



Council Meeting **Agenda**

Wednesday 17
December 2025

Commencing at 7:00pm

Wycheproof Supper Room
367 Broadway, Wycheproof

Daniel McLoughlan
Chief Executive Officer



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

The Mayor Cr Graeme Milne will welcome all in attendance.

STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Mayor Cr Graeme Milne 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.

2 RECEIPT OF APOLOGIES**3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING****RECOMMENDATION**

That Council adopt the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 19 November 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 No: GO/05/04

PURPOSE

To report on the Assembly of Councillors from 6 November 2025 - 3 December 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council note the Assembly of Councillors from 6 November 2025 - 3 December 2025

Date/Time	Councillor Attendees	Meeting Type
19/11/2025 10:00am <i>Wycheproof Senior Citizens</i>	Cr Getley, Cr Milne, Cr Hogan, Cr Delaney, Cr Stafford, Cr Barratt	Councillor Professional Development training
19/11/2025 7:00pm <i>Wycheproof Hall Supper Room</i>	Cr Getley, Cr Milne, Cr Hogan, Cr Delaney, Cr Stafford, Cr Barratt	Council Meeting to Elect Mayor
19/11/2025 7:30pm <i>Wycheproof Hall Supper Room</i>	Cr Getley, Cr Milne, Cr Hogan, Cr Delaney, Cr Stafford, Cr Barratt	Council Meeting
28/11/2025 10:00am <i>Wycheproof Hall Supper Room</i>	Cr Getley, Cr Milne, Cr Hogan, Cr Barratt	Renewable Energy Workshop
3/12/2025 5:00pm <i>Wycheproof Hall Supper Room</i>	Cr Milne, Cr Hogan, Cr Getley, Cr Delaney, Cr Stafford, Cr Barratt	Councillor Briefing

Attachments:

1. Attachment 7.1.1 - Councillor Briefing Record - 5 November 2025
2. Attachment 7.1.2 - Councillor Briefing Record - 3 December 2025



Councillor Briefing Record

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

Date:	Wednesday 5 November 2025	Time:	5:30pm
Location:	Wycheproof Supper Room 367 Broadway, Wycheproof VIC 3527		
Acknowledgement of Country:	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.		

NO.	MATTER FOR DISCUSSION
1	Welcome / Councillor Only Time - 4:45pm – 5:15pm (prior to Council Meeting at 5:30pm)
1.1	Welcome
1.2	Apologies Dan McLoughlan (CEO)
1.3	Guests Item 3.1 JWS Research – Mark Zuker Item 3.2 WycheAlive – Martin Duke, Mary-Anne Duke, Carol Crawford (Volunteers) Item 4.1 Kellie Burmeister and Rodney Hotker (Buloke Shire Planning Dept. Officers) Item 4.2 David Richardson (Buloke Shire Officer)
1.4	Attendees Cr Alan Getley, Cr Graeme Milne, Cr Bernadette Hogan, Cr Bruce Stafford, Cr Stephen Barratt, Cr Charmaine Delaney Jenna Allan (Acting CEO), Paula Gardiner (Acting Director I&D), Gaynor Atkin (Director CD), Salomme Menezes (Acting Director COP)
1.5	Declaration of Pecuniary and Conflicts of Interest Jenna Allan – Declared COI for item 4.2 - SRV Application to LSIF (Life Member WNNC)
2	Confirmation of Notes of Previous Meetings
2.1	Notes of the Council Briefings held on 1 and 15 October 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none">Cr Bruce Stafford raised error in previous briefing regarding Charlton Swing Bridge - item was raised by him, not Cr Barratt as outlined in notes.Cr Hogan note from local laws presentation regarding the cockatoo needs to be altered.
3	Presentations
3.1	JWS Research – CSS Customer Satisfaction Survey Results 2025 6pm
3.2	WycheAlive – 6:30pm
4	Briefing Reports
4.1	Planning Scheme Amendment C44blok – Planning Scheme Review – 7:00pm



	Kellie Burmeister and Rodney Hotker Via teams
4.2	Sport and Recreation Victoria - Local Sports Infrastructure Fund - Wycheproof Netball Court 7:10pm David Richardson via Teams <i>Jenna Allan left the room due to Conflict of Interest – being a Life Member of the Wycheproof Narraport Netball Club (now known as Calder United Netball Club)</i>
5	Councillor Matters
6	Acting Chief Executive Officer Updates
7	Next Briefing
7.1	Next Briefing date/time - to be adopted at 19 November Council Meeting
8	Close Meeting

Councillor Briefing Record

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

Date:	Wednesday 3 December 2025	Time:	5:00 pm
Location:	367 Broadway, Wycheeproof VIC 3527		
Acknowledgement of Country:	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.		

NO.	MATTER FOR DISCUSSION
1	Welcome / Councillor Only Time
1.1	Welcome
1.2	Apologies - Cr Bruce Stafford
1.3	Guests Greg Freebairn – Torq Consultancy Luke Ryan – Emergency Management Coordinator Nick Sondhu – Coordinator Economic Development Salomme Menezes – Manager Financial Strategy
1.4	Attendees Cr Graeme Milne – Mayor, Cr Bernadette Hogan – Deputy Mayor, Cr Charmaine Delaney, Cr Alan Getley, Cr Stephen Barratt Daniel McLoughlan – CEO, Jenna Allan – Director Corporate & Organisational Performance, Paula Gardiner – Acting Director Infrastructure and Delivery, Gaynor Atkin – Director Community Development.
1.5	Declaration of Pecuniary and Conflicts of Interest - Nil
2	Confirmation of Notes of Previous Meeting
2.1	Notes of the Council Briefing held on 5 November 2025 - Noted
3	Presentations
3.1	Industrial Relations - Greg Freebairn
4	Briefing Reports
4.1	Buloke Shire Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2025 DCD/ Luke Ryan
4.2	Draft Event Planning Guide DCD/ Nick Sondhu
	Dinner 6:10pm-6:30pm
4.3	Quarterly Financial Statements September 2025 – DCOP/Salomme
4.4	Recovery of Outstanding Rates through Sale of Property Under S.181 – Update – DCOP/Salomme
4.5	Proposal for Recovery of Outstanding Rates Under S.181 – DCOP/Salomme .
4.6	Infrastructure and Delivery - Award of Contracts - ADID
4.7	Temporary Increase to CEO Financial Delegation – ADID
5	Councillor Matters -
6	Chief Executive Officer Updates
7	Next Briefing



7.1	4 February 2026 – 5:00pm - Sea Lake Senior Citizens
8	Close Meeting
8.1	Time: 9:04pm

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 November 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 November Council Meeting resolutions.

Attachments: 1. Attachment 7.2.1 - Council Resolution Action - Tabled at 17 December 2025 CM

Council Resolution Action – Outstanding and Items from Council Meeting 19 November 2025 - Tabled 17 December 2025

Date	Directorate	Item	Resolution	Actioning Officer/s	Status of Action	Complete or commenced
02082023	Infrastructure & Delivery	8.2.1	<p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> 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. 	Director Infrastructure & Delivery	<p>GWM Water approval obtained, procurement for works has commenced. Civil contractor has recommenced works.</p> <p>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)</p>	Commenced
18122024	Corporate & Organisational Performance	8.1.2	<p>Draft Governance Rules and Draft Election Period Policy.</p> <p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 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; 2. 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 3. 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. 	Director Corporate & Organisational Performance	Progress has been delayed due to impending legal advice that is required before returning the draft proposed rules to a Council Meeting.	Commenced

Tabled 17 December 2025 Council Meeting

Council Resolution Action – Outstanding and Items from Council Meeting 19 November 2025 - Tabled 17 December 2025

Date	Directorate	Item	Resolution	Actioning Officer/s	Status of Action	Complete or commenced
19022025	Corporate & Organisational Performance	9.5.1	Sale of properties for recovery of unpaid rates and charges	Director Corporate & Organisational Performance	Brought to Council. Sale process underway.	Commenced
19112025	Community Development	8.2.1	That Council: 1. Adopt Planning Scheme Amendment C44blok 2. Seek approval from the Minister for Planning for Planning Scheme Amendment C44blok	Director Community Development	1. Complete 2. Complete	Complete
19112025	Community Development	8.2.2	That Council: 1. Approves the officer recommendation to fund the following projects under the Community Grants Program: \$2,000.00 – Charlton Bowling Club Inc – Project: Sun Smart Shades / Rollout Tarps	Director Community Development		Complete
19112025	Community Development	8.2.3	That Council: 1. Commit \$200,000 over FY2026/27 Annual Budgets for the purposes of submitting an application to the Local Sports Infrastructure Fund for the construction of a compliant netball court and associated sports lighting; and 2. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to apply for the Local Sports Infrastructure Fund; and 3. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to underwrite a community contribution to the effect of \$200,000; and 4. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to sign the funding agreement on behalf of the Council should the application be successful.	Director Community Development	1. Complete 2. Complete 3. Complete 4. Outstanding	Commenced
19112025	Community Development	9.1.2	That Council: 1. Advocates to the Victorian Government for urgent increased funding for Neighbourhood Houses, consistent with the Neighbourhood Houses Victoria (NHF) call for an additional \$11.7 million per annum to ensure the sustainability of the sector and prevent the potential	Director Community Development	1. Complete 2. Outstanding 3. Outstanding 4. Ongoing 5. Outstanding	Commenced

Tabled 17 December 2025 Council Meeting

Council Resolution Action – Outstanding and Items from Council Meeting 19 November 2025 - Tabled 17 December 2025

Date	Directorate	Item	Resolution	Actioning Officer/s	Status of Action	Complete or commenced
			<p>closure of up to 200 Neighbourhood Houses across Victoria.</p> <p>2. Directs the Mayor and CEO to write to the relevant Ministers for Health, Ageing, Mental Health, Carers and Volunteers, Youth, Equality and Public and Active Transport, local Members of Parliament, and Neighbourhood Houses Victoria expressing Council's strong support for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. increased ongoing core funding to reflect rising operating costs, increased community demand, and years of funding erosion;ii. investment in the 25 currently unfunded Neighbourhood Houses across the state; andiii. a commitment to establishing 20 new Neighbourhood Houses in outer metropolitan and regional growth areas. <p>3. Highlights within the correspondence to the Minister and Members of Parliament the demonstrated community benefit delivered by Neighbourhood Houses, including that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. more than 185,000 Victorians access programs and local supports through the 400+ Neighbourhood Houses each week;ii. every \$1 invested in Neighbourhood House funding generates \$21.94 in community benefit;iii. neighbourhood house participation results in 94% of visitors reporting improved physical wellbeing and 96% reporting improved emotional wellbeing; andiv. the sector contributes an estimated \$922 million per year in overall benefits to the Victorian community. <p>4. Continues to closely engage with local Neighbourhood Houses within the Buloke Shire Council to understand current service pressures, the impacts of insufficient funding, and opportunities to strengthen Council's advocacy messaging.</p> <p>5. Requests in writing, the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) reinforce statewide advocacy for a sustainable,</p>			

Tabled 17 December 2025 Council Meeting

Council Resolution Action – Outstanding and Items from Council Meeting 19 November 2025 - Tabled 17 December 2025

Date	Directorate	Item	Resolution	Actioning Officer/s	Status of Action	Complete or commenced
			indexed, and contemporary funding model for Neighbourhood Houses.			

8 GENERAL BUSINESS**8.1 MANAGEMENT REPORTS****8.1.1 DRAFT EVENT PLANNING GUIDE**

Author's Title: Coordinator Economic Development

Directorate: Community Development

File No: ED/08/11

Relevance to Council Plan 2025 - 2029

Strategic Objective: Vibrant and connected communities
Strengthen community activity and connections
Empower and support organisations to make a difference in their communities
Prosperous and growing economy
Promote Buloke as a great place to visit, live and invest

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the Draft Event Planning Guide to Councillors for endorsement to go on public exhibition from 18 December 2025 to 31 January 2026.

SUMMARY

The Draft Event Planning Guide has been developed to assist community groups and event organisers to better understand the legislative requirements, processes and best practices for holding events within Buloke Shire.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the Draft Event Planning Guide to go on public exhibition from 18 December 2025 to 31 January 2026.

DISCUSSION

The Draft Event Planning Guide provides a clear and practical framework for planning, assessing and delivering events in Buloke Shire. It has been developed through extensive engagement with community groups, event organisers and emergency services as well as cross-council departments.

The purpose of the guide is to encourage and support safer, more consistent and better managed events, while providing volunteers and organisers with a single point of reference for information and best practice.

RELEVANT LAW

Not applicable.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable.

OPTIONS

Council has the option to not endorse the Draft Event Planning Guide for public exhibition from 18 December 2025 to 31 January 2026.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Draft Event Planning Guide has been developed through a community engagement and consultation process that has been progressively underway since mid-2024.

Feedback received throughout this process has contributed to the continuous refinement of the guide to ensure it is practical, user-friendly, and aligned with current event management requirements.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The development of the Draft Event Planning Guide demonstrates a commitment to innovation and continuous improvement by providing a new resource to better support community groups and event organisers to deliver events in Buloke Shire.

COLLABORATION

The Draft Event Planning Guide has been developed in collaboration with local community groups, event organisers and emergency services as well as cross-council departments.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The preparation and public exhibition of the Draft Event Planning Guide will be delivered within existing operational budgets.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision
- Council Plan 2025-2029
- Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

Following a period of public exhibition, the final Event Planning Guide will be presented to Council for adoption.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

Attachments: 1. Attachment 8.1.1.1 - Draft Event Planning Guide



EVENT PLANNING GUIDE



EVENT PLANNING GUIDE BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Buloke Shire Council acknowledges the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk, the Dja Dja Wurrung and Wamba Wemba people as the Traditional Owners of parts of the land now known as Buloke.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present and value their ongoing contribution to our heritage and our community.



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INTRODUCTION

Buloke Shire Council is pleased to support a wide range of events throughout the region.

To help event organisers, we have created this Event Planning Guide. This guide assists organisers with navigating relevant permits and approvals. It also offers valuable information on holding successful and safe events.

This guide applies to events that are open to the public, whether they are ticketed or not.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have a clear understanding of your event, and that you provide the necessary information and documentation to Council in a reasonable timeframe.

Event organisers have a responsibility to provide adequate measures to ensure the safety of event participants, spectators, and the public. Emergency services including Victoria Police and the CFA must be notified of relevant events, and we highly recommend involving them in the planning of your event.

Additionally, if you are promoting mental health and wellbeing it is important that [local health professionals](#) are engaged to ensure attendees will feel safe and supported.

The Council reserves the right to cancel or suspend an event held on public land at any time, including for safety reasons, (which may include a direction from emergency services or government agencies relating to fire, air quality, flooding or other extraordinary circumstance or event).

If you have any questions or would like further information on any topics covered, please contact our team on



1300 520 520 or



events@buloke.vic.gov.au

WHAT IS AN EVENT?

An event is classified as any planned activity where any open area (fenced or unfenced), structure (permanent or temporary), roadway, venue or facility will contain a number of persons greater than normally found in that area or location at one time.

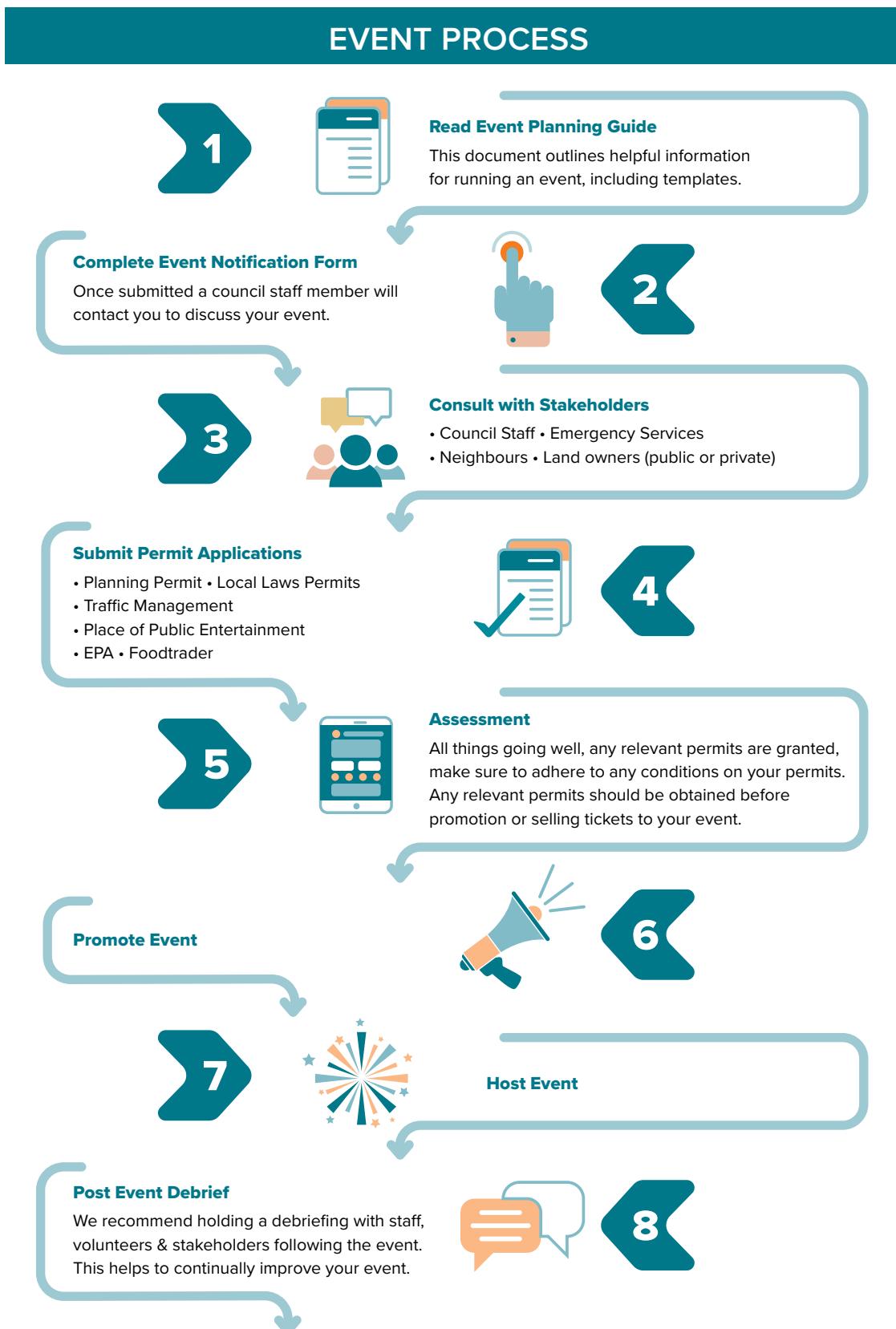
This doesn't include gatherings taking place in venues designed to host events, such as weddings at halls and football matches at ovals, as long as the space has appropriate approvals/permits for the planned usage. E.g. a music concert at an oval is not standard use.

FIRST STEP – TELL US ABOUT YOUR EVENT

We recommend getting in touch with us as early as possible. Even if you don't have all the details of your event planned out, Council staff are here to help and the earlier we have information the more we can help you.

We ask that all event organisers complete our online Event Notification Form. This will provide us with the necessary information to guide you on the right path.

After submitting the Event Notification Form you will receive further information relevant to your event, such as permit application forms and external agencies contact details that you may also need to consult with.



EVENT PLANNING TIMELINE

Start early. Timeframes vary depending on the size and risk level of your event. Use this guide to stay on track when planning your event in Buloke Shire.

SMALL COMMUNITY EVENTS

(e.g. fetes, markets, school concerts, small fundraisers)

3–6 MONTHS BEFORE

Plan and Prepare

- Contact Council and complete an Event Notification Form.
- Confirm your venue, date and expected attendance.
- Identify which permits may apply (Food, Footpath Trading, Waste, etc.).
- Develop your Event Management and Risk Management Plans.
- Book your venue and any suppliers (marquees, bins, first aid, toilets).
- Consult emergency services if your event has elevated risks.

4–6 WEEKS BEFORE

Finalise and Confirm

- Submit any required permits (Food – 2 weeks, Local Laws – 4 weeks).
- Confirm all insurances, bookings and staffing.
- Notify nearby residents or businesses if your event may cause disruption.
- Finalise your event schedule and safety arrangements.

1–2 WEEKS BEFORE

Check and Prepare

- Confirm all equipment and amenities are in place.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their roles.
- Review emergency contacts and contingency plans.

EVENT DAY

Deliver and Monitor

- Implement approved plans and safety measures.
- Stay in contact with Council and emergency services if needed.
- Record any incidents for post-event review.

AFTER THE EVENT

Review and Wrap Up

- Clean up and return the site to its original condition.
- Thank volunteers, suppliers and sponsors.
- Provide feedback to Council and complete a brief debrief.

MAJOR OR HIGH RISK EVENTS

(e.g. large festivals, concerts, motor shows, events with alcohol or camping)

6–12 MONTHS BEFORE

Plan and Prepare

- Contact Council and submit an Event Notification Form early.
- Confirm event concept, venue, capacity and infrastructure needs.
- Identify permits and approvals (Planning, POPE, Road Closure, Food, Liquor, etc.).
- Begin drafting your Event Management, Risk, and Emergency Management Plans.
- Engage early with emergency services (CFA, Police, Ambulance Victoria, SES).
- Secure your venue and major suppliers.

3–6 MONTHS BEFORE

Apply and Coordinate

- Lodge key permits and applications:
- Planning Permit – at least 12 weeks prior
- POPE / Building Permit – at least 8 weeks prior
- Road Closures / Traffic Plans – at least 8 weeks prior
- Liquor, Fireworks, EPA permits – 2–3 months prior
- Provide supporting documentation: site plan, insurance, risk assessment.
- Notify key stakeholders and nearby residents.
- Confirm accessibility, waste and crowd management plans.

4–6 WEEKS BEFORE

Finalise and Confirm

- Ensure all permits and approvals have been issued.
- Finalise your site layout, staffing and contractor arrangements.
- Confirm traffic, waste, and emergency management plans.
- Conduct site meetings with Council or emergency services if required.

1–2 WEEKS BEFORE

Check and Prepare

- Undertake a final site inspection (required for POPE/Building permits).
- Ensure signage, fencing, toilets and waste facilities are in place.
- Confirm first aid, communications, and weather contingency plans.

EVENT DAY

Deliver and Monitor

- Implement all safety and emergency measures.
- Maintain contact with Council and emergency services.
- Monitor conditions and record any incidents.

AFTER THE EVENT

Review and Wrap Up

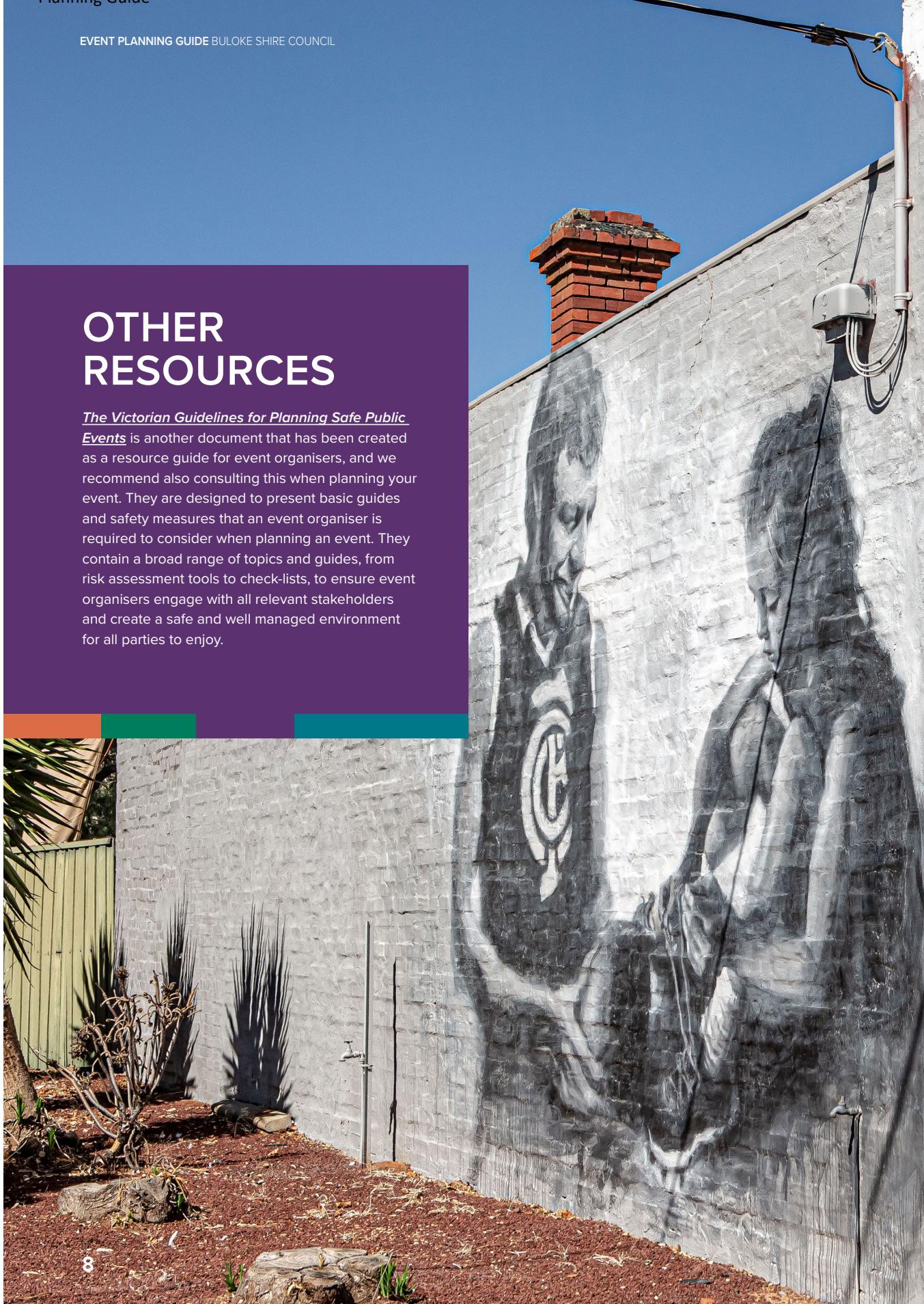
- Clean up and return the site to its original condition.
- Thank volunteers, suppliers and sponsors.
- Provide feedback to Council and complete a brief debrief.

EVENT MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

PLANNING YOUR EVENT			
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Contact Council to notify them of your event and discuss how they can support you	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Have a planning meeting with all those involved in organising the event and allocate roles and responsibilities	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Develop an event plan for your event	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Book your venue	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Council owned or managed land and buildings must be booked at least 8 weeks in advance, to ensure availability of your desired venue and time for council to prepare public spaces	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Develop supporting documentation required for event approvals e.g. site plan, emergency, risk, waste and traffic management plan	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Check that you have all necessary insurances	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Apply for required approvals, permits and licences	
PREPARING FOR YOUR EVENT			
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Develop a comprehensive budget and keep records for each expense	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Determine income and sponsorship opportunities and secure them, including grants <i>*Note: Many grants, and funding opportunities require 2+ months' notice to undertake the application and assessment process, make sure you allow enough time to secure the funding.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Develop a marketing plan. <i>Include items such as acknowledging key sponsors in any promotional material.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Book any other suppliers or services e.g. entertainers, stallholders, bins, equipment etc.	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Receive Permits and Approvals	
RUNNING YOUR EVENT			
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Promote your event	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Notify nearby residents and emergency services of the event	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Schedule and run briefing sessions, most importantly risk management briefings. Such as notifying stall holders about bump in and out times and their requirements if applicable.	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Develop your event day running schedule	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Check the weather forecast and have necessary contingencies in place	
POST EVENT			
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Hold a debrief meeting with staff/volunteers and major stakeholders	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Set up and distribute feedback surveys for attendees	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Thank sponsors, volunteers, and other stakeholders	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Finalise accounts	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Acquit any grants	

OTHER RESOURCES

The Victorian Guidelines for Planning Safe Public Events is another document that has been created as a resource guide for event organisers, and we recommend also consulting this when planning your event. They are designed to present basic guides and safety measures that an event organiser is required to consider when planning an event. They contain a broad range of topics and guides, from risk assessment tools to check-lists, to ensure event organisers engage with all relevant stakeholders and create a safe and well managed environment for all parties to enjoy.



1. HELPFUL EVENT INFORMATION



VENUE

Choosing the right venue is crucial to the success of your event. The location you select should be able to accommodate the expected number of attendees and be capable of accommodating the activities for your event.

THINGS TO CONSIDER COULD INCLUDE:

- Size of venue - Can the venue adequately hold the number of patrons expected to attend the event?
- Parking and transport options
- Access to power and water
- How noise will affect neighbours
- Infrastructure requirements – check toilets, waste, food and drink facilities, campgrounds, open space and building occupancy numbers as per occupancy permit issued for the space
- Is it fenced to allow for ticketed entry, or will you need to hire fencing?
- Impact on the grounds and vegetation
- Exit points in case of emergency
- Identification of natural hazard or risk i.e. Is the venue located in a bushfire, flood, storm or extreme heat prone area?

Council owned or managed land and buildings

Council has many great indoor and outdoor spaces to hold events. If you would like to book one of Council's Venues, please contact one of Council's Customer Service Officers on 1300 520 520 to enquire about venue availability. [View more details here.](#)

Private land

If you plan to hold your event on private land, we recommend getting permission in writing from the owner and check on the zoning with a planning officer as various restrictions may apply and, in most cases, you will require a planning permit.

Public land (other than Council)

If you plan to hold your event on land that is managed by another government agency you will need to obtain permission directly from them and ensure you adhere to any conditions of use.



ACCESSIBILITY

Events that accommodate the needs of everyone in the community will be the most successful in terms of attendance, participation and safety.

Ensuring accessibility and inclusion for individuals with disabilities, CALD, LGBTIQA+, and Traditional Owner communities is mandated under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*.

If you've received or are seeking government grants, part of the requirements will likely include creating supportive spaces that are accessible and welcoming to people of all backgrounds and abilities.

We recommend reviewing this *IncludeAbility Guide* prepared by the Australian Human Rights Commission.



SOUND AND MUSIC

Music is often a key feature of events. Indoor and outdoor entertainment venues and events must follow rules about music noise set out by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). Music noise includes music and other sounds, like singing or performing that is heard at a residence, any place where people live or sleep, school or childcare centres.

WHEN PLANNING THE ENTERTAINMENT FOR YOUR EVENT, YOU SHOULD CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Start and finish time of the sound or music
- Are there surrounding houses that may be affected by this noise?
- Is there wildlife that may be affected by this noise?

Information on how to minimise the impact your event has on your neighbours and also when you need to apply for a permit, [visit the EPA website](#).



NOTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS

To minimise impact on stakeholders notifying them of your planned event is advised and will help you have a successful event.

These can include but are not limited to:

- Victoria Police
- Ambulance Victoria
- Country Fire Authority (CFA)
- State Emergency Services (SES)
- Local Health Professionals
- Surrounding businesses and neighbours

THE NOTIFICATION SHOULD INCLUDE:

- Name, date and location of your event
- The purpose of the event
- The expected number of patrons
- Activities being conducted
- Likely disruptions to residents and businesses with respect to noise, transport and road closures
- A contact number for further information



FIRST AID

Event organisers are responsible for ensuring appropriate duty of care for all attendees and arranging for trained first aid personnel to be present. For small events, this might involve having a volunteer certified in first aid, while larger events should contact a qualified First Aid provider to discuss options.

According to the requirements for First Aid in Victoria, organisations and individuals contracted to provide first aid services must now hold a First Aid licence issued by the Department of Health. The Department of Health has published a list of licensed First Aid providers on [its website](#).

Engaging an unlicensed First Aid provider poses additional risks to public safety and may impact the event's insurance coverage. Authorised Officers from the Department of Health may visit events at any time to verify that the attending First Aid provider is licensed.



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Prioritising mental health and well-being is essential for building resilient, supportive communities. Accessible, inclusive spaces and events that address diverse mental health needs foster a healthier, more connected environment.

Involve [local health professionals](#) to create safe, welcoming spaces that promote hope, normalise help-seeking, and empower individuals. Government grants and funding may support these initiatives, strengthening community bonds and resilience.





TOILETS

Adequate toilet facilities must be provided for the expected number of attendees. You are responsible for ensuring that patrons attending your event have access to clean and accessible toilet facilities.

Calculating the number of toilets and accessible toilets required for an event is subject to many factors.

Factors include:

- The duration of the event
- The type of crowd
- Whether the event is pre-ticketed and numbers known or un-ticketed
- Staggering finishing times where there are multi functions
- The weather
- Whether alcohol will be consumed

As there are multiple standards that may be applied:

- Safe-and-healthy-mass-gatherings
- Temporary Structures ABCB Standard Temp Structures 5.3.1.

[The Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook for Safe and Healthy Mass Gatherings](#)

recommends the following ratio of number of toilets facilities to patrons as a guide:

WHERE NO ALCOHOL IS SERVED AT YOUR EVENT

Patrons	Male*			Female*	
	Toilets	Urinals	Hand Basins	Toilets	Hand Basins
Under 500	1	2	2	6	2
Under 1000	2	4	4	9	4
Under 2000	4	8	6	12	6
Under 3000	6	15	10	18	10
Under 5000	8	25	17	30	17

WHERE ALCOHOL IS SERVED AT YOUR EVENT

Patrons	Male*			Female*	
	Toilets	Urinals	Hand Basins	Toilets	Hand Basins
Under 500	3	8	2	13	2
Under 1000	5	10	4	16	4
Under 2000	9	15	7	18	7
Under 3000	10	20	14	22	14
Under 5000	12	30	20	40	20

*At least 1 unisex accessible toilet is required.

The above figures may be reduced for shorter duration events as follows

DURATION OF EVENT	QUANTITY REQUIRED
8 hrs plus	100%
6-8 hrs	80%
4-6 hrs	75%
Less than 4 hrs	70%

If the number of existing Council run and maintained facilities is not adequate additional portable units must be made available by the event organisers. Council must be advised of this, particularly if sewer connections are required. Temporary facilities require waste removal by licensed transporters per EPA Victoria guidelines, ensuring safe disposal at approved facilities and preventing contamination.

YOUR EVENT'S TOILET FACILITIES SHOULD BE:

- accessible for people with a disability
- located away from food service or food storage areas
- weather-protected
- well-lit so as not to become a security or safety risk
- fitted with sharps and sanitary disposal facilities

WASTE MANAGEMENT

As a general guideline, events generate about one litre of waste per person per meal. The table below suggests the recommended number of 240-litre bins for events covering one mealtime. Multiply the number of bins accordingly based on the number of mealtimes your event will include. If required, make pre-arrangements with Council or your waste contractor for additional waste collection to manage increased waste effectively. It is not the responsibility of Council to provide Event Bins for your event.

PATRONS	GENERAL WASTE BINS	RECYCLING BINS	TOTAL BINS
0 - 500	4	4	8
500 – 2,000	6	6	12
2,000 – 5,000	10	10	20
5,000 – 10,000	15	15	30
10,000 – 20,000	20	20	40



EVENT PLANNING GUIDE BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL

PROMOTION

Consider your target market and the best way to engage them. A mix of different advertising mediums usually works best for community events, including:



Facebook and Instagram posts and ads



Search engine ads



Media releases and activities that get media attention



Posters, flyers, banners, corflute signs



Local papers such as The Buloke Times or The North Central Times



Radio ads



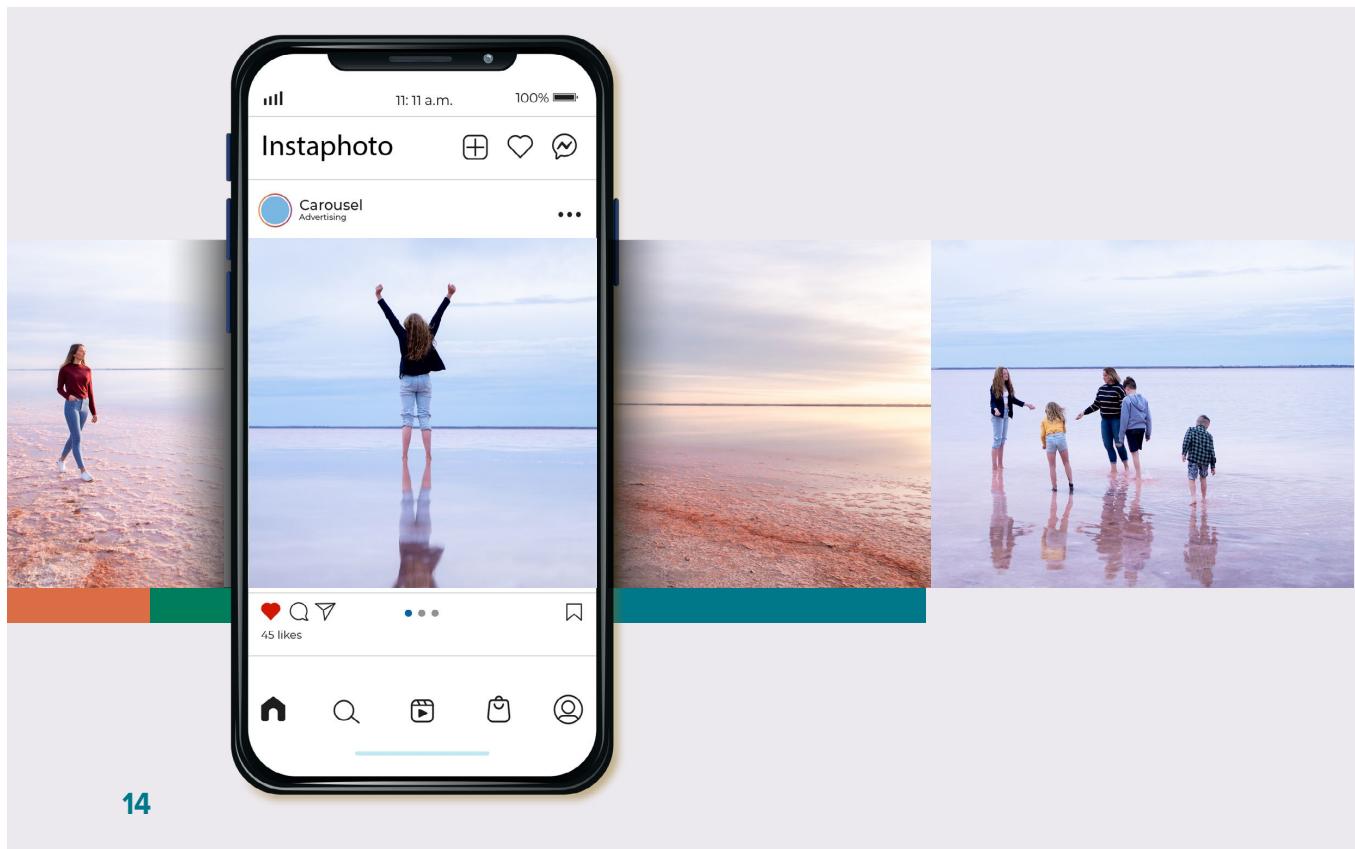
Community newsletters and boards



Refer to our sample promotional schedule template in the Event Plan template for more details available on our website.

Before placing any signage, always check with the relevant authority (Council or VicRoads) for specific rules and obtain necessary permits to avoid penalties.

- **Council Roads:** Signs may be allowed with Council permission. Rules vary, but typically, signs should not obstruct visibility for drivers, pedestrians, or cyclists, locations and must be removed within a specified timeframe after the event or election.
- **VicRoads Roads:** Signs on major (VicRoads-managed) roads require VicRoads approval. Regulations generally restrict signs from obstructing views, interfering with traffic signals, or being placed in safety-sensitive areas like roundabouts or intersections. Unauthorised signs may be removed.
- **Trees:** It is prohibited to attach signs to trees on public land. This rule helps protect trees from damage and supports environmental conservation. Ensure removal of signs within permitted timeframes.



FREE EVENT LISTING

- [Australian Tourism Data Warehouse \(ATDW\)](#)
- List your event for free with the ATDW will mean your event is listed on local, regional and state tourism websites. When you list your event on ATDW you can update the listing at any time (in the one place), and this will be reflected across many other sites.

2. PERMITS AND APPROVALS

WHAT PERMITS WILL YOU NEED?

Please refer to the table below for details, however while this is a detailed this is not an exhaustive list, and we recommend discussing the particulars for your event with our staff to ensure all areas are covered.

BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL				
Permit type	Department	Description	Time frame	Link
Place of Public Assembly	Planning	If you are holding an event on private land	Allow at the very least 6 months before your event, however complex applications may take longer	<u>Planning permit application via Greenlight</u>
Place of Public Entertainment (POPE) and/or Temporary Structure	Building	Permit for public meeting or events that need to temporarily occupy a building, public space or street greater than 500m ² Permit for temporary building structures such as stages or marquees	Allow at least 12 weeks before your event	<u>Building permit application via Greenlight</u>
Road closure	Engineering	Permit for temporary road closures, will also require Traffic Management Plan and in some cases VicRoads approval. Note: Signs on major roads require VicRoads approval.	Allow at least 12 weeks before your event	<u>Temporary Road Closure</u>
Temporary or mobile food premises	Environmental Health	Registration of temporary or mobile food stalls	Allow at least 4 weeks prior to your event	<u>Further council information</u> <u>Foodtrader website</u>
Footpath trading such as signs, raffles and food stalls	Local Laws	The placement of stalls (including raffle stalls), signs etc. on Council land or roads. Note: Signs on major roads require VicRoads approval.	Allow at least 4 weeks prior to your event	<u>Footpath trading form</u>
Camping	Local Laws (Private) land Assets (Public) land	Permit to camp on public or private land	Allow at least 4 weeks prior to your event	Camping permit – <u>contact local laws for details</u>

* estimation of timeframe only with all required documentation completed

EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS				
Permit type	Department	Description	Time frame	Link
Liquor License	Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation (VCGLR)	Required for events where alcohol is to be sold	2-3 months to prior to your event	<u>Temporary limited license form</u>
Open fires or fireworks	Country Fire Authority (CFA)	Exemptions for the use of open fires or fireworks at events during total fire ban periods	2-3 months to prior to your event	<u>Fire danger period permits information</u>
Fireworks	Worksafe Victoria	Approval for Fireworks	2-3 months to prior to your event	<u>Notification on intention to discharge fireworks form</u>
Road closures	VicRoads	Permit for road closures on VicRoads declared roads	2-3 months to prior to your event	Check if the road you intend to use is managed by VicRoads here - <u>Map of declared roads</u> <u>Application to conduct a non-road activity on a highway information</u>
Noise & Waste Management	Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)	Musical instruments, PA's or temporary utilities	45 days prior to the event	<u>More information</u> <u>Outdoor music noise and event permits</u>
Amusement Rides	Worksafe Victoria	Checklist for hiring amusement rides	Not applicable	<u>More information</u>



BUILDING PERMITS / TEMPORARY STRUCTURES

Some temporary structures require an occupancy permit from the VBA before they can be used for public entertainment.

THESE STRUCTURES INCLUDE:

- tents, marquees or booths with a floor area greater than 100m²
- seating stands for more than 20 people
- stages or platforms (including sky boarders and stage wings) exceeding 150m² in floor area
- prefabricated buildings exceeding 100m² other than ones placed directly on the ground surface.

PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT:

- includes events which can be accessed by the public, with or without tickets
- does not include private or invite only events
- does not include use for other purposes such as retail, dining, office space etc.

Note: prescribed temporary structures must not be attached to, erected on or within another permanent building.

Along with other documentation you will need to provide a site plan complying with the r25(2) of the Building Regulation 2018, north, scale, the dimensions of buildings, dimensions between buildings etc.

For more information contact the Building Department on

 1300 520 520 or view information on the [Victorian Building Authority website](#).

SITE PLAN

- Entry and exit points for vehicles and pedestrians
- Emergency access routes
- First aid posts and emergency assembly areas
- Toilets and handwashing facilities
- Stages, marquees, and temporary structures
- Power sources, generators, and lighting towers
- Waste collection points and bins
- Parking areas (including accessible parking)
- Water supply points and fire hydrants
- Fenced or restricted areas
- Signage and information points





OUTDOOR SITE PREPARATION

Proper planning for outdoor site preparation is essential to ensure compliance with Victoria's regulations and to protect the environment, cultural heritage, and public safety. When preparing land for events, it's important to address aspects such as land clearing, dust management, tree safety, and water storage protection. This involves following legislative requirements, engaging with relevant stakeholders, and implementing management plans to minimise risks and environmental impact. You should also check the location of any irrigation systems in the ground where your event is to be held to ensure no shade structure or tent pegs damage them. These are common in public areas such as recreation reserves or parks.

LAND CLEARING:

In Victoria, activities such as land clearing, grading, or digging on public land are governed by several legislative frameworks to ensure environmental protection, public safety, and preservation of cultural heritage.

- Comply with the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 for land-disturbing activities.
- Conduct Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs) for areas impacting Aboriginal heritage.
- Engage with Traditional Owner groups to identify and protect culturally significant sites.

DUST MANAGEMENT:

The Environment Protection Act 2017 requires activities generating dust to implement measures to minimise air pollution.

- Develop Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) for dust control.
- Use water sprays and cover stockpiles.
- Schedule work to minimise dust generation.

TREE SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT:

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004, there is an obligation to ensure the safety of workers and the public during land management activities and events.

