



# Council Meeting **Agenda**

Wednesday 19 March  
2025

Commencing at 7:00 pm

Wycheproof Supper Room  
367 Broadway, Wycheproof

Wayne O'Toole  
Chief Executive Officer



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## **1 COUNCIL WELCOME AND STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

### **WELCOME**

The Mayor Cr Alan Getley will welcome all in attendance.

### **STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The Mayor Cr Alan Getley 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 COUNCIL MEETING**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council adopt the Minutes of the Council Meetings held on 19 February and 3 March 2025.

## **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 2022; and
- b) 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**

## **7 PROCEDURAL ITEMS**

### **7.1 REPORT OF COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES**

**Author's Title:** Executive Assistant to CEO

**Directorate:** Office of the CEO

**File:** *GO/05/04*

#### **PURPOSE**

To report on the Councillor Briefing held 5 February 2025.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council note the report of Councillor Assembly Meeting held 5 February 2025.

#### **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 20 November 2024, 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 Briefing held on 5 February 2025 is attached for public information.

**Attachments:** 1. Attachment 7.1.1 - Councillor Briefing Record - 5 February 2025



## Councillor Briefing Record

*Build a Better Buloke – a healthy, connected, inclusive and prosperous community*

<b>Date:</b>	5 February 2025	<b>Time</b>	5:00pm
<b>Location:</b>	Sea Lake Senior Citizens Building		
<b>Acknowledgement of Country:</b>	The Mayor 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 may be here today.		

### ITEMS

NO.	MATTER FOR DISCUSSION	
1.	<b>Welcome/ Councillor Only time</b>	<b>5:00pm</b>
2.	<b>Apologies</b>	Nil
3.	<b>Attendees</b> Cr Getley, Cr Milne, Cr Hogan, Cr Barratt, Cr Delaney, Cr Stafford, Wayne O'Toole, Jenna Allan, Daniel McLoughlan, Rory White (Acting DCD)	
4.	<b>Visitors</b> Advance Sea Lake Inc. Committee members: Jenny Newell, Patricia Amos and Paul Allan	
5.	<b>Declaration of Conflict of Interest</b>	Nil
6.	<b>Confirmation of Councillor Briefing Notes – 18 December 2024</b>	noted
7.	<b>Presentations</b>	
7.1	Advance Sea Lake Inc.	
8.	<b>Briefing Reports</b>	
8.1	Management Report – Governance and Integrity	
8.2	Community Engagement Process and 2025/26 Budget Timelines;	
8.3	Sale of Property to recover unpaid rates	
<b>Dinner Break</b>		<b>6:20pm</b>
8.4	Community Summit & Proposed Community Panel (Verbal presentation by Rory White – Acting DCD)	
8.5	Planning Matter - Esoteric Event Update (Verbal presentation by the CEO)	
9.	<b>Councillor Matters</b>	
10.	<b>CEO Updates</b>	
11.	<b>Next Briefing</b> - 5 March 2025, Nandaly Hall	
12.	<b>Briefing Close</b>	

## 7.2 STATUS OF ACTION OF PAST COUNCIL MEETING RESOLUTIONS

**Author's Title:** Executive Assistant to CEO

**Directorate:** Office of the CEO

**File No:**  
Governance

### PURPOSE

To provide Council with a list of the Status of Action (SOA) of Council Resolutions outstanding for completion of action, and the SOA for the 19 February 2025 Council Meeting Resolutions.

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the Status of Actions Report for Council resolutions documented in the report.

### KEY POINTS/ISSUES

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 the Council's Governance Rules adopted August 2022, Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law.

The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured and is a fundamental principle of democratic governance.

Attached to this report for public information is a list of the SOA of Council Resolutions outstanding for completion of action and introducing the SOA for the 19 February 2025 Council Meeting Resolutions.

**Attachments:**

1. Attachment 7.2.1 - Action Taken on Council Res - Outstanding Items and items from 19 February CM - to be tabled 19 Marc

**Summary of Action on Council Resolutions – Outstanding from past Council Meetings & 19 February CM – to be tabled 19 March 2025**

Date	Directorate	Item	Resolution/Question	Actioning Officer/s	Status of Action	Complete or Commenced
02082023	Infrastructure and Delivery	8.2.1	That Council: 1. Notes following consultation process in accordance with its Community Engagement Policy, one submission was received to the proposed nine-lot subdivision sale of land at 110 Sutcliffe Street, Sea Lake; 2. Sells nine-lot subdivision surplus land at 110 Sutcliff St, Sea Lake by private treaty or auction in accord sec 114 of the Local Gov Act 2020 and Council's Sale of Land Policy; and 3. Authorises the CEO to execute the Transfer of Land documents and any other documents required to affect the sale of the land.	Dir Infra & Del	GWMWater approval obtained, procurement for works has commenced. Civil contractor has recommenced works.  290524 - Plumbing works for water, sewer and stormwater commence in June, final civil works to follow. Valuation complete to inform sale of land process to be undertaken. (MS)	Commenced
11092024	Community Development	8.2.2	Buloke Planning Scheme Amendment  1. Requests that the Minister for Planning grant Authorisation under Section 8A of the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> to prepare and exhibit a Planning Scheme Amendment to implement the recommendations in the Planning Scheme review report and correct selected mapping/zoning anomalies.	DCD		Commenced

**Tabled 19 March 2025 Council Meeting**



**Summary of Action on Council Resolutions – Outstanding from past Council Meetings & 19 February CM – to be tabled 19 March 2025**

Date	Directorate	Item	Resolution/Question	Actioning Officer/s	Status of Action	Complete or Commenced
18122024	Corporate	8.1.2	<p>Draft Governance Rules and Draft Election Period Policy.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having prepared the Revised Draft Governance Rules in accordance with section 60 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>, approves and commences a 9-week process of community consultation in relation to the Revised Draft Governance Rules and Draft Election Period Policy, and makes the Revised Draft Governance Rules and Draft Election Period Policy available for Public Exhibition via Council's website;</li> <li>Allows persons to make submissions in writing in relation to any proposal contained within the Revised Draft Governance Rules and/or Draft Election Period Policy; and</li> <li>Allows presentations in support of written submissions to be heard at the Council Meeting on 19 March 2025 prior to the proposed adoption of the Draft Governance Rules and Draft Election Period Policy at this Meeting.</li> </ol>	DCOP		Commenced
18122024	Corporate	8.1.3	Adopt the Child Safe Standards Policy	DCOP		Commenced
19022025	Corporate	8.1.1	Adopts the Confidentiality Policy	DCOP		Commenced

**Tabled 19 March 2025 Council Meeting**

**Summary of Action on Council Resolutions – Outstanding from past Council Meetings & 19 February CM – to be tabled 19 March 2025**

Date	Directorate	Item	Resolution/Question	Actioning Officer/s	Status of Action	Complete or Commenced
19022025	Corporate	8.4.2	S6 - Instrument of Delegation to members of Council Staff - 3. The Instrument comes into force immediately upon this resolution being made and is to be signed by the Council's Chief Executive Officer and the Mayor;	DCOP		Commenced
19022025	Corporate	9.5.1	Sale of properties for recovery of unpaid rates and charges	DCOP		Commenced

**Tabled 19 March 2025 Council Meeting**

**8        GENERAL BUSINESS**  
**8.1     POLICY REPORTS**

Nil.

## 8.2 MANAGEMENT REPORTS

### 8.2.1 PLANNING PERMIT APPLICATION PA24022 - USE AND DEVELOPMENT OF LAND FOR A SERVICE STATION

<b>Author's Title:</b>	Planning Officer
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**Directorate:** Community Development

**File No:** LP/09/01

#### **Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025**

**Strategic Objective:** A Safe and Active Buloke

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider this planning permit application and as the Responsible Authority, resolve to issue a Notice of Refusal to Grant a Permit or issue a Notice of Decision to Grant a Permit.

#### **SUMMARY**

A planning permit has been received by Council on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August 2024 for the use and development of land for a service station, alteration to a road in a Transport Zone 2, and to construct and display signage. The address for the application is 327 Broadway Wycheproof (Lot 1 PS 513232T).

The business is proposed to operate between the hours of 5am to 10pm, 7 days per week with at least one staff member on premises at all times.

The proposal includes a convenience store selling a limited range of goods, and customer amenities including an all access toilet.

Proposed works include the installation of fuel bowzers under the existing canopy, installation of underground fuel tanks, alterations to the existing building including the replacement of the garage door with windows and wall, and internal alterations to the building to enable stock display and to facilitate the all access bathroom.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council having caused notice of Planning Application No. PA24022 to be given under Section 52 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and having considered all the matters required under Section 60 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* decides to issue a Notice of Refusal to Grant a Permit under the provisions of the Buloke Planning Scheme in respect of the land known and described as 327 Broadway, Wycheproof (Lot 1 PS513232T), for the use and development of land for a service station in accordance with the endorsed plans, with the application dated 6<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

For the following reasons:

- Does not provide net community benefit. The proposed use does not provide a service to the community that is currently unavailable. The limited economic benefit does not outweigh social concerns on road safety and does not contribute to social or environmental well being
- The proposal does not represent orderly planning. The restricted vehicle accessibility to the site, in a proposal that relies on vehicle access, presents a source of potential traffic movement conflict that is a significant and unnecessary safety issue. The heightened risk for vehicle and pedestrian road safety does not represent orderly planning.

**DISCUSSION****Proposal**

Use and development of land for a service station, alter access to a Transport Zone 2, and the installation of signage. The business is proposed to operate between the hours of 5am to 10pm, 7 days per week with at least one staff member on premises at all times.

