



ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

AGENDA

Wednesday 14 April 2021

Commencing at 7.00pm

Wycheproof Supper Room

367 Broadway, Wycheproof

**Anthony Judd
Chief Executive Officer
Buloke Shire Council**

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. COUNCIL WELCOME AND STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

WELCOME

The Mayor Cr Daryl Warren will welcome all in attendance.

STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Mayor Cr Daryl Warren will acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting and pay our respects to their Elders and to the Elders from other communities who maybe here today.

2. RECEIPT OF APOLOGIES

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council adopt the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Wednesday, 10 March 2021.

4. REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

5. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

In accordance with Section 130 (2) of the Local Government Act 2020 Councillors who have a conflict of interest in respect of a matter being considered at this Meeting, must

- a) Disclose the conflict of interest in the manner required by the Council's Governance Rules 2020; and
- a) Exclude themselves from the decision making process in relation to that matter, including any discussion or vote on the matter at any Council meeting or delegated committee, and any action in relation to the matter.

Disclosure must occur immediately before the matter is considered or discussed.

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

NIL

7. PROCEDURAL ITEMS

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	NIL	
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	NIL	
10.	MEETING CLOSE	

NEXT MEETING

THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WILL BE HELD IN WYCHEPROOF SUPPER ROOM, 367 BROADWAY, WYCHEPROOF ON WEDNESDAY, 12 MAY 2021 AT 7.00PM.

Anthony Judd
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Nil

7. PROCEDURAL ITEMS**7.1 LETTERS OF CONGRATULATIONS AND RECOGNITION OF ACHIEVEMENT/AWARDS**

Author's Title: Executive Assistant

Department: Office of the CEO

File No: CR/13/01

PURPOSE

This report acknowledges and congratulates community persons and/or groups for their success in being recognised for a significant achievement or for being a recipient of an honourable award.

The report also informs Council of any letters of congratulations or any particular recognition of achievement that Council has received or been awarded in the past month.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council acknowledge and congratulate the persons and/or groups mentioned in the report for their achievements.

Attachments: Nil

RECOGNITION OF ACHIEVEMENT ITEMS

Provider	Recipient	Date	Purpose for Recognition
Buloke Shire Council	Ray and Lee Parker Teddywaddy	6 May 2021	For reaching the significant milestone of their 60 th Wedding Anniversary.

7.2 REPORT OF COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS

Author's Title: Executive Assistant

Department: Office of the CEO

File No: GO/05/04

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council note the report of Assembly of Councillor Meetings held on 3 and 17 March 2021.

- Attachments:**
- 1 [Councillor Briefing Record - 3 March 2021](#)
 - 2 [Councillor Briefing Record - 17 March 2021](#)

KEY POINTS/ISSUES

Transparency is a fundamental principle of democratic governance.

The Local Government Act 2020 (The Act) Section 9 (2) (i) provides that the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

In accordance with Section 57 of The Act, Council at its September 2020 Ordinary Meeting, adopted a Public Transparency policy, designed to improve public transparency in Council's decision making processes and to assist the community in understanding the information that is accessible to them.

As per the Council Meeting Schedule adopted 23 November 2020, Councillor Briefings are held for Councillors to meet to consider matters that are likely to be the subject of a Council decision or for the exercise of delegation.

A record of the Councillor Briefings held on 3 and 17 March 2021 is attached for public information.

BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL RECORD Councillor Briefing

Date and Time:	3 March 2021	Time:	3:00pm – 6:00pm
Location:	Zoom		

ITEMS

NO.	TOPIC	PURPOSE
Councillor only time 3.00pm -3.30pm		
1.	Welcome	
2.	Apologies	Nil
3.	Attendees	Cr Simpson, Cr Milne, Cr Getley, Cr Warren, Cr Vis, Cr Stewart, Cr Pollard, Anthony Judd, Hannah Yu, Wayne O'Toole, Travis Fitzgibbon
4.	Visitors	Aileen Douglas (8.2)
5.	Declarations of Pecuniary Conflicts of Interest	Nil
6.	Confirmation of Councillor Briefing Notes	Agreed
7.	Presentations	
7.1	Land Use Activity Agreement and Cultural Heritage Management Plan – Anthony Judd	
8.	Items for Discussion	
8.1	Recycling Update – Wayne O'Toole	
8.2	Budget Discussions – Aileen Douglas; Wayne O'Toole	
9.	Councillor Matters	
9.1	Recent Bill on Local Power Plan	
9.2	Advance Sea Lake Meeting	

9.3 Corack Toilets

10. CEO Updates

10.1 Draft Agenda 10 March Council Meeting

10.2 Donald Trading Park

10.3 Housing Update

10.4 Community Listening Post / Council Plan
Engagement Update

11. Next Briefing:

Date and Time:	17 March 2021	Time: 3.00pm – 6.00pm
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Location:	Wycheproof Supper Room
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12. Briefing Close

8.19pm

BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL

Record

Councillor Briefing

Date and Time:	17 March 2021	Time:	3:00pm – 6:00pm
Location:	Wycheproof Supper Room		

ITEMS

NO.	TOPIC	PURPOSE
Councillor only time 3.00pm -3.30pm		
1.	Welcome	
2.	Apologies	Cr. Stewart, Travis Fitzgibbon
3.	Attendees	Cr Simpson, Cr Milne, Cr Getley, Cr Warren, Cr Vis, Cr Pollard, Anthony Judd, Hannah Yu, Wayne O'Toole, Travis Fitzgibbon
4.	Visitors	Peter Moloney (7.1); Dan McLoughlan (7.1); Ken Rowe (7.1.); Margaret Abbey (7.2)
5.	Declarations of Pecuniary Conflicts of Interest	Nil
6.	Confirmation of Councillor Briefing Notes	3 March 2021 – Agreed
7.	Presentations	
7.1	Roads Infrastructure Asset Report 2019 – Peter Moloney (Moloney Asset Management Systems)	
7.2	Audit and Risk Committee Chair Report – Margaret Abbey (Chair)	
8.	Items for Discussion	
8.1	Community / Council Plan Update – Rose Harris	
	Dinner	
9.	Councillor Matters	

9.1 Coffee van @ travellers rest

9.2 Water Tower (GWM) Culgoa – preferred removal

9.3 Gravel Pits

9.4 Landfill fees

9.5 Community Housing

10. CEO Updates

10.1 Stakeholder Update

10.2 Rural Councils Victoria (RCV) Strategic Plan

10.3 Monthly Capital Projects Update

10.4 Climate Change Mitigation Strategy

11. Next Briefing:

Date and Time:	7 April 2021	Time: 5.00pm – 8.00pm
Location:	Donald District Office	

12. Briefing Close

7pm

7.3 CORRESPONDENCE INITIATED BY COUNCIL

Author's Title: Executive Assistant

Department: Office of the CEO

File No: GO/06/06

PURPOSE

This report notes and records correspondence initiated by Council and informs the Council of the responses received from this correspondence.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council notes the record of correspondence initiated by Council and the responses received.

Attachments: Nil

TABLE OF CORRESPONDENCE

Council Initiative	Correspondence sent to	Date sent	Date of Response	Summary of Response
Nil items.				

7.4 BUILDING PERMITS - MONTHLY UPDATE

Author's Title: Statutory Administration Support

Department: Works and Technical Services

File No: DB/14/01

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides information on Building Permits approved by staff from 1 March 2021 to 31 March 2021.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council note information contained in the report on Building Permits approved by staff from 1 March 2021 to 31 March 2021.

Attachments: Nil

LIST OF BUILDING PERMITS APPROVED BY COUNCIL SURVEYOR

Permit No.	BAMS Permit No.	Address	Project Description	Date Approved
20210011	3512832201802	16 Morrison Street, Birchip	Internal Alterations	25/02/2021
20210012	2468687493717	14 Howard Street, Sea Lake	Garage/Storage Shed	04/03/2021
20210013	6430275990261	31 Bunker Road, Donald	Lunch Room	04/03/2021
20210015	1144590158257	694 Rupanyup Road, Reedy Dam	Duck Shed, Litter Shed & Ancillary Building	11/03/2021
20210016	1714293833149	134-136 Woods Street, Donald (St Mary's Primary School)	Rebound Wall	11/03/2021
20210017	9772646342929	188 Best Street, Sea Lake	Carport	11/03/2021
20210041	5701170718251	34 Calder Highway, Nullawil	Balcony	25/03/2021
20210051	8154959786667	16 Morrison Street, Birchip	Football Goal Posts	31/03/2021

LIST OF BUILDING PERMITS APPROVED BY PRIVATE SURVEYOR

Permit No.	Address	Project Description	Date Approved
20210031	518 Ingrams Road, Springfield	Hay Shed	01/03/2021
20210032	47 Sheep Hills Road, Lawler	Hay Shed	01/03/2021
20210033	41 Taylors Road, Kinnabulla	Farm Shed	02/03/2021
20210034	307 Cooks and Kerrs Road, Narraport	Farm Shed	03/03/2021
20210035	Five Mile Road, Yeungroon East	Yard Cover	09/03/2021
20210040	62 East Boundary Road, Narraport	Dwelling Extension	11/03/2021
20210042	16 Morrison Street, Birchip	Light Towers (x4)	12/03/2021
20210043	36 Tower Road, Donald	Machinery Storage and Servicing Shed	13/03/2021
20210044	273 Smiths Road, Kalpienung	Machinery Shed	15/03/2021
20210045	1370 Nullawil-Quambatook Road, Towaninny	Canopy on Existing Hay Shed	15/03/2021
20210046	1094 Sea lake-Springfield Road, Sea Lake	Swimming Pool & Safety Barrier	16/03/2021
20210047	32 Randall Road, Kinnabulla	Farm Shed	25/03/2021

7.5 PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED - MONTHLY UPDATE

Author's Title: Planning Officer

Department: Works and Technical Services

File No: LP/09/01

PURPOSE

This report provides information on planning applications under consideration by staff and the status of each of these applications.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council note information contained in the report on planning applications under consideration by staff and the status of each of these applications.

Attachments: Nil

LIST OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Application No	Applicant	Address	Date Rec	Summary of Proposal	Status
PPA918/21	AA Majeed	4 Arundell Square, Charlton	19/03/2021	Use and development of land for a store (shipping container)	Referral Notice of application
PPA917/21	MK & AP McClelland	326 Sea Lake-Swan Hill Road, Sea Lake	12/03/2021	Locate transportable unit for workers accommodation/work office	Request for Further Information
PPA916/21	Action Steel Industries Pty Ltd	Birchip-Wycheproof Road, Birchip (Lot 1 LP 89476)	10/03/2021	Construction of a farm shed	Permit Issued
PPA915/21	Northern Land Solutions	94 Elliots Road, Bimbourie	11/03/2021	Two lot boundary realignment	Awaiting report
PPA914/21	Entegra Signature Structures	31 Charles Street, Wycheproof	09/03/2021	Construction of a farm shed	Permit Issued
PPA913/21	JP Arrowsmith	5 Gunyah Flat Road, Charlton	10/03/2021	Construction of a dwelling (studio cabin)	Request for Further Information
PPA912/21	SE & DF Oldfield	7 Lundy Street, Charlton	04/03/2021	Construction of a commercial shed for a retail business	Referral Notice of application

Application No	Applicant	Address	Date Rec	Summary of Proposal	Status
PPA911/21	PB & CT Catherine	16-18 Mildura Way, Charlton	25/03/2021	Change category of liquor licence, vary hours, increase red line area	Awaiting report
PPA910/21	Price Merrett Consulting	76-78 Mount Street, Wycheproof	22/02/2021	Two lot subdivision	Referral
PPA909/21	Kaneira Hotel	24 Main Street, Culgoa	22/02/2021	Construction of shade structure over footpath	Permit Issued
PPA908/21	Paul Roseblade	10 Calder Highway, Berriwillock	11/02/2021	Construct and display a business identification sign	Permit Issued
PPA907/21	James Course (Gawk)	5 Woods Street, Donald	08/02/2021	Construct and display a major promotion sign	Objections
PPA905/21	Beveridge Williams & Co	1 Railway Place, Wycheproof	03/02/2021	Construction of a dwelling	Permit Issued
PPA904/21	Johnson Goodwin Homes	22 Camp Street, Donald	29/01/2021	Construction of six units, garage and storage shed	Awaiting report
PPA902/21	GWM Water	Calder Highway, Dumosa	20/01/2021	Removal of native vegetation	Permit Issued

8. GENERAL BUSINESS**8.1 POLICY REPORTS****8.1.1 COUNCILLOR GIFT POLICY**

Author's Title: Director Corporate Services

Department: Corporate Services

File No: GO|06|11

Relevance to Council Plan 2017 - 2021

Strategic Objective: Support our councillors, staff, volunteers and the community to make informed and transparent decisions.

PURPOSE

To present the Councillor Gift Policy for adoption.

SUMMARY

The *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) requires a Council to adopt a Councillor Gift Policy (Policy) within six months of when the section comes into operation, which is on 24 October 2020. A Policy has been prepared taking into account legislative requirements under the Act.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the Councillor Gift Policy.

Attachments: 1 [Councillor Gift Policy](#)

DISCUSSION

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires a Council to adopt a Councillor Gift Policy within six months of when the section comes into operation, which is on 24 October 2020.

The Policy must make provision for the maintenance of a gift register and any matters in the regulations, including a minimum value of gifts that must be disclosed. Councils must also ensure their Policy complies with the public transparency principles.

Council previously included provision in relation to Gifts and declaration of Gifts within the Councillor Code of Conduct.

RELEVANT LAW

The adoption of the Councillor Gift Policy is mandated by the Act and is an essential part of the practice of good governance.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable.

OPTIONS

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable.

COLLABORATION

Collaboration with other councils occurred in the development of the Policy through the Engage Victoria website.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Not applicable

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council's Public Transparency Policy provides that registers of gifts, benefits and hospitality offered to Councillors will be made available to the public.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

I, Hannah Yu, have no conflicts of interest to declare in relation to the matters contained within this report.



POLICY LOCATION	Corporate Services	POLICY TITLE	Councillor Gift Policy
POLICY NUMBER	[INSERT NUMBER]	DATE ADOPTED	[INSERT ADOPTION DATE MM/YY]
REVISION NUMBER	1	REVISION DATE	[INSERT REVISION DATE MM/YY]

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to comply with section 138 of the *Local Government Act 2020 (Act)* which requires Council to adopt a Councillor Gift Policy.

Scope

This Policy applies to Councillors of the Buloke Shire Council.

Policy Statement

Councillors must not accept, directly or indirectly, a gift that could influence the performance of their duty as a Councillor.

A gift means anything of value given to a Councillor in the performance of their role as a Councillor but does not include reasonable hospitality.

Guidelines

No cash

Councillors must not accept cash as a gift.

No personal advantage or detriment to Council

Councillors must not use their position to obtain any advantage for themselves or any other person, or cause detriment to Council by accepting a gift. This includes acceptance of small gifts in return for taking/not taking a particular action, dealing with a matter more expeditiously than others, or letting it be known that some form of benefit or consideration will be expected from a resident or service provider at some time in the future in return for favourable action to a matter.

Hospitality

A gift in the form of hospitality must be refused unless it is reasonable hospitality and it is received at an event at which the Councillor is attending in an official capacity which is usually evidenced by the Councillor's name badge being clearly displayed on their clothing.

Conditional acceptance

Where refusal to accept a gift may cause offence or embarrassment, it may be accepted by a Councillor on behalf of the Council provided that the gift is delivered to Council's Chief Executive Officer within 7 days of acceptance.

**Bribes and inappropriate gifts**

Where a Councillor has been offered a bribe or an inappropriate gift, the offer should be immediately rejected on the basis that acceptance would be a contravention of this Policy. The matter should also be reported promptly in writing to Council's Chief Executive Officer.

Disclosable gifts

Councillors must comply with section 128 of the Act which provides that one or more gifts with a total value of, or more than, \$500 received from one person, over a five-year period, will give rise to a conflict of interest, and which must be disclosed in accordance with the Act.

Anonymous gifts

Section 137 of the Act prohibits a Councillor from accepting, directly or indirectly, an anonymous gift for the benefit of the Councillor the value of which is equal to or exceeds the gift disclosure threshold (\$500) unless the Councillor disposes the gift to Council within 30 days of receipt.

Declaration and Gift Register

A gift, whether received or refused by a Councillor, regardless of the monetary value, must be reported in writing to Council's Chief Executive Officer within 7 days of receipt (or offer, if the gift was declined) for entry in Council's Gift Register which is an official record of all gifts received by or offered to Councillors and which is publicly available for inspection.

The Gift Register will include the following details:

- a description of the gift;
- the person or organisation who provided the gift;
- the value of the gift;
- whether the gift was received or declined; and
- the decision that was made regarding the use or disposal of the gift.

8.2 MANAGEMENT REPORTS

8.2.1 WYCHEPROOF GOLF CLUB LEASE

Author's Title: Manager Facilities and Projects

Department: Works and Technical Services

File No: CP/22/18

Relevance to Council Plan 2017 - 2021

Strategic Objective: Responding to and enhancing our built and natural environment

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to recommend that Council authorise the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate a new lease with Wycheproof Golf Club Incorporated for the operation and management of part of the Wycheproof Recreation Reserve being allotment 52A, Section A, Parish of Bunguluke, and Allotment 9, Section A, Township of Wycheproof, and that Council authorise the Chief Executive Officer to provide public notice of Council's proposed lease with Wycheproof Golf Club Incorporated for the aforementioned site.

SUMMARY

The Wycheproof Recreation Reserve is Crown Land, for which Council is the delegated Crown Land Manager. Council currently leases allotments 52A, Section A, Parish of Bunguluke, and Allotment 9, Section A, Township of Wycheproof to Wycheproof Golf Club Incorporated for the purpose of operating and managing the Wycheproof Golf Club and Wycheproof Golf Course and associated activities therein. The lease is for a 21 year term which expires on 30 April, 2021. Officers met with representatives from Wycheproof Golf Club Incorporated, Wycheproof Racing Club and Wycheproof Lawn Tennis Club in March 2021 to discuss the lease term expiring. The group have expressed an interest in Wycheproof Golf Club Incorporated continuing to lease the site for a further 21 year term.