- Assess and manage risks of unsafe trees.
- Conduct regular inspections by qualified arborists.
- Implement control measures, like pruning or removing hazardous trees.

WATER STORAGES AND DAMS:

The Water Act 1989 in Victoria regulates land-disturbing activities near water storages, emphasising protection of water quality and public health.

- Obtain necessary permits and conduct risk assessments for events near water storages.
- Establish buffer zones to protect water bodies.
- Manage runoff from event infrastructure to prevent contamination.
- Ensure effective containment of waste and pollutants.





TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

If your event will impact traffic, such as involving road closures, affecting adjoining roads, or requiring numerous parking spaces, you must hire an accredited Traffic Management Designer to develop a Traffic Management Plan (TMP). You must then apply for a permit from Council and in some cases also from VicRoads.

A TMP MUST INCLUDE:

- A map of the event site
- Proposed signage, barricading, and traffic control measures
- A plan showing the types and positions of traffic devices to be used
- Confirmation that traffic direction will only be conducted by police officers or accredited traffic control officers
- Details of proposed road closures and their timing
- At least one diversionary route for traffic affected by each road closure
- Emergency vehicle access points

We recommend to also contact the local police for further information and reviewing this helpful [guide](#) from VicRoads.



FIREWORKS

If you plan to incorporate pyrotechnics or fireworks into your event, you are required to complete 'Notification of Intention to Discharge Fireworks form', available from WorkSafe Victoria, indicating compliance with the Dangerous Goods Act 1985.

You can find further information and the form on the Worksafe website [here](#).



FOOD AND DRINKS

If food will be served or sold at your event, temporary or mobile food premises must be registered with [Foodtrader](#). This includes community groups, individuals, charities and other not-for-profit groups that often hold food fundraisers such as sausage sizzles and cake stalls. Under the Victorian Food Act 1984, these activities require registration or notification to council.

For more details, please visit our Food Registration webpage [here](#).



3. SAFETY AND RISK



PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

All events held within the Buloke Shire must have appropriate Public Liability Insurance cover. You will need to obtain and submit a current copy of your Certificate of Currency to Council. This certificate must:

- Be in the name of the Event Organisers
- Name the event
- Cover the event dates
- Provide appropriate level of coverage, this is often at least \$20M

IF YOU ARE NOT INSURED, THERE ARE MANY WAYS YOU CAN GAIN APPROPRIATE COVER FOR YOUR EVENT:

- Contact your existing insurer and request your event be added to your current coverage
- Insurance quotes for larger scale events or festivals can be obtained from many suppliers, a common insurer for Community Organisations is www.communityinsurance.net.au
- City Rural Insurance Brokers offer insurance through Regional Arts Victoria. The scheme is available to practising artists who are subscribers of Regional Arts Victoria www.rav.net.au
- If you are unsure about your insurance options, chat to us at Council



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Public events must consider how they will respond in the case of an emergency.

ALL EVENT ORGANISERS SHOULD HAVE AN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN (EMP), WHICH CONSIDERS THE FOLLOWING:

- Event venue, layout, activities, duration and anticipated attendance
- Types of possible emergencies e.g. fire, medical emergency and threatening behaviour
- First Aid areas
- Emergency preparation and testing
- Roles of personnel responsible in emergencies and evacuations
- Methods of communication with the public and officials
- Specific emergency response procedures including evacuation procedures and assembly points
- Access and evacuation routes
- Emergency services meeting points
- Vehicle access for ambulance and emergency response providers
- An incident control centre
- Arrangements for additional emergency services personnel



Emergency services should be provided with event details, emergency contact details and venue access requirements especially for Major or High Risk Events. It is essential that these events consult with emergency services in preparing your plan and share the final version with them so all parties can work together in case of emergency.

Smaller Community Events may not need the same level of consultation, however keeping Emergency Services informed where appropriate helps everyone stay aware of what's happening and supports a quicker response if something unexpected occurs.



If you don't already have a plan, refer to our Emergency Management Plan template.
All Event Emergency Management Plans should be developed in accordance with ASNZ4360 Risk Management.



RISK MANAGEMENT

Event organisers must comply with all Health and Safety Legislation that is applicable to the running of an event. Ensure the safety of volunteers, staff, contractors and the public are considered in your planning. Further information is available from [Worksafe Victoria's website](#).

Undertaking a risk assessment and preparing a Risk Management Plan (RMP) prior to conducting an event ensures that risks are identified, evaluated, controlled and documented.



If you don't already have a plan, refer to our Risk Management Plan template.



EXTREME WEATHER

You should address any inclement weather as a risk within your Risk Management Plan which outlines the course of action in the event of wet weather or extreme heat/wind on the day of the event.

If your scheduled event date falls on a CFA declared Catastrophic Day, then the event is to be cancelled or postponed, unless approved by the CFA. Please refer to the [CFA Guidelines for Conducting Small Events and Gatherings in High Fire Risk Locations](#).



GAS AND POWER SAFETY

Electrical and gas equipment, especially temporary setups, can pose significant safety risks. It is the event organiser's responsibility to implement adequate controls to protect the public from these hazards.

POTENTIAL HAZARDS INCLUDE:

- Circuit overloads causing excessive temperatures and fire risks
- Missing or damaged insulation
- Temporary exposed wiring, such as cables strung in trees or across walkways
- Liquids, dust, and vapors coming into contact with electricity
- Unauthorized or inadequate modifications to equipment
- Missing labels or warning signs

All portable electrical appliances, tools, extension cords, power boards, and residual current devices (RCDs) must be tested and tagged, indicating the date tested and the next re-testing date.

EVENT RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX

To help ensure events in Buloke Shire are safe and well-managed, Council uses a standard framework to assess potential risks. This matrix gives an overview of how events are evaluated based on key characteristics such as crowd size, duration, and site access.

By reviewing where your event fits within these categories, you'll get a sense of the risk level Council considers during planning and approval. This helps both organisers and Council identify what level of preparation, documentation, and support may be needed.

Below is our pre-defined risk rating based on event characteristics, providing a guide to assist with planning, preparation, and required approvals. Each risk factor can be assigned a rating (1–3) to assess the overall risk of a proposed event.

RISK FACTOR	LOW RISK (1)	MEDIUM RISK (2)	HIGH RISK (3)
Number of Patrons	< 500	500 – 2,000	> 2,000
Access & Egress	Multiple well-defined access points	Limited access points, some congestion	Single or restricted access/egress
Event Duration	< 4 hours	4 – 8 hours	> 8 hours
Animals Present	None	Domestic animals	Large /exotic animals
Rides/Amusements	None	Mechanical rides (small scale)	Large mechanical rides, thrill rides
Motorsport Activity	None	Static display only	Active motorsport events
Alcohol Service	None or limited (low volume)	Licensed bar with restrictions	Multiple bars, high volume, open consumption
Fire/Open Flames	None	Controlled use (e.g. BBQ, candles)	Pyrotechnics, bonfires, fireworks
Weather Risk	Mild seasonal weather, low flood risk,	Mild seasonal weather, moderate flood risk	Extreme weather season (storms, bushfire risk), high flood risk

EVENT PLANNING GUIDE BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL

QUICK RESOURCE GUIDE

	Amusement Park Checklist		GreenLight Building
	Application to conduct a nonroad activity on a highway information		GreenLight Planning
	ATDW Listing		Halls and Venue Hire
	Buloke Food Registration		IncludeAbility Guide
	Buloke Footpath Trading		Local Laws
	Buloke Temp Road Closure		Mental Health Services
	CFA Guidelines for Conducting Small Events and Gatherings in High Fire Risk Locations		Temp Liquor License
	EPA - More Information		Temporary or mobile food premises - Further information Council
	EPA - Outdoor music noise and event permits		The Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook for Safe and Healthy Mass Gatherings
	EPA Website		The Victorian Guidelines for Planning Safe Public Events
	Fire Danger Periods Permit Information		VicRoads Guide
	Fireworks		VicRoads map of declared roads
	First Aid Services		Victorian Building Authority Website
	FoodTrader		Worksafe Website



8.1.2 LEASE: COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA AS REPRESENTED BY THE BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY

Author's Title: Senior Engineer Buildings and Open Spaces

Directorate: Infrastructure and Delivery

File No: CR/20/17

Relevance to Council Plan 2025 - 2029

Strategic Objective: Built and natural environment
Caring for our environment

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to grant a lease to the Commonwealth of Australia as represented by the Bureau of Meteorology (Bureau) for the land surrounding the Charlton Automatic Weather Station (AWS) at 212 Charlton – St Arnaud Road.

SUMMARY

Council held a lease with the Commonwealth of Australia from 2003 to 2023, the permitted use being for Installation, maintenance and usage of the AWS. The lease period ended on 15 July 2023 and a new lease is required to retain the AWS in Charlton. The terms of the previous lease were 10 years, with the option of one 10-year extension and a nominated annual lease fee of \$10 ex GST if demanded. For the life of the previous lease Council received \$0 from the Commonwealth of Australia as no invoices were issued by Buloke Shire Council.

The lease is proposed on Council owned land as detailed on the certificate(s) of title: Volume 10230 Folio 897, being Lot 2 on Plan of Subdivision 337537A, 212 Charlton-St Arnaud Road, Charlton VIC 3525.

The lease area is approximately 256m² (16m x 16m) surrounding the existing AWS infrastructure which is fenced off from the surrounding land. The land is part of the larger Charlton transfer station site, of which the AWS is located in the Council stack site area which has an independent access point and is separated from the transfer station by a locked gate.

The lease period proposed is 10 years with two further terms of 10 years each on request by the Bureau. These terms are requested by the Bureau to ensure long-term protection of their strategic assets. The commencement date of the new lease is backdated to the expiry of the previous lease, 16 July 2023 and would expire 15 July 2053 if both further terms are requested. Base rent is \$10 ex GST per annum (if demanded).

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Grant a lease to the Commonwealth of Australia as represented by the Bureau of Meteorology (Bureau) for the land surrounding the Charlton Automatic Weather Station (AWS) at 212 Charlton – St Arnaud Road on the following terms:
 - a. A 10-year lease commencing 16 July 2023, including two further terms of 10 years each, and

- b. Base rent is \$10 ex GST per annum (if demanded).
- 2. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to execute all lease documents
- 3. Authorise the CEO to administer the lease in line with the terms and conditions.

DISCUSSION

Existing AWS infrastructure is installed on Council owned land at 212 Charlton – St Arnaud Road. The Bureau held a lease over a fenced area of land immediately surrounding the AWS from 2003 to 2023. The proposed commencement date of the new lease is backdated to 16 July 2023 and expires 15 July 2033 with two further terms of 10 years each on request by the Bureau. Base rent is \$10 ex GST per annum (if demanded). The Bureau must pay all connection, separately metered usage and consumption charges for Utilities consumed in the Leased Area.

The base rent amount was suggested by the Bureau to remain the same as the previous lease. The duration of the lease and further terms were also suggested by the Bureau to ensure long-term protection of their strategic assets. Council officers have not negotiated these elements of the lease and present the original terms suggested by the Bureau. The Bureau provided the following commentary when issuing the draft lease.

"The Bureau provides and distributes weather information for the public. The Bureau is not a commercial tenant, nor are we revenue making, and we have limited funding. The Bureau provides this essential service for the benefit of the public at no cost, but at a cost to itself with the installation and maintenance of existing AWS and monitoring equipment."

The Permitted use included in the lease is as follows;

The administration and undertaking of the rights, powers, functions and/or obligations conferred or imposed upon the Bureau by the *Meteorology Act 1955*, the *Water Act 2007* or any other Law, including (but not limited to) the installation, inspection, renovation, repair, replacement, maintenance, upgrade, operation and dismantling of the Bureau's Property.

The Bureau is to have unrestricted access to and from the Leased Area at all times. The Bureau occupies and uses the Leased Area, uses the other parts of the Land and carries out all Works at the Bureau's own risk. Council must maintain the Land to a suitable condition to ensure that the Bureau and the Bureau's Invitees can safely access the Leased Area and acknowledges that the Bureau is the owner of the Bureau's Property at all times, even if it becomes attached to the Land.

RELEVANT LAW

The *Local Government Act 2020*, Division 4 – Powers in relation to land, sets out Councils requirements for leasing land.

The Bureau operates under the authority of the *Meteorology Act 1955* and the *Water Act 2007*.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

The previous AWS lease was entered into by Council on 16/07/2003 and expired on 15/07/2023.

OPTIONS

The Council may elect not to grant this lease.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The Charlton AWS provides information such as temperature, humidity, wind speed/direction, pressure and rainfall which assists with weather observations providing real time data. Stations such as these are critical for ongoing observations and forecasting by the Bureau.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement has not been undertaken regarding the proposed lease.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The lease allows the Bureau to upgrade the equipment installed on the site to ensure it is up to date with current technology.

COLLABORATION

Council collaborates with the Bureau and other relevant stakeholders through the Regional Water Monitoring Partnerships program which oversees infrastructure critical to flood monitoring.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The income derived from the leasing or licensing of Council facilities will be placed into Council's consolidated revenue and allocated in accordance with Council's annual budget. Income for the life of the lease would be a maximum of \$300.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

The provision of the AWS infrastructure aligns with the Bureau's *Strategy 2022-2027* and its purpose statement:

It's our mission to provide trusted, reliable and responsive weather, water, climate and space weather services for Australia – all day, every day.

We are there for all Australians when it matters most – every day, everywhere.

In providing our services we:

- monitor and report on current conditions
- provide forecasts, warnings and long-term outlooks
- analyse and explain trends
- foster greater understanding and use of the information we provide
- continue to extend our understanding of, and ability to forecast, Australian conditions.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

The Leasing and Licencing of Council Facilities Policy was adopted by Council at its meeting held Wednesday, 14 December 2022.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

Section 116 of the *Local Government Act 2020* allows Council to lease land to any public body with or without consideration. This excludes council from having to comply with the public notification and community engagement obligations required under Section 115 of the Act.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

Attachments:

1. Attachment 8.1.2.1 - Charlton AWS Lease for Execution

OFFICIAL



LEASE

BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL

(LESSOR)

-AND-

**COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA AS REPRESENTED BY THE
BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY**

(BUREAU)

CHARLTON ID: 80128

AUTOMATIC WEATHER STATION

VICTORIA

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Part A

Information Table

Item 1 Lessor	Buloke Shire Council ABN 89 293 793 980 Address: 367 Broadway, Wycheeproof VIC 3527 or PO Box 1, Wycheeproof VIC 3527 Email: buloke@buloke.vic.gov.au
Item 2 Tenant Bureau	Commonwealth of Australia as represented by the Bureau of Meteorology - Melbourne Office - GPO Box 1289, Melbourne VIC 3001 Australia Attention: National Leasing Team Email: leasing@bom.gov.au or such other address as notified by the Bureau from time to time.
Item 3 Leased Area	That part of the Land comprising approximately 256m ² as shown on the plan in Schedule 1 of this Lease and delineated by a red square (16m x 16m).
Item 4 Land	The whole of the land described in certificate(s) of title: Volume 10230 Folio 897, being Lot 2 on Plan of Subdivision 337537A known as "Charlton Tip", 212 Charlton-St Arnaud Road, Charlton VIC 3525.
Item 5 Permitted Use	The administration and undertaking of the rights, powers, functions and/or obligations conferred or imposed upon the Bureau by the <i>Meteorology Act 1955</i> (Cth), the <i>Water Act 2007</i> (Cth) or any other Law, including (but not limited to) the installation, inspection, renovation, repair, replacement, maintenance, upgrade, operation and dismantling of the Bureau's Property.
Item 6 Weather Observation Equipment	Automatic Weather Station, screen (small Stevenson), and TBRG.
Item 7 Commencement Date	16 July 2023
Item 8 Expiry Date	15 July 2033
Item 9	

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Further Term/s Two further terms of 10 (ten) years each

Item 10
Base Rent \$10 excluding GST per annum (if demanded)

Item 11
Not applicable

Item 12
Not applicable **Optional Termination Date**

Commencement Date

Optional Termination Notice Period

12 months

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Part B: Operative provisions

1. Term

1.1 Grant of the lease

- (a) The Lessor grants a lease to the Bureau and the Bureau takes a lease of the Leased Area for the Term at the Base Rent on and subject to the terms of this Lease.
- (b) Subject to the provisions of this Lease, this Lease commences on the Commencement Date and expires on the Expiry Date.

1.2 Further Terms

Provided that the Bureau has given to Lessor a minimum of 3 months' notice prior to the Expiry Date, the Lessor must grant to the Bureau a renewal of the lease of the Leased Area for the period specified in Item 9 upon the same terms and conditions as are contained in this Lease with the following amendments:

- (a) the new Base Rent will be determined in accordance with the method of rent review set out in Item 11;
- (b) the new commencement date, expiry date and base rent will be inserted in Item 7, Item 8 and Item 10;
- (c) this clause 1.2 will be omitted unless Item 9 refers to an additional Further Term after that for which the renewal of the lease is being granted.

1.3 Holding over

If the Bureau continues to occupy the Leased Area after the Expiry Date without objection by the Lessor, the Bureau will do so as a yearly tenant on the same terms and conditions as this Lease (to the extent they are applicable to a yearly tenancy). Either party may end the yearly tenancy by giving twelve months' notice to the other expiring at any time.

2. Rent and Rent Review

2.1 Payment of Base Rent

The Bureau must pay the Base Rent (as varied in accordance with this Lease) to the Lessor in accordance with clause 3.

3. Other costs

3.1 Utility Charges

The Bureau must pay all connection, separately metered usage and consumption charges for Utilities consumed in the Leased Area.

3.2 GST

- (a) Unless otherwise indicated, all consideration for any supply made under this Lease is exclusive of any GST imposed on the supply.

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- (b) Subject to this clause 3.2, if one party (**Supplier**) makes a taxable supply under this Lease to the other party (**Recipient**), the Recipient on receipt of a tax invoice from the Supplier must pay without setoff an additional amount to the Supplier equal to the GST imposed on the supply in question.
- (c) Terms used in this clause 3.2 which are defined in the GST law have the meaning attributed to them in the GST Law.
- (d) No party may claim or retain from the other party any amount in relation to a supply made under this Lease for which the first party can obtain an input tax credit or decreasing adjustment.

3.3 Payment

The Bureau must pay the Base Rent annually in advance. However, if the Lease is not fully executed by thirty (30) days prior to the Commencement Date, then the first instalment is due within thirty (30) days of the Lease being fully executed.

3.4 Broken periods

If an amount is specified to be for a period but the amount payable is for a period shorter than the specified period, then the actual amount payable for the shorter period is the amount payable for the specified period pro-rated on a daily basis.

3.5 Payment Requirements

Subject to receipt of a correctly rendered tax invoice addressed to the Bureau (and given in accordance with clause 9.1), the Bureau must:

- (a) make all payments under this Lease at the place by electronic funds transfer to an account nominated by the Lessor, without any deduction or right of set-off arising at law or in equity whatsoever; and
- (b) pay any amount due within 30 days of receipt of the tax invoice from the Lessor.

3.6 Lease Costs

If the Bureau requires this Lease to be registered, the Bureau must pay:

- (a) the reasonable and proper costs of preparing a plan of the Leased Area in registrable form; and
- (b) any registration fees on or arising from this Lease.

The parties acknowledge that if a Law imposes duty on this Lease and imposes that duty on the Bureau as the tenant, then the Bureau is only liable to pay that duty if that Law is binding on the Bureau.

4. Bureau's rights and obligations

4.1 Access and Services

The Lessor grants a licence to the Bureau over the Land to:

- (a) have unrestricted access to and from the Leased Area at all times;
- (b) install, maintain, repair and replace all cables, conduits, services and ducts required to connect Services to the Leased Area:
 - (i) for the avoidance of doubt – anywhere within the Leased Area; and
 - (ii) outside of the Leased Area – subject to consent from the Lessor (which consent is deemed to have been given by the Lessor if no other response is received by the Bureau within 14 days of its request for consent); and

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- (c) temporarily use the Land immediately surrounding the Leased Area, solely for the purpose of facilitating Works (including but not limited to during the initial installation of the Bureau's Property). The Bureau must restore the immediately surrounding Land used by the Bureau as far as practicably possible to its condition prior to such use by the Bureau (fair wear and tear excepted).

The licence in this clause 4.1 is coupled with and runs with the leasehold interest.

4.2 Conduct of Bureau's operations

- (a) The Bureau must comply with all applicable Laws and requirements of relevant Authorities from time to time affecting the Leased Area, the Bureau's Property and the Bureau's use or occupation of the Leased Area.
- (b) The Bureau is entitled to use the Leased Area for the Permitted Use and any use reasonably incidental to the Permitted Use.
- (c) Except in an emergency, the Bureau will use its best endeavours to notify the Lessor of its intended access to the Leased Area (which notice may be given in writing, email or by telephone).

4.3 Maintaining the Bureau's Property

The Bureau must at all times keep the Bureau's Property in good repair and condition, except for fair wear and tear.

4.4 Alterations to the Leased Area

The Bureau must ensure that all the Works are carried out:

- (a) in a proper and workmanlike manner;
- (b) in accordance with the Approvals and any applicable Laws;
- (c) in a manner that will not adversely and materially affect, disrupt or cause a nuisance to the carrying out of any works in the Land by the Lessor or any other occupier of the Land (provided the other occupier is in occupation prior to the initial date of occupation by the Bureau), subject to:
 - (i) the Bureau receiving no less than 28 days' prior notice of any proposed works by the Lessor or other occupier of the Land; and
 - (ii) any works by the Lessor or other occupier of the Land not interfering with or delaying the Works;
- (d) where applicable - by contractors who are suitably qualified, competent and experienced in carrying out works in the nature of the proposed Works.

4.5 Compliance with Laws

- (a) Notwithstanding anything else in this Lease, the Bureau is only required to comply with a Law relating to the use of the Leased Area:
 - (i) to the extent that the Bureau is bound by a Law; and
 - (ii) provided the Bureau is not required to effect structural alterations or additions to the Leased Area, install, alter or add to equipment in the Leased Area.

4.6 Lease Dealings

- (a) The Bureau may assign, sublease, licence, part with possession or deal with its interest in this Lease after obtaining the Lessor's prior consent.

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- (b) Despite clause 4.6(a), if it is necessary or convenient as a result of a machinery of government change, the Bureau may at any time and without the consent of the Lessor:
 - (i) assign, transfer, sublet, licence or otherwise part with possession or deal with its interest in the Leased Area or part of the Leased Area to a Corporate Commonwealth Entity, a Non-corporate Commonwealth Entity, a Commonwealth Company, any public authority, instrumentality or agency of a State or Territory or any corporation or public authority, instrumentality or agency in which a State or Territory has a controlling interest; or
 - (ii) sublet or part with possession of the Leased Area or any part where the term of the sublease, or the arrangement pursuant to which Bureau parts with possession, does not exceed the Term.
- (c) The Bureau agrees to notify the Lessor within a reasonable time of any action taken in the exercise of its rights under clause 4.6(b).

5. Lessor's rights and obligations

5.1 Quiet enjoyment

The Lessor must give the Bureau quiet enjoyment of the Leased Area without any interruption or disturbance by the Lessor or any person claiming through or under the Lessor.

5.2 Safety

The Lessor must maintain the Land to a suitable condition to ensure that the Bureau and the Bureau's Invitees can safely access the Leased Area.

5.3 Access to the Leased Area

The Lessor must permit the Bureau and the Bureau's Invitees:

- (a) unrestricted access to the Leased Area (including the provision of any security codes, keys or similar ability to unlock security measures necessary to access the Leased Area); and
- (b) the right to install, maintain, repair and replace all cables, conduits, services and ducts required to connect Services to the Leased Area.

5.4 Lessor's insurances

- (a) The Lessor shall effect and keep effected during the Term insurance policies for public liability for at least \$20,000,000 for any one occurrence covering all of the Land.
- (b) If requested by the Bureau, the Lessor must give the Bureau evidence (such as a valid certificate of currency) that it has the policies required under this clause 5.4, but no more than once in every 12 months.

5.5 Compliance with Laws and Authority requirements

The Lessor must comply with all Laws and requirements of Authorities from time to time relating to or affecting the Land.

5.6 Mining tenements

The Lessor must notify the Bureau of any Mining Tenement application or notice concerning the Land within seven (7) days of receiving such an application or notice.

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5.7 Contamination

- (a) The Lessor warrants to the Bureau that, to the best of its knowledge and belief at the Commencement Date, the Land is not contaminated by any Contaminant.
- (b) If, at any time, the Leased Area become contaminated by any Contaminant, the Lessor must:
 - (i) notify the Bureau (providing all relevant information about the Contaminant) immediately after becoming aware of the Contaminant; and
 - (ii) undertake such works as are required to manage and clean-up the Contamination in order to eliminate unacceptable risk to human health and/or the environment and in accordance with all applicable laws, guidelines and Authority requirements and to a level sufficient to allow the Bureau to lawfully conduct the Permitted Use from the Leased Area. This clause 5.7(b)(ii) does not apply to the extent that the Bureau or the Bureau's Invitees caused or contributed to the Leased Area becoming contaminated by any Contaminant.

5.8 Clearance Zones

The Lessor must comply with the requirements in Schedule 2, unless prior written consent from the Bureau is obtained (with the request made in writing). If the Lessor becomes aware of any potential non-compliance, the Lessor must immediately notify the Bureau. For the avoidance of doubt, the cost of remedying any non-compliance is the responsibility of the Lessor.

5.9 Bureau's Property

The Lessor acknowledges that the Bureau is the owner of the Bureau's Property at all times, even if it becomes attached to the Land.

6. Risk and insurance

6.1 Risk

The Bureau occupies and uses the Leased Area, uses the other parts of the Land and carries out all Works at the Bureau's own risk.

6.2 Bureau's Insurance

The parties agree that while the tenant is a Corporate Commonwealth Entity, a Non-corporate Commonwealth Entity or a Commonwealth Company and maintains arrangements for risk coverage through Comcover or any equivalent successor, the tenant is not required to take out any other insurance for the purpose of this Lease.

7. End of Lease

7.1 Make good

- (a) Subject to the following terms in clause 7.1, on the Expiry Date or earlier determination of this Lease, the Bureau must vacate the Leased Area.
- (b) Unless otherwise agreed between the parties, the Bureau:
 - (i) may remove the Bureau's Property from the Leased Area and the Land at any time up to three (3) months after the Expiry Date; and
 - (ii) must remove the Bureau's Property within three (3) months after receiving notice to do so from the Lessor (which notice must not be given before the Expiry Date).

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(c) The parties acknowledge and agree that:

(i) any period after the Expiry Date when the Bureau's Property remains on the Leased Area or the Land pursuant to clause 7.1 is not regarded as holding over under clause 1.3 and Base Rent is not payable by the Bureau during this period.

7.2 Events of default by Bureau

(a) The Bureau will be in default if it does not comply with the terms of this Lease.

(b) If the Bureau is in default of this Lease and the Lessor serves a notice on the Bureau to remedy the default and the default is not remedied within a reasonable period (having regard to the seriousness and nature of the default) after service of the Lessor's notice and being no less than 30 days after service to the Bureau, the Lessor may, without prejudice to any other right it has, terminate this Lease and re-enter the Leased Area without further notice to the Bureau.

7.3 Termination for convenience

At any time after the Optional Termination Date, the Bureau may terminate this Lease by giving written notice to the Lessor of no less than the Optional Termination Notice Period, and the Lease may expire at any time.

7.4 Events of default by Lessor

(a) The Lessor will be in default if it does not comply with the terms of this Lease.

(b) If the Lessor is in default of this Lease and the Bureau serves a notice on the Lessor to remedy the default and the default is not remedied within a reasonable period (having regard to the seriousness and nature of the default) after service of the Bureau's notice and being no less than 30 days after service to the Lessor, the Bureau may, without prejudice to any other right it has, terminate this Lease without further notice to the Lessor.

8. Damage or destruction

The Bureau is entitled to a full abatement of Base Rent if the Bureau is required by Law to vacate the Leased Area (or part thereof) because of a material health, safety or security matter caused directly or indirectly by the Lessor, its employees, agents, tenants (other than the Bureau), licensees or contractors and the abatement will apply from the date of vacation up to and including the date that the Bureau can recommence the Permitted Use from the Leased Area, which it shall not be required to do until the health, safety or security matter has been rectified.

9. General Provisions

9.1 Notices

(a) Any notice, request, demand, consent approval or other communication (**Notice**) in relation to any matter under this Lease, except for notice given orally to the Lessor by telephone in accordance with clause 4.2(c), must be in writing and must be left at or sent to the address or email address of the addressee in this Lease (or such other address or email address previously notified in writing by the addressee as the addressee's alternative address for notices). Clause 9.1(a) does not apply where this Lease provides that a Notice may be given orally.

(b) If given by the Lessor, must be signed or given by the Lessor or the Lessor's duly appointed attorney, solicitor or agent.

(c) If given by the Bureau, may be provided or given by any person employed or contracted by the Bureau and acting on behalf of the National Leasing Manager, Property Services or the Bureau's duly appointed attorney, solicitor or agent.

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(d) A Notice in accordance with clause 9.1 will take effect:

- (i) if left at an address or sent by email, on the day the Notice was delivered provided the Notice was delivered by 5.00pm on that day and that day is a business day. Otherwise, the Notice will take effect from the next business day;
- (ii) if sent by post, on the fourth business day after the Notice was sent; or
- (iii) if given orally, at the time it is given.

9.2 Whole agreement

This Lease comprises the whole of the written agreement between the parties in respect of the Leased Area.

9.3 Parties to act reasonably

- (a) The parties agree that in relation to this Lease they will act co-operatively and reasonably.
- (b) In this Lease unless stated to the contrary, where consent or approval is required to be provided by a party, that party will act reasonably in considering such consent or approval and will not unreasonably withhold or delay consent to any approval requested.

9.4 Further assurances

Each party must do all things reasonably required by the other party to give effect to the terms of this Lease.

9.5 Reading down

If any provision in this Lease is contrary to any Law, the provision must be read down to such an extent as is reasonable in the circumstances so as to give it valid operation. If the provision cannot be read down, it will be deemed to be void and severed from this Lease.

9.6 Waiver and variation

A provision of or a right created under this Lease is not waived or varied except in writing signed by the party to be bound.

9.7 Antecedent breaches

The expiry or termination of this Lease does not affect the rights of a party arising out of a breach of this Lease by any other party that occurs before the expiry or termination.

9.8 Jurisdiction

The laws of the State govern this Lease.

9.9 Mortgagee and caveator consent

If required by the Bureau, the Lessor must obtain the unconditional consent of any mortgagee and caveator of the Land to this Lease at the Bureau's cost (subject to the Bureau first approving the cost) and in a form acceptable to the Bureau (acting reasonably) and provide a copy to the Bureau.

9.10 Sale of Land

The Lessor must not sell, transfer, lease (including any concurrent lease) or otherwise alienate its interest in the Land or any part of the Land of which the Leased Area forms part unless, prior to or at the time of doing so and at the Lessor's cost, the Lessor provides the Bureau with a deed of covenant in favour of the Bureau executed by the person acquiring or proposing to acquire an interest in the Land (**New Party**), binding the New Party to perform and observe all of the Lessor's covenants contained in this Lease, on

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terms and conditions satisfactory to the Bureau (including that the Bureau be a party to the deed of covenant with the New Party).

9.11 Caveats

The Bureau may lodge a caveat on the title to the Land which notes the Bureau's interest under this Lease. If required by the Bureau, the Lessor agrees to provide contemporaneously with execution of this Lease its written consent in registrable form to any caveat which the Bureau may wish to lodge in relation to this Lease.

9.12 Capacity

The Lessor warrants that it has the right, title and interest in the Land sufficient to grant the rights to the Bureau under this Lease.

9.13 Clauses to survive termination

The following clauses will survive termination or expiry of this Lease: 1.3, 9, 7.1 and 10.1

10. Defined terms and interpretation

10.1 Definitions

The following definitions, together with those in Part A (Information Table), apply unless the context requires otherwise:

Approvals means all necessary consents, permits, approvals, licences and certificates from all relevant Authorities having jurisdiction over the Leased Area to lawfully:

- (a) conduct any works in or around the Leased Area; and
- (b) use and occupy the Leased Area for the Permitted Use.

Authority means any government, semi or local government, statutory or other authority, body or regulator.

Base Rent means the rent specified in Item 10, as varied under this Lease.

Bureau means the party or parties named in Item 2 and, unless a contrary intention appears, includes the Bureau's Invitees.

Bureau's Invitee means any employees, agents, suppliers, invitees (whilst on the Leased Area), contractors, licensees or any other person claiming through or under the Bureau.

Bureau's Property means anything installed or placed in or on the Leased Area by or for the Bureau and includes the Bureau's equipment (including, but not limited to, the Weather Observation Equipment), fixtures, fittings, signage and other property as determined by the Bureau in its absolute discretion from time to time.

Commencement Date means the date specified in Item 7.

Commonwealth Company has the meaning given to it in the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cth).

Corporate Commonwealth Entity has the meaning given to it in the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cth).

Contaminant means any toxic or hazardous substance (including asbestos), gas, liquid, or material, any waste or discharge or any pollutant.

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Expiry Date means the date set out in Item 8.

Fixed Increase Date means a date specified in Item 11.

Fixed Increase Rate means a percentage specified in Item 11.

Further Term means the relevant further term specified in Item 9.

GST means the same as in the GST Law.

GST Law means the same as 'GST law' means in *A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999* (Cth).

Land means the land in Item 4.

Law means the common law, a statute, regulation, rule, by-law, ordinance, proclamation, enactment, statutory instrument or delegated or subordinated legislation (whether federal, state, municipal or of any Authority), codes (including any code of practice approved under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth), the *National Code of Practice for the Construction Industry* and the *Australian Government Building and Construction OHS Accreditation Scheme*, and the *National Construction Code*) and any requirement, notice, order or direction of a competent Authority.

Leased Area means that part of the Land described in Item 3.

Lessor means the person entitled to the reversion under this Lease, which at the Commencement Date is the party or parties named in Item 1. A reference to the Lessor includes any agents and employees of the Lessor.

Mining Tenement means a claim, lease, licence, permit or other authority granted under mining legislation.

Non-corporate Commonwealth Entity has the meaning given to it in the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cth).

Optional Termination Date means the date specified in Item 12.

Optional Termination Notice Period means the period of time specified in Item 12.

Permitted Use means the use of the Leased Area in Item 5.

Services means all plant, equipment, pipes, services and apparatus (including air-conditioning plant, fire detection, prevention and protection equipment, wires, cables, conduits, other electronic communication equipment, gas and electrical fittings, toilets, sewerage, plumbing, grease traps and wash basins) at or below the Land.

State means the state or territory in which the Leased Area is situated.

Term means the period of time from the Commencement Date to the Expiry Date or any earlier date on which this Lease is determined and includes any period of holding over.

Utility means the whole or any part of the Bureau's requirements for electricity, gas, water, telecommunications or any other services consumed in the Leased Area.

Weather Observation Equipment means the equipment identified in Item 6 and ancillary equipment installed and/or operated by the Bureau in the Leased Area, as altered, upgraded and/or added to in the Bureau's absolute discretion from time to time.

Works means any works commissioned, carried out or caused to be carried out by or on behalf of the Bureau or any person claiming under or through the Bureau including any works in connection with the Permitted Use, in or around the Leased Area.

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10.2 Interpretation

In this Lease, unless a contrary intention appears:

- (a) an agreement, representation, covenant or warranty in favour of two or more persons is in favour of them jointly and severally;
- (b) an agreement, representation, covenant or warranty made by two or more persons binds them jointly and severally;
- (c) words importing the singular include the plural and vice versa;
- (d) the word person includes corporations, firms, unincorporated associations, bodies corporate, authorities and agencies;
- (e) a reference to a person includes a reference to the person's executors, administrators, successors, substitutes and permitted assigns and includes the employees, contractors and agents of that person;
- (f) a reference to a statute, ordinance, code or other law includes regulations and other instruments under it and consolidations, amendments, re-enactments or replacements of any of them occurring at any time;
- (g) a reference to a Lease includes any variation or replacement of it;
- (h) headings are inserted for convenience and do not affect the interpretation of this Lease;
- (i) a reference to the whole of a thing includes a reference to a part of that thing;
- (j) including (in any form) or such as when introducing a list of items or giving an example does not limit the meaning of the word to which the list relates to those items or to items of a similar kind; and
- (k) without limiting any other rights of the Bureau, all licence rights in favour of the Bureau in respect of or in connection with the Land run with the Bureau's leasehold interest and bind all successors, executors, transferees, assigns and other persons having an interest in the Land or any part of it from time to time.

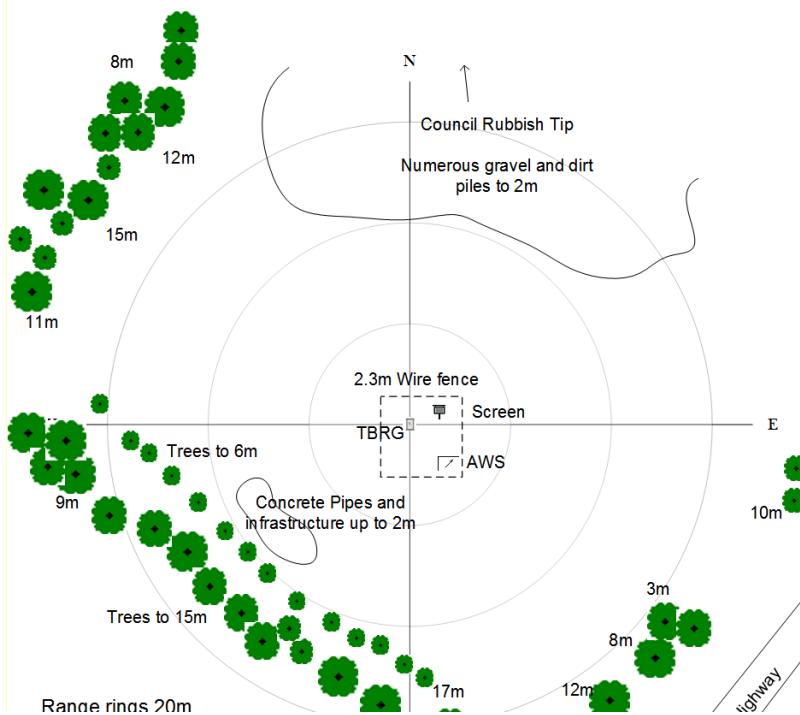
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SCHEDULE 1

PLAN OF THE LEASED AREA



Station: Charlton
Site No: 80128
Date: 11.2.2021



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SCHEDULE 2

CLEARANCE ZONES REQUIRED FOR THE BUREAU'S PROPERTY

1. **Automatic Weather Station:** If an object is to be placed adjacent to an automatic weather station, then it must be at a distance which is thirty (30) times the height of the object.

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Signing page

Executed as a deed on the _____ day of _____ 2025

EXECUTION BY THE BUREAU

Executed for and on behalf of the
Commonwealth of Australia by a duly
authorised officer in the presence of:

)
Signature of Authorised Officer

.....
Witness signature

.....
Name of Authorised Officer (print)

Position Number:

Position Name:

Bureau of Meteorology

.....
Witness name

Date:

EXECUTION BY THE LESSOR

Signed for and on behalf of **BULOKE SHIRE
COUNCIL ABN 89 293 793 980** by its
authorised delegate in the presence of:

)
Signature of Delegate

.....
Signature of Witness

.....
Name of Delegate (print)

.....
Name of Witness (print)

.....
Office Held:

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8.1.3 COMMUNITY GRANTS AND SPONSORSHIPS

Author's Title: Coordinator Community Development & Facilities

Directorate: Community Development

File No: GS/09/42

Relevance to Council Plan 2025 - 2029

Strategic Objective: Vibrant and connected communities
Strengthen community activity and connections
Empower and support organisations to make a difference in their communities

PURPOSE

To present to Council the applications recommended for funding under the Community Grants Program.

SUMMARY

Council allocates funds in its Annual Budget to support community initiatives that align with Council priorities and the Community Vision as outlined in the Council Plan.

The purpose of the grant categories is as follows:

- **Community Grants** – to support the strengthening of the capacity and capability of local organisations, assist with the organisation and management of events, or support the purchase of small capital items.
- **Sustainability Grants** – to support projects that reduce the community's carbon footprint, improve environmental outcomes, or conserve resources.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Approves the officer recommendation to part fund the following projects under the Community Grants Program:
\$1,000 – Birchip Neighbourhood House Inc Project: Together for Christmas
\$500 - Lions Club of Charlton Inc Project: Charlton Community Xmas Fest
2. Notes that a report will be presented to Council at a future meeting on the future of the Community Grants Program.

DISCUSSION

Since the Ordinary Meeting of Council in November 2025, two applications have been assessed under the Community Grants Program.

The combined requested amount of the two applications totals \$2,980 however, there is currently only \$1,508 remaining in the Community Grants Annual Budget 2025–26.

In accordance with the Community Grants Program Guidelines, applications were assessed by a panel comprising three Council officers from across the Community Development Directorate. Based on

assessment against the selection criteria, the panel recommends that the following applications are part funded due to the available funds currently remaining in the Community Grants budget.

Both applicants have stated in their applications that their projects are able to proceed with partial funding.

Name of Organisation	Birchip Neighbourhood House Inc
Project Title	Together for Christmas
Grant Type	Project Support Grant - Up to \$2,000
Total Amount Requested	\$1,980
Funding Amount Recommended	\$1,000
Full project cost	\$9,806
Project Description	The Ecumenical Christmas Carol service and Community Meal
What will the project/ event achieve	The project will celebrate the true spirit of Christmas and reinforce Birchip's identity as a caring, inclusive and resilient community where everyone belongs
Assessment Panel Scoring:	$20 + 16 + 16 = 52$
Average Score:	17 out of 20

Name of Organisation	Lions Club of Charlton Inc
Project Title	Charlton Community Xmas Fest
Grant Type	Project Support Grant - Up to \$2,000
Total Amount Requested	\$1,000
Funding Amount Recommended	\$500
Full project cost	\$3,645
Project Description	The combined service clubs of Charlton are working together to put on a fun Christmas event for the Charlton community.
What will the project/ event achieve	The project plans to attract all members of the community, especially families with children, to participate in festive activities.
Assessment Panel Scoring:	$12 + 14 + 15 = 41$
Average Score:	14 out of 20

The partial funding amounts recommended have been developed to ensure fair and equitable distribution of the remaining funds available in the Community Grants Annual Budget 2025-26 across the two applications.

Council officers are currently working with one applicant to support their eligibility under the Sustainability Grants category. This application will be presented to a future Council meeting for consideration.

RELEVANT LAW

Not Applicable

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not Applicable

OPTIONS

Council has the option to fully fund the two applications received however, this option will result in an overspend of \$1,472 of the Community Grants Annual Budget 2025-26.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not Applicable

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Applicants were contacted by a Council officer if their application required additional information or clarification. The Community Grants Program is regularly promoted through the Council's website and social media channels, local radio and printed media.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Community Grants Program is consistently assessed to identify any opportunities for continuous improvement and to ensure it reflects the needs of the community.

With the Community Grants Annual Budget 2025-26 now exhausted, an opportunity is available to review the Community Grants Program to identify improvements to the program, introduce best practice and reflect on the recommendations of the Municipal Monitors Report.

A report will be presented to Council at a future meeting on the future of the Community Grants Program.

COLLABORATION

Not Applicable

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The allocation of funds for the applications recommended for funding will come under the adopted Community Grants Program (\$20,000) and the Community Sustainability Grants (\$50,000) in Council's Annual Budget 2025-26.

The remaining Community Grants budget is currently \$1,508.00. The remaining Sustainability Grants budget is currently \$29,829.60.

If the recommendation is approved, there will be no further funds available to support future applications received for the Community Grants Program this financial year however funds are still available under the Sustainability Grants category.

As per the Community Grants Guidelines, *no further grants are to be issued once the pool is exhausted*.

To mitigate the potential impact on the community, the Community Grants Program was put on hold on 4 December 2025 until further notice. This has been communicated via Council's social media and Community Update.