The proposal includes a convenience store selling a limited range of goods, and customer amenities including an all access toilet.

Proposed works include the installation of fuel bowsers under the existing canopy, installation of underground fuel tanks, alteration to existing building including replacement of garage door with windows and wall. Internal alteration to the building to enable stock display and to facilitate all access bathroom.

**Subject site & locality**

An inspection of the site and the surrounding area has been undertaken.

The site has a total area of 1014 square metres and currently contains:

- Unoccupied commercial style building with canopy, located toward the south west corner of the property
- The building is approximately 205 m<sup>2</sup> including canopy (measured from aerial photo). The remainder of the property is concrete and packed gravel hardstand.

The main site/locality characteristics are:

- The site is located at the intersection of the service road along Broadway (Calder Highway) and Webster Street.
- Traffic on the service lane is one way traffic heading north.
- The site is located on the west side of Broadway in the centre of the commercial district.
- Parking is available along the kerb, and in between the service lane and the highway.
- No parking on Webster Street

#### **Permit/Site History**

No permit history

#### **Assessment**

##### **The zoning of the land and any relevant overlay provisions**

The land is zoned Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z). The purpose of the Commercial 1 Zone is:

- To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.
- To create vibrant mixed use commercial centres for retail, office, business, entertainment and community uses.
- To provide for residential uses at densities complementary to the role and scale of the commercial centre.

The property is included in the Wycheproof Township Heritage Precinct. The building is not listed in the 'Buildings Significant to a Precinct' table. Buildings not included in this table are considered to be prima facie non contributory to the heritage significance of the precinct and the Heritage Overlay controls are not applicable.

<b>Decision Guideline – Commercial 1 Zone</b>	<b>Comments</b>
The Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.	<i>These have been considered, please refer to details below.</i>
The interface with adjoining zones, especially the relationship with residential areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Does not adjoin the Township Zone.</i></li><li>• <i>Does adjoin residential use.</i></li><li>• <i>Adjoins food and drink premises.</i></li><li>• <i>Will affect residential amenity – traffic into residential area, noise could potentially be inconsistent with noise expected in residential settings, and commercial lighting.</i></li></ul>

<p>The effect that existing uses may have on the proposed use.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Existing residential – adjoining property to the west.</i></li><li>• <i>The existing residential use (7 Webster St.) may affect the ability of large vehicles to exit onto Webster Street if the residents, or visitors to the residence, have parked their car on the extension of their driveway onto Webster Street.</i></li><li>• <i>Existing retail – food and drink premises (bakery) – adjoining to the south – the existing use generates parking demand and pedestrian movement.</i></li></ul>
<p>The drainage of the land.</p>	<p><i>Referred to Council Engineers – no concerns were raised.</i></p>
<p>The effect of traffic to be generated on roads.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Will generate traffic movements onto Webster Street, and then back onto highway at an intersection, that is reported by residents to cause confusion.</i></li><li>• <i>Will generate some traffic movement into the residential areas, as long vehicles unable to turn east out of the service station, due to the power pole adjacent to the exit crossover, then turn west and make their way back to the highway.</i></li><li>• <i>Will generate traffic in the service lane.</i></li><li>• <i>Unable to access service station from Webster Street/ Calder Highway intersection. To access from this intersection a vehicle would have to enter into the one-way service lane travelling the ‘wrong’ way.</i></li><li>• <i>Drivers must have prior knowledge of accessing the service lane 70 metres to the south of the service station to access the service station.</i></li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Vehicles entering the township from the north are required to do a U-turn at Jubilee Street, and travel north along the service lane to access the service station.</i></li> </ul>
The interim use of those parts of the land not required for the proposed use.	<i>No unused land</i>
The movement of pedestrians and cyclists, and vehicles providing for supplies, waste removal, emergency services and public transport.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The applicant has provided a site plan with swept path analysis showing a semi-trailer entering and exiting the site. The swept path shows that the semi-trailer is unable to exit the site without using all of Webster Street, affecting oncoming traffic. If a car was parked in the 'nature strip' part of the driveway at 7 Webster St. it may block the exit of a semi-trailer. A semi-trailer would not be able to turn right onto Webster Street as a power pole is adjacent to the drive way.</i></li> <li><i>Emergency services access OK</i></li> </ul>
The provision of car parking.	<i>52.06-6 service station is a use not specified in table 1, therefore parking must be provided to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority – the proposal is to provide 2 car parks. This is considered adequate</i>



<p>The streetscape, including the conservation of buildings, the design of verandahs, access from the street front, protecting active frontages to pedestrian areas, the treatment of the fronts and backs of buildings and their appurtenances, illumination of buildings or their immediate spaces and the landscaping of land adjoining a road.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Proposed building and works include installation of fuel bowzers, relocation of canopy supports, replace the existing garage door with wall and windows, signage and painting.</i></li> <li>• <i>Any proposed lighting will be subject to a permit condition managing light overspill.</i></li> <li>• <i>No landscaping is proposed adjoining the road as traffic movements will utilise the space.</i></li> <li>• <i>The street scape will not be negatively impacted by the proposed building and works.</i></li> </ul>
<p>The storage of rubbish and materials for recycling.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>No area is annotated on the site plan. There is available space on the property to allow for rubbish management.</i></li> </ul>
<p>Defining the responsibility for the maintenance of buildings, landscaping and paved areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Owner/operator will be responsible for maintenance.</i></li> </ul>
<p>Consideration of the overlooking and overshadowing as a result of building or works affecting adjoining land in a Township Zone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>No new buildings are proposed; overlooking and over shadowing will be unchanged.</i></li> </ul>
<p>The impact of overshadowing on existing rooftop solar energy systems on dwellings on adjoining lots in a Township Zone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>No new buildings are proposed; over shadowing on existing rooftop solar will be unchanged.</i></li> </ul>
<p>The availability of and connection to services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Services are available</i></li> </ul>
<p>The design of buildings to provide for solar access.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>No new buildings are proposed.</i></li> </ul>

## Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS)

The following Municipal Planning Strategies have been considered as part of this application:

02 MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGY
<p><b>02.03 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS</b></p> <p><b>02.03-3 Environmental risks and amenity</b></p> <p>Council's strategic directions for environmental risks and amenity include: Protecting the amenity and character of sensitive land uses when assessing incompatible use and development.</p> <p><b>02.03-5 Built Environment and heritage</b></p> <p>Council's strategic directions for built environment and heritage include: Encouraging development that preserves and enhances the character and amenity of townships.</p> <p><b>02.03-6 Economic development</b></p> <p>Council's strategic directions for economic development include: Encouraging economic development and activity that increases opportunities for the community.</p>
<p><b>Comments:</b></p> <p><i>The proposed service station is largely consistent with policy on economic development.</i></p> <p><i>The proposed service station could affect amenity of nearby established sensitive uses including noise and vapour. Increased traffic movements generated by the business could affect amenity and traffic safety.</i></p>

## Planning Policy Framework (PPF)

The following Planning Policy Framework have been considered as part of this application:

Planning Policy Framework
<p><b>13.04 SOIL DEGRADATION</b></p> <p><b>13.04-1S Contaminated and potentially contaminated land</b></p> <p><b>Objective</b></p> <p>To ensure that contaminated and potentially contaminated land is used and developed safely.</p> <p>Strategies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure contaminated or potentially contaminated land is or will be suitable for the proposed use, prior to the commencement of any use or development.</li> <li>• Protect a sensitive use (residential use, childcare centre, kindergarten, pre-school centre, primary school, even if ancillary to another use), children's playground or secondary school from the effects of contamination.</li> </ul> <p><b>13.05 NOISE</b></p> <p><b>13.05-1S Noise management</b></p> <p><b>Objective</b></p> <p>To assist the management of noise effects on sensitive land uses.</p>

**13.06 AIR QUALITY****13.06-1S Air quality management****Objective**

To assist the protection and improvement of air quality.

Strategies include ensuring, wherever possible that there is suitable separation between land uses that pose a human health risk or reduce amenity due to air pollutants, and sensitive land uses including residential land use

**13.07 AMENITY, HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY****13.07-1S Land use compatibility****Objective**

To protect community amenity, human health and safety while facilitating appropriate commercial, industrial, infrastructure or other uses with potential adverse off-site impacts.

Strategies include: Ensure that use or development of land is compatible with adjoining and nearby land uses

**13.07-1L-01 Amenity Protection – General****Objective**

To encourage use and development without compromising residential amenity or agricultural land use.

**Comments:**

*The responsible authority must ensure that potentially contaminated land is suitable for its proposed use. (see decision guidelines of clause 65 section of this report)*

*The service station will increase noise levels in the immediate area. Vehicles, the bowzers, air conditioning and heating units all produce a level of noise. Replenishing the fuel tanks will generate noise. The service station is not intended to cater to large trucks so the noise will be limited to smaller vehicles.*

*Fuel vapour and dust will have an impact on air quality. The service station is not a large service station, and caters to smaller vehicles, it is not considered that volumes of fuel vapour would be large but there may be a possibility that premises in the immediate vicinity would be affected in certain weather conditions. The adjoining properties contain a food and drink premises with an outdoor area and a dwelling.*

*Emissions from bowzers in general are considered to be sufficiently low, given that the general public is allowed to use them without any requirement to use protective equipment.*

**17.02 COMMERCIAL****17.02-1S Business****Objective**

To encourage development that meets the community's needs for retail, entertainment, office and other commercial services.

Strategies include ensuring commercial facilities are aggregated and provide net community benefit in relation to their viability, accessibility and efficient use of infrastructure.