Council Officers consulted with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and reviewed relevant legislation in relation to lease options. This report intends to recommend that Council authorise Chief Executive Officer to negotiate a lease with Wycheproof Golf Club Incorporated for the operation and management for the aforementioned site, and that Council authorise the Chief Executive Office to provide public notice of Councils proposed lease.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate a lease with the Wycheproof Golf Club Incorporated for the operation and management for part of the Wycheproof Recreation Reserve being allotments 52A, Section A, Parish of Bunguluke, and Allotment 9, Section A, Township of Wycheproof.
2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to provide public notice of Councils proposed lease with Wycheproof Golf Club Incorporated for the operation and management of part of the Wycheproof Recreation Reserve being allotments 52A, Section A, Parish of Bunguluke, and Allotment 9, Section A, Township of Wycheproof.

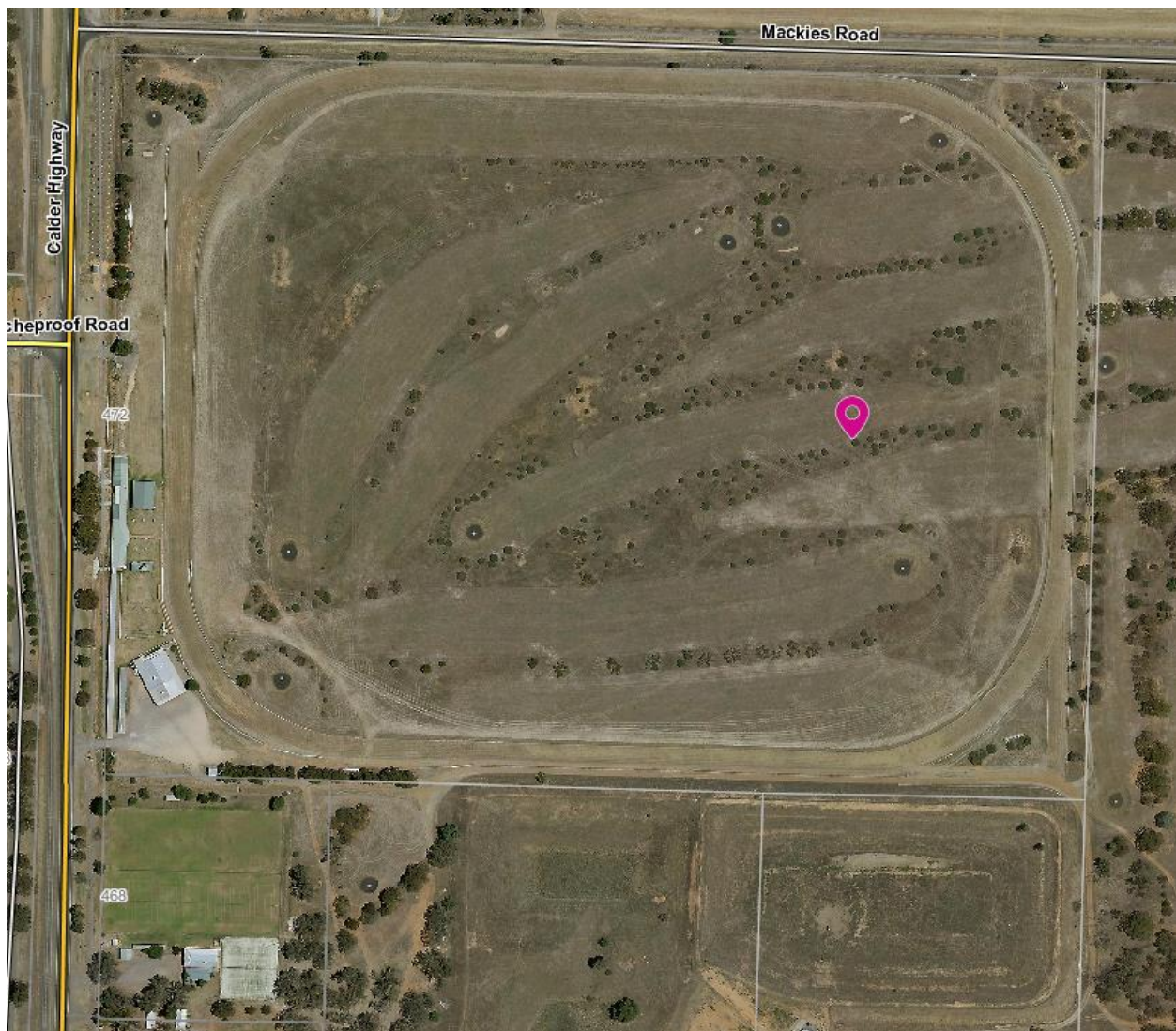
Attachments: Nil

DISCUSSION

The current lease for this site expires on 30 April, 2021 and Wycheproof Golf Club Incorporated have expressed their interest in entering in to a new lease with Council for a period of 21 years. The three groups which primarily use this site have done so for almost one hundred years for the purposes of golf, tennis and horse racing.

The Wycheproof Caravan Park, Football Ground, Hockey Pitch, and Netball Courts do not form part of this report and are subject to agreements with Council independent of the current and proposed new lease with Wycheproof Golf Club Incorporated.

Current lease footprint includes Crown allotments 52A, Section A, Parish of Bunguluke, and Allotment 9, Section A, Township of Wycheproof, as included in red outline below.



The site is Crown Land, for which Council is the delegated Committee of Management. Under s17D of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, Council, as Committee of Management, with the approval of the Minister for Energy, Environment, and Climate Change, may lease any part of the land for a term not more than 21 years.

Council Officers discussed the proposed new lease with an Officer from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning in late March 2021. The Officer of the Department advised that the historic and positive lease arrangement with Wycheproof Golf Club Incorporated should give Council confidence in entering in to a new lease with the community group.

Under s190 of the Local Government Act 1989, for which provisions remain until 1 July, 2021, Council must publish a public notice of the proposed lease if the lease is to be 10 years or more, and any person has a right to make a submission under s223 on the proposed lease.

This report recommends that Council authorise the Chief Executive Officer to enter in to negotiations for a new lease at the site with Wycheproof Golf Club Incorporated, and that Council authorise the Chief Executive Officer to provide public notice of Council's proposed lease in line with its obligations under s190 of the Local Government Act 1989.

RELEVANT LAW

Local Government Act 1989

Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council has in the past and in line with its obligations under s190 and s223 of the Local Government Act 1989 published proposed leases via public notice.

OPTIONS

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council Officers have undertaken community engagement with members of Wycheproof Golf Club Incorporated and Wycheproof Racing Club Incorporated in relation to entering in to a new lease at the site. Officers met with representatives in March 2021, where representatives from Wycheproof Golf Club Incorporated expressed their desire to enter in to a new lease with Council.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable.

COLLABORATION

Council Officers collaborated with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning in formulating this recommendation to Council. An Officer of the Department advised that the historic and positive lease arrangement with Wycheproof Golf Club Incorporated should give Council confidence in entering in to a new lease with the community group.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Not applicable.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Crown Land Leasing Guidelines

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council Plan 2017-2021, Theme Four, Responding to and enhancing our built and natural environment.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

Due to the matter being in relation to public land and public notice being required before Council enters in to a lease of this nature, this report has been prepared for Council to consider in the section of the meeting which is open to the public.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No Officer in preparing this report has a conflict of interest to declare.

8.2.2 COMMUNITY GRANTS AND SPONSORSHIP

Author's Title: Community Development Officer

Department: Community Development

File No: GS/09/42

Relevance to Council Plan 2017 - 2021

Strategic Objective: Build a healthy and active community

PURPOSE

This report is presented to Council to consider the allocation of funds from the Community Grants and Sponsorship Program

SUMMARY

One application presented for the Sustainability Grants Stream.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council allocates the following funding under the Community Grants and Sponsorship program:

- \$6,956 Sustainability grant to Nandaly Community Hotel.

Attachments: 1 [2020-21 Community Grants](#)

DISCUSSION

The Nandaly Community Hotel has applied for funding for a solar system on the Community Co-operative Hotel. The following analysis has been completed by the evaluation panel, who are recommending the award of the grant.

Project:	Supply and installation of solar panels
Organisation:	Nandaly Community Hotel
Amount Applied:	\$6,956
Funding Amount Recommended:	\$6,956
Total project cost:	\$13,192
Project Description:	The supply and installation of a 13.32KW solar system comprising 36 370w solar panels.
Project Benefit:	The Nandaly Community Hotel is an important community connector in Nandaly. The installation of this system will set an important lead for the community. The system will also contribute to the viability of this facility. As outlined in the project analysis provided to the Nandaly applicants.

RELEVANT LAW

Not Applicable

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not Applicable

OPTIONS

Council can determine not to award the funding for this project.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**Economic**

The community hotel contributes to a more diverse economy by providing a service to local patrons, transport operators and tourists coming through the area.

Ecology

This installation will contribute to the reduction of the hotel's carbon footprint.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not Applicable

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The investment into community assets highlight the increased focus on financial and environmental sustainability that the community are having. The use of the Hotel as a Community Hub has been an innovative and positive approach by the Nandaly community.

COLLABORATION

Not Applicable

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The award of this project would be within the annual pool of \$50,000.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not Applicable

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Buloke Shire Council Plan 2017-21

Buloke Shire Council Inclusiveness Plan

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report is presented to open Council meeting in the interests of transparency to the public.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have signed a written declaration that they do not have a conflict of interest in the subject matter of this report.

Community Grants, Sponsorship & Sustainability Fund					
2020-2021					
Organisation	type	Date received	I	Amount in Application	Recommended \$
Charlton Croquet Club	Project Support Grant	23/03/2020		\$731	\$731
Charlton Golf Club	Project Support Grant	7/07/2020		\$2,000	\$2,000
Sea Lake Golf & Bowls club	Project Support Grant	29/10/2020	\$	2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
Charlton Lions	Project Support Grant	7/10/2020	\$	2,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Charlton Forum	Project Support Grant	24/11/2020	\$	576.63	\$ 576.63
Donald Learning Group	Project Support Grant	9/11/2020	\$	1,310.60	\$ 1,310.60
Birchip Neighbourhood House	Project Support Grant	23/02/2021	\$	2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
				\$10,618	\$9,618
Charlton Park Committee	Sustainability Grant	2/09/2021	\$	10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Birchip Cropping Group	Sustainability Grant	23/11/2020	\$	8,778.00	\$ 8,778.00
Nandaly Community Hotel	Sustainability Grant	10/03/2021		\$6,956.00	\$ 6,956.00
					\$ 25,734.00

8.2.3 TRANSFER STATION UPGRADE - FUNDING APPLICATION

Author's Title: Director Works and Technical Services

Department: Works and Technical Services

File No: EM/01/01

Relevance to Council Plan 2017 - 2021

Strategic Objective: Responding to and enhancing our built and natural environment

PURPOSE

This Report is presented to Council to note an application made under the Department Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) Transfer Station Upgrade Program.

SUMMARY

That Council notes an application under the DELWP Transfer Station Upgrade for new Infrastructure to be constructed at The Donald and Birchip landfill, The Charlton, Wycheproof and Sea Lake Transfer Stations, and the Birchip, Donald and Sea Lake depots for the purpose of diverting glass from landfill as part of Circular Economy Victoria.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

1. Notes the submission of an application under the DEWLP Transfer Station Upgrade for Infrastructure to be constructed at all Council landfills and transfer stations and at Birchip, Donald and Sea Lake Depots for the purpose of diverting glass from landfill as part of the State Government circular economy for \$341,231 ; and
2. That a Report be brought to a future Council Meeting outlining options on how Council will undertake an efficient and cost effective glass collection process across the municipality.

Attachments: Nil

DISCUSSION

The Victorian Government recognises that there isn't a one-size fits all solution for our diverse and dispersed State in relation to the challenges around waste and resource recovery particularly when it comes to the removal of glass from comingled recycling. With dispersed populations and greater distances to travel, rural and regional Councils face unique challenges in implementing four waste services by 2028 to achieve the overall target to divert 80 per cent of waste from landfill by 2030, with an interim target of 72 per cent by 2025.

Acknowledging these challenges, the \$20 million Transfer Station Upgrades Program will support regional and rural councils in providing separated glass and organics drop-off services to their residents through upgrades to transfer stations and upgraded/new drop-off points.

Council is proposing to put a 12 metre lidded hook lift skip bin at each of our waste facility sites which are located in Birchip, Charlton, Donald, Sea Lake and Wycheproof. We would also be putting in hard stands for the skips to sit on. By placing them in these locations all residents would have access to a site

without having to travel more than 30 minutes. By placing these at council run sites there would be operators present to ensure contamination is kept to a very minimum.

It is also proposed to build 3 concrete bunker style facilities at Council depots. The bunkers would measure 12 x 10 metres, and have retaining walls on three sides. The purpose of these bunkers would be that once the hook lift skips are full, local contractors will pick up bins and tip off at the bunker sites.

It is proposed that glass crushing will be undertaken on site when bunkers have reached capacity. Crushed glass will be transported to markets or used locally.

RELEVANT LAW

Not applicable.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

This follows the Council decision to adopt the 2020 Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy.

OPTIONS

Council can decide not to apply for these funds.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Designs will be undertaken with environmental sustainability principles in place.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engagement has been undertaken (and is continuing to be undertaken) on this project. If funding is successful, final siting and designs would be completed in consultation with community committees.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The construction of this infrastructure will provide continued improvements to Council waste and resource recovery as identified in the current strategy.

COLLABORATION

Other Wimmera Councils are looking at alternative methods for waste and resource recovery including the joint procurement and shared service of a mobile glass crushing plant.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

There is no requirement for a financial contribution by Council for this funding application. Ongoing maintenance will be funded out of subsequent operating budgets.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

The State Government has initiated a number of plans and strategies in response to the China Sword Policy prohibiting comingled recycling being sent offshore. A Circular Economy Plan was completed and issued in 2020.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

This project is in accordance with the Council Plan 2017 – 2021.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report is to be considered in open Council.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No Officer involved in the development of this report has a conflict of interest.

8.2.4 WIMMERA SOUTHERN MALLEE HOUSING STUDY

Author's Title: Chief Executive Officer

Department: Office of the CEO

File No: GS/03/01

Relevance to Council Plan 2017 - 2021

Strategic Objective: Diversify and enhance our local economy.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the Wimmera Southern Mallee Housing Study and consider future actions.

SUMMARY

Council participated in the Wimmera Southern Mallee Housing Study commissioned by the Wimmera Development Association and a series of findings and actions were established to enhance the housing offerings across the regions

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Endorse the Wimmera Southern Mallee Housing Study;
2. Partner with the Housing Sub-Committee of the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee to develop project proposals and incorporate into next review of Council's Advocacy Strategy; and
3. Continue to work with Wimmera Development Association and other regional councils on the implementation of the Study.

Attachments: 1 [Housing Study](#)

DISCUSSION

Over 2020, Council partnered with West Wimmera, Hindmarsh, Northern Grampians, Horsham and Yarriambiack Councils as part of the Wimmera Development Association commissioned, Wimmera Southern Mallee Housing Review.

The review, completed by Street Ryan aimed to quantify and address the anecdotal challenges that exist across the Wimmera Southern Mallee Region.

Whilst housing has been an ongoing concern for the region, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has seen the housing shortage exacerbated and having a planned and structured approach to addressing the challenge is important.

The study was formed by a range of interviews with key stakeholders and analysis of historical and projected data.

The findings of the report include:

- A lack of housing is inhibiting liveability and economic strength of towns in the region
- There are shortages of residentially zoned and serviced land for sale.
- Existing housing stock is often the wrong mix for ageing populations, not conducive to attracting new residents, and in many cases, vacant dwellings are not even available to the market.
- Incentives are needed for residential development, businesses and new residents to overcome perceived potentially poor returns on investment.
- Zoning and planning provisions for future residential development land must be more ambitious: Offering greater range and choice.
- There is inadequate low-cost housing and social housing, including emergency/crisis accommodation but more frequently housing for seasonal and itinerant workers
- Rental housing is in short supply throughout the Wimmera Southern Mallee region and in several locations the shortage is critical, impacting on the ability to house staff for businesses, public sector agencies and community organisations. The proportion of private sector rental housing in the region is low by any measure.
- One or more Development Facilitation Taskforces could be established to create a sense of urgency in planning processes and to convey a 'can do' and 'open for business' attitude in the region.
- The region has many new economic development projects in the pipeline (for example, in agribusiness, food processing, mining, renewable energies, tourism and health services) and a more aggressive set of growth targets should be adopted by Councils and other regional agencies to ensure housing is not an inhibitor to realising these projects.

A series of future directions and actions were also considered including:

- Consider setting more ambitious housing demand targets and review the assumed population decline rates set by demographers.
- Ensure that housing is considered as part of the regions liveability equation
- Consider intervention in the housing market, where the private sector is unable or unwilling to act (such as Swan Hill Rural City Council work in Robinvale)
- Attract skills in residential design and construction to address a shortage in land development, design, engineering and building.
- Establish an adequate and effective rental stock – considered necessary for the region's economic development pipeline of projects to be delivered.
- Consistent and ambitious regional land use planning

Following the development of this Study, the region has progressed discussions around attracting further funding for a regional project to undertake a residential land supply assessment and consider the strategic planning needs across each community. This work is being considered with the Wimmera Development Association and the DELWP Regional Planning Hubs initiative.

In addition, the need to establish proposals and advocate to the State Government through Regional Development Victoria or to the Social Housing Fund have also become stronger opportunities over recent months.

RELEVANT LAW

Not applicable

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

There are no related Council decisions.

OPTIONS

This report will trigger a range of additional proposals, investment options and ideas. Many of these options will be considered.

Council could opt to not progress with the actions in the report, however as the report notes, housing remains a key inhibitor to the liveability and growth of many communities in the region.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no sustainability implications in this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In developing this report, the authors worked with community leaders and interviewed business and real estate leaders. Further engagement will be required through the implementation of the actions.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

This report calls on Council to think innovatively and consider different approaches to the Housing issues facing the municipality.