Previous grants awarded for the 2025-26 financial year (by township) include:

Grant Amount	Community Group and Project Name	Type of Grant
Birchip – 2 Projects – Allocated Funds - \$2,969		
\$2,000	Birchip Playgroup Project: Strong Start Active Play for Birchip's Future	Project Support

\$969	Birchip Neighbourhood House Incorporated Wiggle & Giggle	Project Support
Charlton – 8 Projects – Allocated Funds - \$9,673		
\$2,000	Charlton Netball Club Inc. Charlton Netball Club: 1953-2025 A full colour Historical Publication	Project Support
\$1,000	Mallee Creatives (Auspice by Charlton Neighbourhood House) Project: Charlton Weekend Coffee Stop – Volunteer Training & Equipment Initiative	Small Capital Equipment
\$1,000	Charlton Neighbourhood House Project: Pickleball for all: Serving Community Connection Across the Court	Small Capital Equipment
\$1,273	Charlton Agricultural & Pastoral Society Inc Project: Level up! - Gaming Events	Project Support
\$1,000	Charlton College Mental Health Awareness Month	Project Support
\$2,000	Charlton Bowling Club Inc Sun Smart Shades/Rollout Tarps	Project Support
\$1,000	Wheels on A79 (Auspiced by Charlton Neighbourhood House Inc) Project: Wheels on A79 Show & Shine	Project Support
\$400	Charlton Golden Grains Museum Project: Victorian Collections Training	Organisation Support
Donald – 6 Projects – Allocated Funds - \$15,670		
\$2,000	Donald Learning Group Incorporated Celebrating the Donald Cultural Connection	Project Support
\$500	Donald Pastoral & Agricultural Society Inc Project: 2025 Donald Show	Sponsorship
\$2,000	Granite Community Church/ Donald Youth Group Project: Storage cupboard used for Youth Group	Project Support
\$1,000	Donald Pastoral & Agricultural Society Inc. Project: Donald Show Photo Board Project	Small Capital Equipment
\$8,001	Donald Lawn Tennis Club Returning Service	Sustainability
\$2,169	Donald Men's Shed Project: Beating the Blues	Sustainability
Wycheproof – 2 Projects – Allocated Funds - \$10,350		
\$350	Combined Probus Club of Wycheproof Inc. Project: Probus Wycheproof Christmas Lunch	Project Support
\$10,000	Calder United Football Netball Hockey Club Project: Make King of the Mount Sustainable	Sustainability

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not Applicable

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Buloke Shire Council Plan 2025-2029

- Community Grant Guidelines 2025
- Community Engagement Policy
- Community Support Policy

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

To promote transparency, Council will consider the recommendation in an open meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

Attachments: Nil

8.1.4 PLANNING PERMIT APPLICATION PA25012 – CONSTRUCT TWO SHEDS ASSOCIATED WITH A SECTION 2 USE (PIG FARM) AND INCREASE IN PIG NUMBER TO 3534 – 376 MILLS ROAD, WHIRILY

Author's Title: Planning Officer

Directorate: Community Development

File No: LP/09/01

Relevance to Council Plan 2025 - 2029

Strategic Objective: Built and natural environment
Caring for our environment

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the Planning Permit Application PA25012 to Council to approve the issue of a Notice of Decision to Grant a Permit.

SUMMARY

A planning permit application was received by Council on the 3 April, 2025 for the construction of two sheds associated with a Section 2 use (Pig farm) and an increase in the pig farm capacity.

The address for the application is 376 Mills Road, Whirily (Lot 2 PS605747).

The application is to expand the capacity of the piggery from 1318 pigs to 3534 pigs (3,588 Standard Pig Units (SPU)).

Two pig sheds are proposed with one shed being 24m x 28.5m, and the other being 23.3m x 28.5m. The proposed sheds are to be located close to the existing sheds and other infrastructure used in the existing pig farm.

One objection to the application has been received.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council having caused notice of Planning Application No. PA25012 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* issues a Notice of Decision to Grant a Permit under the provisions of 35.07-1 and 35.07-4 of the Buloke Planning Scheme in respect of the land known and described as 376 Mills Road, Whirily (Lot 2 PS605747), for the construction of two sheds associated with a Section 2 use (pig farm) and increase in numbers from 1318 to 3534 pigs in accordance with the endorsed plans, with the application dated 3 April 2025, subject to the following conditions:

Endorsed Plans

1. The use and development as shown on the endorsed plans must not be altered without the written consent of the responsible authority.
2. The permitted maximum capacity of the Pig farm is for 3,588 Standard Pig Units (SPU).
3. The use and development allowed by the permit must be undertaken in accordance with the:

- i. Symbanks Pig Farm - Environmental Management Plan (Job No: 235) – Version 3, by Robyn Tucker of Livestock Environmental and Planning (LEAP), dated 8 November 2025
- ii. National Environmental Guidelines for Indoor Piggeries (NEGIP; Australian Pork Limited, 2025).
4. The use and development must be managed so that the amenity of the area is not detrimentally affected, through the:
 - i. Transport of materials, goods or commodities to or from the land
 - ii. Appearance of any building, works or materials
 - iii. Emission of noise, artificial light, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, vapour, steam, soot, ash, dust, waste water, waste products, grit or oil to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.
5. The use and development of the land must not interfere with surrounding existing uses, including agriculture.
6. External lighting must be designed, baffled and located so as to prevent any adverse effect on adjoining land to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.
7. The appearance of the subject land, in the opinion of the responsible authority must not adversely affect the amenity of the local area.
8. The operator under this permit must control vermin and pests, including mosquitoes, to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

Access

9. Suitable access must be provided for emergency vehicles both into and around the development. Roads must be constructed to a standard so that they are accessible in all weather conditions and capable of accommodating a vehicle of 15 tonnes for the trafficable road. The trafficable road width must be a minimum of 6 metres.
10. Before occupation of the development starts, the area(s) set aside for the parking of vehicles and access lanes as shown on the endorsed plans must be:
 - i. constructed
 - ii. properly formed to such levels that they can be used in accordance with the plans
 - iii. surfaced with an all-weather-access material to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

Drainage

11. All stormwater runoff from the proposed development hereby permitted must be disposed of onsite to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.
12. No polluted and/or sediment laden run-off is to be discharged directly or indirectly into the responsible authority's drains or watercourses.
13. All works must be undertaken in a manner that minimises soil erosion, and any exposed areas of soil must be stabilised to prevent soil erosion, to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

Maintenance

14. All buildings and works must be maintained in good order and appearance to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

Referral Authority Conditions – Powercor

15. The applicant shall ensure that existing and proposed buildings and electrical installations on the subject land are compliant with the Victorian Service and Installation Rules (VSIR).
Notes: Where electrical works are required to achieve VSIR compliance, a registered electrical contractor must be engaged to undertake such works.

16. Any buildings must comply with the clearances required by the Electricity Safety (Installations) Regulations.
17. Any construction work must comply with the Energy Safe Victoria's "No Go Zone" rules.
Notes: To apply for a permit to work go to our website: <https://customer.portal.powercor.com.au/mysupply/CIAWQuickCalculator> and apply online through the No Go Zone Assessment.
18. The property owner/builder should contact Dial before you Dig, before any excavation works are undertaken on the property.

Commencement of Permit

19. This permit will operate from the issued date of this permit.

Permit Expiry

This permit as it relates to use and development will expire if one of the following circumstances applies:

- a. The development is not started within 2 years of the issued date of this permit.
- b. The development is not completed within 4 years of the issued date of this permit.
- c. The use does not start within 2 years of completion of the development.

In accordance with Section 69 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, an application may be submitted to the Responsible Authority for an extension of the periods referred to in this condition.

Permit Notes

It is your responsibility to ensure all other authorisations are obtained prior to any works commencing. This may include Building, Engineering and Local Laws Permits. You are also required to abide by any State and Federal Legislation in relation to your approved proposal.

DISCUSSION

The pig farm, located at 376 Mills Road, Whirily (Lot 2 PS605747), currently consists of a combination of conventional sheds and deep litter shelters.

- Conventional housing accommodates pigs within steel-framed sheds with walls that are half solid and half nylon curtain, iron roofing and slatted flooring over concreted under-floor pits fitted with pull plugs. The conventional sheds produce liquid effluent that is captured in a holding pond that is pumped out monthly.
- Deep litter housing accommodates pigs in simple sheds or shelters. The floor of the shelters is concreted, and straw bedding is placed over the base to absorb manure and spilt feed and water. These sheds produce spent bedding but no liquid effluent.

The application is to increase the current herd size to 3,534 pigs.

This requires the construction of the two new conventional sheds. In future, all breeding stock and suckers will be kept in conventional housing and all weaned progeny will be kept in deep litter housing.

In the conventional housing effluent is stored within the under-floor pits and released every two to four weeks. The discharged effluent is directed into a small pond at the southern end of the piggery where it is temporarily stored until it can be irrigated. This pond is not intended to provide treatment or long-term storage; its purpose is just to hold the effluent until it can be pumped onto land. To ensure there is sufficient capacity to store effluent in wet periods, it is proposed to widen the pond on the northern side so the pond has an average width of 8.5 m.

The applicant proposes to use the nutrients in the effluent to produce grain, pulses and straw that can be used within the piggery.

Subject site & locality

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

The site has a total area of 62.89 hectares and currently contains:

- Pig farm shedding and associated infrastructure.
- Sheds, silos and other farm infrastructure associated with broadacre farming and grazing.
- Two dwellings occupied by the farming families. (one of the dwellings is on a separate allotment)
- Some existing native vegetation
- Remainder of allotment is used for broadacre farming

The main site/locality characteristics are:

- The surrounding land is farming and grazing land, generally consisting of large agricultural allotments.
- The nearest dwelling in separate ownership is located approximately 2km to the north of the subject land.
- The property is located 16km to the north east of Birchip, and 11.5km south west of Nullawil.

Permit/Site History

The history of the site includes:

- PPA803/19 - Construction of Dry Sow Accommodation and associated works
- PPA693/17 – Farrowing shed
- Various building permits

Assessment

The land is zoned Farming Zone (FZ). The purpose of the Farming Zone is to:

- implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.
- provide for the use of land for agriculture.
- encourage the retention of productive agricultural land.
- ensure that non-agricultural uses, including dwellings, do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture.
- encourage the retention of employment and population to support rural communities.
- encourage use and development of land based on comprehensive and sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision.
- provide for the use and development of land for the specific purposes identified in a schedule to this zone.

A planning permit is required to change the use (increase numbers) and for building and works associated with a Section 2 use.

Decision Guidelines – Farming Zone	Comments
The Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.	<i>These have been considered, please refer to details below.</i>
Any Regional Catchment Strategy and associated plan applying to the land.	<i>n/a</i>
The capability of the land to accommodate the proposed use or development, including the disposal of effluent.	<i>The property is a large (62ha) agricultural allotment. The development footprint is relatively small, and</i>

	<p><i>stormwater is able to be disposed of within the allotment.</i></p> <p><i>The effluent from the pig farm is caught in an effluent pond and then spread on the families cropping paddocks providing nutrients.</i></p> <p><i>The bedding from the deep litter housing is stockpiled prior to being spread on the cropping paddocks.</i></p> <p><i>Further details on this can be found in the Environmental Management Plan.</i></p>
<p>How the use or development relates to sustainable land management.</p>	<p><i>The combined grain and piggery operation represent sustainable land management as the piggery operation provides nutrients to the grain paddocks, and grain produced by the cropping operation is fed to the pigs.</i></p>
<p>Whether the site is suitable for the use or development and whether the proposal is compatible with adjoining and nearby land uses.</p>	<p><i>The site is suitable. The piggery is operating on the site in a satisfactory way. The use is compatible with adjoining and nearby land uses</i></p>
<p>How the use and development makes use of existing infrastructure and services.</p>	<p><i>The existing piggery is connected to infrastructure and services.</i></p>
<p>Whether the use or development will support and enhance agricultural production.</p>	<p><i>The increase in the capacity of the piggery will increase agricultural production. The increase level of effluent and spent bedding available to spread on cropping land may increase grain production.</i></p>
<p>Whether the use or development will adversely affect soil quality or permanently remove land from agricultural production.</p>	<p><i>The use will be managed so that soil quality will not be adversely affected. Land housing the development will not be available for soil-based agriculture, but no land will be removed from agricultural production. Land not being developed for the pig farm will continue to be used for agricultural production.</i></p>
<p>The potential for the use or development to limit the operation and expansion of adjoining and nearby agricultural uses.</p>	<p><i>The proposed expansion to the pig farm will not affect surrounding and nearby agricultural uses</i></p>
<p>The capacity of the site to sustain the agricultural use.</p>	<p><i>The site has the capacity to sustain the use.</i></p>
<p>The agricultural qualities of the land, such as soil quality, access to water and access to rural infrastructure.</p>	<p><i>The subject land consists of high-quality farming soil and has good access to water and infrastructure.</i></p>

The impact of the use or development on the flora and fauna on the site and its surrounds.	<i>The use and development will have minimal impact on flora and fauna on the site. The site currently contains the existing piggery and farming land.</i>
The need to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the area, including the retention of vegetation and faunal habitat and the need to revegetate land including riparian buffers along waterways, gullies, ridgelines, property boundaries and saline discharge and recharge area.	<i>No native vegetation is proposed to be removed.</i>
The location of on-site effluent disposal areas to minimise the impact of nutrient loads on waterways and native vegetation.	<i>On site effluent disposal areas will not impact on waterways or native vegetation. Effluent is spread on cropping paddocks and nutrients are taken up by the crops. Spent bedding is also broadcast, only being stored on the hardstand until conditions are suitable for broadcast onto cropping land.</i>
The need to locate buildings in one area to avoid any adverse impacts on surrounding agricultural uses and to minimise the loss of productive agricultural land.	<i>The proposed buildings are to be located in close proximity to the existing piggery buildings. The buildings are to be operated in conjunction with the existing piggery. No cropping land will be lost as a result of this piggery expansion.</i>
The impact of the siting, design, height, bulk, colours and materials to be used, on the natural environment, major roads, vistas and water features and the measures to be undertaken to minimise any adverse impacts.	<i>The development will not impact on any important vistas and will not impact on typical tourist or visitor routes. The piggery has been in existence for a number of years and it is considered that the addition of two further sheds will not significantly alter the visual impact of the piggery.</i>
The impact on the character and appearance of the area or features of architectural, historic or scientific significance or of natural scenic beauty or importance.	<i>The development will not impact on features of architectural, historic or scientific significance or of natural scenic beauty or importance. The piggery is an intensive agricultural land use, but not uncommon in the municipal district. It is considered that the local character will not be significantly impacted.</i>
The location and design of existing and proposed infrastructure including roads, gas, water, drainage, telecommunications and sewerage facilities.	<i>Services necessary to the development are available at the site and are being utilised in the existing piggery.</i>
Whether the use and development will require traffic management measures.	<i>No specific traffic management measures are required.</i>

Policy

Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS)

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

02.03 Strategic directions**02.03-4 Natural resource management**

Council's strategic directions for natural resource management are:

- Sustainably managing natural resources and agricultural land.
- Protecting valuable agricultural land from inappropriate development.
- Encouraging sustainable farming practices.
- Supporting, promoting and facilitating sustainable, diverse and viable agriculture to provide for long-term economic, social and environmental health.

02.03-6 Economic development

Council's strategic directions for economic development include:

- Encouraging and managing sustainable agriculture as the economic foundation of the municipality.

Planning Policy Framework (PPF)

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

13 Environmental Risks and Amenity**13.06-1S Air quality management**

Strategies include ensuring 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.

14 Natural Resource Management**14.01-1L-01 Protection of agricultural land**

Strategies include:

- Discourage the fragmentation of agricultural land.
- Discourage use and development in the Farming Zone that:
 - Alienates agricultural resources.
 - Is sensitive to off-site effects from agriculture such as sprays and odour.
 - Lessens the capacity of essential infrastructure.
 - Prejudices agricultural resources and agricultural production.
- Provide buffers on the subject site for proposals that are potentially sensitive to normal activities in agricultural areas.
- Locate buildings or works so as to avoid or minimise loss of good quality agricultural land.

14.01-2S Sustainable agricultural land use

Strategies include:

- Ensure agricultural and productive rural land use activities are managed to maintain the long-term sustainable use and management of existing natural resources.
- Facilitate ongoing productivity and investment in high value agriculture.
- Facilitate the establishment and expansion of cattle feedlots, pig farms, poultry farms and other intensive animal industries in a manner consistent with orderly and proper planning and protection of the environment.

14.01-2R Agricultural Productivity – Loddon Mallee North

Strategies include:

- Support emerging agribusinesses and location clusters, including intensive animal industries.

14.01-2L Sustainable agriculture and rural industry

Strategies include:

- Encourage and support innovative agricultural opportunities arising from the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline water supply.
- Encourage and support innovative agriculture, agricultural diversification and sustainable farming practices, especially where they respond or adapt to the effects of climate change.

15 Built Environment and Heritage

15.01-6S Design for rural areas

Strategies are:

- Ensure that the siting, scale and appearance of development protects and enhances rural character.
- Protect the visual amenity of valued rural landscapes and character areas along township approaches and sensitive tourist routes by ensuring new development is sympathetically located.
- Site and design development to minimise visual impacts on surrounding natural scenery and landscape features including ridgelines, hill tops, waterways, lakes and wetlands.

17 Economic development

17.01-1S Diversified economy

Strategies include:

- Facilitate growth in a range of employment sectors, including health, education, retail, tourism, knowledge industries and professional and technical services based on the emerging and existing strengths of each region.
- Improve access to jobs closer to where people live.
- Support rural economies to grow and diversify.

17.01-1R Diversified economy – Loddon Mallee North

Strategies include:

- Support further diversification of the primary production, service, manufacturing and tourism industries.

The proposed use and development is consistent with the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.

Relevant Particular Provisions

Clause 53.16 Pig Farm

Decision Guidelines - Clause 53.16	Comments
The purpose of the relevant zone.	<i>The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the zone.</i>
The design, height, setback and appearance of the proposed buildings and works.	<i>The design, height, setback and appearance of the proposed buildings are appropriate. The proposed sheds are typical of sheds found in the Farming Zone in the Municipality.</i>
The proposed landscaping.	<i>No landscaping is proposed as part of this application. Trees have been established around the</i>

	<i>farm sheds and the piggery building as part of previous tree planting programs</i>
The need to protect amenity of existing uses on adjoining land.	<i>The expansion of the piggery will not have a significant impact on the amenity of the area. The nearest dwelling in separate ownership is located approximately 2km to the north of the subject land.</i>
The impact of the use of the land on the surrounding area, including from the emission of noise, light, vibration, odour, dust, or waste products.	<i>The expansion of the piggery will not significantly alter the impact on the surrounding area from the emission of noise, light, vibration, odour, dust, or waste products.</i>
The impact of the proposal on any wetlands, waterways or water bodies.	<i>The expansion of the piggery will not have an impact on any wetlands, waterways or water bodies.</i>
The likely environmental impact on the natural physical features and biodiversity of the land, including consideration of any Nutrient Management Plan submitted with the application.	<i>No nutrient management plan has been submitted with the application. The operators have some 5,000 acres (~2,023 ha) of cropping land at the piggery site or nearby. This area is adequate to dispose of effluent produced by the piggery. The relevant information regarding the balance of nutrients applied and nutrients used by the cropping program is provided at 7.4.2 and 7.4.5 of the Environmental Management Plan.</i>
Whether the development will support and enhance agricultural production.	<i>The proposal will increase agricultural production. The piggery output will increase crop yields as it will benefit from the extra nutrients and organic matter available to be applied to the cropping land.</i>
The requirements of the Victorian Low Density Mobile Outdoor Pig Farm Planning Permit Guidelines (June 2018).	<i>The piggery is not a low-density outdoor pig farm.</i>

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.	<i>The subject land is not likely to be contaminated and is not highlighted on the EPA Register.</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 increase in capacity of the land use and the development are consistent with the purpose of the zone.</i>
Any matter required to be considered in the zone, overlay or other provision.	<i>The decision guidelines have been considered in this report.</i>
The orderly planning of the area.	<i>The proposal represents orderly planning.</i>
The effect on the environment, human health and amenity of the area.	<i>The development will not have a significant effect on the environment, human health and amenity of the area. An objection has been received to the application raising a human health issue in relation to Japanese</i>

	<i>Encephalitis Virus (JEV). Planning officers are satisfied that the proposed increase in piggery capacity will not increase the risk of Japanese Encephalitis risk to human health. There is an operating piggery currently on site. The existing piggery will continue to operate no matter the outcome of this application. The increase in capacity of the pig farm will not introduce any change in management practices that will increase the risk of JEV to human health in the area.</i>
The proximity of the land to any public land.	<i>There is a public reserve to the north of the subject land and a reserve running north-south along the western border of the allotment. The reserve contained the Morton Plains -Kaneira channel at the time the earthen channel system was used. The proposal will have no effect on the public land.</i>

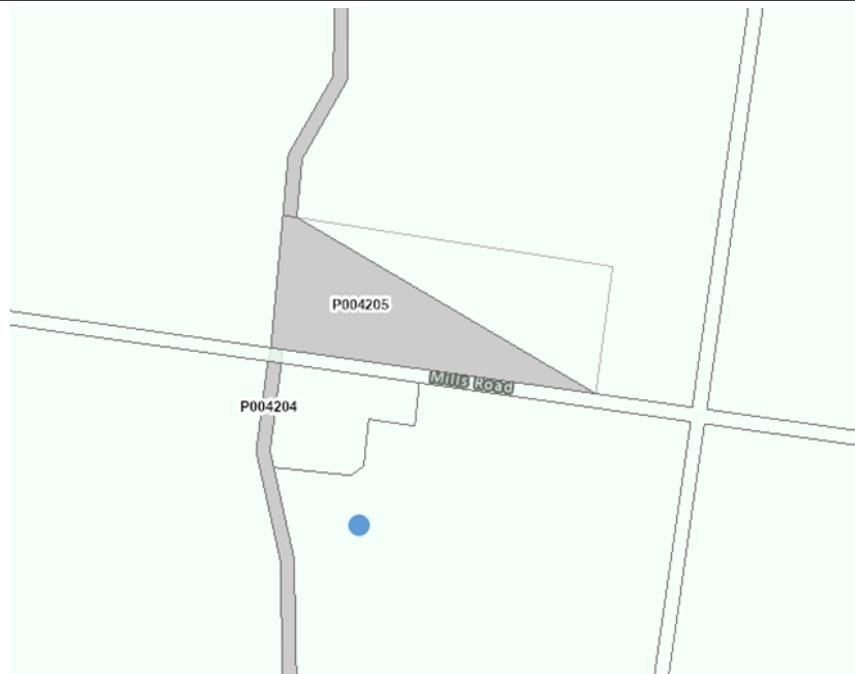


Image sourced from VicPlan interactive mapping showing public land (blue dot approx. piggery location)

Factors likely to cause or contribute to land degradation, salinity or reduce water quality.	<i>The proposal will not cause or contribute to land degradation, salinity or reduce water quality. Effluent and spent bedding are utilised on the cropping lands and will not contribute to land degradation.</i>
Whether the proposed development is designed to maintain or improve the quality of stormwater within and exiting the site.	<i>Stormwater will not exit the allotment boundary. Stormwater from the proposed shedding will not be of poor quality.</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 risk of flood, erosion or fire hazard will not be significantly increased. No new management practices are being introduced that will increase risk. The building regulations may require fire safety measures.</i>
The adequacy of loading and unloading facilities and any associated amenity, traffic flow and road safety impacts.	<i>There is adequate loading and unloading facilities. There will be increased traffic movements associated with the expansion of the piggery. The piggery is located in an area of low traffic, and it is not considered that there will be a significant impact on amenity, traffic flow or road safety.</i>
The impact the use or development will have on the current and future development and operation of the transport system.	<i>The use and development will not have a major impact on the current and future development of the transport system.</i>

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

Not Applicable

Relevant incorporated or reference documents

Not Applicable

Relevant Planning Scheme amendments

Not Applicable

Summary of Key Issues

The expansion of the piggery is consistent with the purpose of the zone and with policy in the Buloke Planning Scheme. The piggery takes advantage of existing services and is appropriately setback from adjoining land uses.

An objection to the application has been received in relation to Japanese Encephalitis Virus (JEV) risk. The ongoing operation of the existing piggery is not under consideration as part of this application. The increase in capacity of the piggery and the construction of two further piggery buildings does not introduce any change to management practices, or changes in environmental conditions that would significantly alter the JEV risk to human health.

RELEVANT LAW

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

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not Applicable

OPTIONS

Council has the option to issue a Notice of Refusal.

Alternative motion:

That Council having caused notice of Planning Application No. PA25012 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 refuses to Grant a Permit under the provisions of 35.07-1 and 35.07-4 of the Buloke Planning Scheme in respect of the land known and described as 376 Mills Road, Whirily (Lot 2 PS605747), for the construction of two sheds associated with a Section 2 use (pig farm) and

increase in numbers from 1318 to 3534 pigs in accordance with the endorsed plans, with the application dated 3 April 2025.

For the following reasons: (Council to supply the grounds on which the application was refused)

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not Applicable

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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

- Sending one notice to the owners and occupiers of adjoining land.
- Notice in the locally circulating newspapers

The notification has been carried out correctly.

Council has received one objection to date. The key issues that were raised in the objections are:

- increasing the risk of Japanese Encephalitis Virus on the community and the animals themselves

Consultation

- The applicant was provided with the objection and an opportunity to respond to the objection.
- The applicant provided a response, and the response was forwarded to the objector, along with a form to withdraw their objection.
- The objector has indicated that the objection will stand.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not Applicable

COLLABORATION

External Referrals/Notices Required by the Planning Scheme:

Referrals/Notice	Advice/Response/Conditions
Section 55 Referrals	Powercor – no objection subject to conditions
Section 52 notices	Agriculture Victoria – no objection – recommends conditions

Internal Council Referrals	Advice/Response/Conditions
Assets and Infrastructure	No objection
Municipal Building Surveyor	No objection – building permit required – comments provided

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

There are no significant budgetary implications or considerations in the approval to issue a Notice of Decision to Grant a Permit.

There, however, may be costs associated with a VCAT appeal if that process occurs.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Municipal Planning Strategy
- Planning Policy Framework

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision
- Council Plan 2025-2029

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 the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest in the subject matter of this report.

Attachments:

1. Attachment 8.1.4.1 - 287 Whirily Piggery EMP 3 Redacted
2. Attachment 8.1.4.2 - Nathan Kemp Site Plan Rev 1
3. Attachment 8.1.4.3 - P A 25012 - Whirily pig farm expansion - Applicant response to objector
4. Attachment 8.1.4.4 - P A 25012 objection received 08.11.25



Livestock Environmental and Planning

Symbanks Pig Farm



Environmental Management Plan

Private Bag 260 (110 Natimuk Road) Horsham Vic 3401
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Kemp family, Whirily

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Version 1 Draft

Version 2 Final

Version 3 Revised

Version 4 Final revised

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1 Introduction

The Kemp family has been operating a piggery at 376 Mills Road, Whirily (Lot 2 PS605747, Shire of Buloke) for many years. There are plans to expand the capacity of the piggery. To enable the ongoing sustainable management of the farm, this Environmental Management Plan (EMP) provides:

- contact details
- environmental policy
- site description
- environmental management strategies and measures
- risk assessment
- monitoring system
- contingency plans to respond to environmental emergency situations
- procedures to respond to complaints and incidents
- record keeping
- plan for regular review and updating of EMP



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2 Contact Details

The contact details for this EMP are:

Name: Mr Nathan Kemp

Address: Symbanks
376 Mills Road
WHIRILLY VIC 3483

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]



Kemp family, Whirily

3 Environmental Policy

The Kemp family has operated a piggery at Whirily for many years. The family aims to produce pigs in a sustainable way and looks for opportunities to beneficially reuse the pig effluent and spent bedding as part of an integrated farming system. The Kemps recognise that they have a duty of care to the environment and must play their part in ensuring that future generations experience a clean and improved environment. To that end, the family is committed to ensuring all aspects of its business operate in an environmentally sustainable way.

In particular, the Kemp family is committed to managing the reuse of its effluent and spent bedding in a way that optimises the use of the nutrients, water and organic matter in the effluent to produce crops, while protecting all aspects of the environment and amenity both on-farm and off-farm. A robust environmental monitoring program will assist with management and identify emerging environmental risks and impacts. Where practical, risks will be eliminated but otherwise they will be minimised through suitable preventative and corrective actions. Opportunities for ongoing environmental improvement will be identified and implemented in a timely manner.

The Kemp family commits to ensuring appropriate organisational skills, funding and resources are dedicated to the implementation and ongoing operation of this EMP.

Signed

Nathan Kemp
Symbanks piggery



Kemp family, Whirily

4 Environmental Objectives and Outcomes

The environmental objectives of this EMP are:

- to describe the site, the piggery operations and the reuse of effluent and spent bedding.
- to identify and describe the environmental impacts and risks associated with the operation of the piggery and reuse activities.
- to provide for the mitigation of actual or potential environmental risks through suitable preventative and / or corrective environmental controls.
- to specify a monitoring regime that allows for the detection, documentation and mitigation of actual and potential environmental risks.
- to identify emergency situations that could pose a risk to the environment and specify contingency plans for these.
- to promote the identification and implementation of ongoing environmental improvements.
- to provide for the regular review and updating of the EMP.



Kemp family, Whirily

5 Licences and Approvals

There are plans to increase the capacity of Symbanks pig farm. To that end, an application for planning approval has been lodged with the Buloke Shire Council.

Because the expanded piggery will house less than 5,001 pigs, no EPA Victoria permissions are required. Nevertheless, like all Victorians and Victorian companies, the general environmental duty applies. This means that the Kemps will operate the Symbanks piggery in a way that eliminates or reduces the risk of harm from their operations so far as reasonably practicable.



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6 Site Description

6.1 Location

The location of the site in relation to nearby towns is shown on Figure 1.

6.2 Farm Layout

Figure 2 shows an aerial photograph of the farm as currently laid out.

Figure 3 shows the proposed layout of the farm.

6.3 Zoning and Overlays

Figure 4 shows the property allotment details. The property is wholly within the Farming Zone. No planning overlays affect the property. There are no waterways or areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity. However, the property and all surrounding land is within a designated bushfire prone area.

There is a small area of Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) immediately to the north of the farm comprising of the Nullawill West Bushland Reserve.



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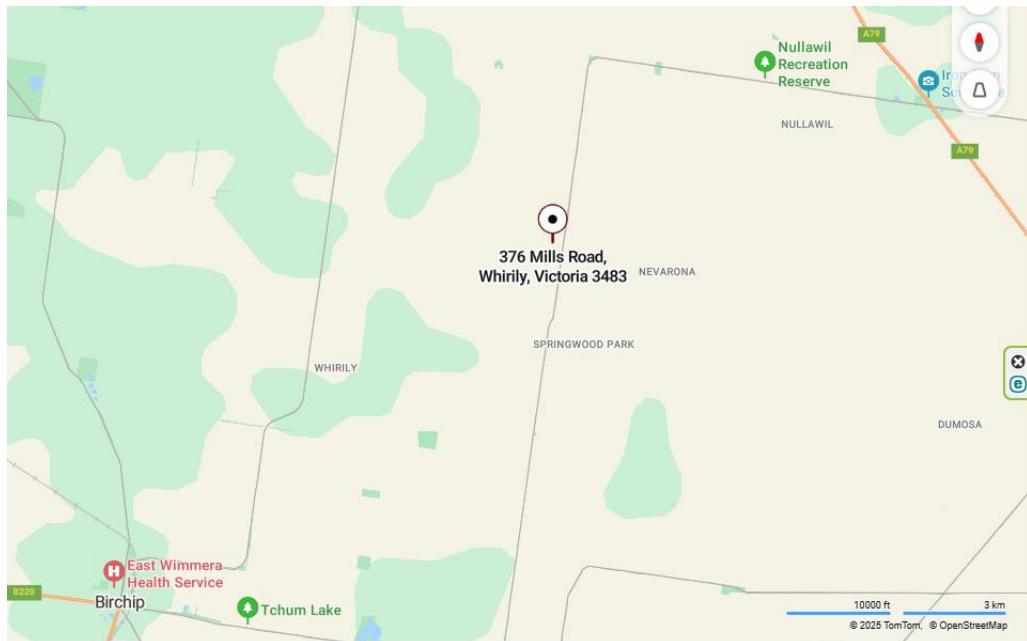


Figure 1: Farm location



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Figure 2: Aerial photo of farm



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Figure 3: Proposed piggery layout



Kemp family, Whirily

PROPERTY DETAILS

Address: **376 MILLS ROAD WHIRILY 3483**
Lot and Plan Number: **Lot 2 PS605747**
Standard Parcel Identifier (SPI): **2\PS605747**
Local Government Area (Council): **BULOKE** www.buloke.vic.gov.au
Council Property Number: **386509004**
Planning Scheme: **Buloke** [Planning Scheme - Buloke](#)
Directory Reference: **Vicroads 19 B8**

UTILITIES

Rural Water Corporation: **Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water** Legislative Council: **NORTHERN VICTORIA**
Urban Water Corporation: **Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water** Legislative Assembly: **MILDURA**
Melbourne Water: **Outside drainage boundary**
Power Distributor: **POWERCOR**

OTHER

Registered Aboriginal Party: **Wamba Wemba Aboriginal Corporation**

[View location in VicPlan](#)

Planning Zones

FARMING ZONE (FZ)

[SCHEDULE TO THE FARMING ZONE \(FZ\)](#)

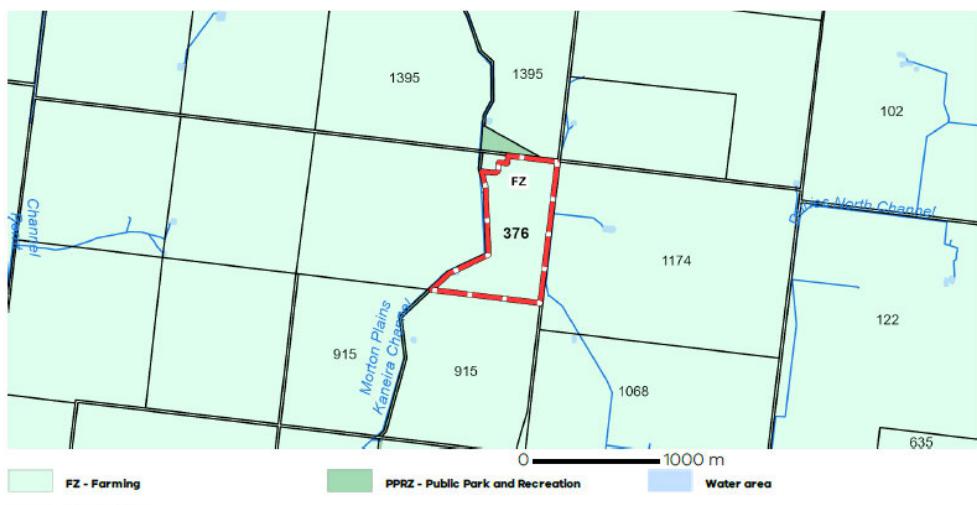


Figure 4: Property allotment details



6.4 Nearby Uses

The surrounding land is used primarily for broadacre farming. A lamb feeding facility operated by the proponents is located ~425 m to the east-south-east of the piggery. The closest house not belonging to the family is located ~2 km to the north of the site.



Figure 5: Surrounding land uses

6.5 Climate

Long-term monthly Climatic data for Birchip is summarised in Table 1. It shows that the annual rainfall is low (373 mm), with a winter predominance. Average monthly rainfall (38.1 mm) exceeds average monthly evaporation (36 mm) only in June. The 90th percentile rainfall exceeds average monthly evaporation from May to August.



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Table 1: Climate data for Birchip (Evaporation Data Longerenong)

Statistics	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual	Years
Temperature														
Mean maximum temperature (°C)	30.7	30.4	27.2	22.0	17.6	14.2	13.7	15.4	18.7	22.0	25.8	29.2	22.2	62 1911 1994
Mean minimum temperature (°C)	14.0	14.3	12.1	8.7	6.3	4.1	3.8	4.3	5.9	7.8	10.2	12.4	8.8	60 1911 1994
Rainfall														
Mean rainfall (mm)	20.5	24.7	22.9	25.2	38.5	38.1	38.1	38.5	39.2	38.2	26.5	23.6	373.8	96 1996 1995
Highest rainfall (mm)	123.0	202.9	146.1	101.0	112.6	111.0	118.6	99.3	111.8	179.2	116.2	163.9	729.2	96 1996 1995
Date	1974	1911	1956	1970	1956	1931	1936	1920	1960	1975	1924	1930	1973	
Lowest rainfall (mm)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	4.4	0.8	1.5	0.0	1.2	0.0	111.0	96 1996 1995
Date	1989	1991	1986	1949	1934	1975	1982	1944	1914	1914	1982	1925	1982	
Decile 1 rainfall (mm)	0.7	0.4	1.2	1.9	9.8	9.4	12.6	12.0	10.6	6.5	3.7	3.3	97	n/a
Decile 5 (median) rainfall (mm)	12.9	11.8	13.0	18.5	33.6	37.2	35.8	37.2	32.1	29.6	20.9	14.4	97	n/a
Decile 9 rainfall (mm)	48.7	52.5	56.4	54.9	75.1	71.8	61.2	63.8	80.2	78.2	57.2	54.5	97	n/a
Mean daily evaporation (mm)	8.4	7.9	5.7	3.5	1.9	1.2	1.3	1.8	2.8	4.2	5.9	7.8	4.4	32 1985 2001

Rainfall annual exceedance probability (AEP) data is provided in Table 2. The 1 in 20 year (5%) 24-hour storm yields 79.7 mm of rainfall.

Table 2: Rainfall AEP

Duration	Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP)						
	63.2%	50%#	20%*	10%	5%	2%	1%
1 min	1.44	1.69	2.56	3.23	3.96	5.05	5.98
2 min	2.42	2.83	4.32	5.51	6.84	8.90	10.7
3 min	3.28	3.84	5.84	7.43	9.19	11.9	14.2
4 min	4.02	4.71	7.16	9.08	11.2	14.4	17.1
5 min	4.67	5.48	8.30	10.5	12.9	16.5	19.6
10 min	6.99	8.21	12.4	15.7	19.2	24.3	28.8
15 min	8.50	9.98	15.1	19.1	23.4	29.7	35.1
20 min	9.61	11.3	17.1	21.6	26.5	33.8	40.0
25 min	10.5	12.3	18.7	23.7	29.0	37.0	43.9
30 min	11.2	13.2	20.0	25.3	31.1	39.7	47.1
45 min	12.9	15.2	23.0	29.1	35.7	45.7	54.3
1 hour	14.2	16.6	25.1	31.8	39.0	50.0	59.4
1.5 hour	16.1	18.8	28.3	35.7	43.7	55.7	66.0
2 hour	17.6	20.5	30.7	38.5	47.0	59.6	70.4
3 hour	20.0	23.2	34.3	42.7	51.7	64.9	76.0
4.5 hour	22.6	26.1	38.2	47.2	56.6	70.0	81.1
6 hour	24.6	28.4	41.2	50.5	60.1	73.6	84.6
9 hour	27.6	31.9	45.8	55.6	65.4	78.8	89.5
12 hour	29.9	34.5	49.2	59.3	69.4	82.8	93.3
18 hour	33.1	38.2	54.1	64.9	75.3	89.0	99.4
24 hour	35.2	40.7	57.6	68.9	79.7	93.9	105



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Figure 6 shows an annual 9 AM wind rose for Birchip. 3 PM wind direction data for Donald was also sourced. In the summer the wind is predominantly from the south in the mornings and the south / south-west / west in the afternoons. In the winter, the wind is predominantly from the north-west in the mornings and the north / north-west / west in the afternoons. Based on this data, the wind generally does not carry towards the closest house in the winter when fog might hinder odour dispersion.

Rose of Wind direction versus Wind speed in km/h (02 Jan 1965 to 31 Jan 1984)

Custom times selected, refer to attached note for details

BIRCHIP POST OFFICE

Site No: 077007 • Opened Nov 1888 • Closed Mar 1995 • Latitude: -35.9825° • Longitude: 142.9156° • Elevation 102m

An asterisk (*) indicates that calm is less than 0.5%.

Other important info about this analysis is available in the accompanying notes.

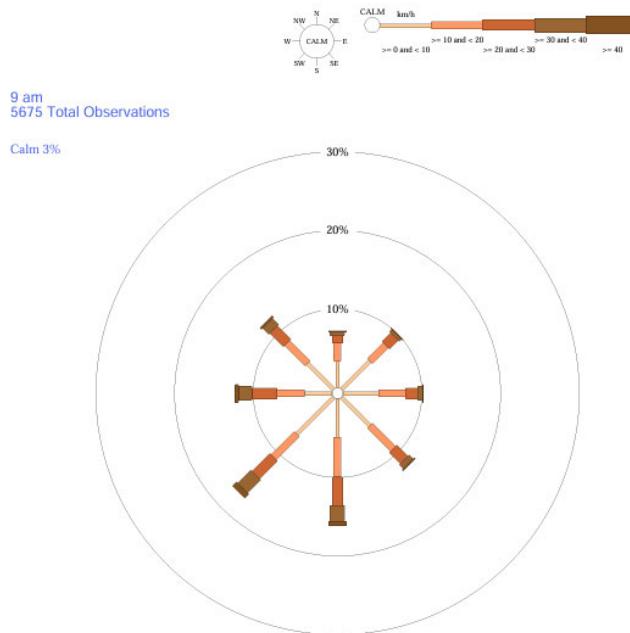


Figure 6: Annual wind rose

6.6 Groundwater

Visualising Victoria's groundwater was used to collect information about this resource. As Figure 7 shows, the groundwater beneath the site is quite deep (20-50 m). It is also saline, with salt levels expected to be within the range of 13,000-35,000 ppm (see Figure 8).



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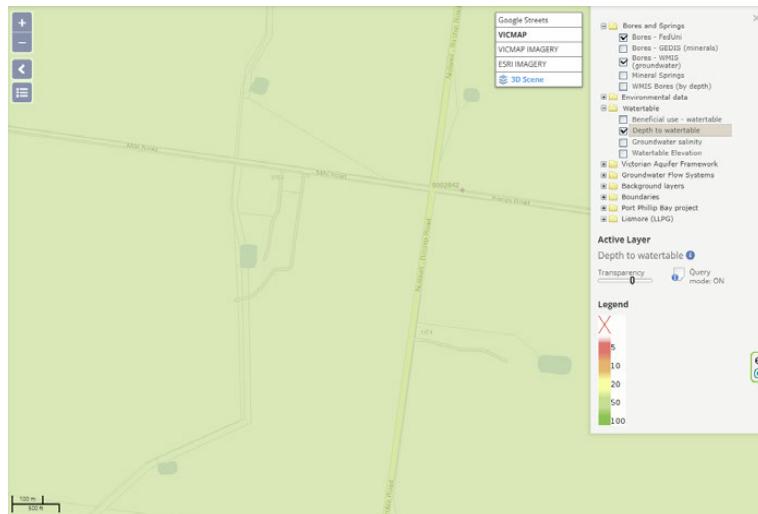


Figure 7: Depth to groundwater

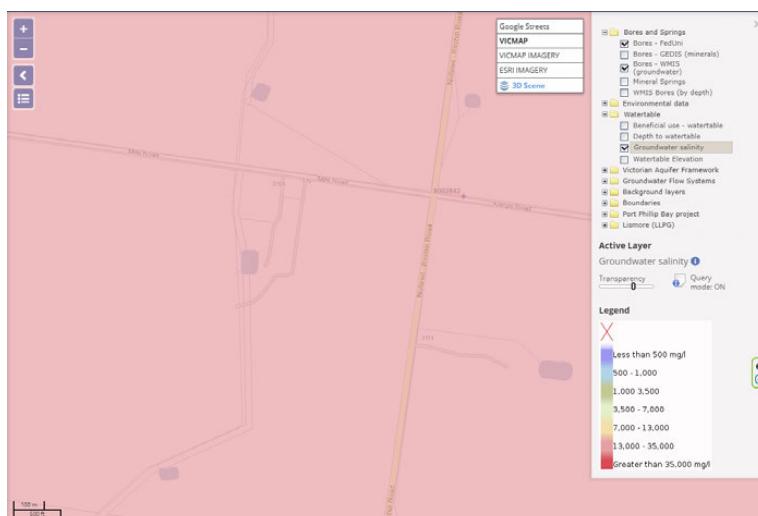


Figure 8: Groundwater salinity



6.7 Topography and Watercourses

The property is relatively flat to gently sloping, as shown on the imagery taken from <https://en-au.topographic-map.com> and provided as Figure 9. There are no watercourses on the subject property and no flood risk.



Figure 9: Elevation map

6.8 Soils and Cropping Type

The soils of the farm are clay loams. Photograph 1 shows cropping land immediately to the south of the piggery. Figure 10 shows a recent soil test for the paddock below the piggery. The soil is in good condition with available macronutrients at acceptable levels for growing a lentil crop. The soil is non-sodic but ongoing monitoring is recommended.

Typical crop production rates are:

- Wheat 4 t/ha grain, 2 t/ha straw
- Barley 3.5 t/ha grain, 2 t/ha straw
- Field peas 3 t/ha
- Lentils 2 t/ha



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Photograph 1: Cropping land



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APAL

SOIL ANALYSIS

Agent: Nutrien Ag Solutions - Birchip
Agent Address: 96 Birchip - Sea Lake Road,
BIRCHIP, VIC, 3483
Client: Symbanks P/L
Test Set or Quotation: NSS81
Barcode: 111510253
Batch Number: 40561
Submission ID: 129121
Report Date: 23/12/2024
Sampling Date: 09/12/2024
Date Received: 12/12/2024
Sample Name: Home_2-Transsect 2024
Crop: Lentils
Sample Depth: 0-10
GPS Start: -35.898478506166, 143.05170346065
GPS End: -35.898895048485, 143.05713795139



NOTE¹: Eurofins APAL will review published literature for crop desired levels, and reserves the right to make changes to this information in test reports as and when these reviews are conducted.

NOTE: Walkley and Black Organic Carbon % (40°C) data presented in this test report have been obtained by a combination of laboratory wet chemistry and the equivalent modelled result from Mid-Infrared Diffuse Reflectance Spectroscopy and Partial Least Squares Regression (PLSR) analysis. An explanatory technical note is available upon request. The exception is for quoted work that specifically required laboratory wet chemistry.

