



Council Meeting **Agenda**

Wednesday 17
September 2025

Commencing at 7:00 pm

Wycheproof Supper Room
367 Broadway, Wycheproof

Daniel McLoughlin
Interim Chief Executive Officer



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1 COUNCIL WELCOME AND STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

WELCOME

The Mayor Cr Alan Getley will welcome all in attendance.

STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Mayor Cr Alan Getley will acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting and pay our respects to their Elders and to the Elders from other communities who 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 20 August 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 7 August to 3 September 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council note the Assembly of Councillors from 7 August – 3 September 2025.

Attachments: 1. Attachment 7.1.1 - Councillor Briefing Record - 3 September 2025

Date	Councillor Attendees	Meeting Type
27/8/25 3:00pm <i>Birchip Chambers</i>	Cr Barratt, Cr Delaney, Cr Getley, Cr Hogan, Cr Milne, Cr Stafford	Councillor Workshop – 10 Year Asset Plan and 10 Year Financial Plan
3/9/25 3:30pm <i>Donald Chambers / Teams</i>	Cr Barratt, Cr Delaney, Cr Getley, Cr Hogan, Cr Milne, Cr Stafford	CEO Recruitment Process
3/9/25 5:00pm <i>Donald Chambers</i>	Cr Barratt, Cr Delaney, Cr Getley, Cr Hogan, Cr Milne, Cr Stafford	Councillor Briefing



Councillor Briefing Record

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

Date:	Wednesday 3 September 2025	Time:	5:00 pm
Location:	Donald Chambers - 31 McCulloch Street, Donald VIC 3480		
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 Salomme Menezes
1.3	Guests Donald 2000 – John McConville, Ian Green and Jodie Hollis Planning for Communities – Michelle Read – Item 4.4
1.4	Attendees Councillors: Alan Getley, Graeme Milne, Bernadette Hogan, Charmaine Delaney, Bruce Stafford and Stephen Barratt. Senior Staff: Daniel McLoughlan (Interim CEO), Gaynor Atkin (Director Community Development), Paula Gardiner (Director Infrastructure and Delivery) Jenna Allan (Director Corporate and Organisational Performance).
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 6 August 2025
3	Presentations
3.1	Donald 2000 John McConville, Ian Green, Jodie Hollis
4	Briefing Reports
4.1	Discretionary Financial Reserves Policy
4.2	Finance Plan
4.3	10-Year Asset Plan
4.4	Draft Public Health & Wellbeing Plan

5	Councillor Matters
5.1	Councillor Matters
6	Chief Executive Officer Updates
6.1	Chief Executive Officer Updates
7	Next Briefing
7.1	7 October 2025 - Birchip Council Chamber
8	Close Meeting
8.1	Close Meeting - 8:46pm

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 20 August 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 20 August 2025 Council Meeting Resolutions.

Attachments:

1. Attachment 7.2.1 - Action Taken on Council Res - Outstanding Items and items from CM 20 August 2025 to be tabled 17 Sep

Status of Action on Council Resolutions – Outstanding from past Council Meetings & 20 August Council Meeting – tabled 17 September 2025

Date	Directorate	Item	Resolution/Question	Actioning Officer/s	Status of Action	Complete or commenced
02082023	Infrastructure & Delivery	8.2.1	That Council: 1. Notes following consultation process in accordance with its Community Engagement Policy, one submission was received to the proposed nine-lot subdivision sale of land at 110 Sutcliffe Street, Sea Lake; 2. Sells nine-lot subdivision surplus land at 110 Sutcliff St, Sea Lake by private treaty or auction in accord sec 114 of the Local Gov Act 2020 and Council's Sale of Land Policy; and 3. Authorises the CEO to execute the Transfer of Land documents and any other documents required to affect the sale of the land.	Director Infrastructure & Delivery	GWM Water approval obtained, procurement for works has commenced. Civil contractor has recommended works. 290524 - Plumbing works for water, sewer and stormwater commence in June, final civil works to follow. Valuation complete to inform sale of land process to be undertaken. (MS)	Commenced
18122024	Corporate & Organisational Performance	8.1.2	Draft Governance Rules and Draft Election Period Policy. 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.	Delayed

Tabled 17 September 2025 Council Meeting

Status of Action on Council Resolutions – Outstanding from past Council Meetings & 20 August Council Meeting – tabled 17 September 2025