**Comments:**

*The service station does not provide net community benefit as the difficult accessibility, and the potential for traffic confusion, and therefore accidents, outweighs the availability of fuel. The town is not deficient in fuel supply. This sentiment was expressed in the submissions – that traffic and pedestrian safety concerns outweigh the availability of fuel at this location.*

**18.01 LAND USE AND TRANSPORT****18.01-L Integrated transport**

Strategies include providing pedestrian and transport facilities within townships to improve access to shopping and community service areas.

**18.01-3S Sustainable and safe transport****Objective**

To facilitate the efficient, coordinated and reliable movement of people and goods by developing an integrated and efficient transport system.

Strategies include planning the transport system to be safe by:

- Optimising accessibility, emergency access, service and amenity.
- Supporting road users to make safe choices through design and wayfinding techniques.

**Comments:**

*The service station has the potential to reduce safety for road users due to the location near to an already confusing intersection.*

*Clear signage would be required at multiple locations to ensure correct access and egress from the site.*

**Relevant Particular Provisions****Clause 52.05 Signs**

The purpose of this particular provision is:

- To regulate the development of land for signs and associated structures.
- To ensure signs are compatible with the amenity and visual appearance of an area, including the existing or desired future character.
- To ensure signs do not contribute to excessive visual clutter or visual disorder.
- To ensure that signs do not cause loss of amenity or adversely affect the natural or built environment or the safety, appearance or efficiency of a road

At clause 34.01-9 the C1Z is in Category 1 – Commercial areas.

At clause 52.05-11 Category 1 a permit is required for Business identification signs if the total display area of all signs at a premises exceeds 8m<sup>2</sup>.

The total area of signage, including promotion signs, entry/exit signs, logo decals, and bowser signage is 23.46m<sup>2</sup>. A planning permit is required for signage.

<b>Decision Guidelines – Clause 52.05</b>	<b>Comments</b>
The character of the area.	<i>The proposed signs are typical of signs to be found in a commercial area.</i>
Impacts on views and vistas.	<i>There will be no impact on view and vistas</i>
The relationship to the streetscape, setting or landscape.	<i>The signs are typical of signs that would be found on a service station and will not have a significant negative impact on the streetscape.</i>
The relationship to the site and building.	<i>The proposed signs are not excessive in size and nature and would be considered to be typical for a service station. The largest sign proposed for the site is a double-sided illuminated promotion sign with dimensions of 3.825 x 2.12 metres, mounted on a pole with a maximum height of 6.00 metres. This is not out of proportion with existing buildings on the site, that have a height of 4.33 metres. It is not out of proportion with buildings in the street in the immediate proximity.</i>
The impact of any illumination.	<i>The illuminated sign is proposed to be located at the northeast corner of the site at the furthest distance from the adjoining dwelling. It will be visible from the two-storey building at 343 Broadway. The Commercial 1 Zone is in the least restrictive category for signs. The Department of Transport has provided permit conditions to prescribe maximum average luminance.</i>
The impact of any logo box associated with the sign	<i>Not applicable</i>
The need for identification and the opportunities for adequate identification on the site or locality	<i>It is considered acceptable that a service station would display signage to make motorists aware of their presence. There is adequate identification opportunity in the signage proposed.</i>
The impact on road safety.	<i>The proposed signage will not significantly impact on road safety. The largest sign is located in the northeast corner but is set back approximately 4.15 metres from the 'give way' line on Webster Street allowing an adequate level of unobstructed vision to the service lane.</i>

**Clause 52.29 Land adjacent to the Principal Road Network**

The purpose of this particular provision is:

- To ensure appropriate access to the Principal Road Network or land planned to form part of the Principal Road Network.

A permit is required to create or alter access to a road in a Transport Zone 2. A change of land use is an alteration of access.

**Clause 52.06 Car parking**

The purpose of this particular provision is:

- To ensure that car parking is provided in accordance with the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.
- To ensure the provision of an appropriate number of car parking spaces having regard to the demand likely to be generated, the activities on the land and the nature of the locality.
- To support sustainable transport alternatives to the motor car.
- To promote the efficient use of car parking spaces through the consolidation of car parking facilities.
- To ensure that car parking does not adversely affect the amenity of the locality.
- To ensure that the design and location of car parking is of a high standard, creates a safe environment for users and enables easy and efficient use.

This clause applies to a new land use. The car parking requirement is not specified for the service station land use in the clause, and car parking spaces must be provided to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

The proposal includes two dedicated car parks, one to be an all-access carpark. This is to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

**The decision guidelines of Clause 65**

Before deciding on an application or approval of a plan, the responsible authority must consider, as appropriate

Decision Guidelines	Comments
Any significant effects the environment, including the contamination of land, may have on the use or development.	<p><i>The subject land has previously been used for a service station. There may be some contamination present from previous service station use. The property is not highlighted on the EPA Register.</i></p> <p><i>Using the tables in Planning Practice Note 30 the recommended approach to consider potentially contaminated land is category C – Preliminary site investigation recommended. The proposed land use is not a sensitive land use identified at 13.04-15. The site has not been used as a service station for many years, and the site has been used for display and retail. The proposed service station utilises concrete and compacted gravel surfaces</i></p>

	<i>mitigating exposure to any historical contamination that may be present.</i>
The Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.	<i>These have been considered in more detail above.</i>
The purpose of the zone, overlay or other provision.	<i>The proposed service station land use is consistent with the purpose of the zone. The building is not considered contributory to the heritage overlay.</i>
Any matter required to be considered in the zone, overlay or other provision.	<i>These have been addressed previously in the Report.</i>
The orderly planning of the area.	<i>The land use does not represent orderly planning of the area. Vehicular access to the site is problematic as the only access to the site is via a service lane that can only be accessed from the highway 70 metres to the south of the service station entrance. See 'summary of key issues'.</i>
The effect on the environment, human health and amenity of the area.	<i>The proposed service station will have an effect on the amenity of the immediate area. The service station will generate traffic movements, and associated vehicle noise. The bowsers, air conditioners etc. will generate noise. The fuel vapour and dust will affect air quality to a minor extent. Stormwater generated will be managed to minimise contamination of water discharged into the stormwater system.</i>
The proximity of the land to any public land.	<i>The nearest public land is the Wycheproof State School Reserve currently occupied by the Wycheproof P-12 College which is 220 metres away. The old Wycheproof Courthouse is also 220 metres away. Buloke Shire offices and Town Hall are located approximately 90 metres to the north. The proposed service station will have minimal impact on public land.</i>
<p>Subject land annotated in blue. Crown land in grey. Town Hall in top left.</p> <p><i>Image sourced from VicPlan interactive mapping showing public land 18/02/2025</i></p>	
Factors likely to cause or contribute to land degradation, salinity or reduce water quality.	<i>The proposed service station will not contribute to land degradation or salinity.</i>
Whether the proposed development is designed to maintain or improve the quality of stormwater within and exiting the site.	<i>Stormwater discharge from the site will have to be managed to minimise contamination of stormwater from fuel spill. The developer will be required to enter into a Trade Waste Agreement with GWMWater</i>
The extent and character of native vegetation and the likelihood of its destruction.	<i>Not applicable – no vegetation is to be removed.</i>

Whether native vegetation is to be or can be protected, planted or allowed to regenerate.	<i>Not applicable – no vegetation is to be removed.</i>
The degree of flood, erosion or fire hazard associated with the location of the land and the use, development or management of the land so as to minimise any such hazard.	<i>The proposed service station will not significantly increase the fire risk in the immediate area. Fuel storage tanks are to be located underground. Standard fuel storage safety regulations will apply.</i>
The adequacy of loading and unloading facilities and any associated amenity, traffic flow and road safety impacts.	<i>The applicant has provided a plan with a swept path analysis showing an 18 metre semi-trailer accessing and exiting the site to demonstrate the ability to refuel on site. Although the swept path analysis shows technically that this is possible, the semi-trailer is utilising the total capacity of the existing crossovers. The trailer wheels are shown to encroach on to footpath space. To access the service station a semi-trailer will enter the service lane approximately 70 metres south of the subject land. A semi-trailer, entering the town from the north, wishing to access the service station would be required to turn right at Jubilee Street and enter the service lane at this location.</i>
The impact the use or development will have on the current and future development and operation of the transport system.	<i>The service station is unable to be accessed from the nearest intersection (Webster Street and Calder Highway). Vehicles attempting to access the proposed service station from this intersection may attempt to enter the service station from the 'no entry' crossover on Webster Street or enter the service lane travelling the 'wrong' way. Signs may be necessary to prevent vehicles entering the service lane in the wrong direction.</i>

### Summary of Key Issues

The use and development of land for a service station in the Commercial 1 Zone, on a main highway would generally be considered to be consistent with the provisions of the planning scheme.