Figure 10: Soil test



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6.9 Native Vegetation

From NatureKit, the site is within the Murray Mallee Bioregion / IRBA Murray Darling Depression. Originally the site was most likely dominated by white mallee, congou mallee, Dumosa mallee and bull mallee / broad leaved box. However, the land was cleared many years ago for farming. No clearing of native vegetation is planned.



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7 Proposed Piggery Development

7.1 Overview

Symbanks Piggery consists of a combination of conventional sheds and deep litter shelters.

Conventional housing accommodates pigs within steel-framed sheds with walls that are half solid and half nylon curtain, iron roofing and slatted flooring over concreted under-floor pits fitted with pull plugs. The conventional sheds produce liquid effluent that is captured in a holding pond that is pumped out monthly. Photograph 2 shows an example of this type of housing.



Photograph 2: Conventional Shed

Deep litter housing accommodates pigs in simple sheds or shelters. The floor of the shelters is concreted and straw bedding is placed over the base to absorb manure and spilt feed and water. These sheds produce spent bedding but no liquid effluent. The spent bedding is stored on a prepared pad prior to spreading onto cropping land.



Photograph 3: Deep Litter Shelters



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The piggery currently has a herd size of 1,138 pigs / 1,360 standard pig units (SPU). However, it is proposed that herd size will increase to about 3,534 pigs or 3,588 SPU¹. This will require the construction of two new conventional sheds. In future, all breeding stock and suckers will be kept in conventional housing and all weaned progeny will be kept in deep litter housing. Table 3 sets out the proposed herd composition and housing.

Table 3: Proposed Herd Composition

Pig Class	Number of pigs	Number of SPU*	Housing type
Gilts	31	56	Conventional, pull plug
Boars	12	19	Conventional, pull plug
Gestating sows	386	618	Conventional, pull plug
Lactating sows	50	125	Conventional, pull plug
Suckers	550	53	Conventional, pull plug
Weaners	970	541	Deep litter
Porkers	440	470	Deep litter
Growers	550	785	Deep litter
Finishers	545	922	Deep litter
Total	3,534	3,588	~871 SPU Conventional ~2,718 SPU Deep litter

* PigBal liveweight regression method used to estimate SPU for progeny

Figure 3 is a plan of the proposed layout of the expanded piggery.

7.1 Water Usage

The piggery will need water for stock consumption, stock cooling and a small amount for washing the flooring in the conventional housing. The choices for how to use water represent environmental best practice because they optimise water use efficiency without compromising animal welfare or shed cleanliness.

Pig drinking water needs will be met by providing suitable drinkers for the number and class of stock. Drinking water wastage will be minimised through the selection of low-wastage drinkers. Minimal water is needed for cleaning due to the shed design selected. The conventional sheds will have pull plug effluent pits. In these systems, the underfloor pits slowly fill with wastewater from shed cleaning and drinking water wastage, manure and waste feed, with the plugs released only every two to four weeks. Once the plug is replaced, a shallow depth of water is added to the base of the pit to stop manure sticking. Deep litter shelters don't require washing since the bedding absorbs manure and waste feed and water and this is just removed and replaced as needed.

¹ SPU have been calculated using the liveweight regression method built into PigBal for progeny. If standard multipliers are used, the herd SPU capacity is 3,658.6 SPU with 872.6 SPU in conventional sheds and 2,796 SPU in deep litter.



7.2 Feed Usage

Although most of the feedstuffs for the piggery are grown on-farm, feed is the most valuable input for the piggery so it is in the operator's interests to minimise wastage. Care is taken when mixing feed to minimise wastage at that time. Diets are formulated to meet the nutritional needs of the pigs. Well-designed feeders minimise wastage within the sheds and shelters.

7.3 Straw Usage

Straw is used as bedding in the deep litter shelters. This is put into the shelter before a new batch of pigs enters. It is topped up as needed to maintain dry low odour conditions. At the end of the batch the straw is removed and replaced. Straw usage matches the National Environmental Guidelines for Indoor Piggeries suggest straw usage of 0.5-1 kg/SPU/d (on average).

7.4 Effluent and Manure Production, Treatment and Reuse

The conventional sheds at the piggery will produce liquid effluent, while the deep litter shelters will produce spent bedding containing manure. The PigBal 5 model was used to estimate the quantity and composition of the effluent and manure. PigBal 5 is a validated model that uses herd, feed and water input data with mass balance theory and feed digestibility data to estimate the effluent and manure production of piggeries.

7.4.1 Effluent Production

The effluent from the conventional sheds is made up of hosing water, wasted drinking water, manure and waste feed which is captured in pull plug pits beneath the slatted shed flooring. It is estimated that a maximum of 3.17 ML/yr or 8,685 L/day (on average) of effluent will be produced.

The estimated daily and annual masses of nutrients in effluent ex-sheds are provided in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Solids and Nutrients in Effluent Ex-Sheds

Component	Mass (kg/d)	Mass (t/yr)
Total solids	318	116
Volatile solids	241	88
Nitrogen	31	11.4
Phosphorus	9	3.2
Potassium	11	4.0

7.4.1 Effluent Storage

At Symbanks piggery, the effluent is stored within the under-floor pits and released every two to four weeks. The discharged effluent is directed into a small pond at the southern end of the piggery where it is temporarily stored until it can be irrigated. This pond is not intended to provide treatment or long-term storage; its purpose is just to hold the effluent until it can be pumped onto land. It is estimated that there will be a maximum of about 0.2642 ML/mth of effluent to manage. The existing pond is approximately 30 m long, 6.7 m wide (on average) and approximately 3 m deep. Photograph 5 shows the existing pond including the drainage infrastructure from the shed and a pipe used to fill the effluent tanker. Leaving 0.3 m of pond depth for freeboard for rainfall capture (the 1 in 20 year (5%)



Kemp family, Whirily

24-hour storm yields 79.7 mm of rainfall), the pond currently has an estimated storage volume of 0.25 ML. Given that evaporation exceeds average rainfall in most months, this volume would usually be sufficient to store a months' effluent. However, it may have insufficient volume during extended wet periods when evaporation rates are lower and irrigation may not be possible.

The pond used to be larger. The western end was filled in when a larger effluent tanker was purchased to make it easier to extract the effluent (smaller pond but greater depth). To ensure there is sufficient capacity to store effluent in wet periods, it is proposed to widen the pond on the northern side so the pond has an average width of 8.5 m. It is also proposed to extend the pond to the west to create a length of 50 m. This will provide pond volume of ~0.65 ML.

It is only in June that the average monthly rainfall exceeds evaporation, with the 90th percentile rainfall exceeding monthly evaporation from May to August. Given that two 90th percentile rainfall months are unlikely to occur in series, capacity to store the rainfall from two consecutive 90th percentile months without any irrigation should ensure there is sufficient wet weather capacity in the pond. Table 5 presents a pond water balance that shows cumulative two-month water balances from April-May to July-August, without any irrigation. The two-month balances range from 533 m³ to 557 m³ (0.533ML to 0.557 ML). Hence, a pond capacity of 0.65 ML is sufficient capacity to store all the effluent and net rainfall plus about ~0.1 ML of effluent or net rainfall in the next month.

Table 5: Pond Water Balance

Pond Parameters					
	April	May	June	July	August
Crest surface area (m ²)	337				
Surface area at ¾ water depth (m ²)*	249				
Inflows and Outflows					
1 in 10 rainfall (mm)	54.9	75.1	71.8	61.2	63.8
Av. Evaporation (mm)	105	58.9	36	40.3	55.8
Rainfall in (m ³)	18.5	25.3	24.2	20.6	21.5
Effluent in (m ³)	260.6	269.2	260.6	269.2	269.2
Total In (m³)	279.1	294.5	284.7	289.9	290.7
Total out (m³)	26.2	14.7	9.0	10.0	13.9
Balance (m³)	252.9	279.9	275.8	279.8	276.8
Two-month balance (m ³)#		532.7	555.6	555.6	556.6

* use to estimate evaporation

based on previous month and current month



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Photograph 4: Effluent Pond



Figure 11: Proposed extension to effluent pond



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7.4.2 Effluent Reuse

The effluent will be irrigated using an existing 33,000 L effluent tanker (see Photograph 5). With an average of 264,200 m³/mth of effluent to irrigate (ignoring evaporation losses), eight loads will empty the pond. In most months, less loads will be needed.

The Kemp family proposes to use the nutrients in the effluent to produce grain, pulses and straw that can be used within the piggery. It is intended that the nutrients will be applied at sustainable rates; ones that address any soil nutrient deficiencies and consider nutrient removal by crop harvest to ensure the soil does not become overloaded.



Photograph 5: Effluent Tanker

It is intended to grow a rotation typically including wheat, barley, field peas and lentils. For the cereals both grain and straw would be harvested. Crop nutrient removal rates for these crops (kg/t) were sourced from GRDC grow notes and converted into rates (kg/ha). The expected nutrient removal rates are:

- Wheat 96 kg N/ha, 15.4 kg P/ha and 62 kg K/ha
- Barley 84 kg N/ha, 10.2 kg P/ha and 51.8 kg K/ha
- Field peas 120 kg N/ha, 11.7 kg P/ha and 24 kg K/ha
- Lentils 80 kg N/ha, 7.8 kg P/ha and 16 kg K/ha

The average removal rates over the rotation are: 95 kg N/ha, 11.3 kg P/ha and 38.4 kg K/ha.



It is estimated that a years' effluent ex-sheds will contain 11.4 t N, 3.2 t P and 4 t K. Gaseous nitrogen losses could be expected from the effluent in the ponds and under spreading. If 40% of nitrogen volatilises, there will be 6.84 t that is potentially available for future uptake by crops.

Under the rotation, the areas of land needed for sustainable reuse of the effluent nutrients are:

- nitrogen 72 ha
- phosphorus 283 ha
- potassium 104 ha

The Kemp family farms over 2,000 ha of land in the area. Hence, there is plenty of cropping country for the effluent to be spread onto. In accordance with the recommendations in the National Environmental Guidelines for Indoor Piggeries – Siting and Design (NEGIP-SD), effluent will not be spread within 50 m of a waterway.

7.4.3 Spent Bedding Production

The spent bedding from the deep litter shelters will consist of a mixture of straw, manure and waste feed. Bedding management will be managed to ensure that low odour conditions are maintained within the sheds and to ensure there are always clean, dry areas for the pigs to rest. A generous amount of the bedding will be added at the start of the batch and this will be replaced at the end of the batch.

Some decomposition will occur within the sheds; PigBal 4, assumes that 20% of TS, 25% of VS and 17% of nitrogen are lost at this stage. From PigBal 4, the solids and macro-nutrients expected to be remaining in the spent bedding removed from the sheds are:

- 629 t/yr total solids
- 524 t/yr volatile solids
- 25.9 t/yr nitrogen
- 6.6 t/yr phosphorus
- 19.0 t/yr potassium

Assuming the removed bedding has a moisture content of 50%, the annual wet weight of spent bedding removed from the shelters would be 1,258 t.

7.4.4 Spent Bedding Storage

Upon removal from the sheds, spent bedding will be stored on a dedicated hardstand area prior to spreading (see Figure 3). It is not proposed to compost the spent bedding this will simply be stored in static piles or windrows. These may be occasionally turned to promote drying if this is necessary in the winter. To minimise the risk of piles overheating and catching fire, the spent bedding will only be stored in piles or windrows up to 2 m high. Assuming the spent bedding has a bulk density of 0.6 m³/t, the annual volume of fresh spent bedding is 2,097 m³. Since the spent bedding will reduce in volume during storage, and aged material will be spread between crops, the maximum volume in storage at any time might be half the annual production volume (~1048.5 m³). If this is stored in windrows 2 m high and 4 m wide at the base, some 262 m of windrow space would be needed. This could be stored



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in six 44 m long windrows. Allowing for 4 m alongside and around the ends of each windrow for vehicle access, these would occupy a 52 m X 52 m area. These can comfortably fit within the storage area. However, aged material could also be formed into a mound to conserve space.

7.4.5 Spent Bedding Reuse

The spent bedding will be spread onto cropping land using a manure spreader. It is estimated that a years spent bedding ex-sheds will contain 25.9 t N, 6.6 t P and 19.0 t K. Gaseous nitrogen losses could be expected from the spent bedding during storage and under spreading. If 20% of nitrogen volatilises, there will be 20.72 t for uptake by crops.

Under the crop rotation presented in section 7.4.2, the average nutrient removal rates over the rotation are: 95 kg N/ha, 11.3 kg P/ha and 38.4 kg K/ha.

Hence, the areas of land needed for sustainable reuse of the spent bedding nutrients are:

- Nitrogen 218 ha
- Phosphorus 584 ha
- Potassium 495 ha

There is plenty of cropping country for the spent bedding to be spread onto. In accordance with the recommendations in the NEGIP-SD, this material will not be spread within 50 m of a waterway.

7.5 Mortalities Management

Some mortalities are expected from any piggery. A deep pit has been excavated (see Figure 3) and mortalities are placed in this before being promptly covered with soil. As the soils have a reasonable clay content and groundwater is not shallow, burial is an acceptable mortalities management option at this site.



8 Normal Operating Condition Management Practices

This section describes the management practices that will be adopted under normal operating conditions.

8.1 Staff Numbers

The piggery currently employs 1 full-time equivalent employees (FTE). It is expected that numbers will increase to 2 FTE after the expansion of the piggery.

8.2 Operating Hours

The piggery will generally be staffed from 7 AM to 5 PM. Truck movements will generally be scheduled to occur during this time frame but will occasionally occur at other times of the day or night. During very hot weather pigs may be transported at night for welfare reasons. At peak harvest time, trucks may transport grain at night (standard industry practice).

8.3 Shed Management

The sheds will be kept clean to maintain low odour, comfortable conditions for pigs and staff. The pen flooring in the conventional sheds will be washed out as needed to keep the sheds hygienic. The effluent will be collected in under-pen pull plug pits that are regularly emptied. Each time the pits are emptied, they will be recharged with a few centimetres of water after the plugs are replaced. This stops manure from sticking to the bases and suppresses ammonia releases from the manure.

In the deep litter housing, bedding will be managed to provide a dry area for the pigs to lie and to minimise odour. A generous amount of bedding will be provided at the start of each batch and this will be topped-up as needed but will also be replaced at least every seven weeks. This aligns with best practice.

8.4 Effluent Storage

About once every two to four weeks, the plugs on the effluent pits will be pulled to empty the pits. Because this may release odour, it will be done between 10 AM and 3 PM when odour dispersion is likely to be best. The effluent will be released directly into the effluent pond via pipes. Effluent will only be temporarily stored in the pond until it can be spread onto land. This will occur as soon as practicable after the pits are emptied, providing soil moisture and weather conditions are suitable.

8.5 Spent Bedding Storage

Spent bedding will be kept in low (<2 m high) piles or windrows on a dedicated hardstand area to age. While this material will not be actively composted, it may occasionally be turned to promote drying. Aged material may be formed into a mound for storage prior to spreading onto cropping land.

8.6 Reuse of Effluent and Spent Bedding

Effluent and spent bedding are valuable fertilisers and soil amendments. They will be carefully managed to avoid risks to the environment or public health.

Effluent and manure products will be applied at rates that achieve a long-term balance between the nutrients they contain and the expected nutrient removal by crop harvest (refer to sections 7.4.2 and



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7.4.5). Effluent and spent bedding will be analysed at least once a year so nutrient levels are well understood and sustainable reuse rates can be determined.

To maximise nutrient uptake, and minimise runoff and leaching losses, a tanker will spread effluent only when the soil is dry enough to absorb the irrigation. A spreader will apply manure products between crops. The effluent tanker and manure spreader will be operated in a way that applies the material evenly. Regular soil testing will be used to confirm the system is in balance.

To prevent amenity impacts, reuse will be scheduled to occur from mid-morning to mid-afternoon when odour dispersion is likely to be enhanced. Weather and wind conditions will be considered when scheduling reuse. Because different areas can be irrigated, areas close to houses will be avoided when the wind is carrying towards them. Reuse will also be avoided under heavy, overcast conditions, if rain is imminent, if the atmosphere is very still or gusty, or if there are gentle winds towards the nearby neighbours.

To guard against any animal or human health risks, a 21-day withholding period will apply between reuse and harvest or grazing. This will allow for drying of applied effluent and manure products and desiccation of microorganisms these contain.

8.7 Mortalities Management

Mortalities will be buried in a dedicated pit. They will be completely covered with soil immediately after placement to minimise odour releases and prevent access by scavengers and insects.

8.8 Fly and Rodent Breeding

Flies and rodents are attracted to the feed used at piggeries and the manure, waste feed and mortalities generated. All reasonable steps will be taken to minimise fly and rodent breeding. The new sheds will be built to minimise cavities that could provide a rodent home and low wastage feeding equipment will be installed. In all sheds feed spills will be promptly removed, the sheds will be kept clean and mortalities will be promptly buried then kept well covered. Baits will be used strategically to control fly and rodent numbers.

8.9 Traffic

Heavy vehicles will be needed to transport a small amount of feedstuffs and other deliveries to the piggery and finished pigs from the facility. All trucks will enter and exit the property via Mills Road which is a gravel road in good condition. The access point to the property provides good visibility in both directions.

Heavy vehicles movements are expected to total ~48 vehicles per year (i.e. 96 truck movements including the movement in and the movement out). This is a small number of trucks that is in keeping with surrounding farming uses. Truck movements will generally be scheduled to come in the day, except under extreme hot conditions when night transportation of pigs will be needed for welfare reasons or during the busy harvest period when night transportation is common. Scheduling vehicle movements for daytime hours reduces the likelihood of noise nuisance for nearby residents.



9 Resource and Waste Minimisation

9.1 Water

A certain amount of water is needed for pig consumption, welfare reasons and to maintain shed cleanliness. However, water use will be minimised by:

- selecting low wastage drinkers,
- choosing pull plug effluent pits rather than flush channels for the conventional sheds,
- using deep litter housing for the progeny, and
- using an effluent irrigation system that does not require dilution.

9.2 Feed

Feed is a major input and expense for the piggery. Minimising feed wastage reduces operating costs and helps in maintaining low odour conditions within sheds. Targeted diet formulation, suitable feed processing and selection of low wastage feeders helps to minimise feed wastage.

9.3 Bedding

It is important to provide sufficient bedding to maintain dry, sanitary conditions within the deep litter housing. Hence, bedding usage is not minimised. As spent bedding is reused as a fertiliser and soil amendment, this is not seen as wasteful.

9.4 Power

Power is a significant cost at a piggery. Power usage is optimised by choosing power-efficient equipment and maintaining these so they run efficiently.

9.5 Effluent and Manure Products

Effluent and manure are not seen as "wastes" but as sources of nutrients and soil amendments for the overall farming system. Nevertheless, the piggery will operate most profitably when the quantities of organic matter, nutrients and water going to effluent and spent bedding are minimised so every effort will be taken to avoid water and feed wastage.

9.6 Rubbish and General Wastes

Rubbish is kept to a minimum by handling feed and other inputs in bulk. Bins are used to collect general rubbish. Where practical, wastes are reused or recycled. However, wastes like syringes and needles undergo proper disposal via return to suppliers.

9.7 GHG Emissions

Measures to reduce the GHG emissions from the piggery were considered in its design and operation. Choices regarding housing, manure management and effluent treatment will minimise emissions. These choices represent environmental best practice.

The use of deep litter housing by the progeny will produce less GHG emissions than standard conventional housing with an anaerobic pond system. McGahan (2015) found that adopting a deep



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litter system and stockpiling the bedding reduced GHG emissions by about 56% compared with conventional housing with an uncovered anaerobic pond.



10 Assessment of Environmental Impacts and Risks

The operation of a piggery has the potential to impact upon surface waters, groundwater, soils and amenity. A risk assessment can be used to assess whether the siting, design and management of the piggery provides adequate safeguards to protect all aspects of the environment. Table 6 provides a risk assessment matrix showing the level of risk (low, moderate, high or critical) depending on the likelihood of occurrence and the severity of consequences.

Table 6: Risk Assessment Matrix

Likelihood	Consequences				
	Insignificant – < \$1000 environmental damage	Minor – low environmental damage <\$10,000	Moderate – medium environmental damage <\$100,000	Major – high environmental damage <\$1,000,000	Catastrophic – toxic environmental damage >\$1,000,000
Almost certain (100%)	Moderate risk	High risk	High risk	Critical risk	Critical risk
Likely (10%)	Moderate risk	Moderate risk	High risk	High risk	Critical risk
Possible (1%)	Low risk	Moderate risk	High risk	High risk	Critical risk
Unlikely (0.1%)	Low risk	Moderate risk	Moderate risk	High risk	High risk
Rare (0.01%)	Low risk	Low risk	Moderate risk	Moderate risk	High risk

In developing the proposal, all risk areas have been considered, and details of mitigation measures and the assessed risks are provided below.

10.1 Surface Waters

The quality of surface water could be impacted if there were effluent pond spills, direct entry of irrigated effluent into waterways or runoff of nutrient-rich runoff from effluent or spent bedding reuse areas. The risk is inherently low as there are no waterways close to the piggery or the on-farm reuse areas.

Stormwater from the piggery and surrounds is carefully managed to prevent contamination of runoff to other areas. Stormwater is unable to enter the sheds. Effluent can only leave the sheds via pipes directly into the ponds. The effluent pond will be expanded so it can store the effluent produced by the expanded piggery and provide suitable wet weather storage. Banks will be installed around the expanded effluent pond to prevent ingress or stormwater runoff. While the spent bedding storage area is not banded, this is not a concern as there are no nearby waterways and runoff from this area is likely to be dilute.

Effluent and manure reuse will occur on land that has previously been cleared and farmed for many years. None of the land to be used is subject to flooding. A 50 m wide buffer will be provided to any waterways. Sustainable effluent and manure spreading rates, based on crop nutrient removal rates, will be used. The good management practices proposed and the significant buffers between both the piggery and the reuse areas to waterways offer further protection. Surface water contamination by



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nutrients or sediment is not expected to result from the operations of the piggery. Nor is runoff likely to be generated so no impacts to flows or erosion are expected.

Surface water contamination is very unlikely to occur, with insignificant environmental harm, equating to a low risk.

10.2 Groundwater

Groundwater could be impacted through leaching of nutrients from sheds, the spent bedding storage area, the effluent pond or reuse areas. There is no shallow groundwater beneath the site. The sheds will all have concreted floors. The manure storage area is a hardstand area. The extension to the effluent pond will have a compacted clay base and sides. Hence, there is little chance of nutrient leaching through these facilities. *Rare likelihood X minor consequences – low risk.*

The reuse areas have clay loam soils. Water and nutrients will not move rapidly through the subsoil which is expected to have good capacity to retain nutrients. Hence, application of nutrients at sustainable rates is the main check to minimise nutrient leaching. A nutrient mass balance was used to ascertain suitable nutrient loading rates and required land areas for reuse. Effluent and spent bedding will be analysed periodically and the results used to determine appropriate reuse rates. The soils of the reuse areas will also be regularly tested to ensure the nutrients are in balance and at suitable levels. Taking all of this into account, the proposal is expected to offer good groundwater protection. *Rare likelihood X minor consequences – low risk.*

10.3 Soils

The soils of the reuse areas will benefit from the addition of carbon and nutrients contained in effluent and spent bedding. A nutrient mass balance was used to ascertain suitable nutrient loading rates and required land areas for reuse of effluent and spent bedding. The effluent and spent bedding will be analysed periodically and the results used to determine appropriate reuse rates. The effluent and spent bedding will be spread evenly and at suitable rates. The soils of the reuse areas will also be regularly tested to ensure the nutrients are in balance and at suitable levels. *Rare likelihood X minor consequences – low risk.*

10.4 Amenity

Piggeries have the potential to impact on amenity through odour, dust or noise nuisance and fly and rodent breeding. Reuse of effluent and spent bedding may also pose a risk of health impacts if not carefully managed.

Fly and rodent breeding at the piggery complex will be controlled through good management of feeding, manure and mortalities. Strategic baiting will be used as needed. These are not expected to pose off-farm impacts.

Odour is inevitable at piggeries but the risk can be minimised through good siting, design and management. The likelihood of an odour nuisance from the piggery was assessed using the Level 1 methodology in the NEGIP-SD. The formula for determining the required separation distances is:

$$\text{Separation distance (D) m} = N^{0.55} \times S1 \times S2 \times S3$$



The following values were used in the determination:

- $N^{0.55} = 91.16397$ where N is the number of standard pig units (3,658.6 SPU²) and 0.55 is the piggery size exponent determined using the results of modelling.
- $S1 = 0.515879$ where $S1 = S1_R \times S1_T$.
 - $S1_R = 0.718247$ which is the product of 1.0 for pigs on pull plugs (872.6 SPU of 3,658.6 SPU) multiplied by 0.63 for pigs in the deep litter system with pigs on single batch of litter \leq 7 weeks (2,786 SPU of 3,658.6 SPU).
 - $S1_T = 0.718247$ which is the product of 1.0 for an uncovered effluent pond with no solids separation (872.6 SPU of 3,658.6 SPU) and 0.63 for spent bedding stored near sheds (2,786 SPU of 3,658.6 SPU).
- $S2$ factor = 25 for a town, 15 for a rural residential zone and 11.5 for a rural dwelling where $S2_R = 25$ for a town, 15 for rural residential and 11.5 for a rural dwelling and $S2_S = 1$ for limited ground cover / short grass
- $S3$ factor = 1 for flat land

The minimum calculated separation distances are:

- town 1,176 m
- rural residential zone 705 m
- house 541 m

There are no towns or rural residential areas anywhere near the piggery. The closest house not belonging to the family is located \sim 2 km to the north of the site (see Figure 5). Hence there are very good separation distances. It is acknowledged that there is another potential odour source in the vicinity of the piggery - a lamb feeding facility operated by the proponents that is located some \sim 425 m to the east-south-east of the piggery (see Figure 5). Given that the lamb facility, piggery and closest house do not align, and the generous separation distance to the next closest houses, cumulative odour impact is not expected to be an issue.

Odour nuisance from the piggery complex is considered unlikely to possible and the resulting environmental harm would be insignificant or minor – low risk.

The spreading of effluent is also unlikely to create odour nuisance or public health impacts at nearby sensitive land uses, mainly due to the small volumes being spread. Because the effluent will be irrigated using a tanker, aerosols that can transport odour will be minimal. Spreading spent bedding is also unlikely to create a problem because the aged material will be relatively dry and low odour by the time it is spread. Because different parts of the farm can be spread with effluent or spent bedding, areas close to houses will be avoided when the wind is carrying towards them, minimising the likelihood of odour or health impacts. It is expected that spreading of spent bedding will mostly occur over a short period during late summer or early autumn.

To minimise the risk of odour and dust nuisance, reuse will generally occur from mid-morning to mid-afternoon and it will not occur if rain is imminent, if the soil is wet, it is windy or if there is a gentle

² In Table 3, SPU were calculated using the liveweight regression method built into PigBal for progeny. If standard multipliers are used, the herd SPU capacity is 3,658.6. To be conservative, the 3,658.6 SPU value is adopted here, with 872.6 SPU in conventional housing and 2,786 SPU in deep litter housing.



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breeze towards neighbours. A complaints-handling processing is in place, including ongoing consultation and corrective and preventative actions should nuisance occur. *It is unlikely but possible that odour or dust nuisance would occur, with insignificant consequences – low risk.*

A 21-day withholding period will be observed between reuse and any grazing or harvest of crops. This will protect grazing stock from any pathogens and prevent contamination of the part of the crop that will be used for human food consumption. *The risk of an animal or human health concern from reuse of effluent or manure products is considered rare X minor consequences = low risk.*



11 Emergency Situations and Contingency Plans

Emergency situations that may pose a risk to the environment can occasionally arise at piggeries. Environmental impacts could occur in the unlikely event of:

- a disruption to the power supply
- blockage of the effluent transfer pipes
- effluent pond full and likely to spill with further rain
- reuse areas too wet to access
- crop failure
- mass mortalities

Following is a description of the management that would be used to address each of these situations to prevent or minimise the risk of environmental harm.

11.1 Power Supply Disruption

Power is needed to operate various aspects of the piggery. It is used to pump water, operate feeding equipment, light the sheds and provide heating for piglets. In the event of a power failure, a diesel generator provides back-up power.

11.2 Blockage of Effluent Pipes

A blockage in the effluent pipes would be obvious and quickly detected. An air compressor would be used to clear this.

11.3 Effluent Pond Full and Threatening to Spill

The effluent pond has been sized to manage the expected volume of effluent and to provide storage during periods of prolonged wet weather. Proactive management will be the main measure used to prevent pond spills. The pull plug pits under the sheds have considerable capacity. Emptying of these for up to a week or two could be delayed if it was not possible to empty the effluent pond. However, as soon as the weather and soil moisture conditions allow, the pond would be emptied to enable release of the effluent pull plugs.

11.4 Reuse Areas Too Wet to Access or Use

The reuse areas are located on land that is not subject to flooding or inundation. With the very dry climate, it is unlikely that the land would be too wet to access or use for long. However, this could pose a short-term problem at times. In this case, effluent would need to be stored in the pond until it could be irrigated and spent bedding would need to be stored in the hardstand area.

Any spills from the effluent ponds or runoff from paddocks that could result in effluent exiting the farm will be reported to EPA Victoria and the Buloke Shire by the piggery manager. However, this is most unlikely to happen.

If space is becoming short in the manure storage areas, windrows of older material will be combined into larger piles to make way for new material.



11.5 Crop Failure

While crops can fail for a range of reasons, the most common reason is weather. This may compromise nutrient removal from areas spread with effluent or spent bedding. This is unlikely to pose a major issue as the clay in the soil has the capacity to store most nutrients until a crop can be harvested the following year to strip nutrients. Reuse would not occur on areas of complete crop failure, or at lower rates in the event of partial failure. Areas that did not receive effluent or spent bedding in the previous year, or that did not experience crop failure, could be spread with effluent or spent bedding at suitable rates. It is important to note that average crop yields were used to determine the nutrient balances. Hence, a crop failure is not a cause for alarm.

The piggery manager will be responsible for identifying suitable land area for reuse and for determining suitable reuse rates.

11.6 Mass Mortalities

In the event of mass mortalities at the piggery, the piggeries consulting veterinarian would be contacted along with relevant government authorities who would investigate the cause of the mortalities and advise and assist with the most suitable disposal method. Composting is the preferred method, providing it is considered suitable taking the cause of death into account. The process would be managed in accordance with AUSVETPLAN along with relevant government bodies. The following entities will be contacted:

- Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888
- DEDJTR Chief Veterinary Officer Unit 03 9217 4246
- Buloke Shire 1300 520 520
- EPA 1300 372 842

Space for composting mortalities is available in the manure storage area and fresh spent bedding could be used as a carbon source. If burial is deemed necessary, this will be done under instruction from the Chief Veterinary Officer and EPA Victoria. Buried mortalities will be promptly covered with at least 1 m of soil after placement. The pit/s will be mounded slightly after back-filling to allow for settling as the mortalities break down.



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12 Performance Standards

To demonstrate environmentally sustainable operation, the following performance standards are specified:

- the piggery operates in a way that does not result in valid nuisance complaints.
- there are no spills from the effluent pond.
- effluent and spent bedding are not spread within 50 m of a watercourse.
- soil test results for on-farm reuse areas indicate that nutrients are not excessive and the soils are suitable for crop production.



13 Environmental Monitoring & Record Keeping

As part of its duty of care, management of the piggery proposes to assess and monitor:

- complaints
- available water storage capacity in effluent pond
- effluent and spent bedding composition
- effluent and spent bedding reuse
- soils of reuse areas

13.1 Complaints

Since the Kemp family aims to fit in with the local community, the piggery manager will facilitate proactive, ongoing communication with surrounding landowners. Any complaints about the piggery will be taken very seriously. The piggery manager will be responsible for ongoing investigation, action and communications with the complainant. In the event of a complaint, the following will be recorded:

- date received
- details of complaint and complainant
- name of person who took the call
- response time and date and actions taken
- details of follow-up with complainant

All complaints received by staff will be immediately reported to the piggery manager. He will promptly initiate an investigation into possible causes. He may also wish to collect more information from the complainant. This will be done in a positive way, with a clear emphasis on investigating and resolving the issue. He will initiate corrective and / or preventative action and will confirm that the issue has been resolved through follow communication with the complainant. Staff training and SOP revision will be undertaken as appropriate to prevent a reoccurrence of the issue.

Details of complaints, findings of investigations and follow up actions will be promptly provided to EPA Victoria upon request.

13.2 Available Water Storage Capacity in Effluent Pond

Prior to releasing the pull plugs, the level of effluent stored in the effluent pond will be assessed. If necessary, effluent will be drawn for irrigation prior to releasing the pull plugs.

Details of any spills from the wet weather pond, including the date/s and estimated volume, will be reported to EPA Victoria.

13.3 Composition of Effluent and Spent Bedding

Effluent and spent bedding will be sampled at least annually, with the spent bedding tested ahead of the main reuse period.

All samples for analysis will consist of a minimum of 10 sub-samples that are bulked to produce a composite sample. The sub-samples will be collected from the centre of a number of windrows or piles.



Analysis parameters will include:

Effluent

- total nitrogen or TKN
- ammonium nitrogen
- nitrate nitrogen
- total phosphorus
- available phosphorus
- potassium
- EC
- chloride
- SAR

Spent bedding

- dry matter content
- total nitrogen or TKN
- ammonium nitrogen
- nitrate nitrogen
- total phosphorus
- available phosphorus
- potassium
- organic carbon
- EC
- chloride

13.4 Effluent and Spent Bedding Reuse

The following records will be kept of on-farm reuse:

- the date/s reuse occurs
- the type of material that was reused (effluent or spent bedding)
- quantity of material spread
- paddocks spread

13.5 Soils of Reuse Areas

The soils of on-farm reuse area will be tested annually in years when reuse area occurred on these. Composite samples of topsoil (0-10 cm) will consist of at least 10 bulked samples taken across the paddock. Composite samples of subsoil (30-60 cm) will consist of at least 5 bulked samples taken from across the paddock. Samples will be tested for:

Topsoil

- pH
- EC
- nitrate nitrogen
- available phosphorus



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- potassium
- copper
- zinc
- organic carbon
- CEC and exchangeable cations

Subsoil

- pH
- EC
- nitrate nitrogen
- available phosphorus
- potassium
- CEC and exchangeable cations

Soil properties will be considered when determining reuse rates. Where deficiencies exist, it will be appropriate to address these by adding additional nutrients. Where surpluses exist, reuse rates will be adjusted down.

13.6 Management of Monitoring Records

The piggery manager is responsible for ensuring monitoring occurs correctly and at the specified time intervals. He is also responsible for reviewing monitoring results as they come into identify any trends or concerns. The piggery manager will initiate an investigation, which may include further sampling and analysis, where there are concerns with the results. He will be fully responsible for initiating corrective and / or preventative measures as needed.

The piggery manager will develop a SOP including environmental monitoring schedules and checklists for sampling, interpretation and follow-up actions to ensure these occur in a timely manner.

All environmental monitoring records will be kept in the piggery office for a period of at least four years. Any effluent spills or other circumstances that result in environmental impacts or nuisance will be reported to promptly reported to the Buloke Shire Council and EPA Victoria.



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14 Review, Reporting and Updating

This EMP is a dynamic document that is integrated into the day-to-day operations of piggery. It provides for annual review of assessment and monitoring data, and overall environmental performance.

The performance of the piggery, the effluent pond, the spent bedding storage area, the reuse areas and the mortalities pit will be reviewed continually throughout the year. However, a full review will also be undertaken annually, with the aim of identifying and addressing any issues (through preventative or mitigation actions) and opportunities for improvement. The review will consider the adequacy of management. This EMP will be updated to reflect identified opportunities for improvement.

Reuse practices will be assessed continually through ongoing visual inspection of the reuse areas and the crops grown on them. There will be an annual review of the soil test results for reuse areas that will confirm that reuse is sustainable (based on the indicators of sustainability provided in the NEGIP-SD) or identify any emerging or actual issues. Where problems are identified, corrective and / or preventative action will be taken. Any opportunities for improvement will also be identified and actioned, with appropriate updating of this EMP.



Kemp family, Whirily

References

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, 2025, "Pigbal 5", Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Toowoomba.

GRDC GrowNotes – various crops. GRDC, Canberra.

Tucker RW, Price J and Tait S, 2025. "National Environmental Guidelines for Indoor Piggeries – Siting and Design", Australian Pork Ltd, Canberra



Buloke PA25012 | Whirily pig farm expansion

Applicants response to Objection

The submitters contend that the expansion of the piggery will increase the Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) risk. With regards to this:

- the submission indicates that “JEV has swept across Australia”. During the 2024–25 mosquito season, the Department of Health confirmed only two cases of JEV infection in Victorian residents (<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/animal-diseases/important-animal-diseases/japanese-encephalitis/japanese-encephalitis-current-situation>) and there have been no recorded cases of JEV in humans whatsoever in Western Victoria including the Buloke Shire.
- while JEV is endemic in northern Australia, it is uncommon in southern Australia. The life cycle of the virus primarily occurs in waterbirds and mosquitoes, and occasionally in humans and other animals including feral and domestic pigs. It has surfaced in Victoria in recent years when heavy rainfall and flooding brought migratory waterbirds south.
- to date, JEV has been found only in northern and central Victoria and not in other parts of the state. As mentioned above, there have been no recorded cases of JEV whatsoever in the Buloke Shire.
- the objectors note that the pig farm is close to Lake Buloke. It is in fact ~38 km from the lake, which is many times the usual travel distance for mosquitoes.
- there is already a piggery at the farm. Hence, preventing the expansion of the piggery won’t address the submitters concerns. As JEV causes reproductive losses in pig herds, the farm is mindful of using appropriate management to protect both pigs and workers, which is consistent with Agriculture Victoria advice.
- vaccination (available free for those who live or work in high-risk areas) and personal protection (long clothing, insecticides) offer effective protection.

The farms’ consulting veterinarian was heavily involved in the JEV response across southern Australia in 2021. To their knowledge, no piggeries with JEV were identified in the Buloke Shire. They also note that the geographical location and climate of the Buloke Shire is not consistent with high populations of herons, egrets and the other major migratory bird species that are the major environmental host and replicator of Japanese Encephalitis. These species are more common in areas with open channel irrigation and extensive river

systems, something which is not present around the farm or for that matter through the Buloke Shire.

The veterinarian has confirmed that the farm is accredited under the Australian Pork Industry Quality Assurance Scheme (APIQ). This requires auditing of the farm at minimum twice yearly to maintain accreditation. Under APIQ standard 4.4c, the farm requires a Pest management plan, that includes:

- mosquito controls
- records of mosquito activity levels and applicable control measures
- measures to manage mosquitoes using non-chemical measures
- use of approved chemicals to control mosquitoes (when and where required)
- handling and use of chemicals according to label and/or emergency permits where applicable.
- measures to ensure farm workers, family members and property residents are aware of the symptoms of JEV, and how to keep themselves protected (e.g. suitable clothing, repellents, vaccination).

These measures are contained within the farm's Quality Assurance manual under SOP 7: Pest Control Procedure, SOP 9: Biosecurity Procedure and SOP 12: Mosquito Control Procedure.

The veterinarian has also reported the following information from official communications with Agriculture Victoria on 19th November 2025 for this mosquito season:

1. the Victorian Department of Health (DoH) has not advised of any human cases to-date in Victoria.
2. there have been no positive detections of JEV in mosquitoes.
3. there have been no positive detections of JEV through the Agriculture Victoria piggery effluent surveillance project.

In summary, the proposed expansion of the piggery poses no significant public health risk (JEV), primarily because:

- JEV very rarely occurs in Victoria with no recorded incidence of JEV in humans or pigs within the Buloke Shire,
- the location and climate of the Buloke Shire is not consistent with the waterbird species that are the major environmental hosts and replicators of JEV,
- the waterbirds that bring JEV south tend to be found in areas with open channel irrigation and extensive river systems; these are not found around the subject farm or in the district,
- this is a sparsely populated region, and
- suitable mosquito controls are in place at the farm.

Considering these facts, I am asking the submitters to reconsider their submission with a view to withdrawing it.

PA25012

Objection received 08/11/2025

Indoor Pig Farm expansion

Farmed Animals Advocacy Group Objection

Introduction

The Farmed Animals Advocacy Group is an organisation dedicated to creating a kinder world for all life on earth by promoting, and enhancing advocacy for animal rights, the natural environment, social justice issues and acting against the drivers of climate change and species extinction.

We the undersigned wish to record an objection to the proposed expansion of the indoor pig farm at 376 Mills Road Whirily VIC 3483 from 1318 pigs to 3534 pigs on the basis of increasing the risk of Japanese Encephalitis Virus on the community and the animals themselves.

Risk of Japanese Encephalitis Virus (JEV)

An article from two local epidemiologists (McGuinness and Leder, 2023), summarises the following information about JEV

“ Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) is the leading cause of viral encephalitis in Asia, causing ?100?000 cases and 25?000 deaths annually. JEV is transmitted by Culex mosquitoes in an enzootic cycle involving waterbirds (reservoir hosts) and/or pigs (amplifying hosts); humans are incidental dead-end hosts. Whilst most human infections are asymptomatic, severe disease occurs in ?1 per 250 infections and may rapidly progress to encephalitis with an estimated case fatality rate of 20–30%. Amongst survivors, ?30–50% have long-term neurologic sequelae. No specific treatment exists, but supportive care improves outcomes.”

JEV has swept across Australia, infected multiple people and claimed the life of two men (Webb, 2025). Victorian health authorities confirmed one of the seven confirmed cases in

the state is an infant. There is no information on the baby's condition. The other six infected Victorians were adults.

JEV in response to Climate change

A June 2023 article co-authored by Doctor Sarah McGuinness and Professor Karin Leder from Monash University, say surveillance gaps and diagnostic challenges lead to an under-appreciation of the true disease burden. They write "Ongoing seasonal transmission in south-eastern Australia is likely given the reporting of JE cases in two consecutive summers and ongoing La Niña weather patterns attracting waterbirds and providing conditions for increased mosquito breeding."

An earlier scientific article (Williams and Webb, et al, 2022) also reported that "Australia has experienced two consecutive years of higher-than-average rainfall, 2020–21 and 2021–22, and record-breaking flooding across the east of the country may have assisted in the spread of JEV over the past year through a combination of greatly increased mosquito breeding sites and conditions, and the attraction of waterbird movements into fresh feeding opportunities"

As for risk of future outbreaks in mainland Australia, the article reads "it is believed that JEV GIV viruses are tropical rather than more temperate in their occurrence. Nevertheless, it is an important question that needs to be addressed. Successful establishment requires the presence of vertebrate hosts and competent vector species; Australia has both in abundance."

Agriculture Victoria response

Agriculture Victoria's website indicates that the department does not undertake a regulatory response to detections of the virus. This includes no quarantines or restrictions on the movement of livestock, products, or fomites". They recommend monitoring of animals and management of mosquito populations if an outbreak on a farm is detected.

It is our contention that the Department of Agriculture's response of "monitoring animals" is inadequate given the risks to humans if infected with JEV. Elizabeth Zuccala (2025), Senior Deputy Medical Editor of the Medical Journal of Australia, asserts that there is an urgent need for policy responses to the climate crisis and health in Australia.

JEV risks in the current planning application

The site of the expanded pig farm is close to Lake Buloke which is a wetland habitat. This increases the risk of mosquito-borne diseases such as JEV. Pigs are known as amplifying hosts for mosquitoes pumping out millions of virus particles that could affect humans. An amplifying host is an infectious organism that is pathogenic in another species and is able to replicate quickly and to high concentrations. Mosquitoes would certainly be able to access these pig sheds.

Summary:

We ask that the Planners in the Shire of Buloke appreciate the real risk, confirmed by epidemiology academic experts, that JEV is a heightened risk for Victoria as a result of a changing climate. The applicant's desire to raise the number of farmed pigs by 2,216 animals can be seen as counter to the public's reasonable expectation that all levels of government make scientifically informed choices that lower the risk of disease transmission, as this new information about risk, becomes available.

Thank you for reading our objection, and we look forward to a response when available

Yours faithfully,

Annie Cranby



Ruth Weston



Nat Kopas



Dorothy Johnston



Dr. Stephanie Jones



Gayle Williams



Diane Roberts



Lyndi Chapman



References:

Long, B and McCrae, D (February, 2025). Japanese encephalitis virus - JEV - detected at two Queensland Piggeries. ABC news. Downloaded on 8.11.25 aat

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-02-18/japanese-encephalitis-virus-queensland-piggeries/104949206>

Sarah L McGuinness, Colleen L Lau, Karin Leder, The evolving Japanese encephalitis situation in Australia and implications for travel medicine, *Journal of Travel Medicine*, Volume 30, Issue 2, March 2023, taad029, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jtm/taad029>

Webb, C (2025). Japanese Encephalitis has claimed two lives in NSW and been detected in Brisbane. Downloaded from https://www.healthed.com.au/clinical_articles/japanese-encephalitis-has-claimed-2-lives-in-nsw-and-been-detected-in-brisbane/ on 8.11.25

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Zuccala, E (2025). Policy responses to climate crisis and health in Australia: a newed for urgency. *Medical Journal of Australia*. Downloaded from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.5694/mja2.52584> on 8.11.25

8.1.5 CONTRACT AWARD - CONTRACT C130 2025/26 - SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF ROAD MAKING MATERIALS AND PRODUCTS

Author's Title: Acting Director Infrastructure and Delivery

Directorate: Infrastructure and Delivery

File No: RO/06/45

Relevance to Council Plan 2025 - 2029

Strategic Built and natural environment

Objective: Advocate and plan for, and manage community buildings, roads and transport networks

Council leadership and engagement

Responsible leadership and decision making

PURPOSE

This report is presented to Council to consider the creation of a panel of contractors for the provision of road making materials as set out in Contract C130 2025/26 – Supply and Delivery of Road Making Materials.