Date	Directorate	Item	Resolution/Question	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
16042025	Infrastructure & Delivery	8.2.2	Variation to Contract C125	Director Infrastructure & Delivery	Variation applied to contract	Commenced
16072025	Community Development	8.2.1	Birchip Recreation Reserve Masterplan - Endorse the updated Draft Birchip Recreation Reserve Master Plan to be placed on public exhibition from Wednesday 16 July 2025 to Tuesday 5 August 2025.	Director Community Development	Public Exhibition until close 5 August	Complete
16072025	Community Development	8.2.2	Community Grants - Action the approval of community Grants	Director Community Development	Ongoing	Complete
16072025	CEO	9.1	Notice of Motion Cr Milne – Write to Minister D'Ambrosio detailing Council's disappointment in the way Councillors and ratepayers have been treated and seeking genuine engagement in the future. Invite the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, and Northern Victorian Parliamentarians to meet with Buloke Shire Council to hear our serious concerns about energy projects in the Shire.	CEO Director Corporate & Organisational Performance	Letters have been written and sent to Minister D'Ambrosio and other relevant Members of Parliament.	Complete
20082025	Corporate & Organisational Performance	7.3	Councillor Internal Resolution Procedure - Adopts the Councillor Internal Resolution Procedure	Director Corporate & Organisational Performance		
20082025	Infrastructure & Delivery	8.1.1	Asset Management Policy - 1. Adopt the revised Asset Management Policy 2025. 2. Publishes the Asset Management Policy 2025 on Council's website.	Director Infrastructure & Delivery	Internal registers updated. Posted to Councils Website.	Complete

Tabled 17 September 2025 Council Meeting

Status of Action on Council Resolutions – Outstanding from past Council Meetings & 20 August Council Meeting – tabled 17 September 2025

Date	Directorate	Item	Resolution/Question	Actioning Officer/s	Status of Action	Complete or commenced
			3. Undertakes a review of the Asset Management Policy within the next 4-year period.	Governance Officer		
20082025	Infrastructure & Delivery	8.1.2	Naming of Roads, Features and Localities Policy 2025 - 1. Adopt the revised Naming of Roads, Features and Localities Policy 2025. 2. Publishes the Naming of Roads, Features and Localities Policy on Council's website. 3. Undertakes a review of the Naming of Roads, Features and Localities Policy within the next 4-year period.	Director Infrastructure & Delivery Governance Officer	Internal registers updated. Posted to Councils Website.	Complete
20082025	Community Development	8.2.1	Community Grants - Action the approval of community Grants	Director Community Development	Ongoing	
20082025	Community Development	8.2.2	Birchip Recreation Reserve Master Plan - Endorse the Birchip Recreation Reserve Master Plan 2025-2037	Director Community Development		In progress
20082025	Corporate & Organisational Performance	9.1.1	NoM Council Flood Recovery Funding Acknowledge and write to the relevant Ministers and Departments regarding Council's 2022 and 2023 flood recovery funding	CEO Director Corporate & Organisational Performance		In progress

Tabled 17 September 2025 Council Meeting

8 GENERAL BUSINESS

8.1 POLICY REPORTS

8.1.1 DISCRETIONARY FINANCIAL RESERVES POLICY

Author's Title: Director Corporate and Organisational Performance

Directorate: Corporate and Organisational Performance

File No: CA45

Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025

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

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present to Council the Discretionary Financial Reserves Policy for consideration and adoption.

SUMMARY

The policy:

- Defines the types of discretionary reserves (externally restricted and internally restricted).
- Sets principles for ensuring all reserves are fully cash-backed.
- Outlines the process for establishing, maintaining, and closing reserves.
- Provides guidance on the transfer of funds into and out of reserves, including approval pathways (budget process, CEO delegation, or Council resolution).
- Clarifies the role of reserves in supporting capital works, waste management, superannuation liabilities, sustainability initiatives, and future grant opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1.** Adopt the Discretionary Financial Reserves Policy

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear framework for the creation, management, and use of Council's discretionary financial reserves. It ensures that Council maintains responsible and sustainable cash holdings by setting out conditions for transfers into and out of any discretionary reserves.

The policy strengthens transparency, accountability, and sound financial management while supporting Council's long-term strategic objectives.