COLLABORATION

In developing this report, Council has collaborated with a range of Councils in the Wimmera Southern Mall region and to attract developers and investment, a broader collaborative approach will be required into the future.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

There are no financial viability issues to consider in this report.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

This report forms a key regional plan for Council to advocate for the implementation of Housing initiatives across the municipality.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

This work aligns with the work established from the Council Plan and Economic Development and Tourism Strategy.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report is presented to open Council and available to community.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officer involved in this report has a conflict of interest.

Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Housing Review 2020 SUMMARY DOCUMENT



November 2020

CONFIDENTIAL: Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Housing Review

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

Housing is constantly raised by community groups and businesses throughout the Wimmera Southern Mallee as a most significant issue to be addressed if population decline is to be stemmed and emerging economic development opportunities are to be realised. There have been pervasive anecdotal comments about housing as a blockage to development, but sound evidence combined with local intelligence on housing and a review of the future outlook needed to be quantified. The Housing Review project has attempted to address this need.

Major Findings

- The extent of agreement that housing is inhibiting liveability and economic strength of towns in the Wimmera Southern Mallee is overpowering.
- Without diminishing conspicuous variations which relate to town sizes, locations, and economic base, housing issues are wide-ranging:
 - There are shortages of residentially zoned and serviced land for sale.
 - Existing housing stock is often the wrong mix for ageing populations, not conducive to attracting new residents, and in many cases, vacant dwellings are not even available to the market.
 - Incentives are needed for residential development, businesses and new residents to overcome perceived potentially poor returns on investment.
 - Zoning and planning provisions for future residential development land must be more ambitious: Offering greater range and choice.
 - There is inadequate low-cost housing and social housing, including emergency/crisis accommodation but more frequently housing for seasonal and itinerant workers
 - Rental housing is in short supply throughout the Wimmera Southern Mallee region and in several locations the shortage is critical, impacting on the ability to house staff for businesses, public sector agencies and community organisations. The proportion of private sector rental housing in the region is low by any measure.
 - One or more Development Facilitation Taskforces could be established to create a sense of urgency in planning processes and to convey a 'can do' and 'open for business' attitude in the region.
 - The region has many new economic development projects in the pipeline (for example, in agribusiness, food processing, mining, renewable energies, tourism and health services) and a more aggressive set of growth targets should be adopted by Councils and other regional agencies to ensure housing is not an inhibitor to realising these projects.
- Actions needed to unlock and improve housing availability are extensive, and include:
 - Future provision for residential land, opening a greater range and choice, not just reliance on infill blocks in many towns
 - Making it attractive for people moving into aged accommodation premises to release their properties for sale or rent without impacting on their eligibility for aged care support/pension funding or their costs at the retirement village/aged care facility
 - Registering Community Housing Groups (or other entity/mechanism) to access social housing funding support
 - Packaging developments across multiple towns to make it attractive for a developer or financial lending institution

- Councils agreeing to underwrite loans, or provide other facilitation, for aged accommodation by community groups
- Streamlining planning controls and implementing consistent terminologies and processes across the region.
- Adopting population and housing demand projections which reflect expected industry and job creation targets (or known developments) rather than a continuation of past trends.
- Advocacy to overcome impacts of stamp duty and other statutory requirements.
- Recognition that availability of suitable housing, and housing choices, is part of a bigger bundle of facilities and services to engender vibrant towns, attractive residential areas, and a level of growth to sustain communities and retain infrastructure and assets.

Future Directions and Implementation Actions

Several new strategic direction suggestions, while not comprehensive responses to the region's housing issues, are proposed in this document for consideration as a basis for actions to address critical housing issues. They are:

- **Setting Realistic but Ambitious Housing Demand Targets.** Housing studies, planning reviews, and strategies over the past 5 to 10 years for the region and its constituent local government areas have often assumed the region's path will continue in line with previous trends (slow population growth in Horsham Rural City and ongoing decline elsewhere). These assumptions may ultimately prove correct. However, the time is right to pursue a more ambitious and proactive future for the region. More ambitious population and housing demand targets have been calculated in the review project and are presented in this document.
- **Housing as Part of the Liveability Equation.** Availability of suitable housing, and housing choices, is part of a bigger bundle of liveability facilities and services. Feedback confirms that housing is unquestionably the most pressing issue to be addressed among all the facility and service needs in Wimmera Southern Mallee region towns. The nature of these 'housing issues' vary somewhat in specifics from town to town, but rental properties, affordable housing, suitable land choices and higher-quality and cost housing tend to be quite ubiquitous across the region.

WSM towns have key liveability strengths in sporting and recreational facilities, cultural and environmental assets, general health services, quality primary and secondary education, and active and connected communities. Significant weaknesses in the liveability 'bundle' for WSM towns are child-care, specialist health-care, transition to retirement and quality aged-care options. Town centres with adequate retail and food service businesses are increasingly becoming liveability essentials. Town centre revitalisation projects, embedding a greater 'service philosophy' in town businesses, and continuing the momentum on creating tourist visitor experiences will all have a flow-on impact on, and complement, liveability in WSM towns.
- **Intervention in the Housing Market.** It is reasonable for governments and communities to take a role in housing (and in other activities affecting their towns) when the private sector is either unable or unwilling to act.

Australia's economy has become dominated by free-market thinking, allowing regional towns to grow or decline depending on their 'regional comparative strengths or weaknesses' with market forces dictating the winners and losers. Intervention to change these market forces has been rare, until the most conspicuous set of interventions ever implemented, in the 2020 COVID 19 pandemic.

Even with the free-market approach, government decisions on infrastructure investments can strongly help, or hinder, growth in regional areas. Many private sector developers will choose their investment locations in centres where infrastructure is provided ahead of demand rather than in response to demand. In this respect, infrastructure provision is one of the key market forces affecting regional development.

Buoyed by the prospect that large swathes of regional Australia and Victoria could become residential locations of choice in the aftermath of COVID 19 (and enhanced by improved communications and other information technologies), Wimmera regional stakeholders now believe it would be timely to intervene in the regional housing market through innovative models for land subdivision, retirement and other accommodation for the aged, and rental housing. Provision of social housing by government agencies, philanthropic groups and not-for-profit entities has always been an exception to the free-market economy, where intervention and subsidisation is frequently the only way to meet demand. There is a need for additional social housing in the Wimmera but the more pervasive need is for affordable housing, and for land and housing choices which extend across differing market segments.

Both the recent Commonwealth and Victorian State budgets show a much greater willingness, or perhaps acknowledged need, to intervene in economic activities which have been largely the domain of the private and community sectors in the past. Intervening in the Wimmera Southern Mallee regional housing market with innovative solutions and an active involvement by local government has never been more justified than in 2020 and in the continuing aftermath of COVID 19 over at least the next 3-5 years.

Some potential intervention approaches recommended for immediate action are:

- Model 1: Collaboration between community retirement housing groups and local councils
- Model 2: Formation of community housing investment groups across multiple towns
- Amending Council planning schemes and town masterplans to provide more areas for future residential development
- Advocacy for reductions to, or replacement of, stamp duties on property transfers.
- Council incentives for developers, businesses and incoming residents to purchase properties.

- **Attracting Skills in Residential Design and Construction.** There are clear shortages in land development, design, engineering and building in the Wimmera Southern Mallee. In late 2020 almost all regional building businesses reported that they are fully committed for the next two years. Home buyer incentive schemes and the newly announced Victorian Big Build social housing program are welcomed, but they will add to the difficulties and time delays in regional housing projects. Increased training and apprenticeship opportunities and further business attraction in the building sector will be one of the barriers to overcome in addressing housing shortages over, at least, the next five years.

In Horsham Rural City there are healthy volumes of residential blocks earmarked to cater for future growth. Council is confident there 20-30 years supply available when required which will meet the projected demand of 80 to 100 new dwellings per year. Despite the expected adequate supply there are significant development issues in Horsham relating to:

- Timeliness of development, planning and building processes.
- Insufficient local residential design and engineering providers.
- Shortages of builders and skilled staff for building businesses.
- Insufficient rental accommodation across most sectors.

- **Establishing an Adequate and Effective Rental Housing Stock.** Lack of rental accommodation in the region is extreme. While the overall ratio of 'rental to owned' is low in the region (less than 20% in all WSM municipalities except Horsham and Northern Grampians, and as low as 16.9% of all occupied housing in Yarriambiack Shire, compared with 27.5% as the Victorian average) this simple comparison is misleading. A large proportion of rented properties in the Wimmera have tenants who are family members or are other personally known owners, not typical private or public sector rental investors/landlords.

An effective rental housing stock is necessary for the economic development initiatives in the region's pipeline to be realised, and to assist existing businesses to grow and sustain their competitiveness. The shortages extend to suitable rental properties for:

- o Key staff and professional staff
- o New and transitioning staff
- o Older aged residents
- o Emergency, seasonal and itinerant workers.

- **Regional Land Use Planning.** All WSM Councils need land use plans which encompass available housing, zoning, infrastructure, and ready land. Land use planning and strategy should be part of all annual Council Plans. Preferably these would reflect ambitious but achievable economic development targets with accompanying identified land and set aside as the building block for future development in order to streamline development. It would be useful for land terminology to be consistent across WSM Councils and for them to participate in a region-wide Land Use Strategy project.
- **Further Housing Assessment with Practical Outcomes.** Work in this project has revealed a greater level of complexity in regional housing issues than anticipated. The research has demonstrated that housing, and the component sub-sectors, is among the most important factors affecting future economic development in the Wimmera Southern Mallee and action is required to shift it from a barrier to an enabling factor.

1. SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

Housing availability, quality and choice are constantly raised by community groups and businesses throughout the Wimmera Southern Mallee as among the most significant issues in stemming population decline and creating economic development opportunities in the region. There are regular and pervasive anecdotal comments about housing as a blockage to development, but some sound evidence combined with local intelligence on housing and a review of the real future outlook all needed to be quantified. This Housing Review project has attempted to address this need, and this report documents the results.

The purposes of this project were

- To develop a quantitative and qualitative information base on the current housing market in the Wimmera Southern Mallee region.
- To measure housing stock availability, quality and outlook by location for both rent and purchase.

The project was designed and undertaken by Wimmera Development Association with support from Street Ryan, during July to November 2020. Research and assessments have been made across the local government areas of Horsham Rural City, and the Shires of Buloke, Hindmarsh, Northern Grampians, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack.

Project activities have included structured discussions with over 50 stakeholders in local government authorities, other government agencies, real estate, building and construction sectors, community organisations, and other some employing businesses. Quantitative data from Councils, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Valuer General's Department and a range of publications have been referenced. Projection scenario projections for population and housing demand have been generated and reported as part of the project.

Sections in this document are structured around:

- Past trends and current snapshots for each WSM local government area and the region's main towns
- Summary discussion of comments and issues raised by interviewed stakeholders
- Projections of population and housing demand.
- Proposed future directions and actions to unlock/change the region's housing issues.

2. REGIONAL HOUSING ANALYSIS

2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC AND HOUSING TRENDS

Human habitation in Victoria's Wimmera Southern Mallee spans at least 1,600 generations. For all but the last 10 of these generations, Aboriginal tribal groups controlled tracts of land and sustained populations living in balance with the available sources of food and water. When migratory lifestyles were the norm, mobility helped the people to live throughout cycles of droughts and floods. Until recently, there had been little recognition of the permanent and semi-permanent settlements of the traditional owners of the land.

In the 1840s, an economy built around indigenous plants and animals rapidly gave way to the exploitation of pastures for livestock production and land for cropping. A century later, the region was transformed with a network of towns, moulded by railway and road networks, and a diverse cropping industry of cereals, pulses and oilseeds. The last 50 years has seen rationalisation of large public enterprises, farm aggregation and agricultural automation, and a shift in the economic base towards service industries. These events have resulted in towns with considerable infrastructure that has been under-utilised by a regional population base which has not expanded for more than a half-century. The housing base however has expanded enormously.

The Victorian Central Planning Authority's 1961 Resources Survey of the Wimmera Region reported a resident population of 49,840 persons (and at that time the region excluded the southern part of West Wimmera encompassing Edenhope, Goroke and Harrow and the northern and eastern parts of Buloke Shire encompassing Charlton, Wycheproof, Birchip and Sea Lake) with 12,118 occupied dwellings. In 2020, the population is around 54,200 and the number of occupied dwellings is about 24,200. This represents, over 60 years, a 4,400 increase in population, or 8.7% more residents, but 99.7% more occupied households. Overall, this is a change in average household size from 4.1 persons per dwelling to 2.2 persons per dwelling. Population size and change is fundamental to demand for housing but the relationship between them continues to change.

Wimmera region building approvals for new houses reached 132 in 2019-20, 75 in Horsham Rural City as well as a further 7 units/flats developments (valued at \$1.55 million), and an average of 10 new houses in the region's five Shires, as summarised in Table 2.1.

Serviced residential land sales in 2019 averaged \$115,000 in Horsham and an estimated \$25,000 in other municipalities in the region¹.

Table 2.1 New Housing Activity: WSM 2019-20

	New houses	New other residential building	Total dwellings	Value of new houses (\$000)	Average per house (\$000)
Buloke Shire	10	0	10	3,590	359
Horsham Rural City	75	7	82	27,429	366
Hindmarsh Shire	14	0	14	4,581	327
Northern Grampians Shire	21	0	21	6,157	293
West Wimmera Shire	4	0	4	1,682	421
Yarriambiack Shire	8	0	8	2,295	287
Total	132	7	139	45,734	346

¹ Victorian Valuer General (2020) vacant land sales by town

SOURCE: Australian Bureau of Statistics Building Approvals 2019-20

Figure 2.1 Dwelling Tenure in Wimmera Southern Mallee 2016 (%)

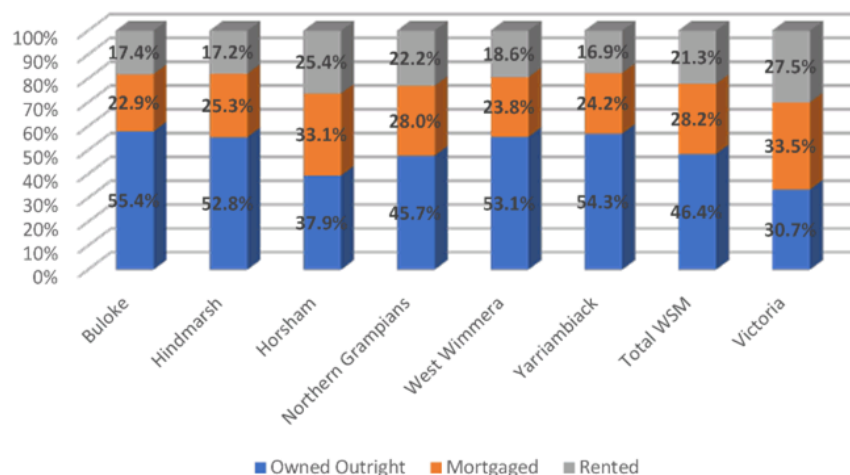


Figure 2.1 reveals clear differences between the region's housing tenure from Victorian averages and also the differences between the region's two largest municipalities and the other four shires. Outright home ownership exceeds 50% in Buloke, Hindmarsh, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack Shires, while it is 46% in Northern Grampians and 38% in Horsham Rural City. The Victorian state average is 30.7%. The percentage of WSM region households with a mortgage is considerably lower than the Victorian average in every municipality except Horsham where the percentage is comparable with the state average.

Rental accommodation is widely reputed to be in short supply, critical short supply in some cases, and this is confirmed by the percentage of households renting properties. In the four less populated WSM municipalities the percentage of renting households is very low, ranging from 16.9% to 18.6%, with Horsham (25.4%) and Northern Grampians (22.2%) not so clearly below the Victorian average. However, the conjecture that the region has a small 'rental market' is best confirmed from details on the mix of landlord types, presented in Figure 2.2. This indicates that not only is rental housing stock lower in the Wimmera Southern Mallee region than Victoria as a whole, but the rental housing market is less commercially oriented. Indeed, only 42.8% of tenants have rental arrangements through the 'normal' managing agent/real estate agent relationship, and it is as low as 11.0% in West Wimmera and 15.3% in Buloke, compared with the Victorian average of 67.0%.

From one perspective, the small commercially oriented rental market situation is symptomatic of an insufficient supply of rental accommodation and too few investors, but is also evidence that some parts of the region have gained important experience in finding innovative solutions to their rental housing problem. In this respect Figure 2.2 reveals:

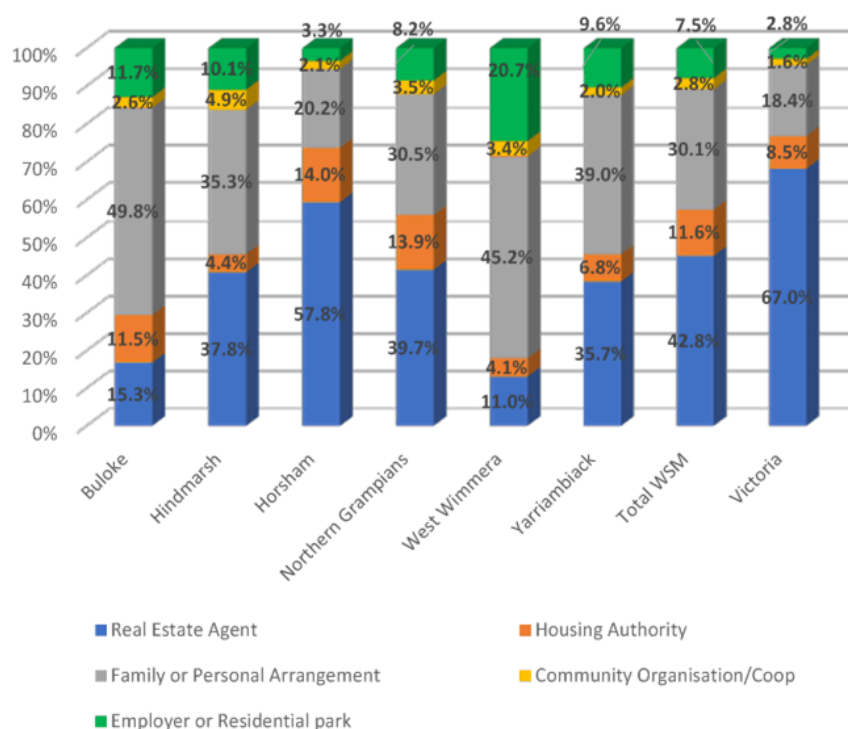
- A very large percentage of rental property tenants in the region have a personal relationship, or arrangement, with their landlord (who is a person with whom they have negotiated directly for their lease or is a parent or other family member of the tenant). Almost 50% of tenancies are in this category in Buloke Shire, and the percentage is high in West Wimmera, Hindmarsh, Northern Grampians and Yarriambiack. Some of these are undoubtedly 'arms-length' arrangements where the landlord is simply avoiding the costs of engaging a property managing agent but many are also properties where the landlord has the added security of

investing in one or more rental properties already with a tenant in mind (sometimes a family member), knowing that the occupancy is secure.