SUMMARY

The Buloke Shire Council invited Tenders from experienced contractors for the supply and/or delivery of roadmaking materials and products for use in the upkeep and maintenance of the Council's road network including (but not limited to):

- *gravel - quartz, sandstone, limestone and other*
- *quarry products - crushed rock, aggregate, beaching and other*
- *concrete products – pipes, box culverts, endwalls, wingwalls, pits and other*
- *bituminous products – emulsion, cold mix asphalt*
- *polymer binding agents and dust suppressant products*
- *concrete supply and cartage*
- *cartage rates for delivery of roadmaking materials and products*

This is a panel contract with the intent that successful tenderers would have a list of products at defined prices available for Council staff to use for the maintenance of the Council's road network as required.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Awards the panel contract of Contract C130 2025/26 – Supply and Delivery of Road Making Materials to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Allstone Quarriesb. AP Earthmovingc. Boral Construction Materialsd. Central Vic Precaste. Colas Australia Groupf. Downer EDIg. EB Mawsonsh. Forest Springsi. Fulton Hoganj. Gravel Lockk. Gregs Diggingl. Harril (Coburn)m. Reeves Earthmovingn. Unyte Southerno. Whitfield Excavations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to sign the Contract documents on behalf of Council.3. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to approve payments to the Contractor for undertaking the works associated with the Contract.4. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to approve all variations under the Contract.5. Notes and declares the attachments to this report as confidential on the grounds that it relates to (g) (ii) private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage as described in s 3(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>.

DISCUSSION

This contract is for the establishment of a panel of road making material suppliers which Council could engage when required in a cost-effective manner, at agreed rates. A previous panel contract for road making materials expired on 30 June 2025.

The new contract is structured as a schedule of rates panel contract with a term of three years, with the ability for Council to refresh the panel of suppliers on a yearly basis to enable new suppliers to be included.

At the close of the submission period, fifteen (15) submissions were lodged via Council's electronic tender box and were provided for evaluation to the Tender Evaluation Panel.

The evaluation report (attached) details the submissions received in relation to this tender, the evaluation criteria used to evaluate, and the recommendation of the Evaluation Panel.

The evaluated conforming tender submissions received for Contract C130 2025/26 – Supply and Delivery of Road Making Materials confirmed all tenderers were suitably qualified and experienced to meet the requirements of the invitation and specifications.

It is recommended that Council appoint the recommended tenderers arising from the evaluation for the establishment of a panel. These tenderers would provide the best value to Council, provide the range of services required in different parts of the Shire, and enabling them to be engaged on a case-by-case basis

RELEVANT LAW

The tender process was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the Council's Procurement Policy.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

There are no previous Council Decisions related to this matter.

OPTIONS

Option 1: Award the contract in line with the Officer Recommendation.

Option 2: Not award the contract and return to the market to seek tender responses to complete the works required to remediate flood impacted road infrastructure. This option is not recommended as it is considered the recommended Contractor has the necessary experience and capability to complete the works to a high-quality standard and provides best value to Council in completing the works.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no identified sustainability implications relating to this matter.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable to this report.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

There are no innovation and/or continuous improvement opportunities identified relating to this matter.

COLLABORATION

No opportunities for collaboration were available at the time this tender was released to market.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The awarding of the panel contract to incorporate multiply suppliers will not have any financial implications to Council as the Contract does not guarantee any works or provision of goods and materials. The panel contract provides options for Council to engage contractors for the supply and/or delivery of road making materials as required in an efficient and effective manner.

The supply and/or delivery of road making materials will be sourced from the panel of contractors as required where budgets have been pre-approved via the annual adopted budget.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable to this report.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision

Council Plan 2025-2029

Council's Procurement Policy

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

The contents of the attached report are confidential in order to protect the tender's commercial information.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have signed a Conflict-of-Interest declaration relating to the subject matter of this report. No General or Material Conflict of Interest was identified that impacted on the panel members completing the evaluation process.

Attachments:

- 1. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - Attachment 8.1.5.1 - C 130 - Evaluation Panel Report

8.1.6 CONTRACT AWARD - CONTRACT C134 2025/26 – FRRW - VARIOUS ROAD WORKS – BERRIWILLOCK & WOOMELANG AREAS

Author's Title: Acting Director Infrastructure and Delivery

Directorate: Infrastructure and Delivery

File No: RO/06/47

Relevance to Council Plan 2025 - 2029

Strategic Built and natural environment

Objective: Advocate and plan for, and manage community buildings, roads and transport networks

Council leadership and engagement

Responsible leadership and decision making

PURPOSE

This report is presented to Council to consider the award of Contract C134 2025/26 – FRRW – Various Road Works – Berriwillock & Woomelang Areas relating to the rehabilitation of sections of Berriwillock Woomelang, Berriwillock Springfield, Willangie-Woomelang roads impacted by the October 2022 flooding events.

SUMMARY

The Shire of Buloke has been impacted by severe weather events declared as natural disasters on numerous occasions. The three events that remain in the recovery phase occurred on 6 October 2022 (1037 - Flooding), 24 December 2023 (1096 - Flooding) and 13 February 2024 (1108 – Bushfires and Storms).

The declared events resulted in significant damage to critical infrastructure, in particular Council's road network. The works contained within the Contract include the rehabilitation of flood damage identified on;

- Berriwillock Woomelang Road between Ch 15.015km to Ch 15.755km,
- Berriwillock Springfield Road between Ch 5.045km and Ch 5.845 km and
- Willangie-Woomelang Road between Ch 8.600km and Ch 8.800km.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Award Contract C134 2025/26 – FRRW – Various Road Works – Berriwillock & Woomelang Areas to **Harril Pty Ltd T/A Coburns Earthmoving** for \$900,004 (excluding GST),
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to sign the Contract documents on behalf of Council,
3. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to approve payments to the Contractor for undertaking the works associated with the Contract,
4. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to approve all variations under the Contract, and

5. Notes and declares the attachments to this report as confidential on the grounds that it relates to (g) (ii) private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage as described in s 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

DISCUSSION

At the close of the submission period, nine (9) submissions were lodged via Council's electronic tender box and were provided for evaluation to the Tender Evaluation Panel.

The evaluation report attached details the submissions received in relation to this tender, the evaluation criteria used to evaluate, and the recommendation of the Evaluation Panel.

The evaluated conforming tender submissions received for Contract C134 2025/26 - FRRW – Various Road Works - Berriwillock & Woomelang Areas confirmed all tenderers were suitably qualified and experienced to deliver the works required by the contract in accordance with specifications, however the tender prices ranged considerably.

During the evaluation process Harril Pty Ltd T/A Coburns Earthmoving scored the highest weighted score, they were not the lowest conforming tender price, but their submission was deemed by the evaluation panel to represent the best value for money for all works contained within the contract and therefore was shortlisted as the preferred tenderer.

At the conclusion of the evaluation process the evaluation panel were satisfied Harril Pty Ltd T/A Coburns Earthmoving tender submission showed they have the plant, equipment and personnel to undertake the works and therefore recommended Harril Pty Ltd T/A Coburns Earthmoving be awarded Contract C134 2025/26 - FRRW – Various Road Works - Berriwillock & Woomelang Areas.

Harril Pty Ltd T/A Coburns Earthmoving has extensive experience with similar projects including flood recovery works and has completed works to a high-quality standard for Buloke Shire Council.

RELEVANT LAW

The tender process was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 and Council's Procurement Policy.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

There are no previous Council Decisions related to this matter.

OPTIONS

Option 1: Award the contract in line with the Officer Recommendation.

Option 2: Not award the contract and return to the market to seek tender responses to complete the works required to remediate flood impacted road infrastructure. This option is not recommended as it is considered the recommended Contractor has the necessary experience and capability to complete the works to a high quality standard and provides best value to Council in completing the works.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no identified sustainability implications relating to this matter.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The community will be informed of works to be completed if they are likely to be impacted or inconvenienced.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

There are no innovation and/or continuous improvement opportunities identified relating to this matter.

COLLABORATION

No opportunities for collaboration were available at the time this tender was released to market.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

This Contract forms part of the AGRN-1037 Flood Recovery program. The sections that have been assessed as flood impacted total 1,740 lineal metres, and for the reinstatement of the existing road pavement the assessing authority, DTP has confirmed a total available funding for construction of \$1,262,544 (Berriwillock Woomelang Road \$559,300, Berriwillock Springfield Road \$541,797, Willangie-Woomelang Road \$161,447).

Council recognises Berriwillock Woomelang and Berriwillock Springfield Roads as strategic roads within our road hierarchy (Willangie-Woomelang Road will remain at 4m wide seal), and determined to undertake upgrade works to widen the seal width to 6.2 metres as part of the scope of this Contract.

As per the DRFA requirements the funding is limited to sections where flood damage has been formally identified, and Council is required to find alternative funding for upgrade and non-flood related damage. The upgrade of the 1,540 lineal metres is estimated as \$194,393 to widen these same sections to 6.2 m seal.

Buloke Shires Council's commitment to the upgrade component of the contract is the sum of \$194,393 to be funded from the \$1.9 million 2025/2026 road rehabilitation budget and will rehabilitate and widen the 1,540 meters on Berriwillock Woomelang and Berriwillock Springfield Roads.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable to this report.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision

Council Plan 2025-2029

Council's Procurement Policy

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

The contents of the attached report are confidential in order to protect the tender's commercial information.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have signed a Conflict of Interest declaration relating to the subject matter of this report. No General or Material Conflict of Interest was identified that impacted on the panel members completing the evaluation process.

Attachments:

1. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - Attachment 8.1.6.1 - C 134 - Evaluation Panel Report

8.1.7 TEMPORARY INCREASE TO CEO FINANCIAL DELEGATION

Author's Title: Acting Director Infrastructure and Delivery

Directorate: Infrastructure and Delivery

File No: PE/02/01

Relevance to Council Plan 2025 - 2029

Strategic Objective: Council leadership and engagement
Objectives: Responsible leadership and decision making

PURPOSE

To consider the temporary increase to the Chief Executive Officer's financial delegation to enable the award of contracts to facilitate the efficient reinstatement of Council's flood impacted road network.

SUMMARY

The Shire of Buloke was impacted by severe weather events on numerous occasions on 6 October 2022 (1037 - Flooding), 24 December 2023 (1096 - Flooding) and 13 February 2024 (1108 – Storm).

The declared events resulted in significant damage to critical infrastructure, in particular to the Council's road network.

Council has a fit for purpose Procurement Policy which enables staff to procure works, goods and services as required to deliver Council's services and projects. As detailed within the Procurement Policy, various Council Officers and the CEO can also approve spending and award contracts within the prescribed financial delegations set via Council resolution.

The current financial delegation provided to the CEO is \$300,000 excluding GST, for any procurement and contract award over this value the decision to award a contract must be made by resolution of Council.

There is an opportunity identified to reduce the procurement timeframe by up to 7 weeks via the temporary increase to the financial delegation provided to the CEO to a recommended financial delegation limit of \$1,500,000 excluding GST.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Increase the Financial Delegation provided to the Chief Executive Officer from \$300,000 (excluding GST) to \$1,500,000 (excluding GST).
2. Authorised the Chief Executive Officer to exercise the increased financial delegation of \$1,500,000 (excluding GST) for the procurement of goods, services and works only when the following conditions are satisfied:
 - a. contracts and works are directly related to projects associated with the 2022 and 2023 flood events, namely:
 - i. AGRN 1037 (October 2022 Flooding Event).
 - ii. AGRN 1096 (December 2023 Flooding Event).

- b. Council Flood Support Fund Approved Works Schedule (AGRN 1037, AGRN 1096, AGRN 1108).
- c. Funded flood studies and Laser imaging Detection and Ranging projects (funded due to the 2022 and 2023 flood events).
- 3. Receive a report at the next available Council Meeting clearly identifying each Contract awarded via the exercising of the temporary increased financial delegation.
- 4. Authorises the temporary increase of the CEO financial delegation up to 30 June 2027, or earlier by resolution of Council.

DISCUSSION

The process for establishing the extent of reinstatement works eligible for funding via DRFA has been a long and protracted exercise, which has largely resulted in Council only recently starting to seek tender submissions and award contracts to deliver the approved scope of flood reinstatement works for our road network. While the time delay to get to this stage has been frustrating, the Flood Recovery team is looking at opportunities to progress the procurement and award of contracts to enable road reinstatement to be completed as quickly as practicable.

The current timeframes relating to the procurement and award of contract is set out as follows;

1. Finalisation of Request for Tender (RFT) documentation prior to advertising (2 weeks)
2. Release tender to market and invite submissions from contractors (4 weeks)
3. Evaluation report including recommendation (minimum 2 weeks)
4. Council Briefing Report (ranges from 1 to 5 weeks depending on when the next available Council Briefings is scheduled – this is typically impacted by misalignment of procurement stages above).
5. Council Meeting Report (2 weeks following Council Briefing).

The opportunity identified is to reduce the procurement timeframe by up to 7 weeks via the temporary increase to the financial delegation provided to the CEO to a recommended financial delegation limit of \$1,500,000 excluding GST.

It is proposed the temporary increase to the financial delegation provided to the CEO be conditional and limited to its application, with the suggested conditions and limitations outlined below;

- Financial delegation provided to the CEO of \$1,500,000 excluding GST is only applicable to contracts and works directly related to projects associated with the 2022 and 2023 flood events, namely;
 - AGRN 1037 (October 2022 Flooding Event)
 - AGRN 1096 (December 2023 Flooding Event)
 - Council Flood Support Fund Approved Works Schedule (AGRN 1037, AGRN 1096, AGRN 1108)
 - Funded flood studies and lidar projects (funded due to the 2022 and 2023 flood events)
 - A report is presented at the next available Council Meeting clearly identifying each Contract awarded via the exercising of the temporary increased financial delegation.
 - The temporary increase of the CEO financial delegation will expire by 30 June 2027, or earlier by resolution of Council.

RELEVANT LAW

The tender processes were conducted in accordance with the requirements of the

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- Council's Procurement Policy

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

There are no previous Council Decisions related to this matter.

OPTIONS**Option 1:**

Council provides conditional approval for the CEO financial delegation to be increased from \$300,000 excluding GST to \$1,500,000 excluding GST.

Option 2:

Council does not approve the conditional increase to the CEO financial delegation.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no identified sustainability implications relating to this matter.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable to this report.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

There are no innovation and/or continuous improvement opportunities identified relating to this matter.

COLLABORATION

No opportunities for collaboration were available at the time this tender was released to market.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

There would be no financial implications if the financial delegations were increased as detailed within this report.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable to this report.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council's Procurement Policy

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

The consideration of this matter in an open Council Meeting ensures Council decisions are made in full view of the community.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No officer declared an interest under the *Local Government Act 2020* in the preparation of this report.

Attachments: Nil

8.1.8 STATUS OF THE MUNICIPAL MONITOR'S REPORT AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Author's Title: Acting Manager Governance

Directorate: Corporate and Organisational Performance

File No: GR/15/03

Relevance to Council Plan 2025 - 2029

Strategic Council leadership and engagement

Objective: Responsible leadership and decision making

PURPOSE

To provide the Council with the Municipal Monitor's Final Report Recommendations – Implementation Plan and Status Report.

SUMMARY

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 the Council in the coming months with information to be provided every six months (July and December) for a period of two years.

The report prepared by the Municipal Monitor to the Minister for Local Government (Attachment A) provided a number of findings and conclusions.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes 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 Attachment A to this report and that a copy of this report is available on the Local Government Victoria website.
2. Submits the Municipal Monitor's Final Report Recommendations – Implementation Plan and Status Report Attachment B to this report to the Minister for Local Government by 31 December 2025.

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.

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 report prepared by the Municipal Monitor to the Minister for Local Government (Attachment 1) 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.

Attachment 2 provides further detail in relation to the implementation of the various recommendations made by the Municipal Monitor, Peter Harriott.

Of the sixteen recommendations made, six are complete; nine are progressing, and one has not yet commenced.

RELEVANT LAW

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

Not applicable.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

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

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

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

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

The presentation of the Municipal Monitor's Final Report Recommendations – Implementation Plan and Status 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 at 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 8.1.8.1 - Buloke Final Municipal Monitor Report
2. Attachment 8.1.8.2 - Municipal Monitors Recommendations Implementation Status Report 31 December 2025



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 9th of May 2024 for a period up to the 31st 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 km2**. 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 Berriwillock, 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**

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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 Council's 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



**Municipal Monitor Final Report Recommendations
Implementation Plan and Status Report
29 January 2025**

Recommendations Status Report as at 31 December 2025		
No.	Recommendations	Status
i.	Ensures that adherence to organisational values is embedded in annual staff performance reviews.	Progressing 31 December 2025
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.	Completed 31 December 2024 Kate Oliver Maddocks General induction to the role and responsibilities of a Councillors <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting procedure & proposed new Governance Rules• Model Code of Conduct

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Biannual Interest Returns <p>13 November 2024 Natalie Walker Head of Sector Services MAV Establishing effective working relationships with officers<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The role of the CEO and council staff (repeat of Kate Oliver but the practicality of this)• The difference between the role of CEO and councillor (repeat of Kate Oliver but the practicality of this)• Legislative prohibition on directing council staff (repeat of Kate Oliver but the practicality of this)• Managing councillor and staff interactions• Skills on a building an effective working relationship with officers<p>12 & 13 December 2025 MAV Mayoral Training Program (Melbourne) Mayor and Deputy Mayor<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local Government Act, associated regulations• Behaviours• Dealing with Conflict• Chairing Meetings• Leadership• Establishing a Peer Support Network<p>Staff and Councillor Interaction Policy Adopted – September 2024 Councillor Internal Resolution Procedure Adopted – August 2025</p></p></p>
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iii.	Provides ongoing training in relation to the benefits of good behaviour and the consequences of poor behaviour	Progressing Action for 2026	For consideration as part of the Councillor Professional Development Training for 2026.
iv.	Adjusts its meeting times and locations to ensure a safe environment is provided for councillors and staff traveling to these meetings.	Completed 20 November 2024	<p>Councillor Briefings are now held monthly on rotation in each of the ten different towns within the Shire, on the first Wednesday of the month at 5:00pm. Where a 2nd briefing was previously scheduled, Council now in 2025, has replaced this additional briefing with dedicated/topical workshops during business hours, for the development of Council's key strategic planning documents. This structure has worked well for staff providing input into these processes.</p> <p>Consideration of holding Briefings earlier was considered and trialled however, to allow Council the opportunity to address matters before Council, consider matters in accordance with the Community Engagement Policy and engage with community organisations and key stakeholders within the 10 different towns within the municipality, the 5.00pm commencement time for Briefings was retained. Tyranny of distance across the municipality continues to be a factor with assemblies of staff and Councillors alike.</p> <p>Council Meetings are open to the Public and are held on the third Wednesday of each month commencing at 7.00pm. For the above reasons described for Briefings, Council has retained the 7.00pm start time for Council Meetings to allow for travel times.</p> <p>Council will on an annual basis continue to review the timing of its Briefings and Council Meetings to ensure that meeting times and locations provide for a safe environment for councillors and staff traveling to these meetings.</p>

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.	Progressing 30 June 2026	All staff gender equality surveying was undertaken in May 2025, results were delivered in September 2025. Officers are focusing attention on gender equality reporting and review/updating of Council's GEAP ahead of the due date for compliance in May 2026. A Staff feedback survey has been undertaken at 2 All Staff meetings held in 2024 and again in June 2025. Another survey will be offered to staff in December 2025 at the end of year staff gathering. A more detailed staff survey will be undertaken through Council's HR platform in 2026, with outcomes and actions to be communicated at the All-Staff Meeting scheduled for mid-2026.
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.	Not yet commenced	Council's new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement was endorsed by the Fair Work Commission in January 2025. Following this, Council have undertaken internal consultation and review processes to update and develop a new People and Culture Policy Manual. This will form the basis of any future retention plans in conjunction with Council's workforce plan (due for review under new CEO) and the reviewed and updated GEAP (due for completion by May 2026).
vii.	Conducts a review of its process for recording and responding to operational requests to ensure an efficient process which	Progressing 31 March 2026	Management is currently reviewing the Customer Requests process to support Councillors. The process review includes the processing, follow up and reporting on Customer Requests raised via the Mayor and Councillors.

	supports councillors to concentrate on strategic matters.		A new Councillor information portal was developed in November 2024 and provides improved access to information and updates for Councillors. The function of a newly introduced 'query' form in the portal allows Councillors to submit any questions/concerns in the 1 space to ensure a smoother process for information gathering and sharing in a transparent manner with all Councillors.
viii.	Considers consolidating indoor and outdoor staff locations to assist with communication, service and project delivery, and overall Council performance.	Progressing	Council is considering ways in which improved and consolidated working environments for officers can be achieved, given the challenges of distance across the municipality. Technology has played a role initially, with televisions installed in offices and depots with internally broadcasted information to all locations to improve communications between indoor and outdoor staff.
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.	Completed 5 November 2025	<p>Since the October 2024 General Election and the subsequent Councillor Induction Program, Councillors have been on a journey and contributed to Council's overall strategic planning requirements.</p> <p>Council's strategic plans are developed in accordance with an integrated approach to planning and reporting driven by the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>.</p> <p>The Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework outlines Councils commitment to building a strategic planning and reporting system that is connected, inter-dependent, and outcomes focused.</p> <p>The framework is designed to give the Council and the community a clear picture of the Vision, what will deliver to get there, and the resources needed to deliver. This will then be reported to the community via the Annual Report.</p> <p>The work undertaken by Council, and the adoption by Council is as follows:</p> <p>Building a better Buloke 2040 - Community Vision File No: CM/13/09</p>

			<p>5 November 2025</p> <p>Council Plan 2025 – 2029 File No: CM/13/09 18 June 2025</p> <p>Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025 – 2035 File No: PH/14/08 29 October 2025</p> <p>Financial Plan 2025 - 2035 File No: FM/15/01 29 October 2025</p> <p>Asset Plan 2025 - 2035 File No: GO/05/02 29 October 2025</p> <p>Budget 2025/26 File No: FM/05/02 18 June 2025</p> <p>Revenue and Rating Plan File No: CM/14/20 18 June 2025</p> <p>In developing both the Budget 2025/26 and Financial Plan 2025 – 2035, Council looked to strengthen its financial sustainability in accordance with Section 101 Financial Management Principles of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> by commencing to incorporate the recommendation of the External Review of Buloke Shire Council's Current and Future Financial Position Report as prepared by MIK2 Consulting Services.</p>
x.	Adopts an improved Community Grants Policy in accordance with the previous VAGO recommendation and	Progressing April 2026	The Community Support Policy is to be reviewed by April 2026.

	continues to work on other policy improvements including exhibition of new Governance Rules.		<p>Council reviewed the Draft Governance Rules at its meeting held 18 December 2024. Council undertook a nine-week community consultation process.</p> <p>Council has been waiting for the release of the Model Governance Rules to finalise this matter.</p>
xi.	Ensures it has adequate processes in place to record and manage the completion of Internal Audit reports.	Completed May 2025	<p>Council appointed AFS & Associates Pty Ltd as its Internal Audit Services provider commencing January 2025.</p> <p>In engaging AFS & Associates Pty Ltd, Council was looking for an effective internal audit function. The internal audit function needs to be able to focus on managements intention and progress in implementing the agreed recommendations.</p> <p>AFS & Associates meet with individuals that have a responsibility for implementing past recommendations to assess the progress. This is completed annually, or more often as agreed. Progress is reported to the Audit & Risk Committee. In addition, AFS & Associates also hold close-out meetings with key stakeholders to discuss the key findings and management comments. This ensures everyone agrees and actions the recommendations.</p> <p>Internal Audit status reporting will be provided to the Audit & Risk Committee on a quarterly basis. Timeframes are also set for the provision of a draft report and the production of a final report.</p>
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.	Progressing 30 June 2026	Council is nearing the final stages of a Regional Transformation project where the replacement of Council's current system will be replaced with a new Asset Management system – Asset Vision. This project is a joint initiative with Gannawarra and Swan Hill Councils that is in the early stages of set up and implementation. As part of the Rural Transformation project, a thorough review and analysis of Council's needs for asset management and data

			<p>management was undertaken throughout early 2025 ahead of the decision to commit to Asset Vision.</p> <p>The project is now in the delivery phase, with Council providing road related data to commence the data migration component.</p> <p>The migration and implementation of the road related asset data into the Asset Management system will be ongoing until at least the end of the financial year.</p>
xiii.	Implements improved governance and financial accounting practices for the Charlton Caravan Park.	Progressing 30 June 2026	<p>Consultation is ongoing with the stakeholders involved to formalize this arrangement.</p> <p>Council is working directly with the Caravan Park Management to support improved governance and oversight where possible.</p>
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.	Progressing 30 June 2026	<p>At this stage no further action undertaken. In developing the Financial Plan 2025 – 2035, Council looked to strengthen its financial sustainability in accordance with Section 101 Financial Management Principles of the Local Government Act 2020 by commencing to incorporate the recommendation of the External Review of Buloke Shire Council's Current and Future Financial Position Report as prepared by MIK2 Consulting Services. Council will review its asset holdings to identify surplus assets not essential to service delivery. It is unlikely that Council will be seeking to add additional land holdings to its asset base when the External Review of Buloke Shire Council's Current and Future Financial Position Report advised Council of asset rationalisation.</p> <p>It is noted that the level of assets owned by Buloke Shire Council is above average. This represents an opportunity for Council in the future to review its asset holdings and determine if any assets are surplus to its needs to deliver services to the community.</p>

			<p>Asset rationalisation may then occur to improve Councils overall financial sustainability position.</p>
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.	Completed 7 November 2025	<p>Council has written to the following in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">the ongoing and unacceptable delays in receiving adequate flood recovery funding from the Victorian State Government following the 2022 and 2023 flood events.The concerns over the deteriorating condition of the local roads, which pose serious safety risks to residents, school buses, contractors, and emergency services.requesting the immediate release of the full funding required to complete all outstanding flood recovery works. <p>Addressees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">State Government Minister for Roads and Road Safety The Hon. Melissa Horne MPState Shadow Minister for Roads and Road Safety and Shadow Minister for Emergency Services, Mr Danny O'Brien MPState Member for Mildura, Jade Benham MPFederal Member for Mallee, Dr Anne Webster MPMunicipal Association of Victoria

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australian Local Government Association• Rural Councils Victoria• Gannawarra Shire Council• Loddon Shire Council• Mildura Rural City Council• Northern Grampians Shire Council• Swan Hill Rural City Council• Yarriambiack Shire Council
xvi.	Write to the Federal Government requesting an increase to the Federal Assistance Grants for Rural Councils.	Completed 31 October 2025	<p>Correspondence sent to The Federal Treasurer, The Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP In relation to having a Financial Assistance Grants Indexation Review.</p> <p>Council requests that the Federal Government review the indexation methodology of the Financial Assistance Grants to assist small rural councils to continue supporting their communities in financially challenging times.</p> <p>Council also calls on the Federal Government for the immediate restoration of the Financial Assistance Grants back to one (1) per cent of Commonwealth tax revenue. This increase to rural councils across Australia, those mostly impacted by limited revenue opportunities, to continue to deliver essential services and</p>

			maintain infrastructure without continued financial constraints to our communities.
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.	Progressing 31 July 2025 31 December 2025 31 July 2026 31 December 2026	Council to report to the Minister every six months for a period of two years in July and December of each year. Report sent to the Minister 7 November 2025. Next report to be submitted by 31 December 2025.
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.	No further action required	No further action required from Buloke Shire Council.

8.2 FINANCIAL REPORTS

8.2.1 QUARTERLY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - SEPTEMBER 2025

Author's Title: Manager Financial Strategy

Directorate: Corporate and Organisational Performance

File No: FM/02/08

Relevance to Council Plan 2025 - 2029

Strategic Council leadership and engagement

Objective: Responsible leadership and decision making

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present to Council the financial reports for the period ended 30 September 2025 (Quarter 1) in accordance with the requirements of Section 97 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

SUMMARY

Council adopted the 2025/2026 Annual Budget at the Council meeting held 18 June 2025.

The attached reports include a comparison of the operating and capital works budgets with actuals for the period ended 30 September 2025 as well as the cash flow statement and balance sheet. Council's overall result as per the income statement for the quarter ending 30 September 2025 stands at \$8.917 million and capital works expended stands at \$2.232 million.

This report was previously brought to Council as a confidential item to the November Confidential Agenda, however as the report did not warrant confidential information and sought only to be endorsed for the following public meeting – the item was deferred by Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

1. Receives and notes the Quarterly Financial Report for period ending 30 September 2025.
2. Receives and notes the Capital Works Statement for period ending 30 September 2025.

DISCUSSION

COMPREHENSIVE INCOME STATEMENT

Total operating income is \$1.216 million lower than the year-to-date budget while capital income is \$665,000 below the year-to-date budget.

Total operating expenditure has a favorable variance of \$27K when compared to the year-to-date budget.

Overall, after 3 months there is an unfavorable variance of \$1.855 million, detailed explanation for which is as per the table below.

Detail	Commentary
Income	
Rates and charges	Against YTD budget has a favorable variance of \$38K.
Statutory fees and fines	Close to YTD budget.
User fees	Unfavorable variance of approx. \$25K due to timing difference in income from services majorly around compliance and public health and well-being.
Grants – operating	Unfavorable variance of \$1.232 million YTD due to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timing difference of the 50% balance of Financial Assistance Grants (approx.\$4 million) receipt (first 50% received in FY24/25) Non-recognition of Council Flood Support Fund of \$300K from advance. Income will be recognised when acquittals are approved on a quarterly basis.
Grants - capital	Unfavorable variance due to delays in project delivery, including Birchip RSL, Tiny Towns, and the Watchem and Wooroonook septic replacement projects, which has resulted in income not yet being recognised.
Contributions	Favorable variance of \$93K is reported due to additional administration support received under the Essential Services and Volunteers Fund.
Other income	Unfavorable variance of \$88K is mainly attributed to lower-than-anticipated interest income on investments (approximately \$100K). This has been partially offset by fuel tax credits, funding received from the Department of Transport and Planning for the LED Transformation project (\$15K), and reimbursements from community groups leasing Council properties for utility expenses.
Expenditure	
Employee costs	Favorable variance to date of \$35K due to internal staff associated with floods recovery works being capitalised along with minor vacancies within the organisation.
Materials and services	Favorable variance of approximately \$247K is mainly due to an underspend on works related to the February 2024 storm event, partially offset by minor increases in expenditure across other operational areas such as asset management.
Depreciation and Amortization	Depreciation for the quarter is over budget due to the capitalisation of assets at year end.
Right of use assets	Lease cost (principal component) close to YTD budget.
Finance costs	Interest on light vehicles leased is close to YTD budget.
Other expenses	Unfavorable variance of approx. \$29K due to timing difference of internal audit fees and council contributions being paid out.

Detail	Commentary
Assets	
Trade and other receivables	These have increased due to rates being raised in August 2025.
Cash and cash equivalents	Cash and cash equivalents stand at \$25.936 million, which when compared to year ended June 2025 decreased by \$5.192 million.
Other assets	Change due to prepayments at year end.
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	Adjusted for depreciation, and capital expenditure to date is included as work in progress.
Liabilities	
Trade and other payables	These have decreased by approx. \$1.355 million as credit and payroll accruals recorded at year end as well as creditor due post year end have been paid off.
Trust funds and deposits	Includes the fire services levy raised that will be payable to the State government.
Contract and other liabilities	Increased due to external grants received – Roads to Recovery = \$309K Regional Workers Accommodation (Cabins) = \$326K and Wycheeproof Wetlands = \$93K.
Provisions	A major decrease due to payout of LSL (approx. 25K) netted off by YTD accruals.
Lease liabilities	No change.
Equity	
Accumulated surplus	Adjusted for last year's surplus and current quarter earnings.
Reserves	No change.

STATEMENT OF CAPITAL WORKS

The Adopted Capital Program for 2025/26 is \$46.735 million.

(in '000)	Adopted program	Revised program*
New projects	32,812	32,812
Carry forward from FY2025	13,923	13,740
TOTAL	46,735	46,552

*Post accounts being audited for year-end

The total Capital Program to be reported now stands at \$46.552 million.

(in '000)	Revised Program	Expenditure	Variance
Projects	15,149	517	14,632
Floods	31,403	1,715	29,688
TOTAL	46,552	2,232	44,320

Detail	Commentary
Land and land improvements	Minor unfavorable variance due to no budget allocated for FY2026 (Sea Lake Housing Development).
Building improvements	Favorable variance as items under building improvements and replacement of public toilet facility at Watchem Park are being progressed as per timeline.
Plant and equipment	Favorable variance as the heavy plant and fleet strategy as agreed in budget development process is in progress.
Infrastructure	
Roads	Favorable variance caused majorly due to flood works not being undertaken as most of them are in procurement/approval phase.
Footpaths and cycleways	Favorable variance due to program being developed.
Drainage	Favorable variance due to program still under development.
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	Favorable variance due to delay in delivery of major projects such as - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aquatic Renewals, where priority projects are being finalized • Birchip Netball Court Remediation, as expert advice is being sought to assess the issues affecting Netball Court, to determine the next actions required to restore court 2 and • Tiny Towns, being in progress with signage installation to be done in November 2025
Parks, open space and streetscapes	Favorable variance due to - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delay in delivery of major projects including Septic Replacements at Watchem which are pending procurement evaluation outcomes. • Regional Workers Accommodation (Cabins) is being carried out as per the timeline while other projects are in procurement or final completion stages.
Aerodromes	Favorable variance caused due to projects still being development phase.

RELEVANT LAW

The reports are consistent with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council has adopted the budget for FY2025/26 on 18 June 2025.

OPTIONS

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable.

COLLABORATION

The attached reports and comments have been prepared in collaboration with various Council officers.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The reports provide a snapshot of Council's financial performance for the first quarter of the year, noting that there is no impact on the adopted budget.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

The report is an opportunity for Council to compare its financial performance against its annual budget and is in accordance with its Council Plan 2025-2029 commitment to manage its budgets responsibly to achieve long-term financial sustainability.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

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

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

Attachments: 1. Attachment 8.2.1.1 - Quarterly Financial Statements Sept 2025



COMPREHENSIVE INCOME STATEMENT

For quarter ending September 2025

	Full Year Budget	Jul 2025 - Sep 2025			Full Year Budget
	Approved	Approved	Actuals	Variance	Variance
400 - Income/Revenue					
1 · Rates & Charges	15,905,298	15,845,298	15,883,145	37,847	(22,153)
2 · Statutory fees and fines	123,800	30,950	28,519	(2,431)	(95,281)
3 · User fees	498,750	106,188	81,355	(24,832)	(417,395)
4 · Grants - operating	9,455,512	2,673,598	1,441,142	(1,232,456)	(8,014,370)
6 · Grants - Capital	35,304,000	665,000	-	(665,000)	(35,304,000)
7 · Contributions	607,550	50,375	143,628	93,253	(463,922)
8 · Other Income	1,348,900	243,164	155,571	(87,593)	(1,193,329)
Total Income/Revenue	63,243,810	19,614,572	17,733,360	(1,881,212)	(45,510,450)
600 - Operating Expense					
1 · Employee Costs	13,415,316	2,818,785	2,783,357	35,428	10,631,959
2 · Materials and services	10,817,077	3,562,085	3,314,586	247,499	7,502,491
3 · Bad and doubtful debts	60,000	-	-	-	60,000
4 · Depreciation	8,852,407	2,213,102	2,446,730	(233,628)	6,405,677
5 · Right of use assets	464,564	116,141	109,510	6,631	355,054
6 · Finance costs - Leases	54,203	13,551	13,989	(438)	40,214
7 · Other expenses	747,285	119,296	148,122	(28,826)	599,163
Total Operating Expense	34,410,853	8,842,960	8,816,295	26,665	25,594,557
Operating Net Surplus/(Deficit)	28,832,958	10,771,612	8,917,065	(1,854,547)	(19,915,893)



BALANCE SHEET

As at 30 September 2025

	30 June 2025	30 September 2025	Movement
Assets			
Current Assets			
Trade and other receivables	3,811,406	20,055,612	16,244,206
Cash & Cash Equivalents	31,128,433	25,936,379	(5,192,054.13)
Inventories	95,739	95,739	-
Other assets	553,247	302,677	(250,569.74)
Total Current Assets	35,588,826	46,390,408	10,801,582
Non-Current Assets			
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	306,648,161	306,437,787	(210,373.93)
Right-of-use assets	760,948	760,948	-
Investments in associates	232,916	212,916	-
Total Non-Current Assets	307,622,024	307,411,650	(210,373.93)
Total Assets	343,210,850	353,802,058	10,591,208
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	2,459,972	1,105,068	(1,354,904.27)
Trust funds and deposits	426,994	2,746,814	2,319,820
Contract and other liabilities	3,149,880	3,872,176	722,296
Provisions	1,787,650	1,774,582	(13,068.77)
Lease Liability	381,938	381,938	-
Total Current Liabilities	8,206,434	9,880,577	1,674,143
Non-current Liabilities			
Provisions	2,533,103	2,533,103	-
Lease Liability	449,651	449,651	-
Total Non-current Liabilities	2,982,754	2,982,754	-
Total Liabilities	11,189,188	12,863,331	1,674,143
Net Assets	332,021,662	340,938,727	8,917,065
Equity			
Accumulated surplus	131,464,078	140,381,143	8,917,065
Reserves	200,557,584	200,557,584	200,557,584
Total Equity	332,021,662	340,938,727	209,474,649



STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
For the quarter ending September 2025

	<i>Inflows / (Outflows)</i>
Cash flows from operating activities	
Rates and charges	2,744,338
Statutory fees and fines	81,355
User fees	1,426,142
Grants - operating	737,296
Grants - capital	143,628
Contributions - monetary	65,075
Interest received	35,102
Trust funds and deposits taken	(164,715)
Other receipts	(3,527,220)
Net GST refund / payment	(4,229,578)
Employee costs	-
Materials and services	-
Short-term, low value and variable lease payments	-
Trust funds and deposits repaid	-
Other payments	(148,122)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	(2,836,698)
Cash flows from investing activities	
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(2,231,856)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	-
Payments for investments	-
Proceeds from sale of investments	-
Loans and advances made	-
Payments of loans and advances	-
Net cash provided by/ (used in) investing activities	(2,231,856)
Cash flows from financing activities	
Finance costs	-
Proceeds from borrowings	-
Repayment of borrowings	-
Interest paid - lease liability	(13,989)
Repayment of lease liabilities	(109,510)
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities	(123,499)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash & cash equivalents	(5,192,054)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	31,128,433
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	25,936,379



CAPITAL WORKS STATEMENT
For the quarter ended 30 September 2025

Account	Full Year Budget	YTD Actual	Variance	Status	Comments
Land improvements					
5022 - Sea Lake Housing Development	0.00	7,134.09	(7,134.09)	Complete	Works completed with final work testing to be done in by mid-November 2025. One final invoice yet to come. Process for sale of lots to commence planning in Q2
Total Land improvements	0.00	7,134.09	(7,134.09)		
Building improvements					
5040 - Building improvements	232,047.00	10,640.40	221,406.60	On track	Program project summary includes: 1. Charlton amenity block design completed. Request for Tenders process commenced. 2. Donald Police camp plumbing investigations completed, remediation works to be quoted, awaiting additional quotes for re-stumping. 3. Donald office toilet replacement awarded, plumber to confirm date of works. 4. Donald hall toilet upgrades, building permit received, procurement for plumbing works underway.
5042 - Replacement of existing public toilet facility at Watchem Park	160,000.00	0.00	160,000.00	Not started	We currently exploring a range of options to deliver new public toilet facilities in Watchem that best meet community needs. Once this review is complete, the preferred approach will be communicated, and project delivery will commence in early 2026.
Total Building improvements	392,047.00	10,640.40	381,406.60		
Plant, machinery and equipment					
5060 - Plant, machinery and equipment	2,089,111.00	3,840.91	2,085,270.09	Delay Risk	Minor plant replacement items being procured including the replacement of water tanks for road construction plant. Major plant replacement on hold pending the outcome of the Heavy Plant strategic review.
Total Plant, machinery and equipment	2,089,111.00	3,840.91	2,085,270.09		
Fixtures, fittings and furniture					
5065 - Fixtures, fittings and furniture	88,771.00	29,550.98	59,220.02	On track	Wycheeproof hall split system replacement complete (older south side units to remain in service), split system upgrades to other buildings to be assessed with remaining funds.
Total Fixtures, fittings and furniture	88,771.00	29,550.98	59,220.02		
Computers and telecommunications					
5070 - Computers and Information Technology equipment	169,534.00	0.00	169,534.00	On track	Purchasing and rollout of Council's computer renewal program underway and on track.
5075 - Library assets	9,486.00	0.00	9,486.00	On track	Priority renewal list being developed.
Total Computers and telecommunications	179,020.00	0.00	179,020.00		

Roads					
5085 - Second temporary levee Donald	718,729.00	12,968.01	705,760.99	On track	Tender documents being prepared to advertise prior to Christmas
5083 - Safer local roads	2,000,000.00	0.00	2,000,000.00	On track	Currently exploring a range of options to deliver new public toilet facilities in Watchem that best meet community needs. Once this review is complete, the preferred approach will be communicated, and project delivery will commence in early 2026.
5082 - Resheet program	1,250,000.00	117,112.88	1,132,887.12	On track	Program being developed.
5086 - Jeffcott Road Rehabilitation & final seal	350,000.00	0.00	350,000.00	Delay Risk	Finalising contract to recommence works. On ground works programmed for after the completion of the harvest season.
5088 - Rehabilitation works	1,900,000.00	0.00	1,900,000.00	On hold	Program on hold - will be used to compliment flood recovery program (for remediation of road defects adjoining the approved flood defects).
5080 - Rehabilitation and flood works	31,403,000.00	1,714,876.28	29,688,123.72	Funding Risk/ Delay Risk	Flood Recovery Program (AGRN 1037 and AGRN 1096) Rehabilitation works being procured as funding approval received 1. Major Patch Contract Complete 2. Laen Litchfield Road Rehabilitation Complete 3. Warne Road, Berriwillock Birchip, Nullawil North Rehabilitation Complete Other works are in the procurement process to begin rehabilitation works for: 1. Nullawil Meridian Road, Nullawil South Road, Berriwillock 2. Springfield Road, Rennys Rd, Berriwillock Woomelang, Watchupna West
5081 - Reseal program	1,291,629.00	7,550.40	1,284,078.60	On track	Program being developed
5084 - Major patching	100,000.00	0.00	100,000.00	On hold	Program on hold - will be used to compliment flood recovery program (for remediation of road defects adjoining the approved flood defects).
Total Roads	39,013,358.00	1,852,507.57	37,160,850.43		
Bridges					
5200 - Charlton Swing Bridge Refurbishment (timber deck replacement)	30,000.00	0.00	30,000.00	On track	Works commenced and programmed to be completed by end of November.
Total Bridges	30,000.00	0.00	30,000.00		
Footpaths and cycleways					
5220 - Footpath and cycleways	133,222.00	0.00	133,222.00	On track	Program being developed
Total Footpaths and cycleways	133,222.00	0.00	133,222.00		
Drainage					
5250 - Drainage Works	50,000.00	0.00	50,000.00	On track	Program of works to be developed
5251 - Nullawil - West/East drainage (Calder Highway Pipeworks)	152,000.00	0.00	152,000.00	On track	Design being reviewed
5270 - Kerb and Channel	150,000.00	0.00	150,000.00	On track	Program of works to be developed
Total Drainage	352,000.00	0.00	352,000.00		
Recreational, leisure and community facilities					
5280 - Aquatic facilities renewal works	100,000.00	0.00	100,000.00	On track	Priority renewal list being developed.
5284 - Flagpole upgrades	18,897.15	1,100.00	17,797.15	On track	Works at Birchip, wycheproof and Sea Lake completed
5285 - Electric vehicle charger Birchip or Charlton	54,757.00	0.00	54,757.00	Delay Risk	Works at Donald and Charlton are pending light installations
5281 - Birchip netball court remediation	500,000.00	1,090.00	498,910.00	Delay Risk	Project on hold pending outcome from the for CV Greenhouse alliance tender process.
5286 - Tiny Towns	332,923.00	2,827.20	330,095.80	On track	Expert advice is being sought to assess the issues affecting Netball Court, to determine the next actions required to restore court 2.
5283 - Recreational vehicle dump point	35,728.00	3,151.20	32,576.80	On track	Project locations include - Culgoa - works completed Berriwillock - works at early stage Mandalay - works not started Watchem works under procurement and Nullawil works under progress
5282 - Birchip recreation reserve generator	82,171.00	1,668.80	80,502.20	On track	Lake Tchum dump point will be installed prior to Christmas
Total Recreational, leisure and community facilities	1,124,476.15	9,837.20	1,114,638.95		Procurement process completed and contractor engaged.