RELEVANT LAW

The policy aligns with the *Local Government Act 2020*, which requires sound financial management and accountability.

The policy ensures compliance with Australian Accounting Standards in recognising reserves and strengthens governance and oversight by embedding reserve reporting into quarterly and annual reporting.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

This is a new policy to Council.

OPTIONS

Council may:

1. Consider adopting the Policy as presented – providing clear governance and sustainable reserve management.
2. Consider adopting with amendments – e.g., adjusting thresholds, reserve classifications, or reporting requirements.
3. Consider not adopting the Policy - and rather continue current practice without a formal policy, which may reduce transparency and increase financial risk.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

There are no direct innovation and continuous improvement activities associated with this report.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Council must ensure cash and cash equivalents are maintained at a level covering reserve balances, holding deposits, and three months' operational expenditure.

Establishing and maintaining reserves provides financial flexibility and reduces the risk of unforeseen funding pressures (e.g., waste management liabilities, or unbudgeted grant opportunities).

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not Applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

The policy aligns with the strategic objectives within the Council Plan, Financial Plan, and Annual Budget by ensuring funds are available for future needs.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS


Not applicable.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

Attachments:

1. Attachment 8.1.1.1 - Discretionary Financial Reserves Policy

			
POLICY LOCATION	Financial Strategy	POLICY TITLE	Discretionary Financial Reserves Policy
POLICY NUMBER	CA45	DATE ADOPTED	[INSERT ADOPTION DATE MM/YY]
REVISION NUMBER	1	REVISION DATE	2027

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- (a) ensure that Buloke Shire Council (Council) has established Reserve Funds that represent income, received from specific sources for a future application.
- (b) establish clear requirements regarding the creation of such Discretionary Reserves including the conditions for transfer to and expenditure from these reserves; and
- (c) ensure sustainable and responsible management of Council's cash holdings and financial reserves through consistent identification, administration and use of externally and internally restricted financial reserve accounts.

2. Scope

This Policy applies exclusively to Discretionary Reserves and does not extend to Statutory Reserves, the use of which is governed by relevant legislation. As of the date of this Policy, Buloke Shire Council does not maintain any Statutory Reserves. In the event that such reserves are required in the future, this Policy will be reviewed, amended accordingly, and readopted by Council.

This Policy also excludes Asset Revaluation Reserves, which form part of Equity on Council's Balance Sheet. These reserves reflect changes in asset values arising from formal revaluation processes and are regulated by the applicable Australian Accounting Standard.

3. Definitions

Council means Buloke Shire Council

ARC means the Audit and Risk Committee.

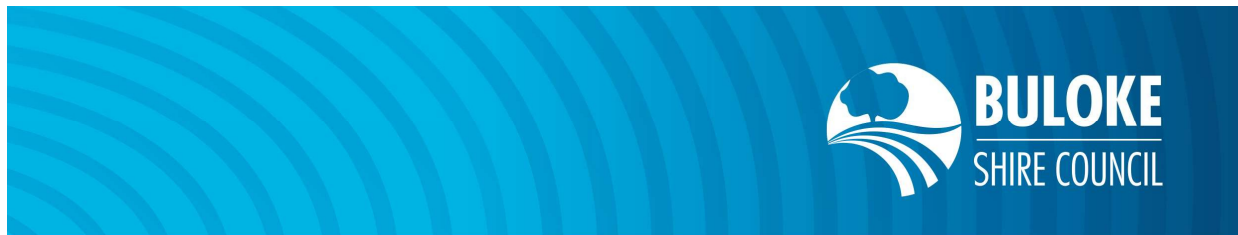
Accumulated Surplus means uncommitted operating surpluses achieved by Council over time.

Balance Sheet means a statement of the financial position of Council which states the assets, liabilities, and equity for a financial year.

EMT means the Executive Management Team of the Council.

Equity means the net worth of Council, after deducting all liabilities from all assets.

Reserves represent funds allocated from both Operating and Capital income streams, designated for the future funding of Council's Operating and Capital expenditure. In accounting terms, these funds are reflected within the Equity section of Council's Balance Sheet.



Reserves are classified into two primary categories:

- **Externally Restricted Reserves** are subject to conditions imposed by legislation or other legal obligations. These reserves must be fully supported by corresponding cash holdings.
- **Internally Restricted Reserves** are established by Council for specific purposes to ensure that adequate funding is available when needed. These reserves are also required to be fully cash-backed by Council.

