** It should be easy for audiences to reach Council via other methods by publishing Council's phone number, generic email, Facebook, **Instagram** Skype and Twitter **LinkedIn** accounts **should be made readily available to facilitate communication between the community and Council.**

Except for minor administrative and editorial corrections, no other substantive changes have been proposed.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

5.1 Good governance through leadership

Budget implications

There are no budget implications in relation to the adoption of the Social Media Policy.

Policy / Relevant Law

The Social Media Policy has been reviewed referencing the Councillor Code of Conduct, Staff Code of Conduct, media and communication procedures, social media procedures and relevant legislation.

Sustainability Implications

There are no economic, social or environmental implications in relation to the item.

Risk Assessment

There are no significant risks involved in adopting or implementing the Social Media Policy.

The Policy will be accessible to Councillors, employees, contractors and volunteers via Council's website.

Innovation and Continuous Improvements

The Social Media Policy provides opportunities for interactive two-way communications with the community, which can complement existing communication and further improve information, access and delivery of key services.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Members of Council's Audit and Risk Committee have reviewed and endorsed the Social Media Policy.

The Media Team have reviewed the Social Media Policy

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Council adopt the Social Media Policy

ATTACHMENTS

The Social Media Policy is Provided as Attachment 3.8

SECTION 4 - INFORMATION REPORTS

4.1 2024/2025 CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM - JANUARY 2025

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 19607

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 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
- Roads to Recovery funded projects (Webb Street & McCrows Road Bridge)

Budget Status:

As of 31 January, 2025, 34% of the budget is spent.

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 is continuing with utilities and service provision being undertaken and footpath works commencing.

	Budget	Committed/ Contracted	Expended	%	Notes
PROPERTY - CAPITAL					
Property Capital	\$270,000		\$151,114	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. Upgrade of the circulating pumps at the indoor pool was undertaken over January 2025.
Ararat Library Upgrade	\$200,000	\$82,875	\$103,188	52%	Works have commenced on the library upgrade with carpet, electrical and shelving currently being installed.

Tatyoan Oval, Drainage, Irrigation & Resurfacing	\$333,500 \$83,500 Council \$250,000 CFNP	\$118,045	\$236,829	72%	Aqualines Irrigation Pty Ltd have completed the works with the new pump connections to the reservoir to be completed in February 2025.
TOTAL PROPERTY		\$224,421	\$491,131	61%	
PLANT & EQUIPMENT					
Book stock - Library Book Replacement	\$40,000	-	\$41,261	103%	Fully expended for 2024/2025
TOTAL PLANT & EQUIPMENT			\$20,422	51%	
ROADS					
Gravel Road Sheeting, Widening & Alternative Sealing	\$1,800,000	-	\$1,228,841	68%	Resheeting, widening and alternative seal works have been completed on a number of roads including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tatyoan North Road • Mt William Road • Webbs Road • Rockies Hill Road • Coopers Road • Astons Road (Shoulders) • Tunnel Road • Tobacco Road • Cherrytree Road • Moyston Township
Reseal Program	\$1,000,000	-	\$892,546	89%	Reseal works are 89% complete for the current financial year, with linemarking the only outstanding works.
Mt William Road (24/25 - HSVPP Funding)	\$6,250,000	-	\$2,252	-	These works will commence on receipt of final cultural heritage management plan.
Buangor Ben Nevis Road	\$2,143,000	\$68,522	\$110,869	5%	Plans and technical reporting have been completed. Council is working with Australian Cultural Heritage Services to complete CHMP. Finalisation of the native vegetation offsets is required with a final report from ecologists expected imminently.
Weighbridge Place, Lake Bolac		\$74,900	\$691		Asphalting works at Weighbridge Place are to be undertaken by SHS Civil, works have commenced in early February 2025. 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	\$800,000	\$2,750	\$44,018	6%	Works have commenced on site with footpath works and service/utility proofing. Works are to be completed by 30 June 2025 in line with LRCI funding.
Webb Street, Ararat	\$700,000	\$3,700	\$11,496	2%	Works will be undertaken in conjunction with works on Churchill Avenue.
Urban Road Gravel to Seal	\$700,000		\$935,756	134%	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	\$100,000	\$	\$68,858	69%	Priority works have been completed in November 24.
Bridges	\$80,000	\$13,927	\$88,654	111%	Investigations into the works required for the Buangor Ben Nevis Road Bridge 1 project are underway. These works include McCrows Road Bridge which will be undertaken with Roads to Recovery funding as approved in January 2025. Other bridge strengthening works are being investigated and estimated for upcoming programs.
Footpath Renewal Program	\$400,000	\$205,833	\$188,554	47%	Council's footpath program has been completed with with Barkly/Queen Street Asphalt Path, and Maude Street finished in January 2025. Other costs within this budget include works on Tunnel Track, Pomonal which was a funded project.
Urban Drainage Works	\$750,000		\$367,779	49%	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	\$239,000		\$159,494	67%	Works on the Walkerville and Wileman Street project in Willaura have been completed.
Miscellaneous			\$128,348		These works include finalisation of works at Gordon Street Reserve and small projects carried over from previous years.
TOTAL INFRASTRUCTURE	\$449,789		\$4,894,256	31%	
TOTAL CAPITAL WORKS	\$674,210		\$5,426,647	34%	

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	Previously Expended Funds	Committed/Contracted	Total Expended	%	Notes
Mt William Road	\$1,000,000	\$313,911		\$526,826	84%	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		\$303		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 - January 2025 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.

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 11 February 2025
Council Briefing held on 19 February 2025

Matters discussed at the briefing:

- Cat curfew request
- Delegations S6 & S11A
- Rate arrears - hardship requests
- Disability drop off point
- Green Hill Lake governance issues and media response
- Community Vision and Community Plan workshop dates
- Housing Support Program update
- Situational update - CEO
- Green Hill Lake
- Transfer Stations
- Governance Rules
- Monthly Performance Report - January 2025
- Capital Works Report - January 2025
- Social media Policy
- Kennel Road Petition
- Rates arrears - top 50 update
- Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan 2025
- Lake Bolac Childcare
- Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund - MAV Motion

- Road Management Plan Review
- Recycle Care
- Building approvals
- Planning approvals under delegation

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:

- Item 9.1 - Rates Arrears - Financial Hardship requests

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:

1. **The confidentiality of the report and decision in relation to Confidential Agenda Item 9.1 not be lifted on adoption of the motion.**