Parks, open space and streetscapes					
5420 - Wycheper Recreation Reserve public toilets	92,798.00	2,179.20	90,618.80	On track	Scope of works finalised and contractor appointed. Works to start in mid November
5411 - Watchem septic replacement *	100,756.00	2,520.00	98,236.00	On track	Request for Tenders complete. Evaluation currently being finalised
5410 - Regional worker accommodation (Cabins)	1,605,131.00	21,594.40	1,583,536.60	On track	Contractor appointed. Frames complete. Cabins will be progressively installed by late November / December
5416 - Playspace (Berri, Birchip, Charlton, Donald & Wycheper)	0.00	38,599.50	(38,599.50)	Completed pending minor defects	Contract works have reached practical completion, some minor outstanding items still to be rectified. Grant acquittal has been completed.
5413 - Birchip streetscape lighting	197,487.00	1,375.31	196,111.69	On track	RFQ is being sought from local contractors.
5418 - Nullawil public toilets	31,622.00	67,551.90	(35,929.90)	Completed	Works complete. Final project closure process underway prior to closing the project financials.
5419 - Sea Lake streetscape lighting	81,474.00	14,518.20	66,955.80	On track	Scope and agreement to be confirmed for memorial park post demolition of water tower
5417 - Memorial Park changing places	63,395.70	28,492.01	34,903.69	On track	Changing places toilet complete and open. Demolition process for old toilet block underway.
5415 - Regional Infrastructure Fund Cabins	0.00	22,899.75	(22,899.75)	Completed	This project is the 1st round lot of 7 cabins, which has been completed.
5414 - Donald Streetscape	451,732.00	5,936.67	445,795.33	On track	Donald basketball half court quotes received. Works scheduled by January 30. Scope for remaining works is being finalised with Donald 2000 prior to designs being finalised.
5421 - Wycheper Wetlands	75,093.19	108,830.00	(33,736.81)	On track	Contracted works have reached practical completion, minor programming changes to be completed. Filling of the wetlands through a temporary supply is underway. Minor earthworks and completion of walking trail segments will be completed while the initial fill progresses. The first fish stocking is scheduled for December.
5412 - Wooroonook septic replacement	296,540.00	3,848.00	291,692.00	On track	Request for Tenders complete. Evaluation currently being finalised
5423 - Birchip cenotaph refurbishment	103,000.00	0.00	103,000.00	On track	Procurement underway, construction scheduled to commence late November.
Total Parks, open space and streetscapes	3,096,028.89	318,344.94	2,779,683.95		
Aerodromes					
5530 - Aerodrome Audit Works	51,900.00	0.00	51,900.00	On track	Priority projects underway.
Total Aerodromes	51,900.00	0.00	51,900.00		
Total capital works	46,551,934.04	2,231,856.09	44,320,077.95		

8.3 ORGANISATIONAL REPORTS

8.3.1 ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 1 FY2025-26

Author's Title: Director Corporate and Organisational Performance

Department: Corporate and Organisational Performance

File No: FM/02/08

Relevance to Council Plan 2025 - 2029

Strategic Council leadership and engagement

Objective: Responsible leadership and decision making

PURPOSE

To present to Council the draft Quarterly Organisational Performance report for Quarter 1 FY2025/26 (at Attachment 1) for noting.

SUMMARY

The quarterly organisational performance report is an integrated progress report that updates Council and community on the delivery of the strategic objectives of the Council Plan 2025-29, including performance reporting, financial performance and delivery of the capital works program for the period including July, August and September 2025.

This report marks the first update to the community, on the delivery of the 2025-29 Council Plan. At the end of September 2025, the Council Plan overall performance demonstrates a positive position of progress as at the conclusion of Q1. Due to some of the carry forward projects and deliverables from the previous Council Plan, some delays have been experienced.

This report is a new format of performance reporting for the organisation, introduced in alignment with Council's integrated strategic planning and reporting framework. It is designed to provide an overview of the quarterly position for the performance of Council's core services, key initiatives and major projects. In line with the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council is required to report against its own strategic objectives adopted within the 4-year Council Plan at least every 6 months. As this is the first instance of this report being brought to Council under the new format, a delay in presenting this report to a public ordinary meeting has occurred due to a process of informing and briefing Council on the new format throughout November and early December.

This report was previously brought to Council as a confidential item to the November Confidential Agenda, however as the report did not warrant confidential information and sought only to be endorsed for the following public meeting – the item was deferred by Council.

Moving forward, this report will be presented to Council in alignment with the Quarterly Financial Statements in February, May and November, along with a financial year end performance report presented in August, to the public via the monthly scheduled Ordinary Meetings, first and foremost.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the Quarterly Organisational Performance Report for Quarter 1: FY2025/26.

DISCUSSION

The Council Plan 2025/26 was adopted by Council on 18 June 2025 in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* (The Act).

Within the Council Plan, a detailed 'Key things we will do' list of actions is provided against each of the strategies associated to the five (5) over-arching strategic objectives.

The key initiatives and projects undertaken by Council are recorded through internal processes, and documented within each service area Business Unit Plan, developed in alignment with the Annual Budget process, which sets out the financial year, + the three years thereafter. Importantly, the Council Plan is also a 4-year document which must be complimented by Council's other key strategic documents and plans in accordance with the integrated strategic planning and reporting framework.

In accordance to the recommendations of the Municipal Monitor's Report published in January 2025 for the Buloke Shire Council, a commitment has been made to maintaining financial sustainability and establishing an Annual Budget on a cash basis going forward.

Like all Local Government Authorities, the Buloke Shire experiences financial constraints that are not new or surprising. Rate capping, cost shifting for various services across sectors and generally rising costs for materials and services (particularly for rural and remote areas) continues to be a challenge in managing the 4-year Annual Budget, which must also inform the long-term financial position outlined within the Financial Plan (10 years).

Resourcing continues to be a major issue in the current environment, increased turnover rates and associated changes in attitudes and culture for employment in the public sector has remained difficult to manage since the COVID pandemic. This is more problematic for Council's typically more traditional, steady tenured roles.

Council's ability to establish a long-term financially sustainable position without having to rely on non-recurrent grant funding remains unlikely. Due to this fact, the challenge remains for Council to deliver the long-term aspirations of the community in a strategically aligned way that enables the delivery of core Council services in the short term.

RELEVANT LAW

Local Government Act 2020

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Adoption of the Council Plan 2025-29 – 18 June 2025

OPTIONS

Council may choose to request further information based on the contents of this report, however this report is for noting the performance and achievements of the work undertaken in Quarter 1 of Financial Year 2025/26.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This report details Council's progress against overall performance in alignment with the strategic objectives of the Council Plan 2025-29. Community engagement results informed the strategic objectives of the Council Plan and the key things that are to be actioned within each. Through the development of all of Council's strategic documents and plans, Council must seek community engagement and demonstrate deliberative and meaningful engagement.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

This report is a newly introduced format of performance reporting that seeks to capture a broader range of Council's core service delivery on a regular, quarterly basis. The report intends to provide a foundation of knowledge for the benefit of the Council and community to better understand the deliverables and measures of success for both regular activities and projects undertaken.

Like any new reporting function, it is expected that the data and information provided within the report will mature as the process also progresses and matures.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council Plan 2025-2029

Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework Policy 2024

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No officer involved within the preparation of this report has declared a conflict of interest in relation to anything specifically discussed within its contents.

Attachments: 1. Attachment 8.3.1.1 - Quarterly Performance Report F Y 2526 - Q 1



ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Buloke Shire Council

Quarter 1 – FY2025/26

Daniel McLoughlan
Chief Executive Officer



ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Quarter 1 – FY2025/26



Buloke Shire Council acknowledges the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk, the Dja Dja Wurrung and Wamba Wemba people as the Traditional Owners of parts of the land now known as Buloke. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and value their ongoing contribution to our heritage and our community.



ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Quarter 1 – FY2025/26



The first quarter of the financial year has seen significant focus on shaping the strategic direction of our organisation. Council has reviewed and developed our key long term strategic plans that will guide decision-making and service delivery in the years ahead. This includes establishing the integrated frameworks that will strengthen our ability to meet community needs in an increasingly challenging and changing environment. An integrated strategic planning approach was applied to enhance the line of sight for decision making and practical implementation. Alignment to the strategic objectives within the new Council Plan adopted in June 2025 is critical for measuring success and ensuring that the purpose of our organisation and its services is clear to all stakeholders.

Simultaneously, we continue to navigate a complex external landscape. The pace of change and the consultation requested of Council and community within the State's transmission planning and renewable energy development processes throughout 2025 has been ineffective, resource demanding and frustrating for our municipality. Council has remained active in advocacy and engagement to ensure that local impacts are clearly understood and that the interests of our communities are represented wherever possible.

Reflecting upon the work undertaken through this first quarter, whilst major initiatives and projects are great to celebrate, I am particularly proud of the daily work that is undertaken by our staff across all service areas. Our teams continue to demonstrate professionalism and pride in the roles they play to make our Buloke communities thrive. As we move into the next quarter, Council will continue to balance our strategic planning with operational excellence, ensuring that we remain focused on delivering outcomes that are aligned with the strategic objectives within our new Council Plan 2025-29 and the Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision.

Daniel McLoughlan
Chief Executive Officer

Quarterly Organisational Performance Report FY2025/26 Q1



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: SERVICES SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES TO THRIVE

1

The first quarter of the financial year saw Council focus heavily on the strategic planning of key long-term documents that inform Council activities and offer our community an outlook on the organisations' direction.

Following the local government election in October 2024, it is a requirement of Council under the Local Government Act 2020, that the major informing strategies for the organisation are reviewed and adopted by the end of October in the following year.

Council facilitated deliberative community engagement through workshops and public exhibition periods to establish insight and guidance from community on what matters most for Asset Planning, Public Health and Wellbeing, Financial Sustainability and our Road Management Planning.

The combined approach to these important conversations with community and key stakeholders intended to improve clarity and understanding of where Council currently dedicate resources and financial investment, and what value for money should demonstrate for the short, medium and longer term to meet community needs.

In considering our performance against this Strategic Objective of the Council Plan, it is our 10 year Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan that sets the clear direction for how our services will support our communities to thrive. The consultation process and stakeholder feedback provided a sound foundation for informing the actions and projects that are vital to Council having a successful role in community wellbeing.

The establishment and leadership activities undertaken by the new Youth Advisory Group have provided valuable insight and professional development opportunities for our young people and Council alike. The presentation of the group to external stakeholders and Council itself have demonstrated the tremendous potential of this group for the future.

Council continue to deliver valuable impacts for the community through essential community services including maternal child health, immunization, library service outreach and supported playgroup. Programs are reviewed regularly, with innovative and engaging initiatives to enhance social connection and participation.

Council's advocacy for improved transport connections has become increasingly important with the deterioration of road networks at both a local and state level. Securing the required funding to reinstate our local network to a safe standard following the flood and storm events of 2022 and 2023 is critical for Council and our community.



Quarterly Organisational Performance Report FY2025/26 Q1



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: VIBRANT AND CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

2

Council has continued to strengthen community connection and participation through targeted support for local volunteers, events, and community groups. Volunteers play a vital role in the social fabric of our community — supporting local programs, events, and emergency responses that make our towns safe, welcoming, and inclusive. Council's ongoing commitment to community planning with Community Forums and key community representatives encourages recognition and practical assistance to sustain these valuable contributions and ensures volunteers feel supported by Council within their roles.

Council's Community Grants Program has again demonstrated its strong local impact, enabling community organisations to deliver projects that build participation, enhance local facilities, and celebrate community spirit. Through this program, Council has seen strong uptake in Quarter 1 and continues to empower passionate volunteers and groups to identify and deliver initiatives that respond to local needs, strengthen connection, and contribute to the overall wellbeing of our communities.

A particular highlight of Quarter 1 was the Youth Fest event held in Charlton in September during the school holidays. This event was a strong display of collaboration and leadership for the benefit of children and families across Buloke. Congratulations to those stakeholders involved, particularly to our Youth Advisory Committee who are a shining example of our future leaders.

Quarter 1 is a critical time for the preparation and recruitment of our workforce to deliver the upcoming Aquatic Season, across Council's 7 swimming pool facilities. Always a challenging task, involving many complex processes and procedures to ensure that the facilities, plant and equipment are prepared, as too is the lifeguard workforce to keep our users safe.

Council values the recreation reserve committees and their tireless efforts to maintain these facilities with their high and varied uses across Buloke. Winter sport throughout Quarter 1 demonstrated the terrific sporting participation of our area and the importance of the facilities that allow it. Our collaboration and partnerships with these committees to maintain our sporting assets is a privilege and something to be extremely proud of.

Quarterly Organisational Performance Report FY2025/26 Q1



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: OUR BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

3

In Quarter 1, Council has focused on the strategic groundwork required to guide the future management and enhancement of our built and natural assets. This has included significant planning and community engagement activities to inform upcoming infrastructure priorities and ensure that Council's decisions reflect local needs and expectations. The finalization of the 10 year Asset Plan and the ongoing development of the Transport and Drainage Asset Management Plans, along with the Buildings and Open Spaces Asset Management Plans will determine Council's priorities in the last three years of this Council Term.

Progress has also been made on several key investigations for drainage works that will underpin the preparation of long-term plans for the delivery of physical works within Council's asset management framework.

These foundational steps are essential to ensuring that future investment in roads, buildings, open spaces, and drainage assets is both evidence-based and sustainable.

Council continues to recognise the importance of maintaining its extensive asset base to a safe and functional standard. Ongoing building maintenance programs and condition assessments have remained a priority, ensuring that community facilities are well cared for and continue to serve residents effectively.

Through this work, Council is laying the foundations for a well-planned, resilient, and sustainable environment — one that balances growth, functionality, and environmental stewardship for the benefit of the whole community.

Delivery of Council's Capital program is progressing well, with a lot of procurement and planning in Q1, ahead of a much larger expenditure period expected in Q2.





Quarterly Organisational Performance Report FY2025/26 Q1

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: PROSPEROUS AND GROWING ECONOMY

4

During the first quarter, Council has continued to strengthen its support for local businesses, industry partners, and community event organisers to foster a vibrant and resilient local economy. A key achievement has been the development of Council's Event Planning Guide, designed to assist community groups and business stakeholders in the planning and delivery of successful local events. This resource will streamline processes, clarify requirements, and enhance the overall quality and safety of events across the municipality.

Stakeholder engagement has also been a strong focus this quarter, with Council working closely with regional tourism bodies, neighbouring councils, and economic development agencies to inform the preparation of Council's forthcoming Economic Development and Tourism Strategy. These conversations are shaping a coordinated approach to promoting local industries, attracting investment, and supporting sustainable growth.

Council has continued to play an active role in promoting local opportunities, circulating information on upcoming events, business support programs, and available grants. This advocacy and communication activity provides tangible benefits to local enterprises and community groups, helping to build economic resilience and visibility across the region.

Through these initiatives, Council is advancing its commitment to creating a prosperous and growing economy — one that supports local enterprise, encourages innovation, and celebrates the unique strengths of our communities.

A positive result for our Q1 Statutory planning in turning around all applications within the required timeframes has been a key highlight to reflect on.

Council have been actively engaged within the renewable energy and transmission planning consultation processes, advocating strongly for improved engagement methods with our community and key local stakeholders. Council made a submission to the Victorian Transmission Plan engagement process and has actively sought out external independent assistance and advice to enhance our working knowledge of the proposed developments and the impacts upon our community both now and into the future.

Promotion of employment opportunities within Council remains a high ongoing priority for all service areas. Retention of staff is a challenge in the current environment for what has otherwise been more traditional long-term Council roles, however the initiation of a new HR system and an increase in our recruitment tools through this system has seen positive results, particularly with the large recruitment of our lifeguard pool in Q1.

Quarterly Organisational Performance Report FY2025/26 Q1



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: COUNCIL LEADERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT

5

In Quarter 1, Council has maintained a strong focus on leadership, governance, and engagement, ensuring the organisation remains accountable, transparent, and responsive to the needs of the community. A key achievement has been the development and community consultation of Council's Long-Term Financial Plan, providing a clear and sustainable framework for future financial decision-making. Complementing this, Council has strengthened organisational integrity through the update of the Fraud and Corruption Policy and the adoption of the Discretionary Financial Reserves Policy, reinforcing prudent financial management and safeguarding community confidence.

Council's commitment to improving internal governance has been demonstrated through the initiatives introduced for Council meetings, briefings, and workshops, ensuring informed discussion and decision-making across strategic and operational matters.

The review and internal consultation to update Council's procurement policy and its supporting documentation has been a major project for officers and will now offer a better standard of information and process for its practical implementation. An increase in thresholds, defining strategic procurement principles and the ability to separate Local from Regional weightings are all some of the welcomed changes throughout this process.

Alongside governance, the organisation has continued to prioritise customer service responsiveness, delivering timely, high-quality support to residents, stakeholders, and local businesses. This focus ensures that community needs remain central to Council operations and that services are accessible and efficient.

Emergency management remains a core responsibility, and significant work has been undertaken in Quarter 1 to review existing processes, deliver staff training, and prepare a new Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) for adoption in the near future. These initiatives strengthen the municipality's preparedness, resilience, and capacity to respond effectively to emergencies, safeguarding the wellbeing of our communities.

Together, these activities demonstrate Council's ongoing commitment to responsible leadership, transparent governance, operational excellence, and proactive community engagement — ensuring that both strategic and day-to-day functions are delivered effectively for the benefit of all residents.



Quarterly Organisational Performance Report FY2025/26 Q1

Quarterly Capital Works Update

Project	Status Q1	Comment
5022 Sea Lake Housing Development	Complete	Process for sale of allotments underway.
5040 Building Improvements	On Track	<p>Program includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Charlton amenities block – tender process underway• Donald Police Camp – various works underway• Donald Office gutter replacement works• Donald Hall Toilets Upgrade – procurement underway
5042 Watchem Public Toilets	Yet to Commence	Investigation and exploration of options to deliver new facilities being completed. Following communication/consultation, works expected to proceed in early 2026 (Q3).
5060 Plant, Machinery & Equipment	Delayed	Minor plant replacement items being procured including the replacement of water tanks for road construction plant. Major plant replacement on hold pending the outcome of the Heavy Plant Replacement Strategy.
5065 Fixtures, Fittings and Furniture	On Track	Wycheproof hall split system replacement complete (older south side units to remain in service), split system upgrades to other buildings to be assessed with remaining funds.
5070 Information Tech Equipment	On Track	Purchasing and rollout of Council's computer renewal program underway and on track.
5075 Library Assets	On Track	Priority list under development in Q1
5085 Secondary temporary levee Donald	On Track	Tender due to advertising in Q2
5083 Safer Local Roads Program	On Track	Planning and preparation on track, procurement activity underway in Q1
5082 Resheet Program	On Track	Program under development in Q1



Quarterly Organisational Performance Report FY2025/26 Q1

5086 Jeffcott Rd Rehab and Final Seal	Delayed	On Track Finalising contract to recommence works. On ground works programmed for after the completion of the harvest season
5088 Rehabilitation Works	On Hold	Program on hold - will be used to compliment flood recovery program (for remediation of road defects adjoining the approved flood defects).
5080 Rehabilitation and Flood Works	Delayed	Funding Risk – delayed Flood Recovery Program (AGR 1037 and AGR 1096) Rehabilitation works being procured as funding approval received 1. Major Patch Contract Complete 2. Laen Litchfield Road Rehabilitation Complete 3. Warne Road, Berriwillock Birchip, Nullawil North Rehabilitation Complete. Currently undertaking procurement process to begin rehabilitation works for: 1. Nullawil Meridian Road, Nullawil South Road, Berriwillock 2. Springfield Road, Rennys Rd, Berriwillock Woomelang, Watchupgna West
5081 Reseal Program	On Track	Program under development in Q1
5084 Major Patching	On Hold	Program on Hold – will be used to compliment flood recovery program (for remediation of road defects adjoining the approved flood defects).
5200 Charlton Swing Bridge Refurbishment	On Track	Works commenced and programmed to be completed in Q2 (End of November).
5220 Footpath and Cycleways	On Track	Program under development with investigation being undertaken.
5250 Drainage Works	On Track	Program under development with investigation being undertaken
5251 Nullawil West/East Drainage (Calder Hwy)	On Track	Design being reviewed
5270 Kerb and Channel	On Track	Program under development with investigation being undertaken



Quarterly Organisational Performance Report FY2025/26 Q1

	On Track	
5280 Aquatic Facilities Renewal Works	 On Track	Priority renewal list being developed.
5284 Flagpole Upgrades	 On Track	Works at Birchip, Wycheeproof and Sea Lake completed. Works at Donald and Charlton are pending light installations.
5285 Electric Vehicle Charger	 Delayed	Project on hold pending outcome from the for CV Greenhouse alliance tender process.
5281 Netball Court Remediation – Birchip	 Delayed	Expert advice is being sought to assess the issues affecting Netball Court, to determine the next actions required to restore court 2.
5286 Tiny Towns	 On Track	Project locations include – Culgoa - works completed Berriwillock - works at final stage Nandaly - works not started Watchem - works under procurement Nullawil - works in progress
5283 Recreational Vehicle Dump Point	 On Track	Lake Tchum dump point will be installed prior to Christmas
5282 Birchip Recreation Reserve Generator	 On Track	Procurement process completed and contractor engaged.
5420 Wycheeproof Recreation Reserve Public Toilets	 On Track	Scope of works finalised and contractor appointed. Works to start in Q2 (mid-November)
5411 Watchem Septic Replacement	 On Track	Request for Tenders complete. Contract awarded.
5410 Regional Worker Accommodation (Cabins)	 On Track	Contractor appointed. Frames complete. Cabins will be progressively installed by late November / December.
5416 Playspaces (Berri, Birchip, Charlton, Donald & Wycheeproof)	 Completed	Contract works have reached practical completion, some minor outstanding items still to be rectified. Grant acquittal has been completed.
5413 Birchip Streetscape Lighting	 On Track	Powercor approval complete. RFQ is being sought from local contractors
5418 Nullawil Public Toilets	 Completed	Works complete. Final project closure process underway prior to closing the project financials.



Quarterly Organisational Performance Report FY2025/26 Q1

5419 Sea Lake Streetscape Lighting	On Track	Scope and agreement to be confirmed for memorial park post demolition of water tower
5417 Memorial Park Changing Places Facility	On Track	Changing places toilet complete and open. Demolition process for old toilet block underway.
5415 Regional Infrastructure Fund Cabins	Completed	This project is the 1st round lot of 7 cabins, which has been completed.
5414 Donald Streetscape	On Track	Donald basketball half court quotes received. Works scheduled by January 30. Scope for remaining works is being finalised with Donald 2000 prior to designs being finalised.
5421 Wycheproof Wetlands	On Track	Contracted works have reached practical completion, minor programming changes to be completed. Filling of the wetlands through a temporary supply is underway. Minor earthworks and completion of walking trail segments will be completed while the initial fill progresses. The first fish stocking is scheduled for December.
5412 Wooroonook Septic Replacement	On Track	Request for Tenders complete. Evaluation currently being finalized.
5423 Birchip Cenotaph Refurbishment	On Track	Procurement underway, construction scheduled to commence late November.
5530 Aerodrome Audit Works	On Track	Priority projects underway.



Quarterly Organisational Performance Report FY2025/26 Q1

Quarterly Financial Update

Council's overall result for the first quarter shows a year-to-date variance of \$30.184 million below budget, primarily reflecting timing differences in the recognition of income and capital funding. Capital works expenditure for the period stands at \$2.232 million. Further details on these variances are provided in the tables below.

Operating Income is \$1.716 million below the year-to-date budget, while capital income is \$29.070 million lower than anticipated. This is largely due to the timing of expected receipts from Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) related to flood recovery packages.

Operating Expenditure shows a favorable variance of \$27,000, reflecting efficient management of day-to-day costs across Council operations. Overall, after three months, the unfavorable variance of \$30.184 million is primarily attributable to timing differences in capital funding.

Key areas of the Quarterly financial position include the following:

- Unfavorable income variation due to the timing of user fees
- Unfavorable income variation for operating grants due to the timing difference of the 50% balance of Financial Assistance Grants (approximately \$4 million) and non-recognition of Council Flood Support Fund of \$300,000 from advance. Income will be recognized when acquittals approved on a quarterly basis.
- Unfavorable other income variance of \$407,000 primarily due to a combinations of Fire Services Levy administration charges received for FY2024/25 and FY25/26 and delay in insurance outcome towards the Birchip Netball Court.
- Unfavorable income variance from capital grants primarily due to grant funding from DRFA towards flood packages (approx. \$28.495 million).
- Favorable expenditure variance for employee costs at Q1 of \$35,000 internal staff associated with floods recovery works being capitalized along with minor vacancies within the organisation.
- Favorable materials and services expenditure variance of approx. \$247,000 mainly due to an underspend on works related to the February 2024 storm event, partially offset by minor increases in expenditure across other operational areas such as asset management
- Depreciation for the quarter is over budget due to the capitalization of assets at year end.

A detailed financial report (including statements) with commentary will be provided and should be read in conjunction with the performance report.

Organisational Performance Report – Quarter 1 FY2025/26: Alignment to Council Plan 2025-29

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: SERVICES SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES TO THRIVE

Strategy: Active advocacy and participation in service networks

1.1	<i>Actively participate in and provide leadership to service networks.</i>	Council's role in achieving:					
		Partnering		Advocacy		%Complete	Target
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date			
Children and Youth	Establishment and activation of the Buloke Youth Advisory Group	On Track	April 2025	December 2025	100%	100%	 Green
	<p>Youth Advisory Group continued to meet throughout this period. Meeting 6 times. During this time, they presented to the Buloke Shire Council. Meet the City of Greater Bendigo Youth Council. Together, they explored how young people across different shires can lead change, strengthen their communities, and build inclusive, youth-led initiatives. The Youth Advisory Group is an annual project which aligns with the school year/calendar year. Recruitment for the new Advisory Group will commence in Quarter 2.</p>						

1.2	<i>Advocate for improvement in the accessibility of health and community services.</i>	Council's role in achieving:					
		Advocacy					
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target
Community Partnerships & Public Health	Review and develop a new 10-Year Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan in accordance with the LGA2020.	Complete	March 2025	October 2025	100%	100%	 Green
	<p>Consultation held with key stakeholders offering health and wellbeing services to the Buloke Community to inform the development of the new Plan. Community engagement undertaken through a community and stakeholder workshop in July. Draft document was placed on public exhibition for community feedback in September ahead of its adoption in October.</p>						
Community Safety and Dev Services	Food Premises Inspections	On Track	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green

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	A total of 16 food premise inspections were carried out in the Q1 program, of these, 3 were in Charlton and 13 in Wycheaproof.						
Maternal and Child Health	Maternal Child Health Services – Q1	On Track	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
	During this period, Maternal and Child Health nurses received 14 birth notifications and conducted 13 four-week Key Age and Stage visits. In total, 96 children have accessed this service during this period. Nurses attended the Maternal Child Health Regional Training Day.						

1.3	<i>Champion the benefits of living locally.</i>	Council's role in achieving:						
		Partnering		Advocacy				
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
Community Engagement	Online engagement and local media promotion of the municipality – Q1	On Track	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green	
	Through regular monitoring of Council's engagement with Community and visitors to the area through Customer Service channels and Community development activities, a conscious effort to promote activities and other organisations offering services has been made to enhance the livability of the local area. Social media continues to be a key engagement tool for establishing connection and highlighting the unique benefits of the Buloke community.							

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: SERVICES SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES TO THRIVE

Strategy: Accessible and Responsive Health and Community Services

1.4	<i>Support the provision of quality early years services for families and children.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Delivering		Partnering
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
Community Safety and Dev Services	Council Immunisation Program – Q1	On Track	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green	Immunisation sessions have been held in Wycheeproof, Sea Lake, Birchip, Charlton and Donald. A total of eight sessions have been conducted including a staff flu vaccination session.
Children and Youth	Buloke Storytime Children's Sessions – Q1	On Track	July 2025	September 2025	15%	25%	 Orange	Two pop-up Storytime sessions have been held in Donald to assess community interest in establishing a regular playgroup in Donald. Additional pop-up Storytime sessions will be delivered during the second quarter to further engage families, with the aim of introducing a fortnightly playgroup in Donald during the third and fourth quarters.
Children and Youth	Buloke Supported Playgroup Sessions – Q1	On Track	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green	During the first quarter, twelve supported playgroup sessions were delivered across Birchip, Charlton, and Wycheeproof, engaging 30 families and 45 children.

1.5	<i>Advocate for improved transport connections including public and community transport.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Advocacy		
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
Assets and Delivery	Participation in Central Murray Transport Advocacy Committee, Calder Hwy Improvement Committee, Wimmer Sth Mallee	On Track	July 2025	Ongoing	100%	100%	 Green	

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	Transport Advocacy Group, Sunraysia Hwy Committee						
Advocacy for Buloke infrastructure and transport connections essential to the local economy and livability of the area.							
Assets and Delivery	Notice of Motion – Call to Action for State Funding commitment	On Track	July 2025	Ongoing	100%	100%	 Green
Advocacy for Buloke infrastructure and transport connections essential to the local economy and livability of the area.							

1.6	<i>Support Neighbourhood Houses to deliver vibrant programs and services and support lifelong learning.</i>	Council's role in achieving:					
		Delivering		Partnering			
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target
Community Partnerships & Library Services	Partnership for library services and Community connection through literacy	On Track	July 2025	September 2025	25%	25%	 Green
Council shares the community library space in Wycheeproof with the Wycheeproof Neighbourhood House and jointly delivers Mon-Fri library services and digital literacy assistance and support services with the technology available through the Neighbourhood House.							
Children and Youth	Partnership with Neighbourhood Houses to support the Buloke FREEZA program and associated Youth activation	On Track	July 2025	September 2025	25%	25%	 Green
Council works in partnership with the Mallee Neighbourhood House network to support the Buloke Freeza program and youth activation programs which encourage youth leadership development, event and project management and the promotion of youth health and wellbeing in rural and regional areas.							
Community Partnerships	Partnership for Community wellbeing in Buloke	On Track	July 2025	September 2025	25%	25%	 Green
Council regularly attends and partners with the Mallee Neighbourhood House network to address community wellbeing needs and opportunities (or gaps), with particular focus on areas of our communities which experience barriers due to diversity, multi culturalism, low socio-economic family challenges and general wellbeing. Initiatives in partnership with the Neighbourhood House network regularly include national or internationally recognized causes, charitable fundraising, seasonal community events (eg. Christmas/Easter events) or collaborative approaches to seeking external funding for program delivery.							

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1.7	<i>Deliver library programs and services to support literacy and learning and community connections.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Delivering		
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
Library Services	Library Services Community Outreach – Q1	On Track	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green	
	Mobile library services utilising Council's mobile library van to provide outreach services to all 10 townships within the Buloke Shire. Services include collection development, rotation and promotion of audio and eBooks. Programming to support outreach services includes book club facilitation and community book reviews for sharing and connection.							
Library Services	Online Library Services through Bolinda – Q1	On Track	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green	
	Collection development and promotion of Council's free audio book and ebook collection through Bolinda. Library membership and participation remains steady. Initiatives and programs intended to promote an increase in membership are being planned for Q2 and Q3.							

1.8	<i>Promote information about services and activities in our community and how to access them.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Delivering		Partnering
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
Community Engagement	Weekly Community Update for Local Print Media – Q1	On Track	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green	
	Weekly community updates printed across local papers.							

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: VIBRANT AND CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Strategy: Strengthen Community Activity and Connections

2.1	<i>Promote opportunities for the community to be more involved in local activities and initiatives including arts and culture, library activities, community events and festivals, sport and recreation.</i>	Council's role in achieving:					
		Partnering					
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target
Community Partnerships	Facilitate the FY2025/26 Buloke Shire Council Community Grants and Sponsorships Programs	On Track	July 2025	June 2026	60%	25%	 Green
Allocated \$22,692 in grant funding to 12 local community organisations in support of community-initiated projects, events and activities across the Buloke Shire Council. Council actively support community through the application process ahead of presenting all applications for approval by Council at the scheduled Ordinary meetings held in July, August and September in Quarter 1.							
Children and Youth	Buloke Youth Fest 2025	Complete	September 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
	With funding support from the Victorian State Government and the Look Over the Farm Gate program, funded by Agriculture Victoria, Council's Children and Youth Team, in conjunction with the Buloke Youth Advisory Group hosted a Youth Fest event was held at Charlton Park. The event was delivered in partnership with East Wimmera Health Service and Headspace Swan Hill to celebrate young people across the Buloke Shire. The free, family-friendly festival featured a movie screening, jumping castle, laser tag, carnival games, healthy eating options, and a smoothie bike, providing an inclusive and engaging community experience. This event was aligned to Youth Week.						

2.2	<i>Facilitate and support local community planning processes to identify and respond to long term community aspirations, to celebrate achievements of the local community plans and encourage community connections and collaboration.</i>	Council's role in achieving:					
		Delivering		Partnering			
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target
Community Partnerships	Development of the Aquatic Strategy	Delayed	2024	March 2026	65%	80%	 Orange

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	Consultation undertaken throughout previous pool season. Detailed costings and condition assessments under review. Draft strategy due to be presented by consultants in Q2 ahead of being presented to Councillors for comment and feedback.						
Community Partnerships	Development of the Birchip Recreation Reserve Masterplan	Compete	2023	August 2025	100%	100%	 Green
	Final masterplan placed on public exhibition in 2025 ahead of being endorsed in Q1.						
Community Partnerships	Completion of all 10 Community Plans	Delayed	2023	September 2025	95%	100%	 Red
	Wycheproof Community plan remains outstanding and is due to be completed with graphic designer in Q2.						
Community Partnerships	Development of the Sea Lake Recreation Masterplan	On Track	2025	June 2026	60%	85%	 Orange
	Community consultation undertaken and masterplan under development. Project previously delayed from previous financial year.						
Community Partnerships	Development of the Donald Recreation Masterplan	Delayed	2025	December 2026	10%	50%	 Red
	Project delayed due to competing priorities. Sea Lake Masterplan to be undertaken first. Project was previously delayed from previous financial year.						

2.3	<i>Promote and support volunteerism to enable community participation in sport, recreation, cultural and community programs, and respond to emergency situations.</i>	Council's role in achieving:					
		Delivering		Partnering			
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target
Community Partnerships	Recreation Allocations and Acquittals Process – FY2025/26	On Track	July 2025	June 2026	25%	25%	 Green
	Volunteer engagement and support with the Committees of management of the recreation facilities across Buloke to manage their recreation allocations and maintenance activities in alignment with the Recreation Strategy. Progression of a model agreement for committees of management to engage in with Council to establish clear expectations, roles and responsibilities has occurred in Q1.						

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2.4	<i>Build meaningful relationships with our First Nations people and their supporting organisations.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Partnering		
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
No reportable activities or initiatives for Quarter 1								

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: VIBRANT AND CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Strategy: EMPOWER AND SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

2.5	<i>Partner with community organisations and townships to provide community, cultural and heritage activities and events.</i>	Council's role in achieving:					
		Partnering					
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target
Community Partnerships	Community Grant – Donald Lawn Tennis club: Returning Service Project	Complete	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
Community grant approved in Quarter 1 for community delivery through the Sustainability Fund							
Community Partnerships	Community Grant – Charlton College: Mental Health Awareness Month	Complete	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
Community grant approved in Quarter 1 for community delivery through the Project Support Grant							
Community Partnerships	Community Grant – Donald Learning Group Incorporated: Celebrating the Donald Cultural Connection	Complete	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
Community grant approved in Quarter 1 for community delivery through the Project Support Grant							
Community Partnerships	Community Grant – Charlton Netball Club Inc. Charlton Netball Club: 1953-2025 A full colour Historical Publication	Complete	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
Community grant approved in Quarter 1 for community delivery through the Project Support Grant							
Community Partnerships	Community Grant – Birchip Neighbourhood House Incorporated Wiggle & Giggle	Complete	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
Community grant approved in Quarter 1 for community delivery through the Project Support Grant							
Community Partnerships	Community Grant – Wheels on A79 (Auspiced by Charlton Neighbourhood House Inc)	Complete	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green

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	Project: Wheels on A79 Show & Shine						
Community grant approved in Quarter 1 for community delivery through the Project Support Grant							
Community Partnerships	Community Grant – Charlton Golden Grains Museum Project: Victorian Collections Training	Complete	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
Community grant approved in Quarter 1 for community delivery through the Organisation Support Grant							
Community Partnerships	Community Grant – Calder United Football Netball Hockey Club Project: Make King of the Mount Sustainable	Complete	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
Community grant approved in Quarter 1 for community delivery through the Sustainability Fund							
Community Partnerships	Community Grant – Granite Community Church/ Donald Youth Group Project: Storage cupboard used for Youth Group	Complete	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
Community grant approved in Quarter 1 for community delivery through the Project Support Grant							
Community Partnerships	Community Grant – Donald Men's Shed Project: Beating the Blues	Complete	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
Community grant approved in Quarter 1 for community delivery through the Sustainability Fund							
Community Partnerships	Community Grant – Combined Probus Club of Wycheproof Inc. Project: Probus Wycheproof Christmas Lunch	Complete	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
Community grant approved in Quarter 1 for community delivery through the Project Support Grant							
Community Partnerships	Community Grant – Donald Pastoral & Agricultural Society Inc. Project: Donald Show Photo Board Project	Complete	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
Community grant approved in Quarter 1 for community delivery through the Small Capital Grant							

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Community Partnerships	Community Grant – Mallee Creatives (Auspice by Charlton Neighbourhood House) Project: Charlton Weekend Coffee Stop – Volunteer Training & Equipment Initiative	Complete	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
Community grant approved in Quarter 1 for community delivery through the Small Capital Grant							
Community Partnerships	Community Grant – Charlton Neighbourhood House Project: Pickleball for all: Serving Community Connection Across the Court	Complete	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
Community grant approved in Quarter 1 for community delivery through the Small Capital Grant							
Community Partnerships	Community Grant – Birchip Playgroup Project: Strong Start Active Play for Birchip's Future	Complete	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
Community grant approved in Quarter 1 for community delivery through the Project Support Grant							
Community Partnerships	Community Grant – Donald Pastoral & Agricultural Society Inc Project: 2025 Donald Show	Complete	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
Community grant approved in Quarter 1 for community delivery through the Sponsorship Program							

2.6	<i>Support recreation and sporting organisations to provide social and competitive opportunities and activities, and support opportunities for women, girls and older adults to participate in recreation and sporting activities.</i>	Council's role in achieving:					
		Partnering					
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target
Community Partnerships	Access Keys for Community Facilities	On Track	August 2024	June 2026	30%	50%	 Orange
	Commencing with community recreation facilities, draft access key documents have been developed for the purposes of informing and supporting inclusive access for all users of community recreation reserves.						

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2.7	<i>Support community groups including Neighbourhood Houses, playgroups, community gardens, theatre and arts groups and book clubs to provide responsive community programs and activities.</i>	Council's role in achieving:						
		Partnering						
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
No reportable activities or initiatives for Quarter 1								

2.8	<i>Partner with community organisations and townships to provide opportunities for community connections including Senior Citizens Clubs, Men's Sheds, CWA, Probus, youth groups and playgroups.</i>	Council's role in achieving:						
		Partnering						
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
No reportable activities or initiatives for Quarter 1								

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Strategy: ADVOCATE AND PLAN FOR, AND MANAGE COMMUNITY BUILDINGS, ROADS AND TRANSPORT NETWORKS

3.1	<i>Regularly report on the planning and delivery of capital works projects.</i>						Council's role in achieving:		
							Delivering		
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target		
Assets and Delivery	Regional Workers Accommodation – Capital Project.	On Track	March 2025	June 2026	30%	50%	 Orange	Delivery of cabins in underway, with delivery of cabins on each site expected to commence by end of Q2.	
Assets and Delivery	Deliver Council's Renewal Program for Roads Infrastructure.	On Track	July 2025	April 2026	35%	40%	 Orange	Delivery of Council's annual Reseal Program, Resheet Program and Road Shoulder Resheet Program expected to be completed by end of Q3.	

3.2	<i>Review Council's role in managing built and natural assets on Crown Land.</i>						Council's role in achieving:		
							Delivering		Advocacy
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target		
Assets and Delivery	Review and Adoption of Asset Management Policy	Complete	June 2025	October 2025	100%	100%	 Green	Policy reviewed and updated in July, prior to being presented to the August Ordinary Meeting for adoption.	

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3.3	<i>Regularly review and implement the Road Management Plan, partnering with VicRoads and other agencies on road network planning and maintenance, transport networks and infrastructure.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Delivering	Partnering	Advocacy
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
Assets and Delivery	Review and adoption of the Road Management Plan 2025	Complete	June 2025	October 2025	100%	100%		 Green
	In conjunction with the review and consultation undertaken with the 10 Year Asset Plan and the 10 Year Financial Plan, a review and update of the Road Management Plan was also completed in July, August and September 2025. Community consultation included dedicated workshops with a community reference group and a period of public exhibition. Following a Councillor workshop and a Councillor briefing, the final document was brought to the October ordinary meeting for adoption.							
Assets and Delivery	Review and adoption of the Naming of Roads, Features and Localities Policy	Complete	June 2025	October 2025	100%	100%		 Green
	Policy reviewed in July and Councillors briefed in July ahead of the policy being brought to the August Ordinary Meeting for adoption.							
3.4	<i>Facilitate a network of walking and cycling paths in towns to enhance connectivity and promote physical activity.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
3.4						Delivering	Partnering	Advocacy
	Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target
Assets and Delivery	Incident and Hazard Response – Q1	On Track	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%		 Green
	Through Council's asset management system, officers investigate and remediate hazards identified by Council's Asset inspectors and reports from the community. Intervention levels and required actions are inline with Council's Road Management Plan.							
3.5	<i>Review Council's portfolio of community buildings and promote shared and multi-purpose use in response to community needs.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
3.5						Delivering	Partnering	
	Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target
Assets and Delivery	Adopt 10 Year Asset Plan	Completed	June 2025	October 2025	100%	100%		 Green

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							Green
	Community consultation included dedicated workshops with a community reference group and a period of public exhibition. Following a Councillor workshop and a Councillor briefing, the final document was brought to the October ordinary meeting for adoption.						
Assets and Delivery	Review and Prepare Asset Management Plans for key asset classes	On Track	February 2025	June 2026	40%	25%	 Green
	Draft Asset Management Plans for Transport and Drainage and Buildings and Open Spaces are in final draft to be presented to Executive for endorsement in Quarter 3.						
Assets and Delivery	Prepare Disposal Surplus Assets Strategy	On Track	February 2025	April 2026	25%	50%	 Orange
	Draft Disposal Surplus Assets Strategy is being prepared. The Strategy will align with the Land Disposal Policy and provide guidelines for consideration and process for assessing and prioritization of land to be disposed of. Strategy expected to be finalized in Q3.						

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Strategy: WELCOMING AND ACCESSIBLE PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

3.6	<i>Plan for and implement a targeted capital works program for key parks and open space areas, lakes and waterways.</i>	Council's role in achieving:					
		Delivering					
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target
Assets and Delivery	Playspaces Project – supporting infrastructure and maintenance	Completed	2024	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
	Completion of the strategic planning and development of 5 key playspaces within Buloke in Birchip, Charlton, Wycheproof, Donald and Berriwillock. Spaces are designed to offer options of play equipment different in every location, within age zones that encourage ease of supervision and accessibility to essential amenities for families. Shade, lighting and typical parks/open spaces supporting infrastructure to be consistent, cost effective and environmentally friendly.						

3.7	<i>Work with community groups to improve stewardship of parks and open space.</i>	Council's role in achieving:					
		Delivering			Partnering		
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target
Works	Surge workforce & Q1 Town Blitz projects	Complete	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
	Initiation of Council's new surge workforce to undertake Q1 town blitz activities including improvements within parks and open spaces. These activities included engagement (ad-hoc and volunteer driven) with township volunteers and Forum members seeking information, providing praise or submitting feedback for consideration.						

3.8	<i>Support integrated planning approaches when infrastructure investments and / or upgrades are proposed in towns to promote community connections and avoid duplication of facilities.</i>	Council's role in achieving:					
		Delivering			Partnering		
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target

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Assets and Delivery	Buloke Aerodrome Strategy (Shire Wide)	On Track	June 2025	June 2026	10%	15%	 Green
	Includes scoping and planning for development of the strategy for a shire-wide approach. Includes Sea Lake Aerodrome redevelopment feasibility study.						

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Strategy: CARING FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT

3.9	<i>Support and promote community environmental programs and initiatives.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Delivering		
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
<i>No reportable activities or initiatives for Quarter 1</i>								

3.10	<i>Actively manage and care for our lakes and their natural and recreation values and work with partners to advocate for access to adequate recreational water in our lakes and waterways.</i>					Delivering Partnering Council's role in achieving:		
						Delivering	Partnering	Advocacy
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
Assets and Delivery	Capital works program – Lake Improvements	On Track	July 2025	September 2025	75%	95%	 Orange	
	See Capital Works updates for lake improvements. Council supports the community lake committees to maintain facilities and services to support the local environment and visitor attractions.							

3.11	<i>Prepare for, respond and adapt to the risks and impacts of a changing climate on our community, environment, infrastructure and services.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Delivering	Partnering	Advocacy
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
Assets and Delivery	Buloke LIDAR and flood studies	On Track	July 2025	June 2027	5%	5%	 Green	
	Contract awarded for shire wide LIDAR survey to commence in January 2026.							