- The region has more than triple the state average percentage of rented premises where the landlord is the tenant's employer (or could be a 'residential park' owner, but this is negligible in the region) in Buloke, Hindmarsh, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack, and about triple the percentage in Northern Grampians.
- All municipalities in the region have a higher than average number of tenancies where the landlord is a community organisation or cooperative.

With these precedents, the region is well placed to embrace further innovative models for meeting future rental housing needs.

Figure 2.2 Rental Properties by Landlord Type 2016, Wimmera Southern Mallee



2.2 REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

2.2.1 Public and Government Housing

Housing Victoria (DHHS), Grampians Community Health, Uniting Wimmera have a stock of residential properties (including those for 55+ years and aged care) across the region. While these are usually fully occupied, social housing issues remain. There are very few single units for younger people. The over 55 years cohort is easier to get into the system, but for younger families and individuals needing social housing there is scarce stock to assist. Uniting Care and the Salvation Army have a partnership in homeless and crisis accommodation and the need has been piqued by COVID 19.

Housing Victoria (part of the Department of Health and Human Services) owns dwelling stock for rent by eligible individuals and households in all six Wimmera Southern Mallee local government areas and an estimated total of 664 properties, mostly 1 and 2 bedroom homes with a few 3 bedroom dwellings and very limited numbers with 4 and 5 bedrooms. The greatest number of Housing Victoria properties in the region are in Horsham and Stawell.

There are waiting lists for Housing Victoria tenancies and in some towns the waiting times are long and eligible applicants do not register. Exact property numbers are fluid due to work-in-progress renovations, sales, purchases and transfers of some properties between support agencies, but the current estimates are:

- Horsham	357 properties
- Northern Grampians	155 properties
- West Wimmera, Hindmarsh and Yarriambiack	81 properties
- Buloke	71 properties

Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) owns and manages public housing stock separate from Housing Victoria and AHV may have a small stock in the Wimmera Southern Mallee, mostly with stable, long-term tenants.

It is understood Housing Victoria has no plans to sell any of its properties and is working on a project to construct a further 1,000 homes (1 and 2 bedroom), some of which is likely to be replacements for existing poor stock. The Housing Victoria properties have 100% occupancy rates and this is only reduced if and when a property is being renovated or upgraded, which might mean a 2-8 weeks vacancy period. Major upgrades usually cost \$25-30,000 while tenancy transfers (exits and new arrivals) might incur minor repairs, painting and cleaning. If the extent of a required upgrade is too great, a replacement home might be built, or a demolition might be replaced with multiple units or apartments.

During the COVID 19 crisis there have been a lot of improvement works undertaken in the region; external works and use of stimulus packages for painting and roofing upgrades to properties. Wimmera South West has not been served as well as other areas due to low growth but is currently getting some good gains.

The recently announced Victorian Government "Big Build" social housing program commits to considerable new investment in the region: A minimum of \$15 million in Horsham and a potential allocation from a \$450 million budget in other parts of the region. The Big Build housing funding support is expected to be accessible to registered housing provider organisations and innovative partnerships (potentially between local government authorities and community organisations). Details of how the Big Build program will be structured in terms of provision of funding to innovative partnerships is yet to be determined, but it is hoped that one of the proposed housing delivery models discussed in this document may be an eligible applicant for social/affordable housing projects in the Wimmera Southern Mallee.

Housing Victoria is trying to utilise all its land assets in each area where there is strong demand. However, on a broad scale it is the bigger towns which have priority. Small towns, for example Beulah, where the department has a few properties and land but limited services and low demand, may well be a place where land could be made available for other uses. Of course, Housing Victoria prioritises housing provision where the tenants are also able to access other client services, transport, health etc. Horsham, Stawell, Hamilton all have stock being put forward for redevelopment.

Housing Victoria has a current policy preference to not establish their housing units in a dedicated area or suburb within towns, preferring to locate them a 'scattered' fashion across communities so both the dwellings and households are well integrated. The newer houses are of a good standard, energy smart and aesthetically attractive. One possible new Housing Victoria project in the region is the Searle Street development site in Horsham where 4-6 public sector units, and possible additional dwellings for elderly tenants is proposed.

Waiting times for public housing differ in response to the urgency and other circumstances of the applicants, giving priority to people at risk of homelessness and/or family violence situations. Until two years ago applicants were only allowed to rank 3 location options, now they can nominate up to 5 on the online Victorian Housing Register. There is a huge waiting list for 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings, 1-2 years is the standard. Regional areas are known to have a lot better communication with applicants in the metropolitan area, and this means issues can often be worked through to resolve or speed up the process.

Accommodation for older residents is not one of the areas in high demand for Housing Victoria, yet. As the population of towns continue to age this may become a focus but the public housing stock does not come with age-care services or transition to care options, so is not really fit for this tenancy group. At present the greatest demand is for 1 and 2 bedroom units for people in the 18-35 years (with dependents) bracket.

There is a 'building homes for homeless' project underway and the department is looking at suitable blocks and spot home purchases in the community. Over the last couple of years the Wimmera South West has not been rated as a growth area but more investment has come into the region in very recent times.

COVID 19 has caused minimal disruption for Housing Victoria, and the agency has acted appropriately where needed, but is not experiencing the same impact that private rental and sale have reported. The regional office has good communication with tenants and has kept on top of rental arrears.

The Victoria Department of Education has housing stock in the region, despite disposal of many dwellings in the past decade; a consequence of falling populations and declining teacher numbers. Considerable accommodation facilities remain. There is no known location in the region where a school principal cannot get accommodation through the department. For example, last year a newly appointed principal arrived to Beulah primary where the existing house had not been used for a few years so the department invested in upgrading the house and fitting it with new appliances.

Housing is one of the first questions raised when the department is recruiting new staff and all regional departmental housing is highly utilised at the moment, with no vacant housing. Nevertheless, some of the houses do need significant updates and resourcing. Potential teaching staff are deterred from applying for regional positions if they feel that there will be limited or sub-standard accommodation and other services.

There is no real Education Department incentive program to attract graduates, either singles or those with young families to move to regional areas. A quality attraction and retention policy could be put in place for multiple government agencies, with subsidised housing and support services like child-care as components.

2.2.2 Regional Real Estate Industry Perspectives

The COVID 19 pandemic has had a positive impact on the region's real estate market. People are genuinely considering moves to regional areas in greater numbers than ever noted before, from Melbourne. Across major provincial cities of Geelong, Latrobe, Bendigo, Ballarat, Horsham and all other regional areas, country agents have experienced the same heightened level of interest.

To facilitate enquiry from prospective new residents, WSM towns need to have good family holiday accommodation. This creates great holiday experiences and sews the seeds for possible future residential relocation.

More land needs to be unlocked for development and greater introduction of rural residential and lifestyle blocks of at least 2,000 to 4,000 square metres in area. Agents advise that for every rural lifestyle property that is brought to the market there are 10 prospective buyers.

2.3 POPULATION AND HOUSING DEMAND PROJECTIONS

Official Victorian Government population projections, known as Victoria in Future (VIF) projections, were last prepared for local government areas in June 2019. Understandably the VIF projections need to apply an accounts-based cohort-survival and migration methodology in order to distribute Victoria's total population across the State's 79 local government areas. These projections are therefore founded on a continuation of past trends over recent years (for births, deaths and domestic migration) and policy settings for international migration. The VIF assumptions in 2019 included:

- Total fertility rate to remain around 1.6 throughout the life of the projections. Local differentials are derived from ABS publication 3301.0, Births, Australia.
- Life expectancy at birth for males is expected to reach 86 years by 2056, and for females 88 years. Regional and local differentials are derived from ABS publication 3302.0 Deaths, Australia.
- Prior to the COVID crisis Victoria was receiving record numbers of overseas migrants, demonstrating the state's attraction as a destination for employment, education and lifestyle. The VIF projections assume that growth due to overseas migration will reduce from record levels but remain very strong by historical standards. The projections assume net overseas migration to Victoria will reduce from approximately 84,000 in 2018-19 to within the range 70,000 to 80,000 per annum until the end of the projection period.
- Net interstate migration to Victoria will be 8,000 per annum from 2019-20 to the end of the projection period.
- Intrastate migration is derived from age-specific regional migration flow trends. Net migration age profiles are based on implied net-migration by age in the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

Of course, the VIF 2019 projections made no assumptions around the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic, which has decimated short-term international migration and is expected to change the dynamics of internal migration, with many commentators predicting a shift in migration towards regional areas of Victoria and Australia well above those evident from past trends. Whether this extends to towns in the Wimmera is open to conjecture, however real estate agents and other interviewed stakeholders report that, since the onset of the COVID 19 crisis, the level of sales and sales enquiry from buyers (and renters) outside the region has escalated beyond any previous period.

Local Government housing policies and planning schemes which assume a relatively unchanged continuation of past trends are not conducive to economic development and, at least in part, have contributed to the current unhealthy state of the regional housing market. These policies tend to not consider that proactive intervention in economic development through local community actions,

investment attraction or the activation of new opportunities could change the jobs, population and housing demand outlook.

Achievement of no more than the Victoria in Future population projections may still prove to be the ultimate result, but planning for, and facilitating, more jobs, more housing and new migrating residents should surely be the target. If not, the “past trends projections” can be ‘self-fulfilling’ because they lead to limited provision for future demand, and opportunities for attracting investment and residents are lost.

In this housing research project there has been concurrence among the interviewed stakeholders (encompassing Council staff, community leaders, building and real estate industry professionals, and community organisations) that housing in at least some sectors is in short supply, or even critically short supply, in virtually all Wimmera townships. Yet, the accepted projections and planning provisions suggest there is no rationale to plan for residential land beyond in-fill of existing town sites and very little demand for net-new dwellings in the majority of the region’s towns.

In the projections of population and housing demand presented in this document, two scenarios have been developed for each local government area:

- Scenario 1 assumes a continuation of the most recent population trends (including the ABS intercensal estimated resident populations since the 2016 Census). In most cases, these projections produce results that are similar to, or slightly greater than, those in the VIF 2019 projections.
- Scenario 2 assumes a continuation of existing birth and death rates and age-sex migration profiles, but with the addition of each local government area achieving net-new job creation which will result from known or expected industry developments in key sectors that are part of work programs of the Councils’ economic development units and/or are being pursued by known investors and business owners.

In every case Scenario 2 produces results which indicate a regular demand for new residential dwellings at a level which will require planning for new land subdivisions, accessing existing vacant sites and new building development projects. It is suggested that Scenario 2 should be adopted as Local Council targets for housing development over the next decade.

Adopting the Scenario 2 targets should address the volume of housing needed to accommodate demand and growth in the Wimmera. However, meeting the needs of all segments within the housing market is more complex, and innovative models are proposed to address some of these needs and to act as demonstration initiatives which can be further modified to meet the needs of other segments.

Demographic and housing demand projections prepared in this review demonstrate that even the partial² achievement of job and flow-on population targets based on known and anticipated economic development outcomes, would generate demand for housing substantially higher over the next 10 years than those suggested by past trends. With a continuation of past trends (Projection Scenario 1) annual housing demand is estimated to be 88 new dwellings per annum during 2021 to 2030. The more ambitious, but still considered conservative, Projection Scenario 2 produces estimates of 317 dwellings per annum. The approximate nature of this demand is further estimated as 230 new dwellings per annum for sale to ‘buying households’ and 87 new dwellings per annum for ‘renting households’ (including short-term and social housing tenants).

² “Partial achievement” means the projections have been conservative in the calculated job and flow-on population targets that are expected in each municipality, varying between 50% and 80% of expectations for realising economic development outcomes that are in the pipeline.

If vacancy rates for properties, which are high throughout the region, could be reduced by making it attractive for owners (especially older aged owners and other absentee owners) to release their properties to either sale or rental markets, the demand for new dwellings would reduce, although probably replaced by existing dwellings in need of restoration, alterations or additions.

2.4 FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

2.4.1 Pervasive Housing Issues

The extent of agreement that housing is inhibiting liveability and economic strength of towns in the Wimmera Southern Mallee is overpowering.

There are well-known variations in town sizes, locations, and economic base, across the Wimmera Southern Mallee. Irrespective, there are common and wide-ranging housing issues:

- There are shortages of residentially zoned and serviced land for sale.
- Existing housing stock is often the wrong mix for ageing populations and not conducive to attracting new residents, and in many cases vacant dwellings are not even available to the market.
- Incentives are needed for residential development, businesses and new residents to overcome perceived potentially poor returns on investment.
- Zoning and planning provisions for future residential development land should be more ambitious; offering greater range and choice.
- There is inadequate low-cost housing and social housing, including emergency/crisis accommodation but more frequently housing for seasonal and itinerant workers
- Rental housing is in short supply throughout the Wimmera Southern Mallee region and in several locations the shortage is critical, impacting on the ability to house staff for businesses, public sector agencies and community organisations. The proportion of private sector rental housing in the region is low by any measure.
- One or more Development Facilitation Taskforces could be established to create a sense of urgency in planning processes and to convey a 'can do' and 'open for business' attitude in the region.

- With so many new economic development projects, involving new employment, in the pipeline the region could benefit from engaging employers in the construction of workers accommodation (as Frewstal has done in Stawell). This does not necessarily mean employers need to buy houses (although it is one possibility, with employers providing initial housing which can eventually be sold to employees), but to work with investors by demonstrating they can guarantee tenants or buyers for, say 20-30 dwellings over the next 5 years.
- The region is hamstrung by a history of little capital gain in property. Capital investment tends to gravitate to where good capital returns are achieved. This market force is beyond the control of Wimmera Southern Mallee stakeholders but, as a region it can be at least partly offset by taking out some of the costs and making investment easier and faster, to de-risk projects.

2.4.2 Strategic Directions

The following strategic direction suggestions are not comprehensive responses to the region's housing issues, part they are presented for consideration and to form a basis for actions which will begin to address the region's housing issues.

Setting Realistic Housing Demand Targets

There have been sporadic housing studies, planning reviews, and strategies over the past 5 to 10 years for the region and its constituent local government areas. There is a pervading theme through these assessments that 'not much will change' and that the region's path will continue in line with previous trends, namely slow population growth in Horsham Rural City and ongoing decline elsewhere. While these assumptions may ultimately prove correct, 2020 and the next few years is the right time to pursue a more ambitious and proactive future for the region. There are a confluence of factors suggesting the time is right for an assertive and interventionist approach to the housing market in particular:

- The 'opportunity' presented by the COVID 19 pandemic recovery, which has already generated unparalleled enquiry and demand for residential property in the region during 2020.
- Known economic development initiatives, stimulus and activity in the investment pipeline.
- Very recent performance of the housing market and demographic indicators (reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics) indicate a break from past trends.
- Interest rates are low, as are financial dividends from most secure investments, so the returns to be expected from an innovative real estate project in the Wimmera Southern Mallee probably do not need to be as attractive as times when there is rapid economic growth.

A consequence of adopting business-as-usual strategies is that local government housing policies and planning schemes tend to not consider that proactive intervention in economic development through local community actions, investment attraction or the activation of new opportunities could change the jobs, population and housing demand outlook. This approach to zoning and planning for residential development appears to be founded in a state-wide methodology used by DHHS in relying entirely on land take-up and residential building activity over the past years or decade as the prime indicator of likely future demand. The Victoria in Future population projections tend to use a similar approach for net-migration in Wimmera Southern Mallee areas. These projections can be a 'self-fulfilling' because they lead to limited provision for future demand, and opportunities for attracting investment and residents are lost.

Housing as Part of the Liveability Equation

There is recognition that availability of suitable housing, and housing choices, is part of a bigger bundle of facilities and services to engender vibrant towns, attractive residential areas, and a level of growth to sustain the communities and retain infrastructure and assets. The feedback compiled in this housing review has confirmed that housing is unquestionably the most pressing issue to be addressed among all the facility and service needs in Wimmera region towns. The nature of the 'housing issue' varies somewhat in specifics from town to town, but rental properties, affordable housing, suitable land choices and higher-quality and cost housing tend to be quite ubiquitous across the region. Freeing up vacant land and premises to the market is also an increasingly critical issue, by removing disincentives for people to sell or derive an income (due to the impact on pension entitlements or transfer costs).

WSM towns have key liveability strengths in sporting and recreational facilities, cultural and environmental assets, general health services, quality primary and secondary education, and active and connected communities. Significant weaknesses in the liveability 'bundle' for WSM towns are child-care, specialist health-care, transition to retirement and quality aged-care options. Town centres with adequate retail and food service businesses are increasingly becoming liveability essentials. Town centre revitalisation projects, embedding a greater 'service philosophy' in town businesses, and continuing the momentum on creating tourist visitor experiences will all have a flow-on impact on, and complement, liveability in WSM towns.

Jobs remain the dominant factor in residential location decisions but advances in technology and COVID 19 have proven that many jobs do not need to be location specific. Even if working as part of a team centred in a metropolitan or provincial city, the need for physical presence can be reduced to a weekly or fortnightly schedule. Regional towns that offer enhanced liveability in the wake of COVID 19 are widely tipped to attract new residents, and the real estate industry feedback in 2020 strongly supports this expectation.