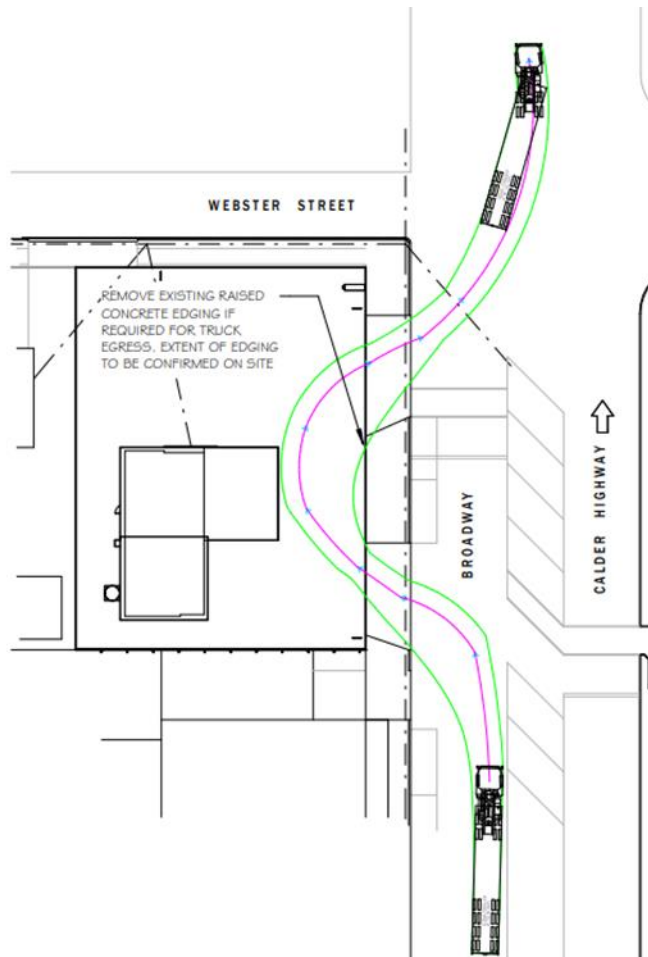
In the case of this proposal the difficulties in accessing the site for vehicles is not consistent with:

- Strategy in *Clause 17.02-1S Business* that aims to ensure commercial facilities are aggregated and provide net community benefit in relation to their viability, accessibility and efficient use of infrastructure.
- Strategy in *18.01-L Integrated transport* providing pedestrian and transport facilities within townships to improve access to shopping and community service areas.
- Strategy in *18.01-3S Sustainable and safe transport* including:
  - Optimising accessibility, emergency access, service and amenity.
  - Supporting road users to make safe choices through design and wayfinding techniques.



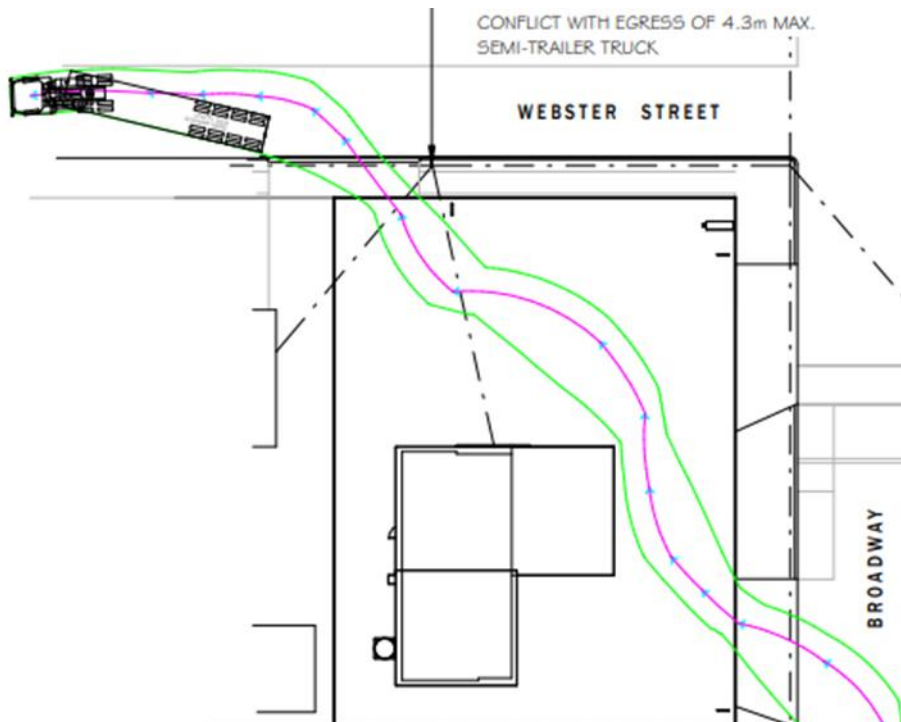
Please see response to decision guidelines for the Commercial 1 Zone in the relevant section of this report.

### Traffic movement



A large vehicle has no margin for error when entering the site. The diagram shows the trailer wheels accessing the footpath in this scenario. The footpath may be further impacted in real life situation, in particular if a car is at the bowser restricting long vehicle maneuvering. A delivery truck accessing the site in this manner and replenishing the underground fuel tanks may restrict patron vehicle movements on the site. There is potential for conflict between tankers refueling and vehicles accessing bowzers as they are proposed to be located adjacent to each other.

*Source: applicant swept path analysis*



The long vehicle requires both lanes of Webster Street to exit the premises. If a vehicle is illegally parked along Webster Street at that location, a long vehicle may have difficulty exiting the site. The trailer wheels are shown accessing the neighbouring property's crossover. A long vehicle is unable to turn right (east) to exit the site due to the location of a power pole adjacent the crossover. *Source: applicant swept path analysis*



Crossover to Webster Street looking east into the subject land. Long vehicle unable to turn right (east) due to power pole. Trailer wheels access the neighbour's crossover. A crossover is the property owner's responsibility and damage to the crossover may impact the neighbouring property owner. If a permit were to be issued a condition could require works to the crossover to mitigate potential damage. *Source: Council officer site inspection.*



The Calder Highway/ Webster Street intersection looking from north to south. No signage denoting one way service lane. The first (north) crossover is exit only which may lead unfamiliar motorists to continue the wrong way along the service lane to gain access or continue along Webster Street and enter the site at the 'no entry' crossover on Webster Street. *Source: Council officer site inspection.*



The property can only be accessed from the service lane. *Source: Council GIS image*

#### **Planning and Environment Act Section 60(1B)**

For the purpose of considering any social effects and economic effects that the responsible authority considers that the use and development may have, the responsible authority must (where appropriate) take into account the number of objectors in considering whether the use will have a significant social effect.

The application received 21 objections to date. A petition was submitted in objection with 114 signatures. A summary of the matters raised can be found in the Public Notification section of this report.

The objections are concerned with the safety of motorists and pedestrians at this location. Anecdotal reports are that this intersection is the site of near misses and confusion currently, and objectors are

concerned that a land use that relies on vehicle access will add to traffic movement numbers and therefore further traffic confusion.

This location is also the location of street furniture and traffic islands in place to assist with pedestrians crossing the two service lanes, railway, and two lanes of the Calder Highway. The local P-12 has made an objection stating that students use this crossing when walking to school, and that parents and staff are concerned for safety.

View from pedestrian traffic island looking west into subject land. *Source Council officer site inspection.*

The number of submissions is proportionally large in a town of approximately 610 people (2021 census) and reflects the social concerns regarding this proposal, and the expression of the community regarding no net community benefit.

### **Economic, Social and Community Benefits**

The proposed service station represents economic activity in the commercial area of Wycheproof. As to whether the proposed service station will represent an increase in economic activity in the town is more difficult to justify. The service station will not significantly generate more visitors to the township, thereby leaving the demand for fuel relatively static, but divided among an extra outlet. Strategy at Clause 17.02-1S includes ensuring commercial facilities provide net community benefit in relation to their viability and accessibility. There will be an employment opportunity, adding to economic opportunity for local residents.

Social concerns have been discussed in the previous section, with the submitters seeing limited community benefit.

### **Integrated decision making**

Clause 71.02-3 refers to the need for planning to meet needs and expectations by addressing aspects of economic, environmental and social wellbeing affected by land use and development. The Clause further requires planning and responsible authorities to integrate relevant planning policies and balance conflicting objectives in favour of net community benefit and sustainable development.

The proposed service station does not significantly contribute to social or environmental wellbeing.

The proposed service station is generally consistent with the purpose of the Commercial 1 Zone, and a number of planning policies are relevant. When considering the balance of conflicting objectives, the proposal does not achieve the requirement of net community benefit and orderly planning.

### **Other relevant adopted State policies/strategies – (e.g. Melbourne 2030.)**

n/a

### **Relevant incorporated or reference documents**

Australian Standard AS/NZS 2890.1:2004 off street carparking.

*The off-street carparks will be provided in accordance with any relevant standards.*

**Relevant Planning Scheme amendments**

n/a

**RELEVANT LAW**

The application is being assessed in accordance with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

**RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS**

There is no previous planning permit history at the subject land.

**OPTIONS**

Council, as the Responsible Authority, could resolve to issue a Notice of Decision to Grant a Permit

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no significant sustainability implications.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT****Public Notification**

The application has been advertised pursuant to Section 52 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, by:

- Sending 2 notices to the owners and occupiers of adjoining land.
- Placing a sign on site
- Notice in locally circulating Newspaper

The notification has been carried out correctly.

Council has received 21 objections to date. A petition was submitted in objection with 114 signatures.

The key issues that were raised in the objections are:

- Pedestrian safety, the retail use next door generates pedestrian traffic.
- The pedestrian crossing infrastructure directs pedestrian to the vehicle crossover accessing the service station site. School children use this crossing to cross Broadway.
- Difficult site for large vehicles to enter.
- Large vehicles are exiting onto Webster Street being a narrow street (approximately 12.3 metres). A semi-trailer exiting the site onto Webster Street is unable to do so without crossing on to the 'wrong' side of the street.
- Increased semi-trailer traffic is introduced into the residential areas of Dempsey Street.
- May generate parking on Webster Street which is a no parking area. This may hinder the movement of emergency services vehicles along Webster Street.
- Traffic may enter the service lane travelling the 'wrong' way to access the site if no access has been made previously into the service lane.
- The closest access to the service lane is approximately 80 metres south of the site. This access is not available to traffic from the north.
- The traffic attempting to access the service station will add to the complexity of traffic movement at an already confusing intersection.