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3.12	<i>Enhance streetscapes and town entrances to improve their attractiveness and encourage community pride.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Delivering		
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
Works	Surge workforce & Q1 Town Blitz projects	Complete	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green	
	Initiation of Council's new surge workforce to undertake Q1 town blitz activities including improvements within parks and open spaces. These activities included engagement (ad-hoc and volunteer driven) with township volunteers and Forum members seeking information, providing praise or submitting feedback for consideration.							

3.13	<i>Explore innovative waste management strategies to minimise waste to landfill and maximise recycling and re-use and educate and support the community in adopting waste minimisation and composting activities.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Delivering		Partnership
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
Works	Circular Economy Household Education Fund project	On Track	July 2025	January 2026	80%	85%	 Green	
	Promotion and advocacy for recycling program and 'glass out' campaign to reduce glass component of recycling in Buloke.							

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: PROSPEROUS AND GROWING ECONOMY

Strategy: ATTRACT INNOVATIVE, CREATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE BUSINESSES

4.1	<i>Support and encourage investment that assists industry and economic growth and diversification.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Delivering		Partnering
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
Community Safety and Compliance	Q1: Statutory Planning	On Track	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green	
A total of 11 planning applications have been received in the first quarter of the financial year with 13 decisions made. Of these 13 decisions, all were processed within the required timeframes (100%).								

4.2	<i>Support sustainable agricultural pursuits and their contribution to Buloke and the broader community.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Partnering		
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
No reportable activities or initiatives for Quarter 1								

4.3	<i>Provide spaces, places and opportunities that develop, and actively support our creative industries.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Delivering		Partnering
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
No reportable activities or initiatives for Quarter 1								

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4.4	<i>Advocate for timely and constructive consultation on renewable energy proposals and maximise the community and economic benefits from investments in renewable energy infrastructure.</i>					Council's role in achieving:	
						Advocacy	
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target
Office of the CEO	Submission to Engage Victoria – Victorian Transmission Plan	Complete	June 2025	July 2025	100%	100%	 Green
	Submission made to Engage Vic and published on Council's website.						
Office of the CEO	Submission to Engage Victoria – PILOR Review	Complete	June 2026	July 2025	100%	100%	 Green
	Submission made to Engage Vic and published on Council's website.						

4.5	<i>Establish and encourage collaboration and partnerships with key industries and organisations.</i>					Council's role in achieving:	
				Delivering		Partnering	
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target
Economic Development	Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism (GWMT) Engagement – Q1	On Track	July 2025	June 2026	100%		 Green
	Ongoing collaboration with GWMT to strengthen regional tourism partnerships and promote the Shire's visitor assets across the region. Regular meetings and consultation in alignment with the key projects being undertaken by GWMT for the Buloke municipality. Q2: October Councillor briefing included an update and presentation from the GWMT in addition.						

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: PROSPEROUS AND GROWING ECONOMY

Strategy: INVEST IN OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

4.6	<i>Support regional approaches for education, training and workforce development and involve young people in decision making.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
	Partnering		Advocacy					
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
No reportable activities or initiatives for Quarter 1								

4.7	<i>Collaborate with education and training organisations to facilitate local opportunities and pathways.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
	Partnering		Advocacy					
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
No reportable activities or initiatives for Quarter 1								

4.8	<i>Promote employment opportunities with Council.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
	Delivering		Partnering		Advocacy			
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
People & Culture	Implementation of Employment Hero HR Platform for Recruitment and Retention	On Track	July 2025	June 2026	25%	25%	 Green	
Improving Council's ability to automate the recruitment process through Employment Hero's HR platform has allowed for increases in the capability of Council's onboarding and induction processes. The promotion and monitoring of recruitment activities enhances both the experience of the applicant and Council. Integration with the SEEK, LinkedIn and Local Government directory are some of the benefits.								

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: PROSPEROUS AND GROWING ECONOMY

Strategy: PROMOTE BULOKE AS A GREAT PLACE TO VISIT, LIVE AND INVEST

4.9	<i>Promote collaboration and leadership within the business community</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Partnering		Advocacy
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
No reportable activities or initiatives for Quarter 1								

4.10	<i>Actively support innovative approaches to increase the diversity, supply, and sustainability of housing and identify successful initiatives implemented by other communities</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Partnering		Advocacy
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
No reportable activities or initiatives for Quarter 1								

4.11	<i>Promote and support the local and regional visitor economy and highlight Buloke's unique qualities and attractions.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Delivering	Partnering	Advocacy
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
Economic Development	Economic Development and Tourism Forum	Completed	September 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green	
Buloke held a forum with representatives from the Buloke Tourism Board and Community Planning Forums to identify opportunities to align community priorities with those of the new Economic Development & Tourism Strategy (in development).								

4.12	<i>Support the development of an increased range of options for visitor accommodation.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Delivering	Partnering	Advocacy
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	

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No reportable activities or initiatives for Quarter 1

4.13	<i>Advocate for improved access to NBN and mobile phone coverage.</i>	Council's role in achieving:						
		Advocacy						
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
<i>No reportable activities or initiatives for Quarter 1</i>								

Organisational Performance Report – Quarter 1 FY2025/26: Alignment to Council Plan 2025-29

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: COUNCIL LEADERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT

Strategy: RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING

5.1	<i>Demonstrate strong leadership through open decision making and a commitment to local democracy.</i>	Council's role in achieving:					
		Delivering					
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target
Governance	Coordination of scheduled Council Meetings and Councillor Briefings in alignment with the LGA2020 and Council's Governance Rules: Q1 - July, August & September	On Track	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
	Council meetings and Councillor briefings are held in accordance with the adopted Council meeting schedule, for Quarter 1, 2025 this included 3 Ordinary Meetings of Council and 3 Councillor Briefing Sessions. Meetings are open to the public and live streamed via Council's YouTube Channel. An additional special meeting of Council was held on September 22 to authorize the signatories of the year-end financial and performance statements ahead of them being brought to the October meeting as part of Council's Annual Report.						
Governance	Review and Update Council's Fraud and Corruption Policy and undertake complimentary staff training.	Complete	June 2025	July 2025	100%	100%	 Green
	Staff training was undertaken in late June 2025 at the All Staff event, facilitated by Macquarie Lawyers who also undertook the legal review of Council's existing policy ahead of its review by officers and presentation to a Councillor briefing for discussion and then the July Ordinary Meeting for Adoption.						
Governance	Adoption of a Councillor Internal Resolution Procedure	Complete	July 2025	August 2025	100%	100%	 Green
	Under Section 140 of the Act, Schedule 1A of the LG Regulations, Council are required to adopt an internal resolution procedure for the benefit of establishing the parameters for which Councillors would resolve disputes. The intention of the procedure and requirement under the Act is to first seek to resolve disputes internally in the first instance. The Councillor internal resolution procedure was adopted in the August Ordinary Meeting of Council.						
Financial Strategy	Review and updating of Council's Procurement Policy	Complete	May 2025	October 2025	100%	90%	 Green

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	Coordination of internal working group and external industry consultation, then refined through a legal review, the Policy was adopted in October 2025. Supporting documentation has been developed and circulated to officers.
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5.2	<i>Implement financial planning and reporting processes to support Council's ongoing financial sustainability.</i>	Council's role in achieving:					
		Delivering					
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target
Financial Strategy	Review and Update of Council's 10 Year Financial Plan in accordance with the LGA2020.	Complete	June 2025	October 2025	100%	100%	 Green
	Council undertook a review of the 10 Year Financial Plan and engaged with internal staff, Councillors, the broader community (through public exhibition) and then in a more targeted approach - a community reference group. Consultation was undertaken to establish a new Financial Plan 2025-2035 in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020, which stipulates that Council's Financial Plan will be reviewed and adopted by the end of October following a Council Election.						
Financial Strategy	Complete year-end audit process in conjunction with Council appointed auditors and VAGO	Complete	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
	Council actively participated in and completed the year end annual auditing process and received positive feedback via the resulting management letter from the Auditors. The resulting audited financial and performance statements were presented to Council's Audit and Risk Committee in September, where they were endorsed for signing and inclusion in the Annual Report.						
Financial Strategy	Develop and Adopt a Discretionary Financial Reserves Policy.	Complete	May 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
	In the September 2025 Ordinary meeting, Council adopted a new Discretionary Financial Reserves Policy.						
Financial Strategy	Undertake an independent external review of Council's 10 Year Financial Plan 2025-35	Complete	August 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
	External consultants with suitable expertise were engaged to undertake a review of the Financial Plan and provide recommendations to officers for consideration ahead of the adoption of the Plan in October and the review planned during the next Annual Budget development process in 2026.						
Works	Plant Replacement Strategy	On Track	July 2025	March 2026	75%	80%	 Green
	Consultant support engaged to determine both acquisition and disposal strategies including lending for heavy machinery.						

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5.3	<i>Maintain an innovative and responsive policy and planning framework to sustain future growth and development of the Shire.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
	Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target
No reportable activities or initiatives for Quarter 1								

5.4	<i>Ensure a commitment to customer service excellence including effective processes for follow up of community service requests.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Delivering		
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
Customer Engagement	Quarter 1: Customer Service Centre delivery of service requests	On Track	July 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green	
			Council's customer service centre utilizes an internal form system for the distribution of customer service requests within the organisation. Works requests are entered separately into Council's dedicated system for logging and resolving these infrastructure based works requests. Over the course of July, August and September 2025, Council's customer service centre experienced 49 email queries, 1,921 phone calls and 176 walk in visits to the customer service centre in Wycheeproof. One of the highest service area of Council for community service requests during this period was in Council's Revenue and Rating team. This is due to the August/September period for the mailing out of the new rates notices and pet renewal notices. The inclusion of the Emergency Services Volunteer Levy into this years' notice and the requirement of Council to collect this levy through our rates collection on behalf of the State Government, has attracted a lot of attention and frustration from ratepayers. This has resulted in significant increases in ratepayers and community members seeking out further information from our rating department. Some requests/follow ups remain outstanding in part.					
Customer Engagement	Upgrade and security enhancements for Council's Website	Complete	August 2025	August 2025	100%	100%	 Green	
	The recent upgrade to the Elcom website included enhanced firewall and security features, significantly improving protection against cyber threats. These improvements ensure safer user access and better data integrity across the platform.							

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5.5	<i>Review employment practices to assist attraction and retention of a capable and committed workforce.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Delivering		Partnering
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
People and Culture	Leadership Development Program and Frontline Management Program	On Track	June 2025	June 2026	25%	25%	 Green	
	6 leadership sessions were undertaken to enhance our people management and professionalism for team leaders, coordinators and managers within the organisation.							

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: COUNCIL LEADERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT

Strategy: ADVOCACY AND PARTNERING TO DELIVER ON PRIORITIES

5.6	<i>Advocate to stakeholders and key decision makers on matters of strategic importance to Council and the community.</i>	Council's role in achieving:					
		Advocacy					
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target
Office of the CEO (in conjunction with other service areas)	New webpage developed for the purpose of information sharing and transparency of Council's activities and advocacy related to the Federal and State Government's Transmission Planning, Renewable Energy and Mineral Sands Mining projects and planning.	Complete	August 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green
	A new webpage has been developed and added to Council's website to provide transparency for Community and stakeholders in relation to the activities and advocacy work that Council has undertaken in relation to the transmission planning, renewable energy planning and proposed mining projects intended to impact the Buloke Shire Council. The webpage was developed following Council's submission to the State Government's consultation phase for the Victorian Transmission Plan prior to the end of the financial year (June 2025). The webpage is intended to provide relevant links to government agencies responsible for these projects and assist in information sharing. It also provides one central point for the community to visit and learn more about the role in which the Buloke Shire Council play in relation to these proposed project and present more transparency on what Council currently knows and are doing.						

5.7	<i>Actively seek external sources of funding.</i>	Council's role in achieving:					
		Delivering		Partnering			
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target
<i>No reportable activities or initiatives for Quarter 1</i>							

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5.8	<i>Actively pursue partnerships and collaborative relationships with government agencies, local businesses and community organisations to progress our community's shared interests.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
			Delivering		Partnering			
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
<i>No reportable activities or initiatives for Quarter 1</i>								

5.9	<i>Work with key partners to proactively plan for and respond to emergency events.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
			Delivering		Partnering			
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
Emergency Management	Development and endorsement of the new Buloke Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP).	On Track	May 2025	December 2025	85%	80%	 Green	
	A legislatively compliant, risk-based plan guiding Buloke's prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery arrangements, endorsed by the MEMPC in August.							
Emergency Management	Plan and Coordinate Emergency Management Training and Exercises for Council staff.	Complete	September 2025	September 2025	100%	100%	 Green	
	Targeted training and simulation exercises for staff with emergency management roles to strengthen capability, confidence, and compliance with emergency management legislation.							
Emergency Management	Development of new operational guidelines, procedures, and defined emergency management roles.	On Track	April 2025	June 2026	75%	25%	 Green	
	Comprehensive update and creation of emergency management documentation, including the Operations Handbook, readiness sitreps and communication procedures for high-risk weather days, the EAD and animal carcass burial procedure, ERC Handbook and procedures, and the MOCC activation and operations procedure, supported by clearly defined roles and responsibilities for key positions.							
Governance	Facilitate and complete the internal audit for Emergency Management.	On Track	May 2025	December 2025	90%	75%	 Green	
	Following the cancellation of the local Esoteric Event in 2025 and the declared health outbreak emergency which occurred during the 2024 Esoteric Event, an internal audit was required and recommended by Council's Audit and Risk Committee to better understand the internal							

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	processes and actions required for Council in future instances of Emergency Management as a result of large events occurring within the municipality. This recommendations of the audit were presented to the September Audit and Risk Committee, with management comments and the finalization of the audit to be returned to the Audit and Risk Committee in Q2 (December).
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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: COUNCIL LEADERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT

Strategy: CONSULTING WITH AND INFORMING OUR COMMUNITY

5.10	<i>Promote collaboration and leadership within the business community.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Delivering		
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
No reportable activities or initiatives for Quarter 1								

5.11	<i>Actively support innovative approaches to increase the diversity, supply, and sustainability of housing and identify successful initiatives implemented by other communities.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Delivering		Partnering
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
No reportable activities or initiatives for Quarter 1								

5.12	<i>Promote and support the local and regional visitor economy and highlight Buloke's unique qualities and attractions.</i>					Council's role in achieving:		
						Delivering		Partnering
Service Area	Key Initiative, Action or Project	Status	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	Target	On Target	
No reportable activities or initiatives for Quarter 1								



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8.3.2 MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Author's Title: Municipal Emergency Management Coordinator

Directorate: Community Development

File No: GO/05/02

Relevance to Council Plan 2025 – 2029

Strategic Objective: A Safe, Healthy and Resilient Community

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the Municipal Emergency Management Plan to Councillors for noting.

SUMMARY

Under the *Emergency Management Act 2013*, Council is required to have a Municipal Emergency Management Plan prepared by the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee:

Section 60ADB Preparation of municipal emergency management plans:

(1) The Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee for a municipal district must arrange for the preparation of a municipal emergency management plan to provide for an integrated, coordinated and comprehensive approach to emergency management in relation to that municipal district.

Under the Act, the Municipal Emergency Management Plan is required to be reviewed and updated every three years under the auspice of the multiagency Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee.

The Municipal Emergency Management Plan was last reviewed in 2017.

In December 2020 the Emergency Management Planning Framework, established by the *Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018* (EMLA Act), shifted responsibility for developing and approving Municipal Emergency Management Plans from local councils to Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees, with final approval required by Regional Emergency Management Planning Committees.

In June 2025, the Buloke Shire Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee commenced a review of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan.

The plan was finalised and endorsed by the Buloke Shire Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee in August 2025 and approved by the Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee in November 2025.

Buloke Shire Council is now fully compliant with all legislative obligations under the amended *Emergency Management Act 2013*.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the Municipal Emergency Management Plan.

DISCUSSION

The Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) provides Buloke Shire Council with a contemporary, compliant and operationally effective framework for emergency management with significant improvements made to meet current legislation, statewide doctrine and regional arrangements.

The functions of a municipal council under the *Emergency Management Act 2013 (59F)* include -

- *Facilitating emergency management planning for emergencies in relation to its municipal district by establishing a Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC); and*
- *In collaboration with other agencies and by the establishment of a Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee for its municipal district, enabling community participation in emergency preparedness, including mitigation, response, and recovery activities; and*
- *Nominating one of the following persons to be the chairperson of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee for the municipal council's municipal district -*
 - i. in the case of a body taken to be a municipal council under section 5(2)(a)(i), (ii) or (iii) of the Alpine Resorts (Management) Act 1997, an employee of that body; or*
 - ii. in any other case, the Chief Executive Officer of the municipal council or a member of the municipal council staff nominated by the Chief Executive Officer; and*
- *appointing one or more municipal emergency management officers under section 59G; and*
- *appointing one or more municipal recovery managers under section 59H*

The MEMP now is better aligned with the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) and the Loddon Mallee Regional Emergency Management Plan (REMP) by integrating updated hazard and consequence-based risk analysis, modernising activation and coordination arrangements, strengthening relief and recovery structures, and embedding community resilience and community-led planning elements.

The Plan comes into effect when it is published on Council's website and remains in effect until superseded by an approved and published update.

RELEVANT LAW

- *Emergency Management Act 2013*
- *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- *Building Act 1993*
- *Electricity Safety Act 1998*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
- *Water Act 1989*
- *Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018*
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Victoria State Emergency Service Act 2005*

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable.

OPTIONS

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The MEMP supports long-term community resilience, climate-aware risk planning, sustainable emergency preparedness and improved municipal capacity to manage emergencies in a changing risk environment.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Under the *Emergency Management Act 2013*, municipal emergency management planning must incorporate community input through representation on the MEMPC.

The legislation does not require a formal public consultation or a public exhibition process for the MEMP. Instead, community needs are addressed through the involvement of community representatives and local organisations on the MEMPC.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

One of the overarching governance principles in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020* is that innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued.

This requirement has been front and foremost in the review of the MEMP, resulting in the REMPC Assurance Sub-Committee commanding Buloke Shire for the approach it has taken and noting that the updated MEMP is *“innovative, contemporary and sector-leading”*.

Key improvements include:

- Strengthened governance, with legislated MEMPC ownership replacing council-led planning
- Contemporary risk and hazard analysis, incorporating climate, vulnerability, consequence and interdependency considerations
- Clearer activation, coordination and information-sharing arrangements aligned with SEMP doctrine
- Enhanced relief and recovery arrangements, including impact assessment, transition processes and community-led recovery
- Digital-friendly formatting, mapping and layout to support field and operational use
- Greater community integration, including community-led planning and improved arrangements for vulnerable populations

Following its successful assurance outcome, the MEMP has been provided to two other Victorian local municipalities as a model template to guide their own MEMP redevelopment.

COLLABORATION

The MEMP was developed in three major sections that were circulated progressively to the Buloke Shire MEMPC for feedback, refinement and endorsement.

The Buloke Shire MEMPC membership consists of representatives from:

- emergency services (Country Fire Authority; Victoria State Emergency Services; Victoria Police; Ambulance Victoria)
- government agencies (Buloke Shire Council; Emergency Recovery Victoria; Department of Families, Fairness and Housing; Department of Health, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action)
- non-government organisations (Australian Red Cross; Victorian Council of Churches)
- community members

This collaborative co-design process strengthened the clarity, accuracy and interoperability of the plan, ensuring it reflects shared ownership and multi-agency agreement at the municipal level.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

There are no financial or resource implications associated with the noting of the MEMP.

All work to review and update the MEMP has been undertaken internally by council officers within existing staff resources, including external funding under the Municipal Emergency Resourcing Program, delivered by the Victorian Government through the Department of Justice and Community Safety.

Section 6 (Pg.33) and Section 7 (Pg.40) of the MEMP identifies the financial arrangements for Council's role and responsibilities in response and recovery.

Council officers with delegations such as the Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO) and Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) will appropriately allocate and track all expenditure during an emergency event.

Any resource or financial allocation during an emergency by either the MEMO or MRM must be approved by the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC) from Victoria Police before it is allocated. This is to ensure compliance with Emergency Management Victoria's Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

All resource provision is documented in Council's emergency management platform (Crisisworks) and payments recorded and made via established Council procedures.

Financial claims can be made under the DFRA scheme through the Department of Treasury and Finance.

An assessment is undertaken by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing for expenditure of single incidents that occur which require Council assistance.

Previous responses to single incidents have included arranging temporary fencing due to a house fire or providing temporary accommodation until other support services are available to provide assistance.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Victorian Preparedness Framework
- State Emergency Management Plan
- Loddon Mallee Region Emergency Management Plan

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Council Plan 2025–2029
- Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025–2035
- Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Buloke Shire Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2025 will be placed on council's website.

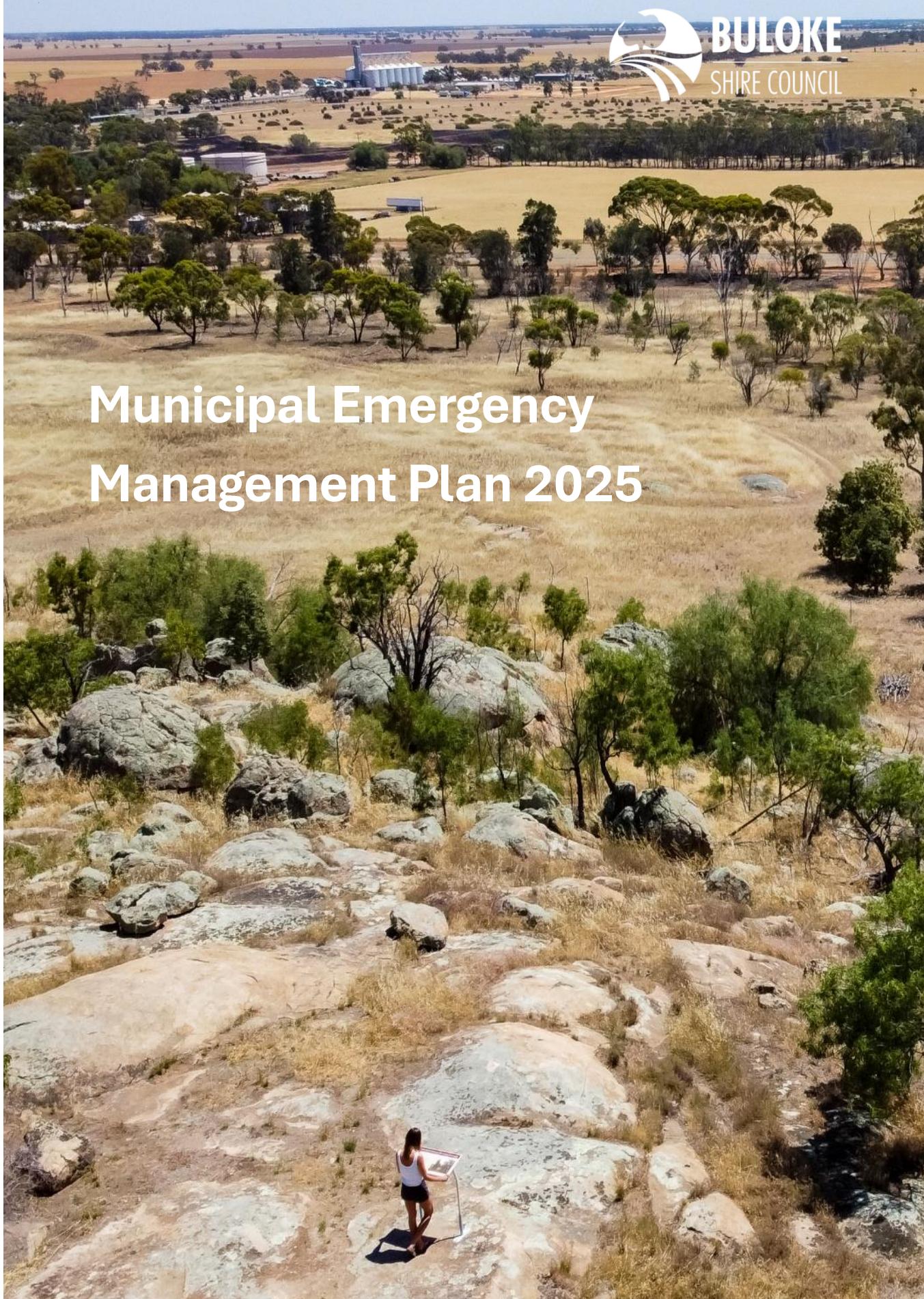
CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

Attachments: Municipal Emergency Management Plan



Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2025





Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge that Buloke Shire Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee business is conducted on Aboriginal land, including the lands of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk, the Dja Dja Wurrung and Wamba Wemba people as the traditional owners of parts of the land now known as Buloke.

The committee acknowledges and pays respect to Elders, past, present and emerging, and is committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the area to achieve a shared vision of safer and more resilient communities.



This plan has been prepared by the Buloke Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) as part of an integrated approach to Emergency Management in Victoria. The plan is consistent with but does not duplicate the [State Emergency Management Plan](#) and [Loddon Mallee Regional Emergency Management Plan](#).



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1. Introduction

Foreword

Victoria faces increasing challenges from both natural and non-environmental risks. Climate change, demographic shifts, urban growth in high-risk areas, and technological advances are reshaping the state's risk profile, heightening the likelihood and impact of emergencies. This places greater demands on the emergency management sector and communities alike.

Emergencies can occur at any time, threatening lives, infrastructure, and the environment. A proactive, coordinated approach is essential to safeguarding Victoria's communities and minimizing disaster impacts.

Emergency management provides a structured framework for identifying hazards, assessing risks, and implementing strategies for prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. Guided by the Emergency Management Act 2013 and its amendments, this approach fosters collaboration across government agencies, emergency services, non-government organizations, and communities.

Municipal emergency management planning supports national, state, and regional strategies by incorporating local knowledge, identifying risks, outlining local capabilities, and documenting relief and recovery strategies. This enhances community resilience and ensures a coordinated response tailored to specific needs.

Victoria's emergency management approach follows an "**all communities, all emergencies**" principle, ensuring inclusivity and adaptability to diverse community needs. Strong partnerships and continuous improvement are essential in an evolving emergency landscape.

This foreword underscores our commitment to comprehensive emergency planning in the Buloke Shire (Buloke). By working together, we can create safer, more resilient communities and a future where preparedness and cooperation are at the heart of emergency management.



Authority, assurance and approval

This Plan has been developed in accordance with the requirements of the Emergency Management Act 2013 (“Act”) and fully complies with the Guidelines for Preparing State, Regional, and Municipal Emergency Management Plans (“Guidelines”) issued under section 77 of the Act.

A Statement of Assurance, including a checklist and certificate, has been prepared and submitted to the Loddon Mallee Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee in accordance with section 60AG of the Emergency Management Act 2013. A certificate of assurance is provided in [Appendix G](#) of this Plan.

This Plan has been endorsed by the Buloke MEMPC and approved by the Loddon Mallee Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee and comes into effect when it is published on the Buloke Shire Council website. It remains in effect until it is superseded by an approved and published version.

Duplication

This plan avoids duplication by aligning with, and linking to, both the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) and the Loddon Mallee Regional Emergency Management Plan (REMP). While its format meets legislative requirements, the content is tailored to the local context. Hyperlinks are used to minimise repetition and provide access to current information, with annual reviews undertaken to ensure link functionality and relevance.

Aim

The MEMP sets out multi-agency and community arrangements for, prevention of, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies in Buloke, as per the [Emergency Management Act 2013](#) (Part 6A). It defines roles, supports collaboration, and promotes shared responsibility to reduce emergency impacts and build community resilience.

Review

This Plan must be reviewed at least once every three years in accordance with [EM Act 2013 s60AN](#), or sooner if required, to ensure it remains current, integrated, and comprehensive for emergency management within the Buloke Local Government Area (LGA).

Updates are also allowed where there is a significant risk to life or property if the Plan is not revised. In such cases, urgent updates take effect immediately upon publication on the Council website and remain in force for up to three months, as per [EM Act 2013 s60AM](#).

2. Buloke Shire

About Buloke

Buloke is a rural municipality located in north-western Victoria, covering approximately 8,000 square kilometers. The Shire is named after the native "Buloke" tree (*Allocasuarina luehmannii*) and is part of the traditional lands of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, and Jupagalk Peoples.

Buloke is home to a resilient and close-knit population of around 6,000 people. The municipality includes the townships of Wycheeproof (home to the Shire offices), Charlton, Donald, Birchip, Sea Lake, Berriwillock, Nandaly, Nullawil, Culgoa and Watchem. The Shire's economy is predominantly based on broadacre dryland farming, especially grain production (wheat, barley, canola) and livestock grazing. This agricultural focus shapes the Shire's land use, infrastructure needs, seasonal workforce demands, and risk profile. Key transport routes such as the Calder and Sunraysia Highways provide vital connections for freight and travel.

Buloke features open plains, intermittent inland lakes (such as Lake Tyrrell, one of Victoria's largest salt lakes and a popular tourism site), wetlands, and significant areas of native vegetation and conservation reserves.





History of emergencies

Over the years, Buloke has experienced a range of natural disasters and emergency events. While the municipality has a relatively small population, its geography, agricultural base, and climate variability make it vulnerable to a variety of emergency risks. A summary of Buloke's emergency history is provided in [Appendix A](#) of this Plan.

Environment and landscape

Buloke features a predominantly flat topography and semi-arid climate, with low annual rainfall and hot, dry summers. The landscape has been extensively cleared for agriculture, yet significant natural assets and ecological systems remain, contributing to both environmental value and emergency management considerations.

Traditional owners

Buloke sits on the traditional lands of the [Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, and Jupagalk Peoples](#). These Nations are represented by the Barengi Gadjin Land Council and Dja Dja Warrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation. Traditional Owners have maintained deep cultural, spiritual and ecological connections to Country for tens of thousands of years. Increasingly, they are involved in environmental stewardship, fire management, and biodiversity restoration activities in partnership with local and state authorities.

Bushland, forests, and native vegetation

Native vegetation within Buloke has been significantly cleared for agricultural purposes, although remnants persist along roadsides, creek lines, and within dedicated reserves. These areas support ecological communities such as endangered buloke woodlands, scattered mallee scrub, native grasslands, and seasonal wetlands. While fragmented, these patches of vegetation provide essential habitat for native fauna, contribute to soil health, and act as biodiversity corridors across the largely modified landscape.

Parks, reserves, and conservation areas

Buloke contains a number of ecologically and culturally significant parks and reserves. Lake Tyrrell, located near Sea Lake, is Victoria's largest Salt Lake and holds great cultural significance for Traditional Owners, as well as ecological and tourism value. Other lakes such as Lake Wooroonook, Lake Watchem, and Lake Tchum serve important recreational, environmental, and drought refuge functions. Additionally, nature reserves and landmarks such as Mount Jeffcott, Mount Wycheproof, Mount Doobooobetic, Donald Nature Conservation Reserve, and the Charlton Bushland Reserve provide valuable native vegetation and environmental education opportunities.



Waterways and wetlands

The **Avoca River** forms the southern boundary of the municipality and has a long history of flooding, with recorded events dating back to 1870. Major floods occurred in 1939 before the construction of levee banks, and in 1956, 1964, 1973, 1975, 1981, 1983, 1988, and 1995 following levee development. More recent significant events were recorded in September and November 2010, and January 2011. The township of Charlton is partly protected by a levee bank built to withstand a 5% AEP (1-in-20-year) flood event, located to the southwest of the town. Rural land between Coonooer Bridge and Ninyeunook is prone to inundation during floods. The Bureau of Meteorology provides flood forecasting for this river system.

The **Avon-Richardson River** catchment covers an area of approximately 3,300 square kilometers in central Victoria, with the river itself stretching around 25 kilometers and flowing through the township of Donald before terminating at Lake Buloke. This river system does not flow into the sea and is often landlocked due to surrounding geography. Overflow from the Wimmera River at Swedes Cutting (east of Glenorchy) can feed into the Richardson River near Bismark, with the Avon and Richardson Rivers converging at Banyena. The river system has experienced significant flooding since the early 1900s, including in 1909, 1918, 1956, 1975, 1992, and during the September and November 2010 events. The most extreme flood on record occurred in January 2011, surpassing the 1909 level by 200 millimeters. Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water provides flood forecasting and guidance for the Rich-Avon Weir. Flooding from this river system affects various lands adjacent to the river.

The **Lalbert, Tyrrell and Cooroopajerup Creek Creeks**, which form part of the Avoca River floodplain, were previously used by Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water for stock and domestic water delivery. These creeks are prone to overflow during larger flood events, with impacts extending further downstream depending on flow volumes. During the 2010 and 2011 floods, both creeks contributed to flooding in the South Wycheeproof and Culgoa areas to varying degrees.

Buloke, particularly the Wycheeproof region, is home to several significant wetlands, including the Wycheeproof Wetlands Precinct. The municipality also features Lake Buloke, Lake Tyrrell (a wetland of national significance), Wooroonook Lakes, Tchum Lake, and Green Lake.



Land use and ownership

The landscape of Buloke is dominated by agricultural land use, with approximately 94 per cent of land zoned for farming purposes. Most of this land is held as freehold by private landowners and is used for broadacre cropping and grazing. Public land comprises only a small proportion of the total area and includes road reserves, bushland and conservation reserves, lake margins, and corridors associated with public infrastructure.

The [2021 Census](#) indicated that there were approximately 2,797 dwellings in Buloke based on the 2021 data.

Important Note: This calculation is an approximation. The 2021 Census data reports on residents and dwellings, not individual homes. The estimated number of dwellings is based on the average household size.

Agriculture

Agriculture is the primary economic activity in Buloke and a defining characteristic of the municipality. The region is known for its broadacre dryland cropping, with major crops including wheat, barley, oats, lentils, chickpeas, and canola. Livestock grazing, particularly sheep for wool and meat, is also widespread, with some cattle enterprises present in the region. Agricultural production is heavily influenced by seasonal conditions and global commodity markets. In recent years, some producers have diversified into regenerative agriculture, organic systems, and niche cropping.

Events

Buloke hosts a variety of annual events including OK Motels in Charlton, the Wycheeproof Cup, the Berriwillock Rodeo, the Birchip and Donald Races, and the King of the Mountain footrace on Mount Wycheeproof, as well as seasonal football, netball, and hockey matches and finals that reflect its rural identity and strong community spirit.

The Esoteric Festival, held near Donald, is the largest event in the municipality. As a multi-day music and arts festival attracting thousands of attendees, it involves complex logistics and emergency management planning across multiple agencies.

Hosting major events in Buloke can present unique challenges due to the geographic isolation, limited local infrastructure, and constrained emergency management resources. Large crowds can place additional pressure on health services, emergency response capabilities, accommodation providers, telecommunications, and transport networks. At times, the MEMPC may play a key role in planning and coordinating with relevant agencies, land managers and event organisers to identify and manage associated risks, supporting community safety and event resilience.



Vulnerable persons and facilities

The Vulnerable Persons Register is a statewide database designed to identify individuals who may require assistance during emergencies. These individuals are typically receiving support from agencies and have been assessed as needing additional help in such situations.

The register can be accessed by authorised Council staff, Victoria Police and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing to support emergency planning and response including potential evacuation.

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing are responsible for overseeing the [Vulnerable People in Emergencies Policy](#). The Policy applies to organizations funded by DFFH to provide personal care, support and or case management services to clients.

Vulnerable facilities are buildings where vulnerable are likely to be situated or gather including, hospitals, aged care facilities, schools, disability groups homes and early learning Centres.

A register, listing facilities located in Buloke is available to authorised Council staff and Victoria Police.

Critical infrastructure

Buloke Shire contains a range of critical infrastructure essential to community functioning, including utilities, transport networks, and key service facilities. A detailed list of critical infrastructure is provided in [Appendix B](#) of this plan.

Industry and essential services

Buloke Shire's economy is primarily driven by agriculture and food processing, with key employers including Kooka's Country Cookies and other manufacturing operations based in Donald. The Shire's five major towns Birchip, Charlton, Donald, Sea Lake, and Wycheeproof, each support essential services including hospitals or nursing homes, which play a vital role in community wellbeing and emergency response capacity. Education services are provided through a network of government and Catholic primary schools, as well as preschools and early learning centres, which are central to community stability and recovery during emergencies.



Emergency management capability and capacity

Buloke's geographic isolation and sparse population shape the capacity and capability for emergency response through several key factors, including reliance on volunteer services, extensive travel distances, telecommunication black spots, limited resources, and strong community resilience.

This context underscores the importance of engaging proactively with the community to build preparedness and resilience. Strengthening local planning frameworks ensures emergency responses are locally informed and risk appropriate. Effective collaboration between council, emergency services, and regional partners is vital, not only for coordinating resources but also for activating resource-sharing protocols and partnering with neighbouring municipalities to scale up support when required. These approaches improve the ability to respond quickly, sustain essential services, and support long-term recovery across the Shire.

Emergency response capability in Buloke

Emergency response in Buloke is supported by multiple agencies with strategically located facilities across the Shire, though not all are staffed at all times. The table below outlines the presence of key emergency services,

Agency	Locations
Victoria Police	Stations in Birchip, Charlton, Culgoa, Donald, Wycheeproof, Sea Lake (not always manned)
Ambulance Victoria	Sub-stations in Charlton, Donald and Sea Lake
VIC SES	Units in Birchip and Wycheeproof
CFA – Buloke West Group	Birchip, Cope Cope, Corack, Corack East, Curyo, Donald, Jeffcott, Laen East, Litchfield, Reedy Dam, Warne, Watchem, Watchupga
CFA – Charlton Group	Buckrabanyule, Charlton, Glenloth East, Teddywaddy, Wooroonook, Yeungroon
CFA – Tyrrell Group	Berriwillock, Culgoa, Dumosa, Nandaly, Narraport, Nullawil, Sea Lake, Wycheeproof, Wycheeproof South



Council

Buloke Shire Council has dedicated emergency management staff, including a Municipal Emergency Management Officer, Municipal Recovery Officer, and Municipal Fire Prevention Officers, as required under the [Emergency Management Act 2013](#). These core roles are supported by other council staff who take on essential responsibilities across preparedness, response, relief, and recovery. While not legislated, these additional roles are critical to ensuring an effective and coordinated emergency management capability.

Responsibilities of land managers, asset owners, and critical infrastructure operators

The [State Emergency Management Plan](#) (SEMP), states that all land managers, asset owners, and infrastructure operators are responsible for emergency management activities relating to the land, assets, or services they manage. This includes councils (for council-managed land and assets), DEECA and Parks Victoria (for forests and public land), VicRoads/DoT (for transport infrastructure), and critical infrastructure providers (water, electricity, gas, and telecommunications).

Responsibilities, outlined in the SEMP Sections 3.4.3, 3.4.4 and Appendix B, include risk assessment and mitigation, preparedness planning, supporting emergency response, restoring damaged assets or services, and contributing to relief and recovery. These entities are expected to collaborate with emergency services and participate in local and regional emergency management planning. Councils are also responsible for providing resources to support response operations, where appropriate and available.

Resource support and sharing

In Victoria, response agencies and councils can access additional support during emergencies through established resource-sharing frameworks. [The Practice Note - Sourcing Supplementary Emergency Response Resources through Municipal Councils](#) provides a structured process for requesting personnel, equipment, and services when local capacity is exceeded. This is particularly valuable for rural councils like Buloke, where limited resources and geographic isolation can affect emergency response capability.

In addition, the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) coordinates an [Inter-Council Emergency Management Resource Sharing Protocol](#). This voluntary agreement enables councils to share trained personnel and support functions across municipalities. It ensures timely access to specialised expertise, enhances resilience during prolonged or large-scale emergencies, and helps councils manage recovery operations more effectively.

3. Planning arrangements

Victoria's Emergency Management Planning Framework

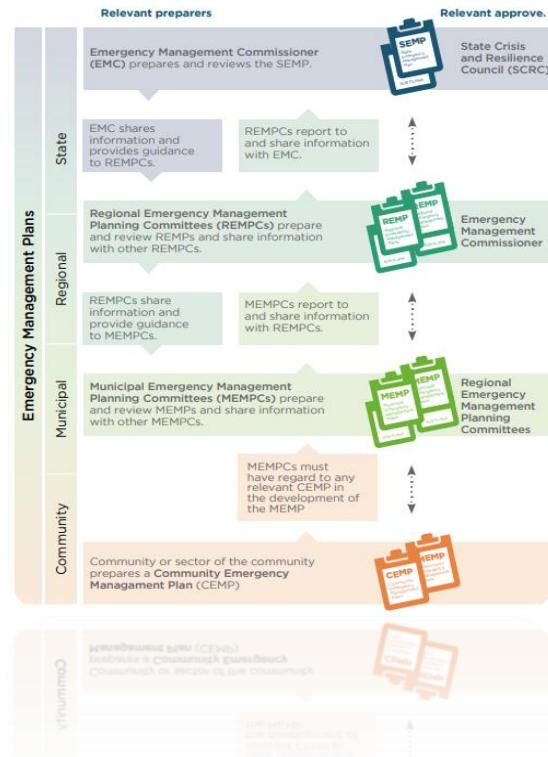
Victoria's Emergency Management

Planning Framework establishes a structured approach across three planning tiers: state, regional, and municipal. The State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) provides the overarching strategic direction, outlining policies and responsibilities for all emergencies. This is supported by hazard-specific sub-plans that detail arrangements for particular risks, such as floods or bushfires, ensuring targeted response strategies.

Regional Emergency Management Plans (REMPs) adapt state strategies to local conditions, coordinating resources and agencies across regions to align with the SEMP and hazard sub-plans. Municipal Emergency Management Plans (MEMPs) are developed by Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees to address specific community risks and capabilities, ensuring preparedness and response activities meet local needs while maintaining consistency with regional and state frameworks.

The framework's clear hierarchy prevents duplication or conflict between plans, with the SEMP and hazard sub-plans guiding regional and municipal planning. This unified approach promotes collaboration, efficient resource sharing, defined roles, and enhances community safety.

This plan supports holistic and coordinated management arrangements within the municipality and is consistent with and contextualises the SEMP and Loddon Mallee Region Emergency Management Plan.





Victorian Preparedness Framework

The [Victorian Preparedness Framework](#) (VPF) is a strategic planning tool developed by Emergency Management Victoria to enhance the state's ability to manage emergencies effectively. It outlines 21 core capabilities—such as planning, community information, health response, and recovery—that are essential for mitigating, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies. Each capability is supported by specific critical tasks and assessed against plausible risk scenarios to identify capability gaps and inform resource allocation.



The VPF is particularly valuable for regional areas like Buloke, providing a common language and structure for assessing local emergency management capacity. It supports collaboration across agencies and municipalities, ensuring that preparedness efforts are coordinated and aligned with statewide priorities.

Emergency management planning framework

Emergency management in Victoria is guided by a tiered planning framework, with the [State Emergency Management Plan \(SEMP\)](#) providing overarching policy direction and coordination arrangements. Prepared by the Emergency Management Commissioner, the SEMP outlines how the state prevents, prepares for, responds to, and recovers from emergencies through clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and governance structures. It emphasises shared responsibility highlighting that individuals, communities, government, and non-government agencies all play a role—and ensures effective escalation, where local efforts are supported by regional and state resources as needed.

The SEMP defines agency responsibilities across the four key pillars of emergency management: prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery (PPRR). These are categorised in the table below.

Role Type	Description	Examples
Control Agencies	Lead specific types of emergency responses.	CFA (fires), VICSES (floods and storms)
Support Agencies	Provide functional assistance to control agencies during emergencies.	VicRoads (traffic management), DH (public health)
Recovery Coordinators and Agencies	Manage short- and long-term recovery, including psychosocial support, housing, infrastructure, and economic recovery.	Emergency Recovery Victoria, local councils



This structure promotes coordination, avoids duplication, and ensures clarity and efficiency across emergency management activities.

At a regional level, Buloke Shire is part of the Loddon Mallee Region, one of Victoria's eight emergency management regions. The [Loddon Mallee Region Emergency Management Plan](#), developed by the Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee, aligns with the SEMP and provides region-specific risk context and operational detail.

At the local level, this Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) sets out multi-agency arrangements for the prevention of, response to, and recovery from emergencies within Buloke. It is prepared in accordance with the [Guidelines for Preparing Emergency Management Plans](#) and is aligned with both state and regional frameworks to ensure consistency and integration across all levels of emergency planning.

Sub-plans and complementary plans

Sub-plans are developed to manage risks that require a coordinated, multi-agency response and are not the responsibility of a single control agency. At the municipal level, the Emergency Management Planning Committee may develop sub-plans to address specific local risks or emergency events involving multiple agencies.

In line with current legislation, Municipal Emergency Management Sub-Plans must be developed using the same collaborative, multi-agency approach as the main Municipal Emergency Management Plan. They are subject to the same consultation, approval, review, and assurance processes and must be published on the Emergency Management Victoria website.

This Plan includes sub-plans for fire management and flood and storm with a full list provided in [Appendix C](#). Existing sub-plans remain in effect until reviewed and updated to comply with new legislative requirements and assurance processes.

In addition, complementary plans are developed by specific industries or agencies under separate legislative or governance frameworks. These plans do not fall under Part 6A of the [Emergency Management Act 2013](#) and are not subject to the same approval or consultation processes as sub-plans. However, they may support coordinated emergency management in Buloke. A list of relevant complementary plans is included in [Appendix C](#).