Horsham Rural City and Northern Grampians Shire are possibly best placed to offer the 'full liveability package' at present. This package includes housing choices and housing value, health care, child-care, metropolitan standard food services (cafés and restaurants), sport/leisure/recreation facilities, retailing and cultural attractions. Tight knit communities are also very important residential attractors, and this is an area where WSM towns have long held a competitive advantage.

The Wimmera Southern Mallee landscape, climate and physical environment does not appeal to all. Indeed, the fact that 85% of Australia's population lives within 50 kilometres of a coastline loudly confirms the nation's love of the sea. Added to this sobering statistic is that the national population is headed for a decline, not growth, for at least the next couple of years from the fallout of the COVID 19 pandemic. But the inland has its attractions and there are an expanding number of examples of inland cities and towns which have reversed declining or slow growing populations and are now on a growth path. Examples of inland provincial cities which have become growth areas are Toowoomba, Orange, Albury-Wodonga, Bendigo and Ballarat, while a few examples of smaller satellite inland rural towns which have reversed declines are Bungendore, Millthorpe, Yackandandah, Beechworth, and Beaufort. In every case the reason for this reversal has been perceived great liveability in these towns, not just job creation.

Intervention in the Housing Market

When is it appropriate for government and/or community-based organisations to intervene in the regional housing market? It is reasonable for governments and communities to take a role in housing (and in other activities affecting their towns) when the private sector is either unable or unwilling to act.

Australia's economy has become dominated by free-market thinking, allowing regional towns to grow or decline depending on their 'regional comparative strengths or weaknesses' with market forces dictating the winners and losers. Intervention to change these market forces has been rare, until the most conspicuous set of interventions ever implemented, in the 2020 COVID 19 pandemic.

Even with the free-market approach, government decisions on infrastructure investments can strongly help, or hinder, growth in regional areas. Many private sector developers will choose their investment locations in centres where infrastructure is provided ahead of demand rather than in response to demand. In this respect, government infrastructure provision is one of the key market forces affecting regional development.

Will the COVID 19 pandemic deliver a trend towards increased population growth in regional Victoria? There have only been two periods since Australia's Federation in 1901, when the population of regional Victoria has exceeded metropolitan Melbourne. These periods were during the Great Depression years (1931 to 1934) and then for a more extended period during 1977 to 1986. Throughout the 115 years 1901-2016 Regional Victoria has recorded an average annual increase in population of 0.63%, approximately one-third of the Melbourne metropolitan growth rate (1.97% per annum). Many commentators expect the mid to late 2020s will be the third time regional Victoria's growth outstrips the rate in its capital city.

Buoyed by the prospect that large swathes of regional Australia and Victoria could become residential locations of choice in the aftermath of COVID 19 (and enhanced by improved communications and other information technologies), Wimmera regional stakeholders now believe the time is right to intervene in the regional housing market through innovative models for land subdivision, retirement and other accommodation for the aged, and rental housing. Provision of social housing by government agencies, philanthropic groups and not-for-profit entities has always been an exception to the free-market economy, where intervention and subsidisation is frequently the only way to meet (or partially meet³) demand. There is a need for additional social housing in the Wimmera but the more pervasive need is for affordable housing, and for land and housing choices which extend across differing market segments; short-term/long-term, owned/rented, single/couple/family, aged care/active retiree, etc.

Both the recent Commonwealth and Victorian State budgets show a much greater willingness, or perhaps acknowledged need, to intervene in economic activities which have been largely the domain of the private and community sectors in the past. Intervening in the Wimmera regional housing market with innovative solutions and an active involvement by local government has never been more justified than in 2020 and in the continuing aftermath of COVID 19 over at least the next 3-5 years.

Some potential intervention recommended for immediate action are:

- Model 1: Collaboration between community retirement housing groups and local councils
- Model 2: Formation of community housing investment groups across multiple towns
- Amending Council planning schemes and town masterplans to provide more areas for future residential development
- Advocacy for reductions to, or replacement of, stamp duties on property transfers with a land tax which would have two important benefits:
 - o It would replace a highly distortionary tax with an efficient, stable long-term revenue stream for the State Government.
 - o It would help asset-rich/income-poor home-owners who would only begin to pay the land tax when they buy a property, and only if they choose not to pay the property transfer duty.

There are many costs involved in buying property and moving house; agents fees, property inspections, bank facility fees, conveyancing, removal (packing, transport, unpacking), change of address, changes of service providers (including medical, schools, club membership, etc). High stamp duty costs reduce the inclination of households to move home. A land tax could operate in a similar fashion to Council rates, paid annually and a small proportion of the value of the property compared with a stamp duty of 5%+ of the property purchase price.

- Council incentives for developers, businesses and incoming residents to purchase properties. Typical assistance could be waiving of fees, deferring rates or rate holidays for developers, and end-to-end streamlining of planning processes (which includes all the statutory authorities, such as GWMWater, Wimmera CMA, CFA, etc, not just Council).

Attracting Skills in Residential Design and Construction

There are clear shortages in land development, design, engineering and building in the Wimmera Southern Mallee. In late 2020 almost all regional building businesses reported that they are fully committed for the next two years. Finding designers and builders from outside the region to work on local projects is not necessarily the solution, because a knowledge of local conditions and requirements is important. Home buyer incentive schemes and the newly announced Victorian Big Build social housing program are welcomed, but they will add to the difficulties and time delays in regional housing projects. Increased training and apprenticeship opportunities and further business

³ Supply of adequate social housing is typically well below meeting needs.

attraction in the building sector will be one of the barriers to overcome in addressing housing shortages over, at least, the next five years.

In Horsham Rural City there are healthy volumes of residential blocks earmarked to cater for future growth. Council is confident there 20-30 years supply available when required which will meet the projected demand of 80 to 100 new dwellings per year. Despite the expected adequate supply there are significant development issues in Horsham relating to:

- Timeliness of development, planning and building processes.
- Insufficient local residential design and engineering providers.
- Shortages of builders and skilled staff for building businesses.
- Insufficient rental accommodation across most sectors.

Establishing an Adequate and Effective Rental Housing Stock

Lack of rental accommodation in the region is extreme. While the overall ratio of 'rental to owned' is low in the region (less than 20% in all WSM municipalities except Horsham and Northern Grampians, and as low as 16.9% of all occupied housing in Yarriambiack Shire, compared with 27.5% as the Victorian average) this simple comparison is misleading. A large proportion of rented properties in the Wimmera have tenants who are family members or are other personally known owners, not typical private or public sector rental investors/landlords.

An effective rental housing stock is necessary for the economic development initiatives in the region's pipeline to be realised, and to assist existing businesses to grow and sustain their competitiveness. The shortages extend to suitable rental properties for:

- Key staff and professional staff – executive positions
- New and transitioning staff – short-term appointments
- Aged residents (both for permanent occupancy and transitioning to downsized housing)
- Emergency, seasonal and itinerant workers.

Regional Land Use Planning

All WSM Councils need land use plans which encompass available housing, zoning, infrastructure, and ready land. Land use planning and strategy should be part of all annual Council Plans. Preferably these would reflect ambitious but achievable economic development targets with accompanying identified land and set aside as the building block for future development in order to streamline development.

It would be useful for land terminology to be consistent across WSM Councils and for them to participate in a region-wide Land Use Strategy project.

- **Further Housing Assessment with Practical Outcomes.** Work in this project has revealed a greater level of complexity in regional housing issues than anticipated. The research has demonstrated that housing, and the component sub-sectors, is among the most important factors affecting future economic development in the Wimmera Southern Mallee and action is required to shift it from a barrier to an enabling factor. Further housing project work should be focussed around:
 - o Revisiting the initial population and housing demand targets in this document based on an agreed pipeline of economic development activities for each WSM local government area. The projections would also incorporate residential location modelling.
 - o Implementation of at least two of the recommended intervention in the housing market approaches/models (including creation of a suitable ownership and investment structure, and business cases for the first stage of housing construction or acquisition for both selected models).

2.4.2 Initial Implementation Actions

Model 1: Collaboration between community retirement housing groups and local councils

Steps and elements for this model are:

- ❖ Select 3-5 towns in the region to participate in each initiative. For convenience and ease of management these could be all in the same local government area, but if the asset base and success of the initiative becomes proven, multiple local government areas could be involved in mutually agreed groups. Ultimately a single regional 'umbrella' committee structure could be established with town-based sub-committees each managing their own property portfolio.
- ❖ Establish or engage (if already in existence) Retirement/Aged Housing Committees as 'Community Assets Committees' of the respective Local Councils. Under this structure ownership of residential dwellings (houses or units) will remain with Council. The Committee will have delegated authority in managing the units, essentially operating as a head-tenant and property manager for the complex (and maybe considered the equity holder in the asset to take ownership from Council at an appropriate time) or are paid the equity when properties are sold. The Committee should also be the decision maker in requesting when units should be sold by Council.
- ❖ The selected Retirement Committees will include some with existing aged units that are unencumbered, have a history of sound economic viability, and are able to be used as security for any needed commercial loans. Any commercial loan for new units project will be taken out by the Committee, and the Councils would allow land and buildings to be used as security for the loan and, in addition, Council would be a guarantor for the loan.
- ❖ It is expected that for every 4-5 existing units owned and operated by the group of Aged Housing Committees would be sufficient to raise loan funds, and to service principal and interest repayments loan funds, for one new unit. Any cash, grant or philanthropic funds that the Committees can contribute to the project could increase the number of units. For example, a cash contribution of around \$150,000 would enable projects of two units instead of one. As a group of Committees, it should be possible to have at least one unit development project in progress each year.
- ❖ Current capital development costs for rural WSM Shires (Buloke, Hindmarsh, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack) indicate that the capital costs of a project involving two units would be \$519,000 excluding land purchase.
- ❖ Most tenants would be pension recipients who are eligible for rental assistance that will substantially offset the required rent levels of around \$125 per week without creating housing cost stress (conventionally considered to occur when households pay more than 35% of their income on either rent or mortgage payments). Rent thresholds for claiming rental assistance, at present⁴ are:
 - \$62.30 per week for singles
 - \$100.90 per week for couples.

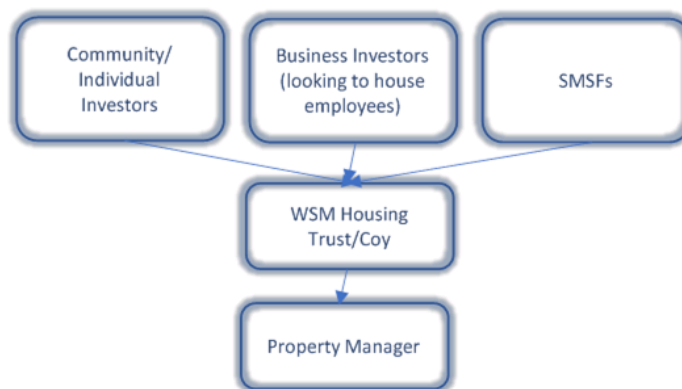
⁴ Rent thresholds are adjusted twice-yearly (in March and September) in line with cost of living movements.

Model 2: Community Housing 'Trusts'⁵

All small Wimmera Southern Mallee towns have vacant dwellings. Reasonably simple negotiations by local community groups might enable a few of these properties to be freed-up for either new tenants or owners, or for acquisition by the Community Housing Trust.

This could include properties from deceased estates with minimal value, sentimental attachments, or an occasional underutilised get-away house. For those that are empty because the owner has moved to aged care, mechanisms for making them available to the housing trusts need to be canvassed and potentially could include:

- The owner remaining their interest in the dwelling as their 'normal residence' through equity in the housing trust.
 - A tenancy arrangement through the trust that is effectively recorded as a house-sitting scheme for which the boarding fee is paid to the trust, and the trust takes responsibility for maintenance and other operating costs of the property.
- ❖ The trust would acquire existing properties initially, to be renovated or given a makeover. Once well established, the trust may be able to build new dwellings.
 - ❖ Some existing properties could be acquired from older aged residents wishing to move into a retirement village/unit but does not want rental income or cash which might affect their pension entitlements/charges at the retirement village. The owner would sell the property in return for equity in the trust as their new ownership of a principal residence.
 - ❖ Opening this model to self-managed superannuation fund (SMSF) investors would make a significant difference to the potential pool of investors and needs to be fully explored.



A report completed by Verso Consulting for Rural Council's Victoria⁶ noted that, "until 1986, the Commonwealth Government provided capital to support the development of older persons Independent Living Units (ILUs) to community organisation⁷. This scheme created a dwelling stock that still remains but which is reaching the end of its serviceable life. Cessation of the scheme and its replacement with the rental assistance scheme has resulted in the critical shortfall and negative impacts".

⁵ Other structures could be considered, including proprietary companies or companies limited by guarantee depending on the investment arrangements

⁶ Verso Consulting 2020

⁷ From 1954 to 1986 the Commonwealth subsidised non-profit organisations for up to 50% of capital cost of older persons housing under the former Aged Persons Homes Act.

8.3 FINANCIAL REPORTS

8.3.1 DRAFT AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES 10 FEBRUARY 2021

Author's Title: Governance Officer

Department: Corporate Services

File No: FM/02/09

Relevance to Council Plan 2017 - 2021

Strategic Objective: Deliver our service in a financially viable way

PURPOSE

To provide Council with the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held on 10 February 2021.

SUMMARY

The draft Audit and Risk Committee minutes are attached for the information of Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the draft Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 10 February 2021.

Attachments: 1 [Audit and Risk Committee Minutes 10 February 2021](#)

DISCUSSION

The Audit and Risk Committee (the Committee) is a statutory committee of Council which considers matters of governance, finance and risk management. The Committee is comprised of three independent members and the Mayor. The Committee provides advice on the integrity and effectiveness of Council's financial reporting and risk management system.

At the meeting held, the Committee considered the following matters:

- Outstanding Action Items
- Audit and Risk Committee Work Plan
- Asset Management Update
- Draft Scope – Internal Audit Debtor Management Plan
- Draft Scope – Internal Audit Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery
- Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2021-2023
- Internal Audit Progress Update
- Related Party Transaction Policy
- Legislative Compliance
- Risk Management
- Councillor Reimbursements
- Draft Financial Performance Report as at 31 December 2020

RELEVANT LAW

Council is required under the *Local Government Act 2020* to establish and maintain an Audit and Risk Committee.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Committee was established by Council at its Meeting held on 12 August 2020. Audit and Risk Committee meeting minutes are provided to Council after each meeting.

OPTIONS

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement is not required.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Committee provides guidance and recommendations that result in improvements to methods and systems of Council.

COLLABORATION

Councillors and senior staff are invited to attend, and present as required and Audit and Risk Committee meetings. Recommendations from the Committee are communicated to relevant staff members for action.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The costs associated with the Audit and Risk Committee are considered in the Annual Budget.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

The Audit and Risk Committee Charter was adopted by Council on 12 August 2020.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Committee is considered an essential element of good governance, monitoring Council's financial and performance reporting, monitoring and providing advice on risk management and overseeing internal and external audit functions. The minutes are provided to Council to consider the activities undertaken by the Committee.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officer involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest.



AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

Wednesday 10 February 2021

Commencing at 1:00 pm

Via Zoom

Anthony Judd
Chief Executive Officer
Buloke Shire Council

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those present.

2. RECEIPT OF APOLOGIES

Cr David Pollard.

3. ATTENDEES

Margaret Abbey PSM (Chair), Dean Sleigh (Member), Bernard Young (Member), Cr Daryl Warren (Mayor), Anthony Judd (CEO), Hannah Yu (Director Corporate Services), Wayne O'Toole (Director Works and Technical Services), Rose Harris (Director Community Development, Aileen Douglas (Manager Finance), Kathie Teasdale (RSD Audit), David Pell (AASB), Cr Carolyn Stewart, Cr Graeme Milne, Cr Bronwyn Simpson, Zoe Watts (Manager Governance), Jen Hewett (Governance).

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

MOTION:

That Audit and Risk Committee adopt the Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 2 December 2020.

MOVED: DEAN SLEIGH

SECONDED: BERNARD YOUNG

CARRIED.

Minutes were confirmed and signed by Chair.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE BRIEFING

- Currently one legal matter arising from a 2016 workplace accident that occurred in 2016. The accident meets the criteria of the *Transport Accident Act* 1986 and has been referred to the TAC.
- Triennial Actuarial Investigation has been completed, and the review report completed as at 3 June 2020. VBI reported at 104.6.
- Councillor Inductions have been undertaken, with involvement from MAV and VLGA. A consultant has been engaged to provide planning and financial management training, and a workshop on the revenue and rating plan development is programmed in February.
- Governance Rules 2020 have been reviewed and updated to include the ability of the Mayor to call a special Meeting of the Council. The revised Rules will be presented to the Council at its February Meeting. The Councillor Code of Conduct will also be presented for adoption at the February Meeting.
- Annual Community Satisfaction Survey has commenced.
- An Integrated Strategic Planning framework has been adopted and engagement activity has commenced for the development of the Council Plan, and 'Buloke Beyond 2030'.
- The Community Engagement Policy will be presented for adoption by the Council at its February meeting.
- Preparation of 2021/22 Annual Budget commenced in December 2020, and workshops with Councillors are programmed from March. The rate cap has been set at 1.5%.

