BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL 2026 STATE ELECTION COMMITMENT ADVOCACY



BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL
PO Box 1 Wycheproof VIC 3527
367 Broadway, Wycheproof. Victoria, 3527
T: 1300 520 520 E: buloke@buloke.vic.gov.au
W: buloke.vic.gov.au

BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL 2026 STATE ELECTION COMMITMENT ADVOCACY



SEA LAKE

COST: $2.2 MILLION
ASK: $2.155 MILLION

Sea Lake Aerodrome is the northern anchor of Buloke Shire's emergency response network. It is the priority base for Country Fire Authority aerial firefighting across a large catchment in the northwest of the Shire and broader region. It also supports agricultural aviation and provides emergency access for a dispersed community facing long travel distances to health services. However, its unsealed runway loses grass cover, requires regular maintenance and becomes unusable after minor rainfall. The site has no helipad and the existing surface is unsuitable for helicopter landings.

The proposed investment will chip seal the existing 1,040 metre east-west runway, provide a sealed taxiway and apron, improve drainage and construct a compliant concrete helipad with shelter and access road. These works will give emergency services a reliable all-weather facility when it matters most. A sealed surface will also reduce the recurring maintenance burden and strengthen aerial firefighting and agricultural operations. The helipad closes the remaining gap in the Shire's helicopter network, supporting patient transfers and emergency response across the north. Reliable access protects lives and livelihoods in a region exposed to bushfire, flood and extreme heat. This is a targeted, practical investment that addresses an immediate safety and operational need. It is the recommended first stage of works under the Aerodrome Strategy.

BIRCHIP COMMUNITY HOUSING

COST: $1.5 MILLION
ASK: $1 MILLION

Birchip Community Housing is aimed at furthering the housing initiative that has been in place in Birchip for close to forty years, providing suitable and affordable housing for people to age in place. Building on the existing house stock in the community and addressing the substantial demand for more housing, the Birchip Community Housing group is seeking funding to build an additional 4 Two-bedroom units.

The $1.5 million would see the delivery of these 4 Two-bedroom units on a central town allotment and allow for additional existing housing stock to be released back into the community for use alongside providing ongoing resilience and community strengthening

BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL

WYCHEPROOF
Wycheproof Recreation Reserve

COST: $11 MILLION
ASK: $2 MILLION

The Wycheproof Recreation Reserve, located on the Calder Highway, is a cornerstone of community life in Buloke Shire—supporting sport, recreation and social connection for residents and visitors alike. The reserve services a wide range of activities, including football, netball, cricket, tennis, hockey, bowls, croquet, golf and horse racing, alongside informal recreation such as swimming, walking and jogging. This breadth of use makes it one of the Shire's most important multi-purpose community assets. However, ageing infrastructure is limiting its capacity to meet current standards and community expectations.

Existing facilities constrain participation, reduce the ability to host regional events, and fall short of providing inclusive, safe and modern amenities. Without investment, the reserve's role as a community hub will continue to decline. A clear, staged pathway for renewal is already in place through the adopted Master Plan. Priorities include a modern multi-sport change facility, upgraded playing surfaces and targeted improvements across six pavilions. These works will significantly enhance accessibility, participation and the overall user experience. Investment in the reserve will deliver strong returns—strengthening community cohesion, improving health and wellbeing, and attracting visitors and regional events that support the local economy. Most importantly, it will secure the long-term sustainability of a vital community asset.

CHARLTON
Charlton Civic Rejuvenation

COST: $600,000
ASK: $300,000

The Charlton Civic Rejuvenation project is a township-wide strategic planning process designed to develop a shared vision for the future of Charlton's community infrastructure. Led by Buloke Shire Council, the process will engage a broad cross-section of the Charlton community to determine what a reimagined civic heart for the township should look like, one that is safe, accessible, multi-purpose and reflective of the community's priorities.

Charlton is a resilient rural township with a strong community identity, deep volunteer culture and natural amenity that makes it a genuinely attractive place to live. However, like many small towns across regional Victoria, its community infrastructure has not kept pace with evolving community needs and expectations. The Charlton Shire Hall, long a centrepiece of community life is no longer able to fulfil that role and the broader network of township facilities requires a strategic rethink to serve current and future generations.

Investment in this project will deliver a renewed community hub that strengthens social connection, supports local economic activity, and creates the conditions for Charlton to attract and retain the residents and families it needs to thrive. Critically, it will secure the long-term co-location and sustainability of essential community services including Council administration, library services and programs delivered through the Charlton Neighbourhood House and Senior Citizens facilities in a new facility that is fit for purpose for the decades ahead.

DONALD
Powering the Donald Industrial Estate

COST: $9 MILLION
ASK: $1.5 MILLION

The Dondd Industrial Area is a suitable location for renewed power infrastructure due to its established industrial land use, proximity to existing road and rail infrastructure, and ability to further economic activity across the Shire. The site is already designated for industry and manufacturing uses and accommodates existing businesses. The presence of established industry demonstrates suitability of the land for employment-generating activities and additional energy supply supports its ongoing use for industrial development.

GWM Water, Buloke Shire Council and Powercor have developed a micro grid solution for the Donald Industrial Estate that would increase the electricity available to new and existing business growth. Funding is being sought via the Federal government through ARENA with the design and consultation having occurred and connection consent provided by Powercor.