- Damage to road surfaces entering and exiting the site will affect road safety.
- Site is too small to accommodate a service station.
- Negative effect on air quality.
- Dangerous goods (fuel) stored in town adds to risk.
- Opening hour are too long – noise will affect amenity.
- Reduced amenity – noise, fumes, light from the signage.
- Not necessary – other fuel outlets in town.
- Delivery times for fuel could affect amenity if outside business hours.

### Consultation

Consultation was not undertaken.

A mediation meeting was not held between the objectors and the applicant as it was considered by Council officers that due to the nature and the number of objections that the probability of achieving resolution and withdrawal of the objections to be minimal.

### INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable.

### COLLABORATION

External Referrals/Notices Required by the Planning Scheme:

Referrals/Notice	Advice/Response/Conditions
Section 55 Referrals	Department of Transport – no objection subject to conditions
Section 52 notices	GWMWater – no objection subject to conditions

Internal Council Referrals	Advice/Response/Conditions
Assets and Infrastructure	No objection – advice
Municipal Building Surveyor	No comment

### FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The subject matter of this report does not have significant budgetary implications or considerations.

### REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Policy has been discussed in the discussion section of this report.

### COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

**TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS**

In order to promote transparency, Council will consider this resolution in an open meeting

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No officer involved in preparing this report has a conflict of interest in its subject matter.

***Attachments:*** Nil



## **8.3 FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Nil.

## 8.4 ORGANISATIONAL REPORTS

### 8.4.1 MUNICIPAL MONITOR REPORT

**Author's Title:** Executive Team Project Officer

**Directorate:** Office of the CEO

**File No:** Office of  
CEO

**Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025**

**Strategic Objective:** A Well Governed and Healthy Organisation

#### PURPOSE

To provide Council with the Municipal Monitors report that was released 10 February 2025.

#### SUMMARY

The Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Melissa Horne MP on the 6 May 2024 appointed Mr Peter Harriott as a Municipal Monitor to the Buloke Shire Council on the 9 May 2024 for a period up to the 31 December 2024. All Councillors were provided a copy of this correspondence.

The appointment was made under section 179 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act).

The appointment followed concerns in relation to Behaviour and Governance standards of the council.

On 31 January 2025, the Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Nick Staikos MP provided Council with the report from the Municipal Monitor (**Attachment A**) accompanied by correspondence containing Governance Directions from the Minister in accordance with s175 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The correspondence requires response from Council in the form of a draft implementation plan and outlines a series of actions requiring attention from Council, with reporting to occur directly to the Minister bi-annually in July and December for two years.

#### RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1) Note the Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Melissa Horne MP on the 6 May 2024 informed Council of the appointment of Peter Harriott as Municipal Monitor and confirmed the terms of reference, effective from the 9 May 2024, with an end date of 31 December 2024.
- 2) Note the Terms of Reference for the appointment of the Municipal Monitor required a final report be provided to the Minister for Local Government by the 31 December 2024.
- 3) Note the Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Nick Staikos MP provided Council a copy of the report prepared by Peter Harriott, Municipal Monitor on 31 January 2025 as Attachment A to this report and that a copy of this report is available on the Local Government Victoria website.

- 4) Note the Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Nick Staikos MP provided Direction to Council on 31 January 2025 in accordance with section 175 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, directing Council to provide the Minister with bi-annual reports for a period of two years on the implementation of the actions requiring attention from Council.
- 5) Note the requirement for the Chief Executive Officer to develop an implementation plan for the actions required by Council.
- 6) Note the cost of the Municipal Monitor appointment to Council for the 2-3 days per week required during the term of appointment from 9 May 2024 to 31 December 2024 was \$157,385 inclusive of the Goods and Services Tax.

## DISCUSSION

The Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Melissa Horne MP on the 6 May 2024 appointed Mr Peter Harriott as a Municipal Monitor to the Buloke Shire Council on the 9 May 2024 for a period up to the 31 December 2024. All Councillors were provided a copy of this correspondence.

The appointment was made under section 179 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act).

The appointment followed concerns in relation to Behaviour and Governance standards of the council.

The Terms of Reference for the appointment of the Municipal Monitor are as follows:

- 1) To monitor with specific regard to.
  - a) the Councillors understanding and performance of their statutory roles and responsibilities, including in relation to the separation of roles between councillors and the Chief Executive Officer;
  - b) the Council's meeting procedures and decision-making processes, including councillor attendance at briefings and Council meetings, and the adequacy of the Governance rules;
  - c) the relationships between councillors and between councillors and Council staff, including councillor behaviour with respect to the Councillor Code of Conduct and processes for resolving disputes between councillors;
  - d) support for the Chief Executive Officer to effectively perform their responsibilities and functions, including in relation to establishing policies and practices that manage the interactions between Councillors and Council staff and contractors;
  - e) the Council's processes and practices in relation to health and safety, including any matters that may be creating a serious risk to the health and safety of councillors, council staff or other persons;
  - f) the Council's policies, processes and practices related to the management of conflict of interest;
  - g) the Council's community engagement and financial and asset management practices, including its ability to meet current and future needs of the community;
  - h) any support needed in the lead up to and following the elections in October 2024 to ensure good governance at the council; and
  - i) any other matters that may be affecting the Council's ability to effectively perform, including behaviour that may be preventing the Council from performing its function.
- 2) Advise and assist in relation to items included in clause 1 above.
- 3) Assist the development of action plans for progression of items included in clauses 1 and 2 above.
- 4) Report to the Minister for Local Government with respect to the matters in clause 1 on;
  - a) any steps or actions taken by the council to improve its governance and the effectiveness of those steps or actions; and

- b) any recommendation for the exercise of any ministerial power under the Act.

The monitoring activities of the Municipal Monitor included:

- Establishing action sheets.
- Attending meetings including Councillor meetings, Council Briefings, Executive meetings, Audit and Risk committee meetings and other Community meetings.
- Councillor induction.
- Requesting a review of the financial indicators.
- Observing the CEO's annual review.
- Contributing advice as part of initial policy reviews.
- Undertaking a staff Stop/Keep/Start survey.
- Reviewing other data sets.
- 2024 Community Satisfaction Survey
  - o All Staff Meeting survey
  - o McArthur Culture Survey
  - o Outdoor Staff Culture and OH&S (2020).

In relation to the Terms of Reference, the Municipal Monitor also established action sheets relating to:

- Indoor Staff issues
- Outdoor Staff issues
- Councillor issues
- Community issues and
- Behavioural issues.

The behavioural issues range from bullying and harassment allegations to general human resource matters such as recruitment and poor communication. There are approximately 200 individual actions associated with the seven (7) action sheets. As at Thursday, 5 December 2024, 80 items or 39% are complete and closed.

The report prepared by the Municipal Monitor to the Minister for Local Government (Attachment A) provided a number of findings and conclusions including, but not limited to:

- i) Ensures that adherence to organisational values is embedded in annual staff performance reviews.
- ii) Ensures that councillors and staff are aware of avenues to report poor councillor and staff behaviour and that there are adequate complaint handling processes in place to ensure the safety of parties to a complaint.
- iii) Provides ongoing training in relation to the benefits of good behaviour and the consequences of poor behaviour.
- iv) Adjusts its meeting times and locations to ensure a safe environment is provided for councillors and staff traveling to these meetings.
- v) Conducts annual culture surveys open to all staff, reports the results annually to the Council and staff and implements actions to address the results.
- vi) Develops a staff retention plan by 3 June 2025 which identifies issues such as flexible work arrangements, working from home, provision of housing for key staff, remuneration rates,

- working hours and working days (consideration of a 4-day working week) and other employment benefits that may attract and retain staff in a rural setting.
- vii) Conducts a review of its process for recording and responding to operational requests to ensure an efficient process which supports councillors to concentrate on strategic matters.
  - viii) Considers consolidating indoor and outdoor staff locations to assist with communication, service and project delivery, and overall Council performance.
  - ix) Adopts the financial guidance provided in the report titled “External review of Buloke Shire Council’s current and future financial position, October 2024” and ensures that the Council’s budgets and long-term financial plans incorporate the suggestions and guidance from this report.
  - x) Adopts an improved Community Grants Policy in accordance with the previous VAGO recommendation and continues to work on other policy improvements including exhibition of new Governance Rules.
  - xi) Ensures it has adequate processes in place to record and manage the completion of Internal Audit reports.
  - xii) Finalises its review of its Asset Management Systems during 2025 and completes an assessment of the data for completeness and accuracy prior to the end of 2025.
  - xiii) Implements improved governance and financial accounting practices for the Charlton Caravan Park.
  - xiv) In relation to the Sea Lake Landfill site, ensures compliance with EPA directions, budgets appropriately for any required rehabilitation in accordance with EPA directions and moves to secure ownership of the site as soon as practicable.
  - xv) Requests a review of the Natural Disaster funding process to make the process more efficient and ask the Federal and State Government for early confirmation that additional claims have a confirmed funding source. xvi. Write to the Federal Government requesting an increase to the Federal Assistance Grants for Rural Councils.

On 31 January 2025, the Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Nick Staikos MP provided Council with the report from the Municipal Monitor (**Attachment A**) accompanied by correspondence containing Governance Directions from the Minister in accordance with s175 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The correspondence outlined a series of actions requiring attention from Council in the coming months with information to be provided every six months (July and December) for a period of two years.

#### RELEVANT LAW

In accordance with s179 and s180 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Melissa Horne MP appointed Peter Harriott as the Municipal Monitor for Buloke Shire Council on 6 May 2024.