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- Working for Victoria staff term appointments are concluding over coming months. Council was selected to participate in an EY audit (initiated by the State Government), with a specific focus on financial management and OHS. The report has not yet been received.
- Reports have been received in relation to the workplace culture audit into Council depots, and OHS audit and TNA. All recommendations from both reports have been adopted.
- VAGO report, 'Sexual Harassment in Local Government' was been released in December 2020. Staff and Councillors from Victorian Councils had the opportunity to participate in the survey, which found that councils are not providing workplaces that are free from sexual harassment. Of the respondents across the state, 28% said they had experienced sexual harassment, yet only 2% made a formal complaint. Recommendations from the report included further training, policy review, record keeping and encouraging formal reporting.
- Additional resources in finance and project management have been approved to support Council's capital works program.
- Majority of corporate administration staff are still working from home due to COVID-19 restrictions. Council has recently reviewed it's COVID-19 Safe Plan; a review of flexibility arrangements to support staff returning to the office has also commenced.
- First draft received of the Business Transformation Strategy and roadmap, highlighting significant investment proposed over next 5 years. A review of priorities under the Strategy will be undertaken, highlighting opportunities to work on proposed initiatives with the Yarriambiack Shire Council.
- Rural Councils Transformation Project RFT has closed; the evaluation process is programmed to commence in mid-February.
- Ballarat City Council recently released a report into their workplace culture, and a further review of procurement processes following the Victorian Ombudsman's report released in May 2020. A review of the findings and recommendations will be tabled at the May Audit and Risk Committee Meeting.
- Project accountant was engaged in December to assist with the internal review of Council's aged rates debtors. An update on the status and outcomes of this review will be reported to the Committee.

6. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of conflicts of interest. .

7. MATTERS FOR DECISION / DISCUSSION / NOTING

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8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**9. MEETING CLOSE**

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NEXT MEETING

THE NEXT AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING WILL BE HELD IN WYCHEPROOF HALL SUPPER ROOM

367 BROADWAY WYCHEPROOF ON WEDNESDAY, 12 MAY 2021 AT 1:00 PM.

Anthony Judd

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

7. MATTERS FOR DECISION / DISCUSSION / NOTING**7.1 OUTSTANDING ACTION ITEMS****Author's Title:** Governance Officer**Department:** Corporate Services**File No:** FM/02/09**PURPOSE**

To inform the Audit and Risk Committee of the current status of actions from internal and external audit and relevant regulatory reports.

MOTION:

That the Audit and Risk Committee:

1. Notes the status of the outstanding actions
2. Approves items 4 and 31 as complete

MOVED: BERNARD YOUNG**SECONDED:** DEAN SLEIGH**CARRIED.****Attachments:** 1 Outstanding Action Items**KEY POINTS / ISSUES**

Council staff are required to provide updated commentary and to advise when an action is complete. Once completed items are to the satisfaction of the Audit and Risk Committee, the action will be removed from the report.

Current comments are indicated by red font.

Discussion

Delays in finalising actions relating to Plant and Fleet due to the increased workload resulting from COVID-19 and other priorities arising from the Councillor elections and induction, and introduction of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Completion of immunisation action items have been delayed to ensure procedures put in place during COVID-19 are reviewed.

The Committee were advised Action Item #4 is now complete, and a MCH manual has been developed.

7.2 REVIEW OF AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**Author's Title:** Governance Officer**Department:** Corporate Services**File No:** FM/02/09**PURPOSE**

To provide an updated status of the Audit and Risk Committee Work Plan

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee note and review the work plan

NOTED**Attachments:** 1 2021 Work Plan**KEY POINTS / ISSUES**

The work plan incorporates all matters that have been considered or will be considered by the Audit and Risk Committee over a twelve-month period.

The attached annual work plan has been populated to show the status of current documents and processes, and key documents and initiatives to be considered within the 2021 meeting schedule, that are known.

It should be noted that the proposed internal audit program may be subject to change based on the revised internal audit program to be undertaken by Council's Internal Auditor.

The work plan is a dynamic document. It will be reviewed and adjusted at each meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee and additional items shall be added as they become known.

Discussion

The work plan had been updated to include a biannual report to the Chief Executive Officer in February and September.

7.3 ASSET MANAGEMENT UPDATE**Author's Title:** Director Works and Technical Services**Department:** Works and Technical Services**File No:** FM/02/09**PURPOSE**

To provide Audit and Risk Committee an update on the status of the Asset Management processes and frameworks

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the report.

NOTED**Attachments:** Nil**KEY POINTS / ISSUES**

Previous internal and external audits conducted at Council have highlighted a number of concerns with its asset management processes and frameworks. Prior year open findings are incorporated into Council's regular Outstanding Action report.

The Audit and Risk Committee has requested separate key milestone reports to give a level of assurance to Council that recording and financial reporting of assets is progressing in accordance with Council's action plan. Council Officers propose a status report is presented to the Audit and Risk Committee on a quarterly basis.

Focus in the previous quarter continues to be on updating all of Council's Asset Management Plans, commencing a review on the Asset management Policy and Strategy, utilising Working For Victoria resources to undertake inspections of many of our small assets such as street furniture etc., while continuing the implementation of the Confirm Asset Management system.

Council is participating in a Finance and Support Team (FAST) funded program with eight regional Councils to investigate the feasibility of a regional approach to asset management. CT Management has been working with each member Council. There is a belief that such an approach could deliver significant cost savings, improve the asset management capability and capacity across the participating councils and derive increased community benefits through engagement and reporting.

A draft Report has been completed and is now being considered by each member Council.

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Action	Risk	Responsibility		Status
Internal Audit – Asset Management	Medium	Director Works and Technical Services	The Asset Management Plan will be reviewed annually. A bi-annual review of action plans will be conducted to update status.	All Plans have been reviewed by staff.
Infrastructure team produce an asset maintenance plan/strategy for presentation to Council. Even though the budget for asset maintenance and replacement is quite limited, Council is currently unable to make informed decisions regarding this without all the scenarios demonstrating the impact of expenditure on the assets. Consideration should also be given to the best method of maintaining Council assets.	High	DWTS		A roads infrastructure maintenance plan and schedule has been developed. Building Maintenance Plans have been developed, including an asbestos management procedure.

Discussion

Development of the Asset Management Plan has commenced to ensure completion and adoption by 22 June 2022 in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*. The Asset Management Policy is currently in final draft and the Asset Strategy is near completion.

Buloke was assessed under the National Asset Management Assessment Framework (NAMAF) which is used to assess the maturity of a Council's asset management and financial planning processes. A score of 880 out of 1100 was achieved, which put Buloke in the mid-range of larger councils.

The Committee noted the report and acknowledged the achievement of the NAMAF score and the work involved in its determination.

7.4 INTERNAL AUDIT - DRAFT SCOPE DEBTOR MANAGEMENT AUDIT**Author's Title:** Governance Officer**Department:** Corporate Services**File No:** FM/02/09**PURPOSE**

To provide Audit and Risk Committee with the draft scope of the Debtor Management (including rates collection) Audit to be undertaken by RSD Audit, for consideration and approval.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee approve the scope for the Debtor Management Audit.

NOTED**Attachments:** 1 Scope-Debtor Management (including rates collection) Audit**KEY POINTS / ISSUES**

At the February 2020 Audit and Risk Committee meeting, the Audit and Risk Committee agreed with the Internal Audit Plan. This plan included an audit on Council's Debtor Management – including rates collections.

The proposed draft scope for the Debtor Management Audit indicates fieldwork for the audit is due to commence in February / March 2021. The final report should be available for the May 2021 Audit and Risk Committee meeting.

The draft scope for the audit has been attached for consideration and approval.

Discussion

The scope of the audit reflects the work being undertaken in aged debtors.

7.5 INTERNAL AUDIT - DRAFT SCOPE BUSINESS CONTINUITY AND DISASTER RECOVERY**Author's Title:** Governance Officer**Department:** Corporate Services**File No:** FM/02/09**PURPOSE**

To provide Audit and Risk Committee with the draft scope for the audit of Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery to be undertaken by RSD Audit, for consideration and approval.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee approve the scope for the Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Audit.

NOTED**Attachments:** 1 Scope-Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Audit**KEY POINTS / ISSUES**

At the February 2020 Audit and Risk Committee meeting, the Audit and Risk Committee agreed with the Internal Audit Plan. This plan included an audit on Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery.

The proposed draft scope for the Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Audit provides for fieldwork to commence in February / March 2021. The final report should be available for the May 2021 Audit and Risk Committee meeting.

The draft scope for the audit has been attached for consideration and approval.

Discussion

The Committee noted the link between the risk register and the audit scope, and that the environmental scan to assess best practice will provide a good oversight.

7.6 STRATEGIC INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2021-23**Author's Title:** Manager Governance**Department:** Corporate Services**File No:** FM/02/09**PURPOSE**

To provide the Audit and Risk Committee with the Draft Internal Audit Plan for 2020 -2022

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee endorses the draft Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2021 – 2023 and Annual Plan 2020-2021

NOTED**Attachments:** Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2021-23**KEY POINTS / ISSUES**

In December 2020 Council appointed RSD Audit to provide internal audit services to Council for a three year period.

As part of this appointment RSD were requested to draft a Strategic Audit Plan for presentation to the Audit and Risk Committee at its February 2021 meeting.

The Annual Plan 2020-21 includes scopes for projects to be undertaken within the current financial year.

A draft rolling Strategic Internal Audit Plan has also been developed. It was envisaged that this be based on a review of Council's previous Internal Audit Plan, a risk review and an environmental scan of issues arising in the local government sector which may not have been identified in the risk review.

It is proposed that the Strategic Internal Audit Plan be reviewed annually.

Discussion

RSD Audit advised that there is flexibility in the Audit Plan to move, adjust or include projects as required. RSD Audit drew the Committee's attention to the appendices of the report.

The Committee noted the 2022 ICT Audit will be useful to support the interim and final external audit process.

AASB Audit advised ICT controls were considered in the 2020 audit and a further audit may be undertaken in the event of major system changes and/or cyber security risks.

7.7 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS UPDATE**Author's Title:** Governance Officer**Department:** Corporate Services**File No:** FM/02/09**PURPOSE**

To provide an update to the Audit and Risk Committee on the status of the Internal Audit Plan and a summary of regulatory reports and publications.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the Audit and Risk Committee Update Report from Council's Internal Auditors – RSD Audit.

NOTED**Attachments:** 1 Internal Audit Progress Update - Feb 21**KEY POINTS / ISSUES**

The 2020-2022 Audit Plan was endorsed by the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 5 February 2020. The objectives of the Internal Audit program are to provide a risk based, cyclical, strategic plan which focuses on the organisations risks and internal control systems. The progress update provides an update on the status of the Internal Audit program.

RSD Audit has provided a summary of recent reports and publications by government agencies and other sources that may impact on public sector agencies.

The Audit and Risk Committee Update Report dated 10 February 2021 is attached.

Discussion

Not applicable.

7.8 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTION POLICY**Author's Title:** Director Corporate Services**Department:** Corporate Services**File No:** FM/02/09**PURPOSE**

To inform the Audit and Risk Committee of the review of the Related Party Transaction Policy

MOTION:

That the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting to endorse the Related Party Transaction Policy

MOVED: DEAN SLEIGH**SECONDED:** BERNARD YOUNG**CARRIED.****Attachments:** 1 Related Party Transaction Policy**KEY POINTS / ISSUES**

The Australian Accounting Standards Board 124 *Related Party Disclosures* (AASB 124) has applied to financial statements prepared by Victorian councils since 2016. The Standard outlines the principles in relation to disclosure and recognition of related party transactions by councils and the consideration of such transactions as part of the financial statements within the Annual Report of Operations.

The Related Party Transactions policy is designed to ensure compliance with disclosure requirements under AASB 124 by:

- Identifying key management personnel
- Identifying related party relationships and related party transactions (other than ordinary citizen transactions as defined)
- Maintaining systems to identify and capture related party transactions
- Assessing transactions to be material or significant, and
- Determining the category of disclosure required for the purposes of complying with AASB 124

The Policy requires disclosure of related party transactions by key management personnel, whether monetary or non-monetary, on a 6 monthly basis or following any changes or events, including but not limited to, Council elections, restructures, changes to personal circumstances, or any other circumstance as determined by Council.

The attached Related Party Transactions policy (Policy) is adopted as an overarching document to ensure Council meets the requirements under AASB 124 and applies the standard consistently. This

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Policy is now due for review; feedback is sought from the Audit and Risk Committee in relation to the proposed content of the Policy.

Discussion

No material changes have been proposed in the policy content.

In response to a question from the Committee, Officers advised the definition of KMP in the policy is aligned with the definition in the Accounting Standards.

7.9 LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE REGISTER**Author's Title:** Governance Officer**Department:** Corporate Services**File No:** FM/02/09**PURPOSE**

To provide the Audit and Risk Committee with the status of items in the Legislative Compliance Register.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the Legislative Compliance Register

NOTED**Attachments:** 1 Legislative Compliance Register**KEY POINTS / ISSUES**

A Legislative Compliance Register was developed, containing items for compliance pursuant to the *Local Government Act 1989* (LGA89), the *Local Government Act 2020* (LGA20) and associated regulations. Compliance obligations have been included in the report, taking into consideration the commencement dates of the various sections of LGA20. Items for compliance to other legislation are being added progressively as these items are identified.

The Legislative Compliance Framework places the responsibility on individual departments to identify compliance items and to notify the Governance Team for inclusion into the Register. The Register also provides for identification of items of compliance / non-compliance, and a review of due dates, in accord with LGA89, the LGA20 and best practice, which in effect provides Council with a gap analysis to ensure that all the key elements under same are met. Overdue items and items due within 3 months are reported to the responsible staff.

The Register highlights items that are either overdue or near due for appropriate action to be taken.

Discussion

The Committee noted the report.

7.10 RISK MANAGEMENT**Author's Title:** Governance Officer**Department:** Corporate Services**File No:** FM/02/09**PURPOSE**

To provide an update on the status of Risk Management within Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the status of Council's Risk Register

NOTED**Attachments:** Nil**KEY POINTS / ISSUES**

Council and management are responsible for reviewing all major strategies, plans and actions to identify risks to the organisation. Additionally, management is responsible for establishing and maintaining an effective system of internal controls that support the achievement of Council's objectives.

The Risk Register is a useful tool in providing an analysis of Council's key risks. It ensures there is a common and consistent understanding of risks to Council. The Risk Register also a means of communicating key risks to the Audit and Risk Committee.

Council is currently documenting the risks that exist within each directorate into Council's Risk Management System. This work is ongoing and the identified risks, the registers they are located in, controls and tasks will be further refined as part of the ongoing review process over the coming months.

The system used by Council to identify, rate and monitor risks has recently been upgraded to incorporate a number new functionalities, some of which are recommendations from the Internal Audit on Risk Management undertaken by RSD Audit in June 2020.

The system now has the ability to:

- Assign risks to individuals
- Include review dates and review frequencies, and send reminder emails to assigned individuals
- Have inherent risk assessment and residual risk assessment
- Include risk appetite for each of the consequence areas
- Show the control type

Population of data in response to the above changes has commenced, however the software vendor has not yet provided the ability to generate reports following these updates. The vendor has indicated that this is expected early in 2021.

The current Risk Management framework provides the frequency for monitoring and reviewing risks, which will be added to each identified risk in the system. The risk monitoring and review cycles will be considered when the framework is reviewed.

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Below is the current organisational risk profile which reports residual risk. Risks in the extreme category have been reviewed to reflect residual risk, however not all risks have been reassessed and some may still show an assessed inherent risk.

Summary Report

Risk Register

Report Type: Organisational Risk Profile;

LIKELIHOOD \ CONSEQUENCE LEVEL	1 : Insignificant	2 : Minor	3 : Moderate	4 : Major	5 : Extreme
RARE: A. Highly unlikely to occur in the next 5 years	2	5	5	3	2
UNLIKELY: B. Slight possibility of occurring in the next 5 years	2	18	35	5	0
POSSIBLE: C. 50/50 chance of occurring in the next 3 - 5 years	1	15	24	6	0
LIKELY: D. 50/50 chance of event occurring in next 3 years	0	4	10	2	0
ALMOST CERTAIN: E. likely to occur once in the next 12 months	0	7	5	1	0

Discussion

Council is still awaiting system updates for reporting, work is being undertaken in the background to set review dates for each risk. The strategic objectives set under the Council Plan will be incorporated into Council's risk management framework.

7.11 COUNCILLOR REIMBURSEMENTS**Author's Title:** Manager Finance**Department:** Corporate Services**File No:** FM/02/09**PURPOSE**

To note the report on reimbursement of Councillor expenses in accord with section 40(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* and reimbursements to the CEO.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the report of reimbursements of Councillor expenses and reimbursement of CEO expenses.

NOTED**Attachments:** 1 Councillor Expenses Reimbursement**KEY POINTS / ISSUES**

Section 40 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to reimburse Councillors or members of a delegated committee for out-of-pocket expenses, and to provide details of all reimbursements under this section to the Audit and Risk Committee.

Council has adopted a Councillor Expenses Policy that provides information on what expenses can be reimbursed, and the conditions of the reimbursement;

- Must be a bona fide expense;
- Have been reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor or member of a delegated committee; and
- Are reasonably necessary for the Councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform that role.

The attached report itemises all reimbursements to Councillors from 1 December 2020 to 3 February 2021. No reimbursements have been made to the CEO during this period.

Discussion

An allowance was incorrectly included in the report ; this item will be removed from future reports.

7.12 DRAFT FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020**Author's Title:** Manager Finance**Department:** Corporate Services**File No:** FM/02/09**PURPOSE**

To present to the Audit and Risk Committee the Draft Financial Statements for the period ending 31 December 2020.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the Draft Financial Performance Report as at 31 December 2020.

NOTED

- Attachments:**
- 1 Balance Sheet
 - 2 Income Statement
 - 3 Cashflow Forecast 31 Dec 2020
 - 4 Cashflow Forecast Chart 31 Dec 2020
 - 5 Cashflow Statement 31 Dec 2020

SUMMARY

The anticipated year-end surplus has been forecast down from the approved budget mostly due to confirmations of capital project timing. The forecasted year-end surplus is \$8.757m which is less \$1.413m less than the approved budget adopted at the start of the financial year.

In accordance with the requirements under the *Local Government Act 2020* this report confirms that a revised 2020/21 Annual Budget is not required.

DISCUSSION

The **Income Statement** provides a summary of the total income and total expenditure relating to Council's annual operations. Capital grant income is included in the calculation of the Councils total surplus/ (deficit) but is presented separately to distinguish operational activities. Capital grant income is specifically used to fund expenditure on Council assets which is reported on the balance sheet.

The reported deficit as at 31 October 2020 is \$1.011m. Excluding capital grant income of \$6.938m, the operating result is a deficit of \$7.948m. These results are better than anticipated at this stage of the year due to adjustments in the timing of annual expenditure between months in the financial year.