BULOKE ROAD NETWORK:
Heavy Plant

COST: $12.5 MILLION
ASK: $4.5 MILLION

Buloke Shire's heavy plant and equipment fleet is critical to delivering essential services, including road maintenance, drainage and community infrastructure. However, much of the fleet has reached or exceeded its useful life, leading to increasing breakdowns, higher maintenance costs and declining operational efficiency. This ageing fleet is now a direct risk to service delivery. Equipment failures delay critical works, reduce productivity and increase reliance on expensive repairs and contractors—placing growing pressure on Council's limited resources. Without timely replacement, these challenges will continue to escalate. Targeted investment will enable the renewal of key assets, including graders, loaders, trucks and water carts, with modern, fuel-efficient machinery. The introduction of GPS and telematics will further strengthen asset management, enabling real-time monitoring, improved planning and data-driven decision-making.

New equipment will also meet contemporary safety and environmental standards, reducing risk and improving operator safety. A modernised fleet will deliver immediate and long-term benefits—improving reliability, reducing downtime and enabling faster, more cost-effective delivery of infrastructure works. It will also support a more sustainable, planned approach to future asset management. Importantly, this investment will deliver strong economic returns, with an estimated $3–4 million injected into the regional economy and new employment opportunities created through procurement and commissioning. Over time, increased productivity and reduced operating costs will further support Buloke Shire's economic resilience. This is a practical, high-value investment that will secure service delivery, strengthen financial sustainability and ensure Council can continue to meet the infrastructure needs of its community.

DRFA

COST: $60 MILLION
ASK: $60 MILLION

Buloke Shire Council is facing a critical disaster recovery funding shortfall following consecutive flood events in October 2022 and December 2023. These events caused widespread and compounding damage across the Shire's 5,300-kilometre rural road network—an essential backbone for freight, agriculture, emergency response, school transport and daily connectivity for a dispersed population of 6,000 residents. Council's response was decisive and effective. Proactive flood mitigation protected property, and rapid restoration works ensured farmers maintained access during crucial harvest periods. However, the cumulative damage has left the network structurally compromised, with accelerated deterioration now occurring under ongoing heavy vehicle use.

The recovery need is substantial but clearly defined. Buloke has refined its reconstruction program from an initial $90 million estimate to a disciplined $60 million REPA claim, independently validated and fully aligned with DRFA requirements. This represents a credible, evidence-based investment in essential public infrastructure. Without adequate funding, road conditions will continue to decline—escalating safety risks, constraining freight and agricultural productivity, and increasing financial pressure on Council. The consequences will be felt across the regional economy and in the daily lives of residents who rely on this network. Targeted investment is essential. Restoring Buloke's road network will safeguard critical infrastructure, support primary industry, enable efficient emergency access, and maintain the connectivity that underpins community sustainability. Funding this recovery is not optional—it is fundamental to ensuring the resilience, productivity and future of Buloke Shire.

BIRCHIP
Birchip 5 Ways Intersection

COST: $5 MILLION
ASK: $5 MILLION

The Birchip "Five Ways" intersection is a critical transport junction connecting the Sunraysia Highway, Corack Road, Birchip–Wycheproof Road and Cumming Avenue. It carries high volumes of local, freight and agricultural traffic, making it a vital link for community access and regional productivity. However, its current configuration presents a serious and ongoing safety risk. The complex layout creates driver confusion, restricts visibility and increases the likelihood of vehicle conflicts. As a result, it is widely recognised as one of the most dangerous intersections in Buloke Shire.

The $5 million upgrade is urgently required to address this risk. Delivering a roundabout and associated road improvements will simplify traffic movements, improve visibility and significantly reduce the potential for crashes. Roundabouts are a proven solution for improving safety outcomes at high-risk intersections like this. Beyond safety, the upgrade will improve freight efficiency, supporting the movement of agricultural goods that underpin the local economy. It will also provide safer, more reliable access for residents, visitors and service providers, strengthening connectivity across the region. This is a practical, high-impact investment that will resolve a long-standing safety issue, protect lives, and support the ongoing resilience and productivity of Birchip and surrounding communities.

SUNSHINE CROSSOVER REMOVAL

ADVOCACY

The proposed removal of the two Sunshine Regional Rail Link crossovers as part of the Sunshine Super Hub development poses a significant risk to the efficiency and competitiveness of rail freight across Victoria. These crossovers provide critical operational flexibility, enabling more direct routing and efficient network use. Their removal would force freight services to divert via Geelong—adding approximately 47 kilometres to each journey and materially reducing network efficiency.

This longer routing will increase transit and cycle times, raise operating costs through higher fuel use and additional crewing, and ultimately erode the competitiveness of rail freight compared to road. This outcome directly conflicts with state and national policy objectives to shift freight from road to rail, reduce congestion and lower emissions. Retaining the crossovers is essential to maintaining a flexible, efficient and cost-effective freight network. It will protect supply chain performance, support regional productivity, and prevent unnecessary pressure on already constrained road infrastructure. This is a practical, low-regret decision that safeguards freight efficiency today while supporting a more sustainable, resilient transport network into the future.