4. Policy Principles

This Policy provides a clear framework to guide Council and its officers in the establishment, management, and utilization of Reserves. It outlines principles that ensure:

- Sufficient funds are available at the appropriate time to support the achievement of Council's strategic objectives.
- Sound, responsible financial management practices are applied in managing financial risks.
- All reserve activities comply with relevant legislative and common law obligations; and
- High standards of transparency, accountability, and probity are maintained.

The underlying purpose of reserves accounting is to allocate funds in the current financial year for expenditure in future periods, in alignment with identified priorities and the strategic direction outlined in the Council Plan.

To support this objective, the allocation of funds to reserves will be determined through the annual budget process and year-end financial reporting, or at any other time by formal resolution of Council. Transfers will be actioned accordingly.

5. Guidelines

5.1 Cash Reserves

All Externally and Internally Restricted Reserves are required to be 100 per cent cash backed.

Council will retain a cash and cash equivalents balance equal to the total of holding deposits plus cash backed reserves plus three months of operational expenditure.

Cash and cash equivalents balance refers to cash on hand, cash at bank, and term deposits (maturing within 90 days or less as per financial reporting guidelines). Term Deposit means a fixed-term investment where the investor receives interest at maturity.

Reserve accounts will be closed at the end of their useful lives through Council resolution.



5.2 Classification of Financial Reserves

5.2.1 Externally Restricted Reserves

The following criteria apply to externally restricted reserves:

- The reserve is governed by legal obligations that dictate how the funds must be used; or
- The reserve contains unspent funds originally provided for a specific purpose, and there is a legal or contractual obligation to return any unused portion to the original contributor

Name of Reserve	Overview & Purpose of Funds
Unspent Grants Reserve	This reserve holds unspent grants and contributions from external sources, to be used in accordance with funding conditions. It applies only when the grant cannot be recognised as a liability under Australian Accounting Standards.
	This reserve is used to account for any over or underspends of annual kerbside collection and waste charge fees that are not spent in the year of recognition.
Waste Reserve	<p>The funds are to be utilised to assist with the cost of strategic projects, compliance, long-term planning for Council's landfills, transfer stations, and waste management responsibilities.</p> <p>This may also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remediation works of current and former landfills;• Waste related capital infrastructure projects;• Purchase of capital items related to waste (e.g. garbage trucks or street sweepers);• Other initiatives directly related to Council's waste management responsibilities

5.2.2 Internally Restricted Reserves

The following criteria apply to internally restricted reserves:

- The reserve is not subject to legal requirements governing the use of the funds; and
- It has been created for a specific internal purpose, but if that purpose is no longer required or Council's priorities change, the funds may be reallocated to other uses.



Name of Reserve	Overview & Purpose of Funds
Defined Benefits Superannuation Reserve	This reserve is designed to hold funds to assist with any future funding call associated with defined benefits superannuation liabilities, because of a shortfall in the defined benefit superannuation entity. Council has set aside a cap of \$1,000,000 for this reserve in line with potential risk.
Sustainability Fund Reserve	This reserve is established to retain surplus annual income generated from windfarm operations within the Shire, earmarked specifically to fund community projects that promote local sustainability
Grant Opportunity Reserve	This reserve is used to hold an annual allocation from Council's accumulated surplus to support unanticipated grant funded projects that may arise outside of the annual budget cycle.
Capital Project Initiations Reserve	This reserve is used to hold an annual allocation from Council's accumulated surplus to facilitate initiation and design expenditure for unanticipated projects, in response to grant opportunities that may arise outside of the annual budget cycle.

5.3 Establishment of Financial Reserves

5.3.1 Establishment of Externally Restricted Reserves

A reserve will be established for any value if there is a legal requirement or a requirement under the Australian Accounting Standards.

5.3.2 Establishment of Internally Restricted Reserves

Generally, income and expenditure should be budgeted for in the financial years in which it occurs. However, Council can create Internally Restricted Reserves where:

- It is anticipated that extensive works will require council funding over a period; or
- Funds are collected specifically for particular works or
- Discharge any other obligation, (if risen)

Internally Restricted Reserves would generally not be created where it is expected that the balance of the Reserve will not reach \$200,000 by end of financial year in which it was created



5.3.3 Process for Establishment of Reserves

Creation of new finance reserves must be approved by Council by either:

- Recommendation from Quarterly Financial Reports for establishment of internally restricted reserves; or
- Internal communication channels for establishment of externally restricted reserves.