As highlighted in the Full Year Budget and Forecast columns, little variation is anticipated in operating income and expenditure following reforecasting in December. However, a reduction of \$1.533m capital income is anticipated from the confirmation of capital grant receipt timing which unfavourably impacts the overall anticipated year end result. Further confirmation of the December 2018 Flood Event project and Streetscape projects is still in progress to be reported next month.

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The **Balance Sheet** summarises the value of Assets (what Council owns) and our Liabilities (what Council owes), and the difference between assets and liabilities (Net Assets or Equity) reflects Council's net worth. Council's net worth as at this accounting period is \$284.220m.

The **Cashflow Statement** reflects actual results for the year to date (July–December) in line with statutory financial reporting.

At 31 December 2020, Council's Cash and Cash Equivalents were \$19.285m of which \$2.456m is grant funding received in advance (restricted cash).

The **Cashflow Forecast** is a projection of cashflow for the remainder of the year based on the cash balance as at 31 December 2020, the monthly budgets, specified timing parameters (such when BAS/super are due and quarterly rate receipts) and capital expenditure.

The **Cashflow Chart** visually depicts the cashflow forecast and the updated format is illustrated in a dual design, based on best practice reporting.

The bank balance is expected to remain positive throughout the 2020-21 financial year and adequate to cover predicted current liabilities.

The **Capital Works Program** has been held over whilst the timing of multi-year capital projects is being finalised.

RELEVANT LAW

This report is consistent with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Council adopted its Annual Budget 2020/21 on 1 July 2020. Variations identified at the July Council Meeting have been incorporated into the Council's current budget. Council's current budget will be used for financial report comparison for the remainder of the 2020/21 financial year.

OPTIONS

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

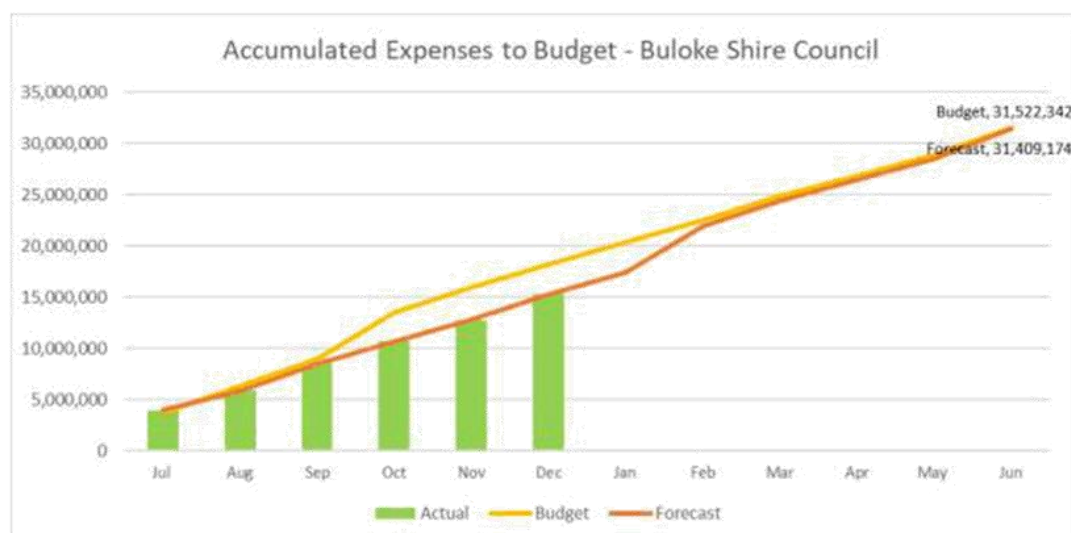
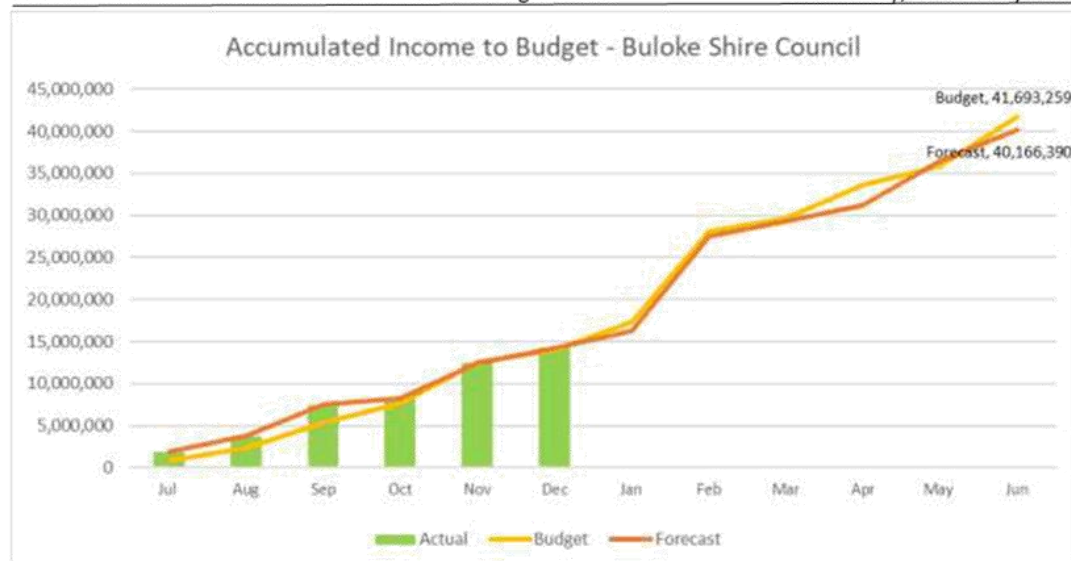
FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The tables below provide an overview of Council's financial performance against approved budget income and expenses as at 31 December 2020. An analysis of Council's financial position confirms that a revised 2020/21 Annual Budget is not required.

Following reforecasting completed during December, the year-end total income is predicted to be down due to less capital income on confirmation of funding projects. Total year-end Operating Expenditure is anticipated to remain on budget.

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**REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES**

Not applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council adopted its Annual Budget 2020/21 in July 2020. The Buloke Shire Council Plan 2017-21 outlines Council's commitment to providing clear and concise reporting on a monthly basis to Council meetings.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

Financial reporting ensures the Council and the Buloke community are aware of financial implications of decisions and actions. Reporting Council's financial position allows the Council to monitor and respond to financial risk.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officer involved in the preparation of this report had a conflict of interest.

Discussion

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An unfavourable variance of the net surplus/deficit (\$8.7m down from \$10.1m) is a result of Capital Income variances.

Operational budgets for 2021-22 have reconstructing the service resource plan. The implementation of Council's project management system will result in improvements in development and monitoring Council's capital budget. Additional support and training has been provided to budget managers.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In response to a question regarding impact on Council post-COVID, the Committee were advised Council will be reviewing requirements in relation to immunisations and vaccinations, maintaining social connectivity and maintaining an adequate level of support. It is anticipated funding opportunities and grants will reduce over the next 2 -3 years. Low diversification in its economy has resulted in approximately 2.5% reduction in jobs and the economy. Strong community support for local businesses has been noted, in addition to good harvests. Business on the main tourist routes of the Sunraysia and Calder Highways have been negatively impacted, and a shortage of housing stock, both for rental and purchase, has also been noted. Anecdotal evidence suggests local businesses were unable to engage staff due to Job Keeper and Job Seeker payments being higher than earning capacity in local businesses.

The Committee noted Council's reliance on state and federal grants and noted stimulus funding packages for tourism often go to projects that are not properly developed and 'shovel ready' projects miss out, resulting in a level of wastefulness of funding. In addition to this, the State Government are encouraging Victorians to travel within Victoria where previously their strategies focussed on international visitors, this is likely to result in a shift in tourist behaviours.

9. MEETING CLOSE

Meeting was closed at 2:10pm

8.3.2 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT AS AT 28 FEBRUARY 2021

Author's Title: Manager Finance

Department: Corporate Services

File No: FM/19/01

Relevance to Council Plan 2017 - 2021

Strategic Objective: Deliver our service in a financially viable way

PURPOSE

To present to the Council the financial statements for the period ending 28 February 2021.

SUMMARY

The anticipated year-end surplus has been forecast down further following confirmation of capital and operating grants.

The forecasted year-end surplus is currently \$8.235m which is less \$1.936m less than the approved budget adopted at the start of the financial year. This variance is due to the confirmation of Capital Grant funding timing between financials years.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Financial Performance Report for the month ending 28 February 2021.

- Attachments:**
- 1 [Income Statement](#)
 - 2 [Balance Sheet](#)
 - 3 [Cashflow Statement](#)
 - 4 [Cashflow Forecast](#)
 - 5 [Cashflow Forecast Chart](#)

DISCUSSION

The **Income Statement** provides a summary of the total income and total expenditure relating to Council's annual operations. Capital grant income is included in the calculation of the Council's total surplus/ (deficit) but is presented separately to distinguish operational activities. Capital grant income is specifically used to fund expenditure on Council assets which is reported on the balance sheet.

The reported surplus as at 28 February has increased to \$7.148m due to receipt of rural annual rate instalments. Excluding capital grant income of \$8.473m, the operating result is a deficit of \$1.363m. This result is less than anticipated at this stage of the year but this is due to adjustments in the timing of annual expenditure between months in the financial year.

As highlighted in the Full Year Forecast, the year-end result remains consistent with December 2020 reforecasting when Capital grant funding was confirmed to be \$2m less than the Approved Budget taking into account the timing of construction milestones.

The **Balance Sheet** summarises the value of Assets (what Council owns) and our Liabilities (what Council owes), and the difference between assets and liabilities (Net Assets or Equity) reflects Council's net worth. Council's net worth as at this accounting period is \$292,379m.

The **Cashflow Statement** reflects actual results for the year to date (July–February) in line with statutory financial reporting.

At 28 February 2021, Council's Cash and Cash Equivalents were \$26,054m of which approximately \$3m is grant funding received in advance (restricted cash).

The **Cashflow Forecast** is a projection of cashflow for the remainder of the year based on the cash balance as at 28 February 2021, the monthly budgets, specified timing parameters (such when BAS/super are due and quarterly rate receipts) and capital expenditure.

The **Cashflow Chart** visually depicts the cashflow forecast and the updated format is illustrated in a dual design, based on best practice reporting.

The bank balance is expected to remain positive throughout the 2020-21 financial year and adequate to cover predicted current liabilities.

The **Capital Works Program** has been held over whilst project forecasts are refreshed.

RELEVANT LAW

This report is consistent with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Council adopted its Annual Budget 2020/21 on 1 July 2020. Variations identified at the July Council Meeting have been incorporated into the Council's current budget. Council's current budget will be used for financial report comparison for the remainder of the 2020/21 financial year.

OPTIONS

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable.

COLLABORATION

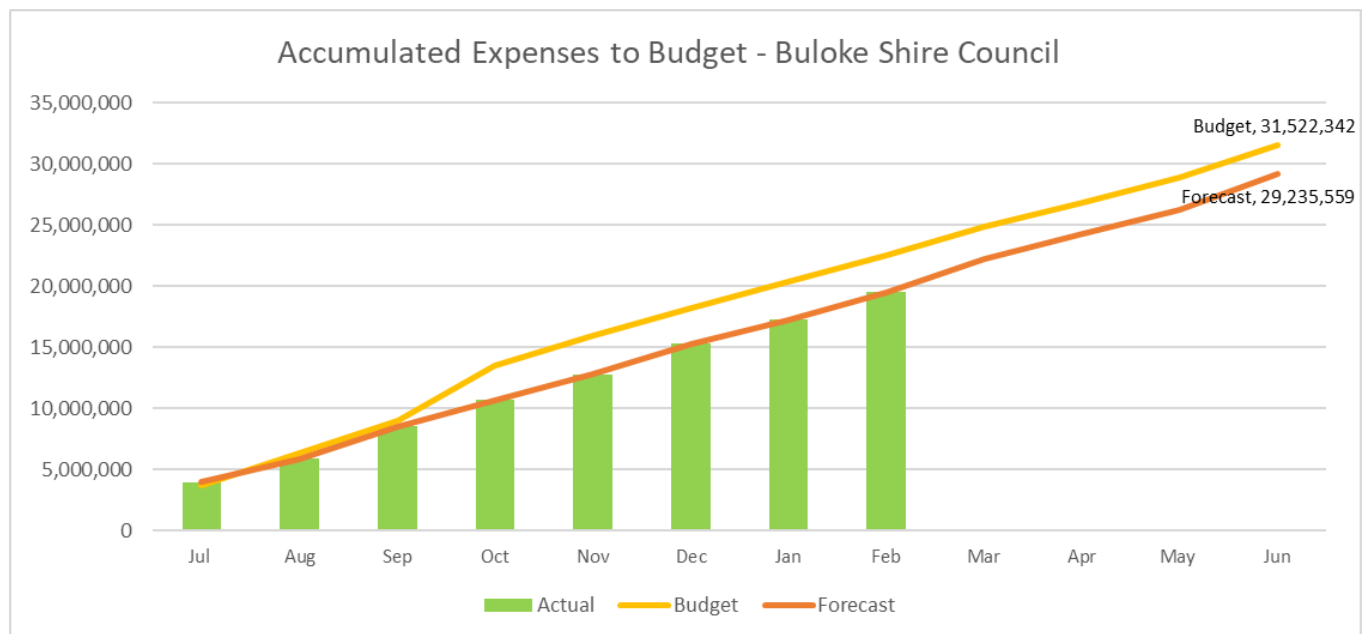
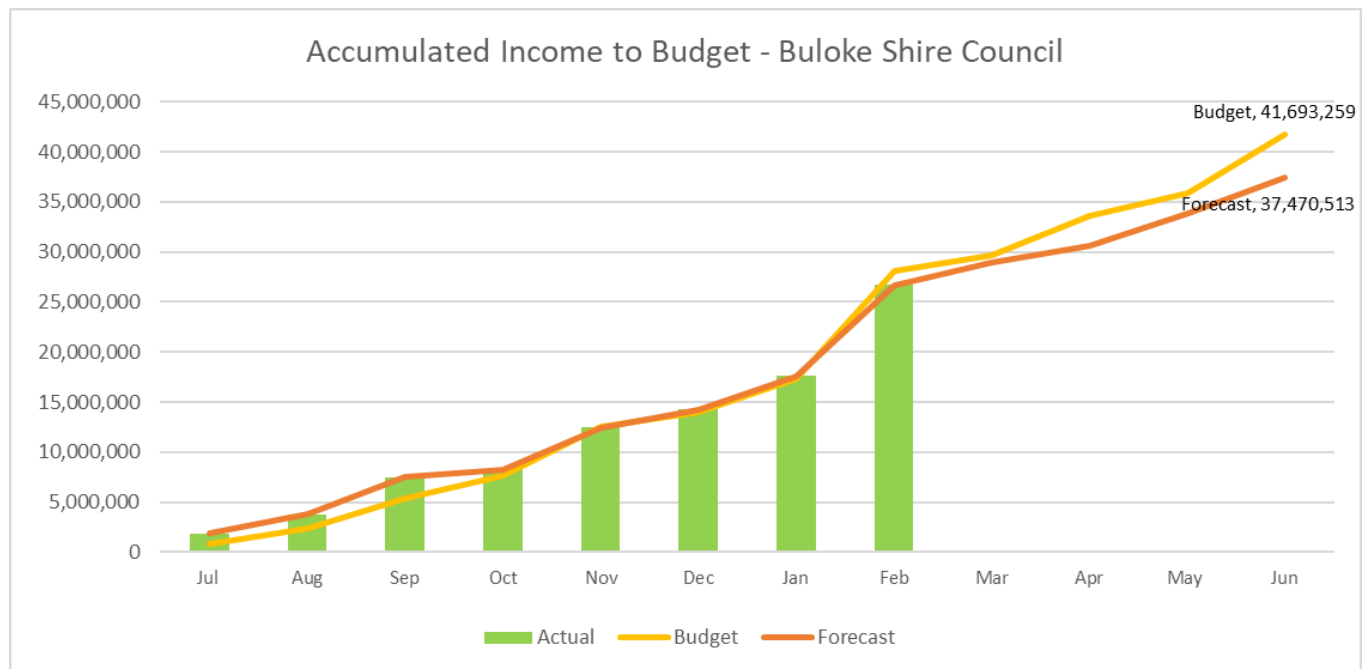
Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The tables below provide an overview of Council's financial performance against Approved budget income and expenses as at 28 February 2021.

Both total income and expenditure have been revised down to reflect the outcome of the final revision of cost estimates and respective funding related to the Dec 18 Flood event. As these roughly offset there is minimal impact on the forecasted net year-end surplus result.

Income was forecasted down \$2m from the Approved budget following the confirmation of Capital grant income timing between financial years.



REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council adopted its Annual Budget 2020/21 in July 2020. The Buloke Shire Council Plan 2017-21 outlines Council's commitment to providing clear and concise reporting on a monthly basis to Council meetings.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

Financial reporting ensures the Council and the Buloke community are aware of financial implications of decisions and actions. Reporting Council's financial position allows the Council to monitor and respond to financial risk.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officer involved in the preparation of this report had a conflict of interest.