In accordance with s175 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Nick Staikos MP provided Governance Direction to Buloke Shire Council on the 31 January 2025.

In accordance with s176 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, if Council fails to comply with a written direction made under section 175; the Minister may take that failure to comply with the direction into account for the purposes of recommending the suspension of all the Councillors of the Council under this Act.

#### RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable.

**OPTIONS**

Not applicable.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Not applicable.

**INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Not applicable.

**COLLABORATION**

Not applicable.

**FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

The total cost of the Municipal Monitor appointed by the Minister for Local Government for the term of appointment was \$157,385 inclusive of the Goods and Services Tax. This total expenditure includes the engagement of contract services by a suitably qualified professional to undertake the Financial Review at the Municipal Monitor's request.

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

There are no Regional, State and National Plans and Policies related to this report.

**COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES**

There are no Council Plans and Policies related to this report.

**TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS**

The presentation of the Municipal Monitors report to Council demonstrates Council continues to provide good governance through the performance of its role in accordance with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles of the Act.

Any decisions made in relation to this report will be made in an open Council Meeting to promote openness, accountability and transparency.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

In preparing this report, no conflicts of interest have been declared.

***Attachments:***

1. Attachment 8.4.1.1 - Municipal Monitor Report



Government  
Services

# Municipal Monitor appointed to Buloke Shire Council

Report to the Minister for Local Government (Dated 18/12/24)

## 1. Background

### 1.1 Appointment

The Minister for Local Government appointed me, Mr Peter Harriott as a Municipal Monitor to the Buloke Shire Council on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2024 for a period up to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2024. The appointment was made under section 179 of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act).

This followed concerns in relation to Behaviour and Governance standards of the council.

The Terms of Reference for the appointment are as follows.

1) To monitor with specific regard to.

- (a) the Councillors understanding and performance of their statutory roles and responsibilities, including in relation to the separation of roles between councillors and the Chief Executive Officer;
- (b) the Council's meeting procedures and decision-making processes, including councillor attendance at briefings and Council meetings, and the adequacy of the Governance rules;
- (c) the relationships between councillors and between councillors and Council staff, including councillor behaviour with respect to the Councillor Code of Conduct and processes for resolving disputes between councillors;
- (d) support for the Chief Executive Officer to effectively perform their responsibilities and functions, including in relation to establishing policies and practices that manage the interactions between Councillors and Council staff and contractors;
- (e) the Council's processes and practices in relation to health and safety, including any matters that may be creating a serious risk to the health and safety of councillors, council staff or other persons;
- (f) the Council's policies, processes and practices related to the management of conflict of interest;
- (g) the Council's community engagement and financial and asset management practices, including its ability to meet current and future needs of the community;
- (h) any support needed in the lead up to and following the elections in October 2024 to ensure good governance at the council; and

1 Final Report from the Municipal Monitor appointed to Buloke Shire Council

- (i) any other matters that may be affecting the Council's ability to effectively perform, including behaviour that may be preventing the Council from performing its function.
- 2) Advise and assist in relation to items included in clause 1 above
- 3) Assist the development of action plans for progression of items included in clauses 1 and 2 above
- 4) Report to the Minister for Local Government with respect to the matters in clause 1 on;
  - (a) any steps or actions taken by the council to improve its governance and the effectiveness of those steps or actions; and
  - (b) any recommendation for the exercise of any ministerial power under the Act.

## 1.2 Context for the Buloke Shire

The total **area** of the Shire is approximately **8000 km<sup>2</sup>**. It is 140km from the southern boundary near Charlton to the northern boundary beyond Sea Lake, this is a vast area filled with very productive cropping and grazing land and sprinkled with small **townships** including Sea Lake, Wycheproof, Charlton, Donald and Birchip and smaller settlements of Berriwillcock, Culgoa, Nandaly, Nullawil and Watchem. Recreation facilities and appearance of streetscapes are important facets of these communities. Buloke has a **population of 6000** and an asset valuation of approximately **\$300m** most of which is represented by **5300 km of roads** necessary to transport crops from the farmlands to grain silos and other uses. The Buloke Shire Council has its **main administrative centre in Wycheproof** but also runs offices at Birchip, Donald and Charlton. Buloke employs approximately **140 staff**.

**Council elections** have concluded and there are three returning councillors from the previous term and three new councillors. I refer to councillors from the previous term as pre 2024 election councillors and the new group as post 2024 election councillors.

**Staff turnover is high**, and some positions are very difficult to fill.

**Finances** undertook a significant review in 2012 when the council was in some difficulty. In 2024 the finances are in a much better position which I comment on later in the report.

Like most of Victoria, Buloke was hit hard by the **Oct 2022 floods** and **additional events in December 2023 and February 2024**. Currently Buloke Shire Council has a combined natural disaster relief claim of approximately **\$82m**. **Council believes the administrative processes associated with this Natural Disaster Funding are cumbersome and leading to significant delays in completing works, so much so that the next storm or flood event is occurring before works from the previous event have been approved.**

The organisation has very good **Values**. The challenge now is to ensure that they are consistently upheld and actively lived every day. The values include:

- **"Commit to and consistently deliver on our priorities"** and, **"Are responsive and communicate honestly and clearly"**. **The number one issue for pre 2024 election Councillors was organisational adherence to these 2 values, particularly the timing of responses to matters (I expand on this in section 2 (a)).**
- **"Enable a culture which is courteous, based on mutual trust and consideration of others"** and, **"Do right by each other and treat everyone with courtesy and respect"**.



These are two values which are important in relation to councillor-to-councillor interaction but are also related to staff concerns regarding councillor to staff interactions. Respect is a word repeated in Codes of Conduct as well as these values.

- **"Have the courage to stand up for what is right and inspire others to value integrity and respect"**. This value is most important for the new council and organisation heading into a new term.

**Adherence to the Values is the first step in ensuring not only very good performance but also that the Council is an attractive and safe place to work.**

**Councillors were asked to briefly state what they would like mentioned in the report.**

Responses included:

- "one size does not fit all",
- "the truth",
- "make a clear statement about the difference between operational and strategic sufficient for the community to understand the difference also",
- "training to ensure the organisation does not walk past obvious maintenance works and that we all take pride in our work", and
- "for councillors to be treated like adults".

**In relation to the request to clarify councillors strategic role, I note that this will form part of the councillors induction training. I also note that there are many publicly available resources (such as the candidate training prepared by DGS, the MAV's Citizen to Councillor Guide 2024 and the VLGA's Good Governance Guide) which include helpful information about the role of councillors.**

**The executive were asked a similar question** and their responses included:

- "we are resource poor, we need greater federal assistance grants and it is not all doom and gloom, we have good people doing good work",
- "we have high overheads because of our location, high expectation to deliver business as usual whilst recovering from major flood and storm events",
- "we are proud of what we do and who we are",
- "behaviour issues are the major concern", and
- "the new council will be an opportunity for a reset".

### 1.3 Monitoring activities

**1.3.1 Establishing action sheets** relating to my terms of reference (TOR), and covering, Indoor Staff issues, Outdoor Staff issues, Councillor issues, Community issues and Behavioural issues. The behavioural issues range from bullying and harassment allegations to general human resource matters such as recruitment to examples of poor communication. There are approximately 200 individual actions associated with the 7 action sheets. As at 5/12/24, 80 are complete/closed or 39%. Some Councillors would debate that if more tasks were done on time, they wouldn't feel the need to be so operational.

**1.3.2 Attending meetings**, including Councillor meetings, Council Briefings, Executive meetings, Audit and Risk committee (ARC) meetings and other Community meetings. Generally, the behaviour at these meetings has been good. **I have only**

**had to call out poor Councillor behaviour at Councillor briefings twice.** With regard to the Audit and Risk committee it is relevant to look at some comments found in the Chairs annual report: "It has been an ongoing concern to this Committee that there have been considerable delays in the finalisation of the internal audit reports." ...." Given the important value of internal audits to drive process improvement and the education and development of the organisation, the Committee strongly encourages a greater focus on completing the outstanding audits." ... Following these comments from the Chair of the Audit and Risk committee, it is fair to say that greater focus needs to be applied to ARC matters.

- 1.3.3 Councillor induction** has started and I have presented the key findings of my report.
- 1.3.4 Requesting a review of the financial indicators** in the 24/25 budget and trends for the future. This report is attached and summary comments provided in section 2(g) below.
- 1.3.5 Observing the CEO's annual review** process. An independent consultant was engaged by Council to oversee the annual review and from what I observed very good governance was adhered to.
- 1.3.6 Contributing advice as part of initial policy reviews,** including the Governance Rules, Councillor/Staff interaction policy and Community Grants Policy. Significant work has been done by the organisation to review and update its policies of recent times. Prior to the elections, Councillors had started discussing proposed Governance Rule changes during two productive sessions, however the adoption of any changes will be for the newly elected Council. The pre-2024 election Councillors were reluctant to move away from raising and discussing operational matters at Council meetings as well as changes relating to meeting times and locations. The changes to delegate decision making to staff for community grants in accordance with a VAGO recommendation was proposed in a report to a Council meeting however the report lapsed due to lack of a seconder for the motion. This is reflective of a sentiment amongst some Councillors that their role is being diminished, a view that "one size does not fit all" and a concern by some Councillors that staff may be equally as likely as a Councillor to have a conflict of interest in relation to a community grant.
- 1.3.7 Undertaking a staff, Stop/Keep/Start survey.** Approximately 40% of staff participated in this voluntary survey. The average staff satisfaction rating was 50%.
- Stop responses related to alleged poor recruitment practices and the delays with the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA). Staff wanted poor behaviour including bullying and abuse to stop as well as poor communication to be addressed.**
- Keep responses related to local employment opportunities, flexible work arrangements and the friendly wonderful people that work at the Council. They want to keep listening to the community and spend more money on roads.**
- Start responses related to fair recruitment processes, the timing of the new EBA having annual reviews completed on time, improve communications, ensuring**

the executive is more visible and the prevention of bullying and a higher pursuit of respect.

