



MEDIA RELEASE

July Ordinary Meeting Wrap

14 July 2016

It was a full agenda at Buloke Shire Council's July Ordinary Meeting. The allocation of funding available through the Drought Communities Program as well as management reports on the impacts of the Maitreya Festival, grant applications successes, customer satisfaction survey and the Hobsons Bay friendship alliance anniversary were key items. Council also adopted an updated Road Management Plan.

The Berriwillock Bowling Green redevelopment (\$200,000), Green Lake Water Security project (\$50,000), Charlton Park 2020 development (\$775,000) and the Donald Community Precinct development (\$475,000) will share in \$1.5 million of funding available through the Drought Communities Program.

In May 2016, the Federal Government declared that Buloke Shire Council was eligible for funding under this program and that the proceeds needed to be spent prior to 30 June 2019. These projects are seen as the most suitable way to use this funding to leverage other state and community funding to deliver important community projects and optimise the benefits to the Buloke community.

Council noted the great success it has had with grant applications. Council achieved an outstanding 94% success rate over the past sixteen months. Council attracted \$3.1 million of non-recurrent external grants over this period, with five applications still pending.

Council endorsed expression of interest applications for the 2017/18 Sport and Recreation Victoria Community Sport Infrastructure Fund. Council has submitted applications seeking funding for upgrades to the Birchip cricket training facility and the Donald multi-use oval. Paperwork has also been lodged to attract funding for the Buloke pools splash play development. Council will also commit \$41,700 to this project in 2017/18.

The 10 year anniversary celebration of Council's Friendship Alliance with Hobsons Bay City Council was hailed a success. The union was celebrated across 27 and 28 May with a visit from the Hobsons Bay delegation. In a full itinerary, it involved a tour of Buloke and a celebration dinner. This alliance has seen many profitable opportunities open up for Buloke businesses as well as benefits for artists and crafters. The annual bowls tournament is a regular highlight of a very real and successful friendship.

Council also noted the impacts of the failed Maitreya Festival 2016. The promoter failed to gain Council approval for the event earlier this year despite Council working closely with the promoter between April 2015 and February 2016. A report presented to Council outlined the implications on the Wooroonook Lakes site, the Buloke community and in particular Charlton as well as public safety. The report also outlined a range of financial implications.

A range of factors were responsible for a less than favourable customer satisfaction survey results for 2016. Reductions in service levels flowing from the very significant budget cuts coupled with the survey being held at the time of the failed Maitreya Festival will have contributed to this outcome.

Council is confident its financial reforms will help raise community perception and the growing impetus of its Rural Living campaign and Council's increased focus on communications will contribute positively to future surveys. Council will use the results of the survey to develop a workshop to be held at the first Community Forum Summit of the new Council in 2017.

Council will write to VicRoads highlighting concerns in the delay of the Charlton – St Arnaud Road floodway construction. VicRoads original timeline for completion of December 2016 has been revised by it to March 2017. In addition the initial estimate for the project of \$500,000 has been revised by VicRoads up to \$800,000. Council is seeking the construction of the floodway to be completed as soon as possible.

Council will also write to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning to formally refuse their request to close a number of roads within Lake Buloke. The proposed roads for closure are still in public use and the submissions highlight they are still required for access to property.

Finally, Council adopted the updated Road Management Plan 2016. The plan continues to guide Council in managing and maintaining its extremely large and important road network. These minor changes make the plan more realistic and allow it to better align with work practices.

Council's next Ordinary Meeting will be on Wednesday, 10 August in the Wycheproof Supper Room.

End release

For further information contact Media and Communications Officer, Travis Fitzgibbon on 1300 520 520.