Other plans

Control agencies also maintain internal operational plans and procedures, which may be used during emergency responses in Buloke. Additionally, state-level documents such as the [Victorian Emergency Operations Handbook](#), [Joint Standard Operating Procedures](#), and [Emergency Management Team Arrangements](#) provide overarching guidance for incident management.

Community Emergency Management Plans may also be developed in partnership with local communities to support grassroots preparedness and resilience. Under the [Emergency Management Act 2013](#), these plans aim to capture local knowledge and build community-led capacity to manage emergencies, complementing formal municipal and agency arrangements.

Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee

The Buloke Shire Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) is responsible for developing and maintaining the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP), which outlines how emergencies will be prevented, prepared for, responded to, and recovered from across the municipality. The Committee operates in accordance with the [Emergency Management Act 2013](#), with governance arrangements detailed in its Terms of Reference.

While the MEMPC is responsible for local emergency management planning, it does not manage emergencies directly, this is the role of designated Control Agencies, supported by partner agencies. Emergency management in Buloke is built on strong multi-agency collaboration, with emergency services, Council, and recovery organisations working together through a comprehensive, risk-based approach.

This collaborative model is supported by:

- Regular risk assessments, training, and exercises
- Agreed activation triggers
- Ongoing stakeholder and community engagement
- A strong culture of shared responsibility

Committee membership

The MEMPC is established under Section 59A of the [Emergency Management Act 2013](#), which sets out minimum membership requirements. The Committee includes representatives from core emergency management agencies and has invited additional members with specialised expertise, local knowledge, or community representation to strengthen planning and coordination.



Membership includes representatives from:

- Buloke Shire Council
- Victoria Police (VicPol)
- Country Fire Authority (CFA)
- Ambulance Victoria (AV)
- Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES)
- Department of Health (DH)
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH)
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)
- Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV)
- Australian Red Cross (ARC)
- Community representatives
- Other relevant agencies and organisations as required.

The Committee also welcomes representatives with specific local responsibilities in emergency management and recovery.

The MEMPC does not hold a budget or financial delegation. Buloke Shire Council facilitates meetings and provides limited secretariat support to ensure the effective operation of the Committee.

The Committee's Terms of Reference are available on request.

Sub-committees and working groups

To support the work of the MEMPC, sub-committees or working groups may be established to explore specific issues in more detail, or to assist in the review and updating of the MEMP or its sub-plans.

These groups may include MEMPC members, as well as community representatives or agencies with relevant expertise, influence, or local interest in the topic area.

Sub-committees and working groups are required to report back to the MEMPC on their progress and the outcomes of their work. They may provide recommendations for consideration but cannot make decisions or endorse actions on behalf of the MEMPC.



4. Identifying and assessing risk

Introduction

Understanding the types, likelihood, and consequences of emergency risks that Victoria faces is crucial to determining Victoria's preparedness, including the identification of core capability requirements for the sector and community.

A key component of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) is the identification and assessment of risks that may impact the municipality. This process involves understanding the hazards that are most likely to occur, their potential consequences, and the likelihood of these events affecting people, the environment, infrastructure, and the economy. Through collaboration the Buloke Shire MEMPC can prioritise risks and ensure appropriate mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery arrangements are in place. This risk-based approach supports effective planning and builds community resilience to emergencies.

Systemic risk

Systemic risk is a multifaceted concept encompassing hazard, exposure, vulnerability, and resilience. It's about understanding how interconnected risks across different communities, systems, and networks can lead to cascading effects and potentially devastating outcomes for society.

The MEMPC routinely identifies, assesses, and reviews current and emerging risks using the CERA process. When a risk is deemed complex or significant, a specific sub-plan is developed to detail the control measures needed to manage it effectively. In addition to this, the MEMPC maintains a local risk register to support agencies and the community in planning targeted mitigation activities beyond those covered by the broader CERA framework.



Community emergency risk assessment process

The [Community Emergency Risk Assessment \(CERA\)](#) is an all-hazards risk assessment tool aligned with [ISO 31000](#) Risk Management standards. Facilitated by VICSES Emergency Management Officers, the CERA process supports Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees (MEMPCs) to identify, understand, and prioritise risks relevant to their communities.

CERA helps:

- Identify hazards posing the most significant threat
- Understand community exposure and vulnerability
- Assess consequences, likelihoods, and impacts
- Highlight gaps in mitigation measures and opportunities for improvement
- Inform emergency management planning through collaborative analysis

The process includes facilitated discussions and is supported by **CERA Online**, which generates exportable risk profiles and heat maps for inclusion in emergency management plans. While risks are considered at a municipal scale, CERA also helps identify areas and assets within the community that may be more vulnerable.





Buloke, community emergency risk assessment outcomes

The list below outlines the outcomes of the Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) process for Buloke Shire, highlighting those hazards with a **residual risk rating of High or Extreme**. It identifies key emergency risks to the community, their potential impacts, and areas requiring attention to support effective emergency planning and preparedness.

Region	Municipality	Hazard category	Emergency hazard	Rating confidence	Residual Risk Rating	Date reviewed
Loddon Mallee (North West)	Buloke Shire	Transport	Transport accident- discontinued, use specific transport risk	High	High	2017-10-03
Loddon Mallee (North West)	Buloke Shire	Natural Disasters	Flood	Medium	High	2019-08-06
Loddon Mallee (North West)	Buloke Shire	Biological	Outbreak- discontinued, update to specific outbreak risk	Medium	High	2020-02-25
Loddon Mallee (North West)	Buloke Shire	Technical	Urban Fire- discontinued- use specific structure fire risk	High	High	2018-11-13
Loddon Mallee (North West)	Buloke Shire	Transport	Transport Incident- Road	High	High	2017-10-03
Loddon Mallee (North West)	Buloke Shire	Natural Disasters	Flood	Medium	High	2019-08-06
Loddon Mallee (North West)	Buloke Shire	Biological	Human disease (pandemic)	High	High	2028-05-13
Loddon Mallee (North West)	Buloke Shire	Biological	Emergency Plant Pest	Medium	High	2020-02-25
Loddon Mallee (North West)	Buloke Shire	Technical	Fire- Structural/ Residential fire	High	High	2018-11-13
Loddon Mallee (North West)	Buloke Shire	Human-caused	Mass gathering events	Medium	High	2027-10-07

Hazard specific risk registers

The Buloke Shire MEMPC has developed hazard-specific sub-plans to address key emergency risks within the municipality. A list of these sub-plans is provided in [Appendix C](#) of this Plan.



Flood and storm

Although there is no standalone flood and storm risk register, the [Buloke Flood Emergency Plan](#) outlines local flood and storm risks, including flood history, behavior, and high-risk areas. This is supported by [SES Local Flood Guides](#) for specific townships, providing practical preparedness advice tailored to local communities. Tools such as the North Central Catchment Management Authority's [FloodEye](#) platform further enhance flood preparedness through real-time mapping and intelligence.

Some areas within Buloke remain unmapped or lack flood modelling, so regular updates to the plan and guides are essential to incorporate new data and maintain accuracy.

Fire

The [Victorian Fire Risk Register - Bushfire \(VFRR-B\)](#) identifies and assesses bushfire risk to key assets across Buloke, including residential areas, critical infrastructure, and culturally significant sites. The process involves collaboration between local government, fire services, land managers, utilities, and community representatives, and records existing treatments such as fuel reduction and community education.

The [Bushfire At-Risk Register \(BARR\)](#), maintained by the Department of Education, identifies educational facilities at highest bushfire risk. As of the latest update, no schools, kindergartens, or childcare services in Buloke are listed on the BARR.



5. Mitigation

Introduction

Emergency mitigation is a critical component of emergency management, as outlined in the [State Emergency Management Plan](#) and the [Victorian Preparedness Framework](#). It involves taking proactive steps to eliminate or reduce the likelihood and consequences of emergencies before they occur.

Mitigation focuses on reducing risk through informed planning, infrastructure improvements, land use controls, and community education. It also supports resilience by ensuring individuals, communities, and agencies understand their risks and can take practical actions to reduce potential impacts.

Roles and responsibilities - Mitigation

Mitigation of emergency risks across Victoria involves a coordinated effort by multiple agencies, each with specific responsibilities outlined in [Table 8 of the State Emergency Management Plan](#). For risks rated as “high” within Buloke, relevant mitigation activities are identified and addressed through targeted strategies and collaborative planning.

Agencies with roles under the SEMP share a collective responsibility to prevent emergencies where possible and to reduce their potential impacts. At the local level, the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) contributes by identifying hazard-prone areas, promoting integrated risk reduction initiatives, and monitoring the implementation of agreed mitigation actions to ensure community safety and resilience.



Enhanced community resilience and education

In Buloke, agencies, organisations, and Council collaborate to enhance community resilience through targeted education and engagement activities. These joint efforts aim to raise public awareness, strengthen preparedness, and empower residents to actively participate in managing emergency risks as,

- Providing support for communities to develop and maintain Community Emergency Management Plans (CEMPs) that address local priorities and vulnerabilities
- Promotion of the “First 72 Hours” initiative, encouraging households to prepare for self-sufficiency immediately after an emergency
- Educational programs and awareness campaigns covering bushfire safety, flood readiness, storm response, and other emergency topics, delivered in partnership with agencies such as CFA and VICSES
- Tailored support and resources for individuals and communities more vulnerable to emergencies, ensuring inclusive preparedness
- Use of social media platforms to raise emergency awareness, disseminate timely information, and engage effectively with the community
- Encouragement to use trusted information channels like the VicEmergency app for accurate, real-time updates during emergencies





6. Response

Introduction

The [State Emergency Management Plan](#) defines Emergency Response as the actions taken during and in the first period after an emergency to reduce the effects and consequences of the emergency on people, their livelihoods, wellbeing and property; on the environment; and to meet basic human needs.

The SEMP recognises that effective emergency management requires a seamless integration of readiness and relief within the response phase. While the primary focus of response is to protect life, property and the environment, the SEMP acknowledges that successful outcomes depend on pre-established readiness measures and the timely delivery of relief.

The SEMP outlines that readiness, response, and relief are interconnected and often occur simultaneously during an emergency.

Readiness

Readiness increases the ability for timely response with activities immediately before and in anticipation of a potential or actual emergency. Command, control and coordination arrangements must be in place to ensure readiness:

- for major emergencies irrespective of whether a specific emergency is anticipated, occurring or has occurred
- if a major emergency is anticipated (such as a weather forecast that indicates the possibility of a flood)
- if a minor emergency could potentially escalate into a major emergency.

The Victorian Preparedness Framework is the primary planning tool guiding emergency management in Victoria. It identifies five core capability elements—people, resources, governance, systems, and processes—and 21 core capabilities that support activities across all phases of emergency management.



At the local level, preparedness involves proactive planning and coordination by agencies and stakeholders to address identified hazards, such as the High Risk Weather Season.

This includes:

- Coordinated pre-season briefings and reviews of joint-agency Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- Integrated training and exercises to support seamless transition from readiness to response and recovery
- Emergency Management Awareness and Emergency Management Liaison Officer (EMLO) training for local government and EM stakeholders
- Traffic and Evacuation Management training for local police
- Development of agency readiness and response arrangements
- Local planning to enhance cross-agency support
- Inter-agency and organisational training and education sessions

These activities are complemented by ongoing efforts to strengthen relationships between local agencies, neighbouring municipalities, and regional emergency and support organisations, ensuring a collaborative and well-prepared approach to emergency management.

Regional emergency management team briefings (REMT)

The Regional Emergency Management Team (REMT) in the Loddon Mallee region conducts regular briefings to support situational awareness, coordination, and preparedness across agencies. These briefings are generally held monthly throughout the High Risk Weather Season but may occur more frequently in anticipation of significant weather events or during ongoing emergency response operations.

Participants are provided with up-to-date information on weather forecasts and the current emergency management situation, allowing for shared awareness and informed decision-making. The briefings enable agencies to align priorities, plan resources, and ensure a consistent regional approach to emergency management.



Response

Response is the action taken during and in the first period after an emergency to reduce the effects and consequences of the emergency on people, their livelihoods, wellbeing and property; on the environment; and to meet basic human needs.

The purpose of command, control and coordination arrangements in the response phase is to ensure sufficient resources are deployed, coordinated and responding to an emergency, and that consequences are being managed.

Operational tiers

In Victoria, the response to emergencies operates at three tiers - Incident, Regional & State. Emergencies are managed at the appropriate operational tier, typically commencing at the incident level and escalating as required, depending on the development or scale of the situation. Conversely, as the emergency is brought under control, management is deescalated to a lower operational tier in line with the reduced complexity or severity.

Classification of emergencies

Emergencies in Victoria are classified under the **State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP)** to support consistent response coordination, escalation, and resource allocation. These classifications help determine the scale, complexity, and potential consequences of an emergency, guiding appropriate levels of control, support, and governance.

Classifications consider factors such as:

- The severity and spread of the incident
- The level of multi-agency involvement required
- The impact on communities, critical infrastructure, and the environment
- The need for regional or state-level coordination and support



A summary of emergency classifications, including descriptions and key characteristics, is provided in the table below.

Emergency Classification	Description	Characteristics
Non-Major Emergency	A single incident or small-scale impact emergency that can be resolved locally.	
Level One Emergency	A small-scale emergency that can be resolved through local or initial response resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Less than 24 hours duration– Response limited to the incident area– Little to no potential for escalation
Level Two Emergency	Medium scale emergency requiring resources beyond the initial response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Response duration over 24 hours– One or more incident areas– Multiple hazards involved– Potential for escalation
Level Three Emergency	A large-scale emergency with high complexity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Response duration over multiple days– Multiple incident areas– State or Commonwealth significance likely

Command, control and coordination

The traditional emergency and incident management mechanisms of Command, Control and Coordination have been supplemented by the addition of Consequences, Communication and Community Connection. The combination of the 'six Cs' is an inclusive and community focused approach led by Emergency Management Victoria with the aim of building safer and more resilient communities.

Term	Definition
Control	The overall direction of response activities in an emergency, operating horizontally across agencies. Control remains the responsibility of the designated control agency, which appoints an Incident Controller.
Command	The direction of personnel and resources within a single agency in performing that agency's specific roles and tasks. Command operates vertically within the organisation.
Coordination	The bringing together of agencies and resources to support the response to and recovery from emergencies.
Consequences	The management of the effects of emergencies on individuals, communities, infrastructure, and the environment.
Communication	The provision and exchange of timely, accurate, and accessible information across agencies and with the community before, during, and after emergencies.
Community Connection	Understanding and connecting with trusted networks, leaders, and diverse communities to support resilience, inclusion, and informed decision-making.



Roles and responsibilities – Response

The [State Emergency Management Plan](#) (SEMP) outlines the roles and responsibilities of agencies involved in the response to emergencies in Victoria. Each agency with a response role is assigned responsibilities based on their legislated authority, expertise, and capacity to provide support. This includes control agencies, support agencies, emergency services, and departments with specific functional responsibilities.

The SEMP also identifies responsibilities for public information, evacuation management, coordination of resources, and emergency relief during response operations. These arrangements ensure a unified, scalable approach to managing emergencies across all tiers.

Municipal emergency management roles

At the municipal level, response arrangements align with state structures, with key roles legislated under the [Emergency Management Act 2013](#). Victoria Police appoints a Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC) in each district to lead coordination across emergency services, Council, and other agencies.

Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator

Appointed by Victoria Police, the MERC is responsible for:

- Coordinating emergency response activities at the municipal level across all agencies.
- Supporting the Incident Controller by facilitating inter-agency cooperation.
- Ensuring appropriate activation and escalation of response arrangements.
- Liaising with the MEMO, MRM, and Control Agency to ensure integrated support for affected communities.

Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO)

The MEMO is a council-appointed role responsible for:

- Coordinating council's emergency management functions related to response.
- Supporting the MERC and Incident Controller by facilitating the provision of local council resources and logistics.
- Ensuring council obligations under the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) are met.
- Maintaining local emergency management arrangements, contact lists, and resource registers.



Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM)

The MRM is responsible for planning and coordinating recovery activities at the local level, but their involvement often begins during the response phase. Key responsibilities include:

- Supporting relief coordination and participating in response planning where recovery considerations are required early.
- Coordinating the transition from response to recovery in collaboration with the Control Agency and MERC.
- Liaising with Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV), community organisations, and recovery agencies.
- Providing advice on community impacts and emerging recovery needs.

Municipal emergency response arrangements

The majority of incidents that occur within Buloke are classified as Level 1 incidents. These are typically straightforward, localised events where the response is considered routine and managed as part of the control agency's standard operations without the need for regional or state level intervention.

In situations where an incident escalates or is more complex, the [State Emergency Management Plan](#) provides clear procedures for the escalation and de-escalation of control, command, and coordination, including guidance for requesting additional resources from outside the local area.

The response objective of this Municipal Emergency Management Plan is to protect life, property, and the environment during emergencies in Buloke by ensuring the coordinated and timely deployment of resources and services. It seeks to support control agencies such as CFA, VICSES, and Victoria Police through the provision of local knowledge and logistics, while also maintaining essential community services and infrastructure. Additionally, it focuses on delivering relief and accurate information to affected communities and promoting effective communication and situational awareness among all responding organisations and the broader community.



Incident emergency management team (IEMT)

An Incident Emergency Management Team (IEMT) is established to support the management of emergency response at the incident level. The IEMT operates under the control of the Incident Controller and comprises representatives from key agencies and organisations involved in the response.

The purpose of the IEMT is to:

- Provide coordinated input to support the Incident Controller's decision-making.
- Share situational awareness across all agencies.
- Coordinate operational planning and resource allocation.
- Ensure effective communication and collaboration between all agencies at the scene.
- Support the transition between response and relief or recovery.

IEMTs may vary in size and composition depending on the nature, scale, and complexity of the emergency. Membership typically includes representatives from control, support, and relief agencies operating at the incident level. Where appropriate, local government may also participate in the IEMT to support coordination of relief and recovery efforts and to provide council-owned or managed resources in support of response operations.

Incident control, coordination and facilities

Agency incident control

A control point is a location in the field where the Incident Controller may operate, typically during the early stages of an emergency or for smaller-scale incidents. If the emergency escalates in size or complexity, an Incident Control Centre (ICC) or/and Regional Control Centre (RCC) will be established to enable enhanced technical support, planning capability, and resource coordination.

Information regarding Incident Control Centres (ICC), Regional Control Centres (RCC), and the State Control Centre (SCC) is outlined in the [State Emergency Management Plan](#) and supporting [SEMP sub-plans](#), as established under the [Emergency Management Act 2013](#)



Municipal emergency control center (MECC)

Under the [Emergency Management Act 2013](#), councils are not legislatively required to establish a Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre (MECC) during an emergency; however, they may choose to do so where appropriate.

The MECC is a council-managed coordination hub that facilitates the deployment of municipal resources and supports the delivery of both emergency response and essential council services during and after an emergency. Its functions include maintaining situational awareness, coordinating council's operational response, supporting relief and recovery operations.

The MECC may be activated at the direction of the MEMO, MRM or MERC. Administrative and operational support is provided by council staff, with councils responsible for identifying, training, and exercising a surge workforce to maintain operational readiness.

The primary MECC location for Buloke is the Wycheproof Council Office Supper Room, with secondary MECC sites able to be established at Charlton, Donald, or Birchip council offices as needed. If these locations are unavailable, councils may seek support from neighbouring municipalities to host remote or shared MECC operations.

Operating systems

[Crisisworks](#) is an emergency incident operating system used by Council to manage a range of operations prior to during and following emergencies and disasters. It may also be used by control and support agencies during emergencies to communicate and manage resource requirements and allocation. Additionally, it incorporates Secondary Impact Assessments, recovery case management, Vulnerable Persons Registers, Fire Prevention Register and community view.

[EM-COP](#) (Emergency Management – Common Operating Picture) is Victoria's primary emergency information and collaboration platform. It supports decision-making and coordination before, during, and after emergencies by enabling real-time information sharing, situational awareness, mapping, and planning across all levels of emergency management. MEMPC representative can use EM-COP to monitor incidents, share intelligence, and support local planning and response efforts.



Community information and warnings

Victoria has a state-wide approach to emergency information and warnings to ensure communities receive consistent and reliable messaging during emergencies.

Emergency information and warnings in Victoria are coordinated by the control agency and issued through the [VicEmergency](#) platform to provide timely, accurate, and consistent public communication. The platform provides a centralized hub for accessing emergency information, warnings, and preparedness/recovery resources.

Support agencies and organisations represented on the MEMPC, are encouraged to share emergency warnings issued by the control agency without alteration to maintain a single, trusted source of truth. This supports consistent messaging, helps reach communities who may miss official warnings, and aligns with responsibilities under the SEMP.

Evacuation

In Victoria, emergency evacuation is a planned and coordinated process led by the control agency, in accordance with [JSOP 3.12 – Planned Evacuation for Major Emergencies](#). Once the control agency has made the decision to recommend or direct an evacuation, Victoria Police is responsible for coordinating and implementing the withdrawal of affected communities.

Evacuation involves the movement of people from areas of actual or potential danger to safer locations and may include shelter-in-place, partial, or full evacuation strategies. The evacuation process consists of five phases: decision, warning, withdrawal, shelter, and return.

Councils and relevant support agencies assist by establishing and managing emergency relief centres, providing transport and logistical support, and disseminating community information, as outlined in the SEMP and applicable sub-plans.

Cost responsibility in response support

Control agencies are responsible for all costs involved in that agency responding to an emergency. When a Control Agency requests services and supplies on behalf of several supporting agencies, the Control Agency will be responsible for the costs. The provision of a support agency resources may be subject to limits and / or constraints, (e.g. the use of some equipment may be limited to a timeframe due to the expense of operation). Such limits and / or constraints should be reasonable and commensurate to the agencies capacity to provide such resources. Cost and payment should be raised with the requesting agency at the earliest possible time.



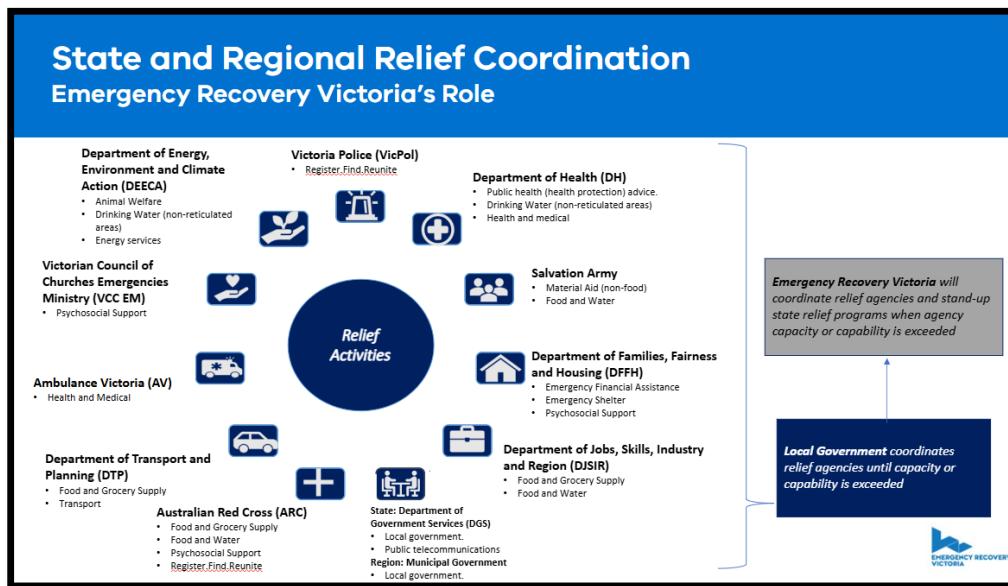
7. Relief

Emergency relief involves the provision of essential needs to individuals, families, and communities in the immediate aftermath of an emergency. The type and extent of relief required depend on the nature, location, and impacts of the incident, and are guided by a needs assessment.

Relief may include community information, emergency shelter, psychosocial support, material aid, food relief, first aid, financial assistance, animal welfare, and legal support. It can be delivered through Emergency Relief Centres (ERCs), outreach programs, virtual services, or other community locations. ERCs also assist with triaging individuals for emergency accommodation when required.

Relief arrangements in Victoria are outlined in the [State Emergency Management Plan](#). At the state and regional levels, Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) leads coordination, supported by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH). At the municipal level, councils are responsible for coordinating local relief, working in partnership with the Control Agency, Incident Controller, Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC), Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO), and Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM).

Support agencies include the [Australian Red Cross](#), [Salvation Army](#), [Foodbank Victoria](#), and [Victorian Council of Churches Emergency Ministry \(VCCEM\)](#). Relief coordination may scale with the complexity of the incident, involving ERV as needed.





Emergency Relief Centres

Suitable facilities have been identified throughout the Shire, with five primary and five secondary Emergency Relief Centre (ERC) locations nominated. This list, provided in [Appendix D](#), is flexible; additional ERCs may be established at other locations if necessary.

Councils are responsible for establishing and managing Emergency Relief Centres (ERCs). The decision to activate an ERC is made by the Council, typically in consultation with the Control Agency and the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC), depending on the nature and scale of the emergency.

Once an ERC is established, agencies responsible for relief under the SEMP will provide representatives as needed. Relief agencies should be prepared to staff multiple ERCs over extended periods, with appropriately trained surge personnel.

The Incident Controller will issue public information regarding ERC locations as they become operational, which will be disseminated via [VicEmergency](#) and emergency broadcasters. Incident Controllers and Public Information Units must ensure ERC details are kept accurate and up to date.

Victoria Police, supported by the Australian Red Cross, are responsible for coordinating the [Register, Find, Reunite \(RFR\)](#) service to assist displaced individuals and families.

While it is not a legislative requirement for Victoria Police to be stationed at an ERC, it is considered best practice to have a presence where possible to support coordination and safety.

Inclusive and coordinated emergency relief

Emergency relief must consider the wide range of needs across affected populations, including children and young people, elderly individuals, people with disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people experiencing homelessness, those with mental health challenges, chronic illnesses or medical needs, pregnant and new mothers, the LGBTIQA+ community, low socioeconomic groups, people with pets or animals, and those experiencing gender-based and family violence.

Recognising this diversity, councils are committed to delivering tailored support and accessible information to mitigate harm and meet unique needs during emergencies. This includes integrating family violence prevention efforts in relief settings, as highlighted in frameworks such as the Victorian [Family Violence Framework for Emergency Management](#) and the [National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032](#).



Emergency relief efforts should draw on key capacities, such as community networks and leaders, volunteers and organisations, and technology and communication tools, to enhance responsiveness and coordination across all levels of government and sectors.

Transition to recovery

Although recovery activities commence concurrently with response and relief, the formal transition to recovery should be timely, coordinated, and based on the evolving needs of the community. While relief addresses immediate needs, recovery focuses on restoring and enhancing the social, built, economic, and natural environments. Planning for recovery should begin early in the relief phase to ensure a smooth handover and continuity of support.

During the response phase, a transition plan to recovery will be developed. The Agency Controller, in collaboration with the MRM, leads this process. Once the MRM, control agency and relevant partners agree that the response is complete and the transition plan is in place, the Incident Controller will notify all agencies of the handover to the MRM.



8. Recovery

Introduction

Recovery is the coordinated process of helping individuals and communities restore wellbeing, adapt to changed circumstances, and build long-term resilience after an emergency. It extends beyond returning to pre-emergency conditions and recognises that recovery may take years or remain incomplete for some individuals.

In Buloke, recovery is shaped by the [National Principles for Disaster Recovery](#) and guided by the [State Emergency Management Plan \(SEMP\)](#). Local recovery efforts will be tailored to community needs and capacities, with a strong focus on collaboration, shared responsibility, and community leadership.

Recovery principals and priorities

Recovery in Victoria aligns with the [National Principles for Disaster Recovery](#) which underpin the planning, coordination, and delivery of services. These principles ensure recovery:

- **Understands the context** – Acknowledges the unique characteristics of each community.
- **Recognises complexity** – Responds flexibly to dynamic and evolving situations.
- **Uses community-led approaches** – Empowers local people and supports community-driven recovery.
- **Coordinates all activities** – Integrates efforts across all levels of government, agencies, and partners.
- **Communicates effectively** – Maintains transparent, timely, and two-way communication.
- **Recognises and builds capacity** – Strengthens individual, organisational, and community capabilities.

Recovery is not a linear process or bound to a fixed timeframe. The [Victorian Government's Recovery Outcomes Framework](#) guides delivery across key domains.

Additionally, the [Victorian Government Strategy for Aboriginal Community-led Recovery](#) provides culturally safe guidance to embed Aboriginal leadership, values, and healing practices in recovery. Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) supports this approach through its coordination framework.



Recovery environments

Recovery planning and delivery operate across five recovery environments, which provide a framework for aligning responsibilities, services, and outcomes:

1. **Social environment** – Supporting health, wellbeing, shelter, safety, and psychosocial recovery. [SEMP Table 15 – Social environment](#)
2. **Aboriginal culture and healing environment** - Ensures the voices of Aboriginal Victorians are represented in recovery decision-making and that recovery efforts are culturally safe and appropriate. [Aboriginal community led recovery](#)
3. **Economic environment** – Assisting business recovery, economic renewal, and primary producers. [SEMP Table 16 – Economic environment](#)
4. **Built environment** – Restoring critical infrastructure, housing, utilities, and essential services. [SEMP Table 17 – Built environment](#)
5. **Natural environment** – Rehabilitating natural assets, cultural heritage, and environmental health. [SEMP Table 18 – Natural environment](#)

Recovery must also be inclusive, culturally appropriate, and accessible to all members of the community, including Traditional Owners and vulnerable groups. It involves coordination between local government, state agencies, non-government organisations, businesses, volunteer groups, and private providers.

Roles and responsibilities – Recovery

Recovery in Victoria follows a coordinated, community-led approach guided by the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP). [Recovery roles and responsibilities](#) are structured across the social, economic, built, and natural environments, with Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) coordinating efforts at the regional and state levels.

At the municipal level, the Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) leads local recovery efforts, coordinating planning and delivery. When local capacity is exceeded, recovery activities may be escalated to involve state or regional support, while retaining local leadership wherever possible.

Impact assessments

Effective recovery starts with early planning and is informed by reliable data on the scale and nature of impacts.



Initial impact assessment (IIA)

Initial Impact Assessments are conducted by the Control Agency within 24–48 hours of safe access. These rapid assessments:

- Identify immediate damage to people, property, infrastructure, and the environment.
- Guide early relief and short-term recovery decisions.
- Are based on visual inspections, agency input, and community reports.

Findings are shared with councils and relevant stakeholders to support prioritisation and planning. They also inform the need for more detailed secondary assessments.

Secondary impact assessment (SIA)

Secondary Impact Assessments are more detailed evaluations conducted ideally within four weeks of the emergency. Councils lead this process as the Recovery Coordinator, supported by:

- Emergency management staff
- Building and environmental health officers
- Planning staff
- Partner agencies such as the Australian Red Cross (ARC) and Victorian Council of Churches Emergency Ministry (VCCEM)

SIA data is recorded by councils and shared (with consent) to support targeted recovery actions—including, but not limited to, applications for Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), emergency accommodation, counselling, financial assistance, infrastructure repairs, and advocacy efforts.

Community led recovery and role of recovery committees

Effective recovery is grounded in local knowledge and leadership. It should be flexible and responsive to the community's evolving needs. Non-government organisations, community groups, faith-based organisations, and businesses all play critical roles in this process.

When the scale or complexity of recovery warrants more formal coordination, a Community Recovery Committee may be established when recovery is complex, helping coordinate agencies and ensure actions reflect community values and priorities.



A Community Recovery Committee may include,

- Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) and deputies
- Local councillors (particularly from affected wards)
- Relevant government agencies
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations or community health services
- Impacted residents or community leaders
- Local social and community groups (e.g. neighbourhood houses, sports clubs, interfaith networks)
- The Control Agency, particularly in early recovery phases

This collaborative structure promotes inclusive, well-informed recovery that builds on community strengths.

Recovery funding arrangements

Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) are joint federal-state arrangements that provide financial assistance to help communities recover from eligible natural disasters or terrorist acts. In Victoria, the DRFA is managed by the Department of Transport and Planning and is designed to ease the financial burden on individuals, local councils, businesses, and community organisations following significant emergencies.

Once an event is declared eligible, a range of support measures may be activated under four main categories:

- **Category A:** Emergency relief for individuals, such as temporary accommodation, food, and clothing.
- **Category B:** Assistance to restore essential public infrastructure and support small businesses, primary producers, and non-profits.
- **Category C:** Community recovery packages for severely impacted areas.
- **Category D:** Exceptional assistance in extraordinary circumstances.

Council may submit claims to the state for reimbursement of eligible costs, such as emergency works, community support, and asset restoration. Claims must follow specific guidelines and are assessed for eligibility and compliance.

DRFA funding may also support recovery activities such as community clean-up, public asset repairs, and targeted financial relief, depending on the severity and scale of the event. Importantly, financial support is only available where Commonwealth and state criteria are met, and the event is officially declared under the scheme.



9. Lessons management and continuous improvement

The MEMPC is committed to continuous improvement in emergency management, aligned with the principles of the EM-LEARN Framework (2015). This involves applying a lessons management life cycle that identifies and embeds learnings from assurance and learning activities such as after-action reviews, debriefings, public forums, independent reviews, and system-based evaluations, conducted before, during, and after emergencies. Lessons are documented and shared with relevant agencies and the Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee (REMPC) to support broader system improvement.

The MEMPC also prioritises interoperability between all agencies operating within the municipality and across borders. Regular meetings will include interoperability as a standing agenda item, and learnings from exercises and real events will be discussed. Where necessary, interoperability issues will be escalated through agency chains of command and to the REMPC.

While recognising the time and resource constraints faced by many organisations, the MEMPC supports and encourages participation in emergency management exercises, including those at the regional and cross-border level. Control agencies are encouraged to include municipal sub-plan testing within their broader exercise programs. A record of past exercises is maintained in [Appendix D](#) of this Plan.

To further support recovery improvement and evaluation, the MEMPC encourages the use of the [National Recovery Monitoring and Evaluation Framework](#). This resource provides examples of outcomes, activities, and indicators used in other post-disaster contexts and supports the evaluation of recovery coordination and programs outside operational environments. Councils and agencies are encouraged to share and upload their evaluations and reports to contribute to collective learning

The development of this MEMP reflects significant changes in Victorian emergency management legislation and marks a shift toward an all-agencies, all-emergencies approach, with community safety at its core. The MEMPC is dedicated to enhancing the Plan by maintaining awareness of existing arrangements across municipal, regional, and cross-border contexts, and by supporting risk identification, hazard-specific planning, and prioritised mitigation strategies.



10. Appendices

The following appendices provide supporting information, detailed data, and reference material to complement the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP). They include locally relevant plans, operational tools, contact structures, and risk data that support emergency planning, response, relief, and recovery arrangements in Buloke Shire.

Appendix A – History of emergency events

Event Type	Year(s)	Details / Impact
Flood A blue icon of a house partially submerged in water.	1870, 1889, 1894, 1909, 1915, 1923, 1933, 1939, 1956, 1964, 1973, 1975, 1981, 1983, 1989, 1993, 1995, 1996, 2010,	Multiple major flood events in Buloke Shire history.
	2011	Over 369 properties flooded (270 residences, 15 businesses, a hospital). Charlton and Culgoa heavily impacted; evacuation required while Wycheeproof received some impact.
	2016	Localised flash and riverine flooding caused damage to roads and farmland.
	2019	In December 2019, intense rainfall caused severe flash flooding in Birchip, flooding about 20 properties and leading to the evacuation of 10 residents to a local relief centre.
	2022	Widespread flood inundation damaged properties, assets and infrastructure. Communities in Charlton, Donald, Culgoa, were isolated.
Fire A yellow flame icon.	2016	Six fast-moving grass or stubble fires recorded.
	2018–2024	Fires during harvest caused losses to fencing, crops, and threatened township boundaries.
	Ongoing	Average of 30 structural fires recorded annually across the municipality.
Storms and Wind A blue cloud icon with a yellow lightning bolt inside.	2020–2021	Spring storms caused damage to residential, rural properties and grain storage facilities.
	2024	Intense late summer/autumn storms caused wind, hail, flash flooding in Sea Lake, Charlton, Watchem; power outages, fallen trees, property damage reported.
Road and Transport Emergencies A red truck icon.	2006	Multiple-fatality road accident at Borung Hwy & Donald–Swan Hill Rd intersection; six deaths.
	Ongoing	Numerous truck roll overs have been recorded in the area. Risks due to rural roads, freight routes, and wildlife crossings.



Drought 	1944, 1967, 1982 2000–2010 2018–2020	Significant historical droughts. Prolonged dry period. Dry seasonal conditions led to reduced crop yields, increased mental health concerns, and pressure on rural support services.
Agricultural and Biosecurity 	1977, 1994, 2021 2010 Ongoing	Mouse plagues causing crop damage, stock feed loss, community distress. Locust outbreaks causing widespread agricultural damage; ongoing vigilance. Risk of livestock disease outbreaks (e.g., foot-and-mouth disease); active participation in regional biosecurity planning.
Pandemic 	2019 - 2022	Death toll recorded in Victoria was 8,494, with nearly 3 million total cases as of late 2023.
Heatwave 	2009, 2014, 2018, 2019 and 2024	Extreme summer temperatures, with around 30 days over 35 °C and several days exceeding 40 °C each

Appendix B – Critical infrastructure

Category	Infrastructure/Service	Details/Locations	Managing Authority
 Hospitals	Sea Lake Hospital	9 aged care beds, 4 acute beds, 1 urgent care bed	Mallee Track Health and Community Service
	Birchip Hospital	8 acute beds, 10 aged care beds	East Wimmera Health Service
	Wycheproof Hospital	6 acute beds, 30 aged care beds	East Wimmera Health Service
	Charlton Hospital	2 acute beds, 13 aged care beds	East Wimmera Health Service
	Donald Hospital	10 acute beds, 12 aged care beds	East Wimmera Health Service
 Water	Urban and Rural Water Supply	Wimmera Mallee Pipeline	GWM Water
	Water Services in Eastern Buloke	Around Loddon River System	Goulburn-Murray Water
 Power	Zone Substations	Charlton, Donald, Birchip, Wycheproof, Sea Lake	Powercor
 Road Transport	Highways and Major Roads	Calder Hwy (A79), Sunraysia Hwy (B220), Borung Hwy, Wimmera Hwy, Birchip–Sea Lake Road	Regional Roads Victoria (DTP)
	Key Bridges	Avoca River (Charlton), Richardson River (Donald), Rail overpass (Wycheproof) Cooner (Coonooer Bridge)	Regional Roads Victoria (DTP)
 Rail	Freight Rail Corridors	Mildura line (Donald, Birchip,); Sea Lake branch (Sea Lake, Nullawil, Culgoa, Wycheproof and Charlton)	VicTrack (owned), V/Line (leased operations)
	Key Rail Infrastructure	Grain terminals, level crossings, rail bridges (esp. Donald, Wycheproof, Charlton)	VicTrack/V/Line
 Airports	Regional Airstrips	Charlton, Donald, Birchip, Wycheproof, Sea Lake	Buloke Shire Council
 Telecommunications	Telephone Exchanges	Charlton, Donald, Wycheproof, Birchip, Sea Lake, Culgoa	Telstra, Optus, Vodafone (TPG), NBN Co.
	Mobile Base Stations	~30 towers incl. Donald, Charlton, Sea Lake, Mount Jeffcott	Telstra (incl. Black Spot Program), Optus, Vodafone
	NBN Delivery	FTTN (Sea Lake), Fixed Wireless (rural), Satellite (remote)	NBN Co.



Appendix C – List of Buloke Emergency Management Plans

Name	Last Published	Schedule Review	Plan Status	Owner
Municipal Emergency Management Plan	2025	2028	Endorsed by MEMPC on 12 August, 2025.	MEMPC
Buloke Municipal Fire Management Sub- Plan	2017	2026	Plan will be reviewed upon arrival of new state template. VFRR register due to be reviewed in 2025.	MEMPC
Buloke Municipal Flood and Storm Emergency Sub- Plan	2022	2026	Plan to be reviewed upon release of new state template due to arrive in 2025.	MEMPC
Buloke Influenza Pandemic Sub - Plan	2018	2026	Review to be determined by MEMPC.	MEMPC
Buloke Heat Health Sub - Plan	2018	2026	Review to be determined by MEMPC.	MEMPC



Appendix D – Emergency Relief Centre's

Location	Facility	Map reference
Birchip	Birchip Leisure Centre	2WC6+GM Birchip, Victoria
Charlton	Charlton Park	P9P5+X4 Charlton, Victoria
Donald	Donald Sports Stadium	JXPP+49 Donald, Victoria
Sea Lake	Sea Lake Community Centre	FVR4+47 Sea Lake, Victoria
Wycheproof	Wycheproof Sports Stadium	W6HG+GM Wycheproof, Victoria

The table above outlines the Primary Emergency Relief Centre (ERC) locations. In the event that a primary site is unavailable, Council has a number of documented secondary or backup sites across the Shire. These can be accessed by contacting Council directly.

Appendix E – Exercises

Exercise	Date	Details
	2025	Representatives of the Buloke MEMPC reported that they were unaware of any exercises undertaken by the Committee since 2020.

Appendix F – Map of Buloke Shire Council area





Appendix G - Statement of assurance

Part one - Checklist

Checklist Requirement	Self-assessment	Evidence (MEMP page ref)
The MEMP has been prepared by the MEMPC with required agency membership	Yes	Section 3, pp.17-18
The MEMP is prepared in a collaborative manner and reflects community EM planning principles	Yes	Sections 1 & 3, pp.5-6, 17
Reviewed within three years	Yes	Review Date August 2028 – p.1
Does not conflict/duplicate other EM plans	Yes	Section 1, p.6
Consistent with State and Regional EM Plans	Yes	Sections 1 & 3, pp.6, 14-16
Contains mitigation provisions	Yes	Section 5, pp.23-24
Contains response provisions	Yes	Section 6, pp.25-33
Contains recovery provisions	Yes	Section 8, pp.37-40
Specifies roles and responsibilities	Yes	Sections 5, 6, 8, and Appendix B-G
Collaborated but prepared independently	Yes	Section 1.4 & 3, pp.5-6, 14-18



Consulted with community sectors and agencies	Yes	Sections 2 & 3, pp.7-18
Provides municipal overview and hazard profile	Yes	Sections 2 & 4, pp.7-22
Identifies cross-boundary opportunities	Yes	Section 2.2 & 3, pp.10, 14-16
Conducted risk assessment (CERA)	Yes	Section 4, pp.19-22
Assesses capability & capacity (VPF)	Yes	Section 3.2, pp.12, 14-16
Tested through exercises	Yes	Appendix E, p.46

Part two – Certificate of assurance

I, Gaynor Atkin, Chair of the Buloke Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee, hereby certify that the attached Municipal Emergency Management Plan:

- Complies with the requirements of the *Emergency Management Act 2013*
- Has had regard to all relevant guidelines issued under section 77 of the Act

This Plan was formally endorsed by the Committee on 12 August 2025 and supersedes the previous Plan published in 2017.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gaynor Atkin".

Name: Gaynor Atkin

Position: Chair, Buloke Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee

Date: 14 August 2025

8.4 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

Name: Cr Stephen Barratt

Month/year: November/December 2025

Meetings Attended:

Date	Meeting / Event
19/11/2025	Councillor Professional Development Training – <i>Wycheproof Senior Citizens</i>
19/11/2025	Council Meeting - <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>
28/11/2025	Renewable Energy Information - <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>
03/12/2025	Councillor Briefing - <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>
09/12/2025	Charlton Hall Community Meeting
10/12/2025	Wycheproof Resource Centre 9.30/11/30 coffee and chat
10/12/2025	Transmission Forum Updates online 12.00/1.00
10/12/2025	Sea Lake Airfield meet with the Community and CFA 2.30/3.30

Actions/outcomes for the attention of Council:

- Charlton Shire Hall requires further investigation in a timely manner report back to Community when information available.
- Sea Lake Airfield Council needs to work with Committee to ensure a plan of action

Name: Cr Bruce Stafford

Month/year: November/December 2025

Meetings Attended:

Date	Meeting / Event
19/11/2025	Councillor Professional Development Training – <i>Wycheproof Senior Citizens</i>
19/11/2025	Council Meeting - <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>
27/11/2025	CVGA Annual General Meeting
27/11/2025	CVGA Regional Climate Leaders' Forum
09/12/2025	Meeting with Traveller's Rest Committee
09/12/2025	Charlton Hall Community Meeting
16/12/2025	Charlton Forum Meeting

9 OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 NOTICES OF MOTION

Nil.

9.2 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Nil.

9.3 URGENT BUSINESS

Nil.

9.4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Nil

9.5 MATTERS WHICH MAY EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

The Meeting may be closed to members of the public to consider confidential matters.

RECOMMENDATION

That pursuant to section 66(1) and (2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020* the meeting be closed to the public to consider the following reports that are considered to contain confidential information on the grounds provided in section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* as indicated below:

No.	Title	Confidential Reason
9.5.1	Sale of Properties for Recovery of Rates and Charges	Notes and declares this report as confidential on the grounds that it relates to (a) Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released: (f) personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs as described in s 3(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> .

10 MEETING CLOSE