#### 1.3.8 Reviewing other data sets.

- **2024 Community Satisfaction Survey** (2021 to 2024). Waste Management has remained constant at 68 to 66. Declines in satisfaction have occurred for Customer Service (69 to 57), Making Community Decisions (61 to 52), Community Consultation (60 to 50), Overall Performance (62 to 49), Value for Money (52 to 43), Overall Council direction (54 to 38), and Sealed Roads (48 to 37). Some arrest of the decline has been seen in the last 12 months and areas such as Recreational Facilities show an increase from the previous year, (68 to 72). These figures show a need for change as some of them are amongst the lowest in the State. Council's summary of these results says, "Council should look to strengthen confidence among residents in the effectiveness of its decision making, as perceptions of council decision making have the strongest influence on overall performance." This relates to several aspects of the Council however it would include the standard of debate around a decision, the behavioural standards surrounding the debate and the decision itself. Currently the Council's decision making processes (especially in relation to Councillor debate and conduct during Council meetings and the quality of Council decisions) are producing very low community satisfaction results. That should be enough incentive for change.
- **All Staff Meeting Survey.** Staff input into the results of the August all staff meeting survey was extensive. The results included similar comments to other staff surveys such as the need for improved communications, greater leadership, a need to improve staff response time, improvements to recruiting, requests for more staff, more flexible working arrangements, provision of housing for staff, better equipment, more training, an improved website and better promotion of the Council's achievements.
- **McArthur Culture Survey.** This survey has been conducted since 2018, collates quarterly results and appears to have a workforce participation rate of about 25%. The results mostly show an average decline from 2018 to 2024. I do not think that this survey has been promoted for some time, that the results have been made available or that the results and trends have been used as a management tool. The lowest category with consistent decline from 2018 through to 2024 is "Communications". This is consistent with the other data available and requires immediate and significant change.
- **Outdoor Staff Culture and OH&S review (2020).** This report which goes back 4 years and the issues raised are similar and consistent with the issues noted above.

## 2. Governance at the Council

This section includes observations and findings in relation to matters contained in the terms of reference and have been informed by the action sheets relevant to each section and the activities discussed above in section 1.3.

(a) The Councillors understanding and performance of their statutory roles and responsibilities, including in relation to the separation of roles between councillors and the Chief Executive Officer.

Whilst the councillors understand the difference between the role of a Councillor and the role of the CEO, some do not accept that they have a limited role in operational matters. Wanting to maintain, "Councillor Question time", as a standing agenda item at Council meetings to question and berate council staff in relation to road grading matters (as an example) shows a misunderstanding of their role. Section 28(3) of the Act says the role of Councillors does not include the performance of any responsibilities or functions of the CEO. The CEO is responsible for all staff and Councillors should not be attempting to use the Council meeting to performance manage staff. The new Councillor induction period will be an opportunity for further training and education for Councillors to ensure they understand and accept their statutory role and the important separation between the role of Councillor and the CEO. In my view the main tool for guiding councillors away from raising operational matters in Council meetings and briefings is to improve the way operational matters are recorded, responded to, and reported. Currently councillors are saying this is not working and that they are required to keep raising matters because they are unresolved.

(b) The Council's meeting procedures and decision-making processes, including councillor attendance at briefings and Council meetings, and the adequacy of the Governance Rules.

Generally, the meetings and briefings I have attended have been conducted well. I did miss a September briefing, and it has been reported to me that it got a little out of hand. This raises concerns about whether the Council will sustain improved practices and performance when a monitor is no longer present. The briefings tend to go a little too late and can finish at 9pm in a location that still requires a further 30 to 40 min drive in areas known for kangaroos and with several potholes. These are not safe conditions particularly in winter for staff or Councillors. This matter was attempted to be addressed in a report to the November Council meeting recommending 4pm starts to meetings. It was disappointing to see the new Council not support this recommendation and raises concerns about whether the new Council are willing to change in other areas also. A review of "pre 2024 election" Councillor's attendance and reasons for any absence from meetings has been undertaken. This included the review of previous independent work and several of the recommendations in this report are aimed at providing safe opportunities for people to attend meetings and for Councillors and staff to perform their respective roles. The Governance Rules have been reviewed by an external consultant. "Pre 2024 election" Councillors, prior to the election, have been briefed on the changes and have had an opportunity for input. Subject to final preparation of the document the new Council are to consider and resolve to place the document on public exhibition at the December 2024 Council meeting. This will see new Governance Rules in place early in 2025. The new Governance Rules are improved in many ways. However, some councillors see these changes as unnecessarily restricting the way they perform their role. There is strong reluctance for change amongst some councillors.

(c) The relationship between councillors and between councillors and council staff, including councillor behaviour with respect to

## Councillor codes of Conduct and processes for resolving disputes between councillors.

Poor Councillor behaviour has been the primary issue affecting good governance and performance at the Council. In my view, poor Councillor behaviour directly relates to poor Community Satisfaction Survey Results. Satisfaction results for, "Overall Performance" have decreased from 62 to 49 and results for "Overall Council direction" have decreased from 54 to 38 (over a 4-year period). These results should be incentive enough for Councillors to refrain from poor behaviour.

More importantly poor behaviour over extended periods negatively impacts mental health. I have reviewed several behavioural matters within the Council and what I find is that if the codes of conduct and values of the organisation were followed, particularly in relation to treating everyone with respect, there would not be many issues. Like the experience of many other councils from the previous term, this poor behaviour is difficult to prevent and it is difficult to deal with when it occurs. Quite often, processes to address disputes rely on the different accounts of the parties to the interaction without the benefits of the accounts of other witnesses. Sometimes the behaviour of a Councillor may not constitute a serious matter, and this may go unaddressed. However, if continued over a longer term even minor behaviour problems can wear down and negatively affect the recipient and witnesses of the behaviour. I have received several examples of poor councillor behaviour negatively impacting on staff which has influenced their decision to leave the Council.

This is the main issue that the new Council need to understand from the past, poor Councillor behaviour can cause staff to leave and negatively impact the Councils performance results. The new mandatory Model Councillor Code of Conduct will assist with improved Councillor conduct. However, there is still no legislative basis for a CEO to make a complaint about minor but persistent inappropriate Councillor behaviour through the Councillor conduct framework. Consideration should be given to providing the CEO with the ability to report minor but persistent inappropriate Councillor behaviour directly to the Local Government Inspectorate (LGI). Municipal Monitors appointed to Councils across Victoria are identifying poor Councillor behaviour as a major issue affecting Council governance.

The new Council as part of their annual mandatory training should take a deeper dive into what constitutes poor behaviour, what the individual councillor's role is in monitoring and reporting poor behaviour and what the impacts of this poor behaviour are, including impacts on mental and physical health, difficulty attracting and retaining highly skilled and specialist staff and poor Councillor performance results.

- (d) Support for the CEO to effectively perform their responsibilities and functions, including in relation to establishing policies and practices that manage the interactions between Councillors and Council staff and contractors.

Work in this space continues but I have focussed my efforts on attending meetings and providing advice in relation to Councillor behaviour, observing the CEO's annual performance review process, drafting new governance rules, and assisting with the

adoption of a new Councillor/Staff interaction Policy. All policy review underway at the moment is attempting to adopt best practice and this will provide benefit to the new Council in this next term.

(e) The Council's processes and practices in relation to health and safety, including any matters that may be creating a serious risk to the health and safety of councillors, Council staff or other persons.

The main issues which have been reported to me are alleged instances of poor behaviour described in some instances as bullying and harassment. This includes Councillor to Councillor, Councillor to staff and staff to staff. Council has very good existing Codes of Conduct and dispute resolution is described in these codes. The new Mandatory Model Councillor Code of Conduct will be another step forward in guiding better behaviour. Some of these instances of alleged poor behaviour have been investigated and found to either be not supported or to have insufficient information to adjudicate. There is a reluctance to directly report for fear of retribution. I have suggested that Council address this matter which includes providing adequate support for complaint handling. The new Council with its new mix of councillors has an opportunity to reset and reinforce high standards of Councillor behaviour.

(f) The Council's policies, processes and practices related to the management of conflicts of interest.

Conflict of interest provisions are described in the new Mandatory Model Councillors Code of Conduct and the relevant sections of the Act are referenced.

The Council failed to adopt a new Community Grants policy at the August 2024 Council meeting. If adopted this would have resulted in staff determining community grants in accordance with the VAGO recommendation from a fraud and corruption investigation. VAGO recommended that councillors should not be involved in the decision-making process for community grants due to the risk of conflict of interest. There was no seconder for the motion and no debate, so the matter lapsed. The concerns expressed at briefings before the matter was considered at the Council meeting gives some insight into the lack of understanding of conflict of interest and good governance by the Councillors. They were concerned that removing their ability to determine community grants would diminish their role as a Councillor and some councillors considered that the staff may be equally as likely as a Councillor to have a conflict of interest in relation to community grants. The Executive are proposing to bring this policy back to the new council for its consideration. The new Council should take the opportunity to implement improvements to its Community Grants policy based on the findings and recommendations of VAGO.

(g) The Council's community engagement and financial and asset management practices, including its ability to meet current and future needs of the community.