Income Statement — Buloke Shire Council

MONTH: FEB 2021

	Jul 2020 - Feb 2021		Approved Budget		Full Year Budget	
	Actuals	Approved	Variance	Variance (%)	Approved	Forecast
Operating Income						
Rates and charges	11,868,858	12,666,917	(798,059)	(6%)	14,023,076	14,077,474
Statutory fees and fines	208,591	207,835	756	0%	266,791	267,546
User fees	458,604	389,829	68,775	18%	618,810	704,804
Grants - operating	5,292,049	8,664,870	(3,372,820)	(39%)	13,424,994	10,872,782
Contributions	63,667	59,672	3,994	7%	70,033	74,028
Other Income	267,224	117,982	149,242	126%	131,963	341,379
Total Operating Income	18,158,993	22,107,104	(3,948,112)	(18%)	28,535,668	26,338,014
Operating Expense						
Employee Costs	7,732,321	8,029,969	297,648	4%	11,376,239	11,193,288
Materials and services	5,468,563	7,768,151	2,299,588	30%	9,823,263	8,018,515
Depreciation & Amortisation (Leasing)	6,004,975	6,251,008	246,033	4%	9,287,795	9,044,187
Bad and doubtful debts	210	0	(210)	N/A	300,000	200,210
Borrowing costs	(108)	0	108	N/A	0	(108)
Other expenses	316,602	497,377	180,775	36%	735,045	779,465
Total Operating Expense	19,522,562	22,546,506	3,023,943	13%	31,522,341	29,235,557
Operating Profit	(1,363,570)	(439,402)	(924,168)	(210%)	(2,986,673)	(2,897,544)
Capital Income						
Grants - capital	8,472,308	5,972,198	2,500,110	42%	13,107,589	11,042,499
Other Capital Income	40,000	0	40,000	N/A	50,000	90,000
Total Capital Income	8,512,308	5,972,198	2,540,110	43%	13,157,589	11,132,499
Net Surplus/Deficit	7,148,738	5,532,796	1,615,942	29%	10,170,916	8,234,955

Balance Sheet — Buloke Shire Council

FEB 2021

	Feb 2021	Jun 2020	Variance	% Variance
Asset				
Current assets	28,803,354	20,523,968	8,279,386	40%
Cash and cash equivalents	26,054,488	17,544,040	8,510,448	49%
Trade and other receivables	2,494,156	2,612,321	(118,165)	(5%)
Inventories	210,541	180,882	29,660	16%
Other assets	44,169	186,725	(142,556)	(76%)
Non-current assets	275,091,425	271,336,372	3,755,054	1%
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	275,091,425	271,336,372	3,755,054	1%
Total Asset	303,894,779	291,860,339	12,034,440	4%
Liability				
Current liabilities	10,218,779	5,333,078	(4,885,702)	(92%)
Trade and other payables	6,470,602	2,399,697	(4,070,904)	(170%)
Trust funds and deposits	988,080	200,294	(787,786)	(393%)
Provisions	2,502,830	2,475,819	(27,011)	(1%)
Leases	257,267	257,267	0	0%
Non-current liabilities	1,296,122	1,296,122	0	0%
Leases	159,554	159,554	0	0%
Provisions	1,136,567	1,136,567	0	0%
Total Liability	11,514,901	6,629,199	(4,885,702)	(74%)
Net Assets	292,379,878	285,231,140	7,148,738	3%
Equity				
Equity	292,379,878	285,231,140	7,148,738	3%
Accumulated Surplus	112,144,954	103,766,640	8,378,314	8%
Reserves	173,086,186	173,086,186	0	0%
Current Earnings	7,148,738	8,378,314	(1,229,576)	(15%)
Total Equity	292,379,878	285,231,140	7,148,738	3%

Cashflow Statement — Buloke Shire Council

JUL 2020 - FEB 2021

	Jul 2020 - Feb 2021
Bank at Beginning	17,544,040
Cashflow from Operating Activities:	
Net Profit	7,148,738
Adjustments to Net Profit for Non-Cash Activities:	
Non - Cash expenses	5,729,234
Depreciation	5,729,234
Total Adjustments to Net Profit for Non-Cash Activities	5,729,234
Adjustments to Net Profit for Non-Operating Activities:	
Operating Activities	(108)
Cash Outflows	(108)
Total Adjustments to Net Profit for Non-Operating Activities	(108)
Adjustments for Balance Sheet Movement on Operating Activities:	
Current assets	231,062
2 · Trade and other receivables	118,165
4 · Inventories	(29,660)
5 · Other assets	142,556
Non-current assets	1,914
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	1,914
Current liabilities	4,634,866
1 · Trade and other payables	3,820,068
2 · Trust funds and deposits	787,786
3 · Provisions	27,011
Total Adjustments for Balance Sheet Movement on Operating Activities	4,867,842
Net Cashflow from Operating Activities	17,745,706
Cashflow from Investing Activities:	
Non-current assets	(9,486,202)

Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(9,486,202)
Net Cashflow from Investing Activities	(9,486,202)
<hr/>	
Cashflow from Financing Activities:	
Current liabilities	250,836
1 · Trade and other payables	250,836
Operating Activities	108
Cash Outflows	108
Net Cashflow from Financing Activities	250,945
<hr/>	
Net Cashflows	8,510,448
Bank at End	26,054,488
<hr/>	

Account tree BSC - Bal Sheet

Cashflow Forecast — Buloke Shire Council

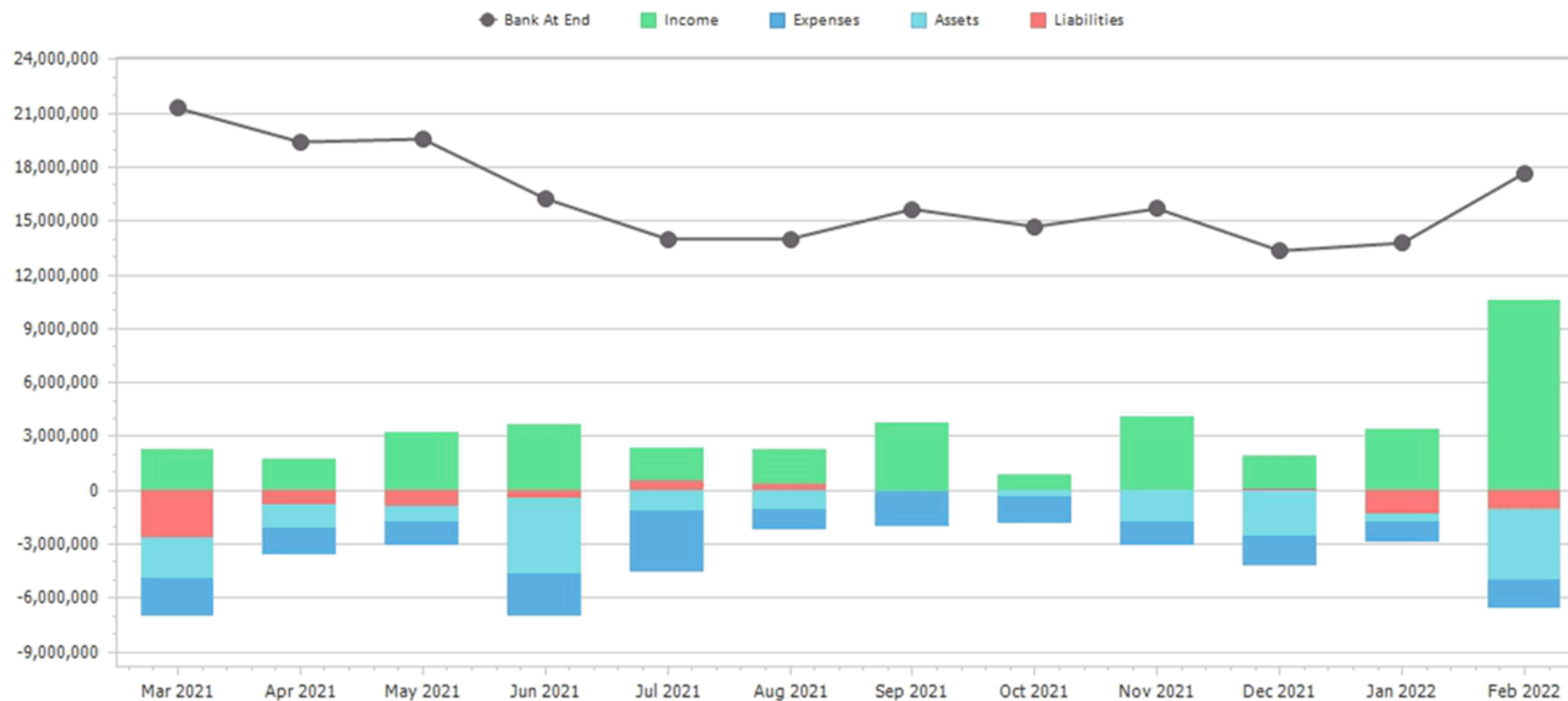
MAR 2021

	Mar 2021	Apr 2021	May 2021	Jun 2021	Jul 2021	Aug 2021	Sep 2021	Oct 2021	Nov 2021	Dec 2021	Jan 2022	Feb 2022	Total
Bank at Beginning	26,054,488	21,295,197	19,410,986	19,576,053	16,262,498	13,996,164	14,013,315	15,668,171	14,696,360	15,700,402	13,351,839	13,785,544	26,054,488
Operating Income													
Rates and charges	16,713	0	2,175,220	16,683	(25)	140,736	1,391,155	(4,275)	1,331,448	9,513	1,016,859	9,142,513	15,236,539
Statutory fees and fines	14,739	14,739	14,739	14,739	21,571	22,469	20,049	8,874	29,122	80,503	21,238	14,739	277,521
User fees	54,381	55,564	60,073	100,802	29,198	52,072	73,344	52,902	74,213	57,822	106,448	43,767	760,585
Grants - operating	69,965	1,126,865	863,400	3,520,504	913,729	1,424,749	101,466	106,848	1,006,859	132,197	647,877	1,315,085	11,229,544
Contributions	91	91	91	10,087	2,843	42,488	3,044	2,521	1,036	1,712	2,802	91	66,900
Other Income	44,924	10,747	8,602	9,882	2,545	52,371	46,255	35,331	36,096	65,590	13,124	8,922	334,389
Cash Inflows from Operation	200,813	1,208,006	3,122,125	3,672,697	969,862	1,734,884	1,635,314	202,200	2,478,773	347,337	1,808,348	10,525,117	27,905,477
Operating Expense													
Employee Costs	(1,179,259)	(792,312)	(745,817)	(739,549)	(509,759)	(792,011)	(1,292,404)	(884,731)	(930,314)	(1,035,695)	(787,565)	(929,163)	(10,618,579)
Materials and services	(563,292)	(560,316)	(414,394)	(1,217,959)	(2,897,758)	(277,481)	(470,417)	(430,113)	(373,073)	(581,086)	(374,124)	(564,062)	(8,724,075)
Depreciation & Amortisation (Leasing)	(24,225)	(24,225)	(24,225)	(24,225)	(23,895)	(37,608)	(27,182)	(48,770)	(41,312)	(38,788)	(37,635)	(23,880)	(375,969)
Bad and doubtful debts	0	0	0	(220,000)	0	0	0	(231)	0	0	0	0	(220,231)
Borrowing costs	0	0	0	0	108	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	108
Other expenses	(274,799)	(35,632)	(61,068)	(137,651)	(33,417)	(28,620)	(37,736)	(29,303)	(29,334)	(49,042)	(23,533)	(44,770)	(784,904)
Cash Outflows from Operation	(2,041,575)	(1,412,484)	(1,245,504)	(2,339,383)	(3,464,721)	(1,135,720)	(1,827,738)	(1,393,149)	(1,374,034)	(1,704,611)	(1,222,856)	(1,561,875)	(20,723,649)

	Mar 2021	Apr 2021	May 2021	Jun 2021	Jul 2021	Aug 2021	Sep 2021	Oct 2021	Nov 2021	Dec 2021	Jan 2022	Feb 2022	Total
Asset													
Works In Progress	(2,289,245)	(1,354,042)	(895,645)	(4,210,865)	(1,136,745)	(1,051,793)	(222,619)	(373,701)	(1,770,394)	(2,556,367)	(409,773)	(3,972,128)	(20,243,316)
Movement in Assets	(2,289,245)	(1,354,042)	(895,645)	(4,210,865)	(1,136,745)	(1,051,793)	(222,619)	(373,701)	(1,770,394)	(2,556,367)	(409,773)	(3,972,128)	(20,243,316)
Liability													
PO Accrual	(2,711,191)	(1,084,477)	(1,084,477)	(542,238)	0	0	0	0	0	0	(1,521,842)	(1,141,382)	(8,085,608)
GST	125,551	271,210	163,569	106,234	508,929	357,705	106,448	51,076	63,621	183,971	275,766	57,165	2,271,244
Superannuation Payable	(76,259)	0	0	0	(43,658)	(67,926)	(108,563)	(76,831)	(79,942)	(90,964)	(79,549)	0	(623,692)
Movement in Liabilities	(2,661,900)	(813,267)	(920,908)	(436,004)	465,270	289,779	(2,115)	(25,755)	(16,321)	93,007	(1,325,625)	(1,084,217)	(6,438,056)
Capital Income													
Grants - capital	2,032,616	487,575	50,000	0	900,000	180,000	2,072,014	598,593	1,686,019	1,472,070	1,563,611	0	11,042,499
Other Capital Income	0	0	55,000	0	0	0	0	20,000	0	0	20,000	0	95,000
Other Inflows	2,032,616	487,575	105,000	0	900,000	180,000	2,072,014	618,593	1,686,019	1,472,070	1,583,611	0	11,137,499
Net Movement	(4,759,291)	(1,884,212)	165,067	(3,313,555)	(2,266,334)	17,151	1,654,856	(971,811)	1,004,042	(2,348,563)	433,705	3,906,897	(8,362,046)
Bank at End	21,295,197	19,410,986	19,576,053	16,262,498	13,996,164	14,013,315	15,668,171	14,696,360	15,700,402	13,351,839	13,785,544	17,692,442	17,692,442

Cashflow Chart — Buloke Shire Council

MAR 2021 — FEB 2022



8.4 ORGANISATIONAL REPORTS

Nil

8.5 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

Nil

8.6 MATTERS WHICH MAY EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

Nil

9. OTHER BUSINESS**9.1 NOTICES OF MOTION****9.1.1 SAFETY UPGRADES TO GRADE RAIL-CROSSING - BOORT-CHARLTON ROAD**

Author's Title: Councillor Pollard

Department: Office of the CEO

File No: GO/09/01

PURPOSE

The purpose for this Notice of Motion is for Council to consider to advocate to the State Government on behalf of concerned community members, for safety upgrading to occur at the Rail Crossing situated on the Boort-Charlton Road, east of the Charlton township.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Write to the Minister for Transport Infrastructure, Hon. Jacinta Allan, and the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Hon. Ben Carroll, to request safety upgrades to the at grade rail crossing on the Boort-Charlton Road; and
2. Send copies of the letter to local MP, Ms Louise Staley, and the Chief Regional Roads Officer, Regional Roads Victoria, Mr Paul Northey.

Attachments: Nil

BACKGROUND

Council has been approached by concerned community members about the condition and safety concerns of the at grade level railway crossing on the Boort-Charlton Road, just East of the Charlton township.

The Boort-Charlton Road is an arterial road (Regional Roads Victoria managed and maintained) and links Charlton to the agricultural districts of Barrakee, Buckrabanyule, Wychetella, Lake Marmal, Glenloth, Ninyeunook and Terrapee. Beyond the Buloke Shire boundary, the road links Charlton to Boort, Kerang, Borung and regional centre of Echuca.

The road is also a school bus route and carries a large amount of heavy freight vehicles. According to Regional Roads Victoria, the road currently has approximately 190 vehicles per day, which clearly increases in peak harvest seasons.

The angled intersection with the railway, means that it is particularly difficult to see trains from the cab of a truck. The nearby angled intersection of the Gunyah Flat Road. Despite the low sight lines, the intersection with the railway only has give-way signage and rumble strips.

Over many years, community members have been asking for safety improvements to this intersection, including for it to be fitted out with boom gates and flashing lights, which is often the safety treatment on the other arterial roads across Victoria. These upgrades would provide a safer level crossing for road users and trains.

It is proposed that Council write to the Minister for Transport Infrastructure, Hon. Jacinta Allan, and the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Hon. Ben Carroll, to request safety upgrades to the rail crossing on the Boort-Charlton Road.

9.1.2 CHARLTON FIRE BRIGADE FACILITY SITE

Author's Title: Councillor Pollard

Department: Office of the CEO

File No: GO/09/01

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Notice of Motion is for Council to consider the option of another site that is deemed to be more suitable, effective and safe, for the housing of Charlton Country Fire Authority (CFA) Fire Brigade facility.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council write to the Acting Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Hon. Danny Pearson, with a copy to the local State Members of Parliament, to advocate for the immediate selection and purchase of a preferred site to redevelop the Charlton Fire Brigade Headquarters, and for the funding for the construction of this facility.

Attachments: Nil

BACKGROUND

Current Site

The current site of the Charlton Fire Brigade facility is High Street in Charlton.

This site is in the low-lying part of the township, and was subject to flooding in September 2010, and also January 2011, whereby the depth from this flood event, reached the height of approximately one metre.

The Charlton CFA were forced to relocate the emergency control facility and equipment during these flood events.

Both the Premier and Minister in office at this time inspected the CFA facility in the 2016 flood event and noted the facility was below the necessary standard for managing emergency incident/s.

The current facility does not accommodate for the storage of up-to-date appliances to allow for improved reliability, and for crew safety to be in compliance with modern emergency response.

CFA members experience ongoing issues with the confined space, outdated appliances and being able to maintain serviceability with the current facility, which creates serious concerns and exposure for the control of Occupational Health and Safety incidents for emergency operations.

Proposed Site

The site proposed for the relocation of the Charlton CFA facility is located in the industrial zone in the township of Charlton. This site has provision of space to expand the facility and necessary equipment when compliance of the state of Fire Brigade facilities may change in the future.

The industrial zone of Charlton provides a suitable buffer zone from the residential area, which would minimise disturbance for overnight emergency call-outs. It is located immediately beside the town water pumping station, providing access to excellent hydrant water flow and mains pressure.

The industrial zone is situated in a site that can be easily accessed by other districts, which is effective and efficient factor for neighbouring township brigade's response and attendance in emergency operations.

The site is the preferred site of the Charlton CFA members and it will provide dry access in the case of a flood emergency, with minimal fill required to prevent inundation in a major flood event.

It is anticipated the relocation and rebuild of the Charlton CFA facility would be constructed and developed in a simpler and more efficient process than the site relocation and rebuild of the Charlton Hospital after the January 2011 flood event.

9.2 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Nil

9.3 URGENT BUSINESS

Nil

9.4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Nil

10. MEETING CLOSE