**Community engagements** seem to work well considering the limited resources the Council has to devote to engagement.



The Councils' **financial practices** are well guided by the consultants engaged by the Council and the internal staff working in this space. The CEO has provided comment on the longer-term arrangements for the financial team to ensure ongoing coverage of this vital area including the soon to be appointed manager of Finance. There is a good understanding of the levers to pull to ensure financial stability. That said there are significant pressures on rural councils such as rate capping, natural disasters, staff turnover and reduced financial assistance from the Federal Government. An independent review of the financial indicators for the 24/25 budget and the longer term has been completed. The final report from the review, **"External review of the Buloke Shire Councils current and future financial position, October 2024" (the independent Financial Report)** is enclosed with this report. This independent report notes that *"The current financial position of the Buloke Shire is quite sound"....* however, it cautions that *"The forward financial outlook based on models prepared is not as positive for the Council."* In order for the Council to maintain a strong cash position and ensure longer term financial sustainability, the report suggests that the Council will need to:

- invest time and resources reviewing its modelling,
- consider the extent of capital works it can afford with possible reductions,
- reduce or remove some services,
- engage in asset rationalisation, and
- consult with the community in relation to the possibility of applying for a rate cap exemption.

The Independent Financial Report recommends an organisation wide review to consider these matters. My advice is to include an assessment of the efficiency of running 4 office sites and 5 depot sites as part of this review.

The Independent Financial Report also notes the risk associated with the current estimated National Disaster Relief claim of \$82m. Currently this figure is not accounted for and will obviously have a large impact on future budgets and the Council's resources required to deliver. My advice is that the Council should attempt to de risk this matter as much as possible including by writing to the Federal and State Governments to confirm the current claim. The Council has made submissions to recent Federal and State financial sustainability reviews and both conclude that rate capping is restricting income below increases in CPI over many years and that rural councils such as Buloke that have had significant impacts from natural disasters over the last decade or more just cannot keep up with the impact on roads without an increase in the Federal Assistance Grants.

The Independent Financial Report also notes that the cost of landfill rehabilitation will need to be budgeted for in future capital works programs. Included in this would be the Sea Lake Landfill rehabilitation which has initial estimates of several million dollars associated with rehabilitation. My advice is that the Council adopt this financial report and its findings in full and modify their future budgets and long-term financial plans accordingly.

**Asset Management** is suffering from an inability to fill vacant positions. The Council has a high turnover rate and on top of that some positions are just very difficult to fill. A review of the Asset Management Systems needs to be completed in conjunction with two other councils, Swan Hill and Gannawarra. Once that review is complete the asset data needs confirmation of its completeness and accuracy. Currently the Asset Renewal financial indicators suggest on average over the next 4 years that asset renewal will be fully funded at above 100%. This is a good sign however it relies on accurate data to be a sound indicator. The Independent Financial Report also includes comments on renewal expenditure. The report suggests that in attempting to maintain its current strong cash position *"this may lead to reductions in the Councils ability to undertake capital works and may in turn lead to increased challenges in terms of adequately renewing Councils assets."* This further reinforces the need to finalise the asset system review and then a check of data completeness and accuracy. A specific review of asset useful lives, replacement value and depreciation will assist in improving confidence around the amount of funds required to keep asset renewal at 100% even if the total capital works program needs to be reduced. Funding of asset renewal at 100% must be a fundamental financial and asset management principle otherwise the Councils assets cannot be maintained and will just deteriorate.

(h) Any support needed in the lead up to and following the elections in October 2024 to ensure good governance at the Council.

The Councils role in the election was well handled. Discussions with the VEC indicated that they had good support from Council to perform their role.

(i) Any other matters that may be affecting the Council's ability to effectively perform, including behaviour that may be preventing the Council from performing its functions.

The following two matters are relevant:

1. Council owns a **Caravan Park at Charlton** where a private operator runs the park under the guidance of a committee with a connection to the "Charlton Forum". It is unclear at this stage if Councils risk is sufficiently protected with the current arrangements in place for the management of the facility.
2. The **Sea Lake landfill** has an EPA notice on it to report annually due to its condition and location and the Council whilst responsible for the site do not own the land on which it is located. My advice is that the Council comply with any EPA notice, budget for appropriate works and secure the site through acquisition as soon as possible.

### 3. Recommendations

1. That the Council:



- i. Ensures that adherence to organisational values is embedded in annual staff performance reviews.
- ii. Ensures that councillors and staff are aware of avenues to report poor councillor and staff behaviour and that there are adequate complaint handling processes in place to ensure the safety of parties to a complaint.
- iii. Provides ongoing training in relation to the benefits of good behaviour and the consequences of poor behaviour.
- iv. Adjusts its meeting times and locations to ensure a safe environment is provided for councillors and staff traveling to these meetings.
- v. Conducts annual culture surveys open to all staff, reports the results annually to the Council and staff and implements actions to address the results.
- vi. Develops a staff retention plan by 3 June 2025 which identifies issues such as flexible work arrangements, working from home, provision of housing for key staff, remuneration rates, working hours and working days (consideration of a 4-day working week) and other employment benefits that may attract and retain staff in a rural setting.
- vii. Conducts a review of its process for recording and responding to operational requests to ensure an efficient process which supports councillors to concentrate on strategic matters.
- viii. Considers consolidating indoor and outdoor staff locations to assist with communication, service and project delivery, and overall Council performance.
- ix. Adopts the financial guidance provided in the report titled "External review of Buloke Shire Council's current and future financial position, October 2024" and ensures that the Council's budgets and long-term financial plans incorporate the suggestions and guidance from this report.
- x. Adopts an improved Community Grants Policy in accordance with the previous VAGO recommendation and continues to work on other policy improvements including exhibition of new Governance Rules.
- xi. Ensures it has adequate processes in place to record and manage the completion of Internal Audit reports.
- xii. Finalises its review of its Asset Management Systems during 2025 and completes an assessment of the data for completeness and accuracy prior to the end of 2025.
- xiii. Implements improved governance and financial accounting practices for the Charlton Caravan Park
- xiv. In relation to the Sea Lake Landfill site, ensures compliance with EPA directions, budgets appropriately for any required rehabilitation in accordance with EPA directions and moves to secure ownership of the site as soon as practicable.
- xv. Requests a review of the Natural Disaster funding process to make the process more efficient and ask the Federal and State Government for early confirmation that additional claims have a confirmed funding source.
- xvi. Write to the Federal Government requesting an increase to the Federal Assistance Grants for Rural Councils.

2. That the Minister request a report from the Council every six months for a period of two years on its progress to address the matters noted above, including whether the Council considers that a municipal monitor is needed to support the Council.
3. That the Minister consider expanding the powers of the Chief Municipal Inspector to bring applications alleging misconduct by councillors based on complaints from council Chief Executive Officers.



Peter Harriott  
**Municipal Monitor**

## **8.5      REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS**

Nil.

**9 OTHER BUSINESS****9.1 NOTICES OF MOTION**

Nil.

**9.2 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS****9.3 URGENT BUSINESS**

Nil.

**9.4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS****9.4.1 INTERSTATE TRAVEL - CR GETLEY**

**Author's Title:** Executive Assistant to CEO

**Directorate:** Office of the CEO

**File No:**  
GO/06/11

**Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025**

**Strategic Objective:** Partnerships to Outcomes

**PURPOSE**

In accordance with Council's Expenses Policy adopted August 2020, proposed interstate travel of Councillors, requires the approval of the Council.

Cr Getley is seeking approval from the Council for his travel interstate to represent the Buloke Shire Council, together with the CEO, at the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) - National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA), incorporating the Regional Cooperation and Development Forum 24 June 2025 to 27 June 2025, to be held in Canberra.

**SUMMARY**

The NGA is the premier national gathering of local governments, and provides councils with the opportunity to come together, share ideas, debate motions, and most importantly unite and further build on the relationship between local government and the Australian Government.

The costs to be incurred by the Council will be for Cr Getley's return flights from Melbourne to Canberra, accommodation, and registration for the event.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council approve the interstate travel and its associated costs for Cr Getley's attendance to the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) - National General Assembly of Local Government incorporating the Regional Cooperation and Development Forum to be held 24 June 2025 to 27 June 2025 in Canberra.

**DISCUSSION**

This year is the 31st NGA and will be held at the National Convention Centre.

The theme of the 2025 NGA is “National Priorities Need Local Solutions” - highlights the unique role Australia’s 537 councils can play delivering local, placed-based solutions that meet the needs of their communities, while addressing broader national priorities.

The National General Assembly of Local Government will focus on opportunities for councils to work with the next Federal Government to deliver local solutions that will help them deliver on their vision for the nation.

**RELEVANT LAW**

Not applicable

**RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS**

The Councillor Expenses Policy was adopted by Council in December 2024.

**OPTIONS**

That council accept or deny Cr Getley attendance at the ALGA 2025.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Opportunity to advocate for new or expanded programs and key policy initiatives.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Publication of the 19 March 2025 Council Meeting Agenda and Minutes to Council’s Website.

**INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Opportunity to advocate for new or expanded programs and key policy initiatives.

**COLLABORATION**

Opportunity to engage with the Federal Government and key Ministers.

**FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

Council Budget 2023-2024.

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

*Local Government Act 2020.*

**COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES**

In accordance with the Buloke Shire Council Expenses Policy December 2024, a Council resolution is required to approve interstate training, conferences or professional development. Expenses are paid, or reimbursed, in accordance with the policy.

**TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS**

Council resolution required.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Council officer writing this report has no conflict of interest.

***Attachments:*** Nil

**9.5      MATTERS WHICH MAY EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC**  
**10      MEETING CLOSE**