Details of the report to council should specify the following –

1. The purpose and length of time the financial reserve is required
2. Source and frequency of the funds into the reserve
3. The dollar value of the expected reserve balance and transfer in/to the reserve
4. Nature of expenditure from the fund
5. The manner in which the reserve will close

5.4 Responsibility of Accounting

Any transfer INTO or FROM the reserve must be made by Manager Financial Strategy or Co-ordinator Financial Strategy (reviewed by Manager Financial Strategy).

5.5 Transfer of Funds INTO Financial Reserves

Externally Restricted Reserves	Transfer of funds into reserve account occur as stated in the report to Council as per pt 5.3.3.
Internally Restricted Reserves	Transfer of funds into reserve account occur as stated in the report to Council as per pt 5.3.3.
For all Reserves currently in existence at the date of approval of this policy, the source of funds paid into the Reserves is the current balances of Reserves. New Reserve amounts transferred to the Reserve must be from the sources outlined above.	



5.6 Transfer of Funds FROM Financial Reserves

1. Transfers of funds from a reserve must be for the agreed purposes of the Reserve.

Transfers approved as part of annual budget process	In most cases the transfer of funds from reserves will be approved as part of the Budget process by Council <i>For example, Capital Works Projects include details of project funding including any planned use of reserves. Projects are then evaluated and approved in the budget process.</i>
Transfers in excess of or not approved in budget	In cases where a transfer of funds from a reserve was - approved in the budget but subsequently a higher level of funding is additionally required from reserves OR not part of annual budget up to 10% of CEO financial delegation as per procurement policy in place, needs to be discussed in EMT and approved by CEO
Transfers not falling in above categories	Transfers in excess of 10% CEO financial delegation as mentioned above, must be approved by Council through resolution

Reserve transfers will be reported and presented to EMT, Council and ARC -

1. In a detailed statement of movements and balance as part of the Quarterly Financial Report,
2. In a detailed statement as part of the Annual Financial Statements and Annual Report

Discretionary Financial reserves will be reflected on Council's balance sheet under equity, as 'other Reserves'.

6. References

Staff are encouraged to access the related documents and/or external resources which are available, as per the below.

These documents include:

- Asset Management Plan
- Financial Plan
- Annual budget
- Local Government Act 2020
- Australian Accounting Standards.

8.2 MANAGEMENT REPORTS

8.2.1 DRAFT FINANCIAL PLAN 2025 - 2035

Author's Title: Director Corporate and Organisational Performance

Directorate: Corporate and Organisational Performance

File No: FM/15/01

Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025

Strategic Objective: Council leadership and engagement
Responsible leadership and decision making
Consulting with and informing our community

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement to place the draft Financial Plan 2025 – 2035 on public exhibition.

SUMMARY

Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council are required to adopt a Financial Plan by October in the year following a Council Election for a period of minimum 10 years.

The Financial Plan is a long-term forecast that demonstrates Council's key strategic objectives will be resourced and monitored to achieve the actions within the Council Plan and the aspirations of the Community Vision.

This strategic plan meets statutory requirements and reflects Council's commitment to long-term financial sustainability, aligning asset renewal and service priorities with available funding.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Endorse the draft Financial Plan 2025 – 2035 for public exhibition.
2. Gives public notice of the draft Financial Plan 2025 – 2035 on Council's website and invites written submissions from Thursday, 18 September 2025 until Thursday 9 October 2025.
3. Notes that in accordance with Section 93 and 96(1)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, consultation will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy.
4. Notes that any person who makes a written submission in relation to the draft Financial Plan 2025 – 2035 may be heard by Council on Wednesday 8 October 2025
5. Notes that the Financial Plan 2025 – 2035 will be considered for adoption at the Council Meeting to be held 15 October 2025.

DISCUSSION

Purpose of the Financial Plan

In addition to meeting statutory requirements, Council must undertake comprehensive planning to outline the resources required to achieve the objectives of the Council Plan and the aspirations set out in the Community Vision, thereby supporting long-term financial sustainability.

The Financial Plan is one of the strategic plans subject to the Strategic Planning principles in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*. In general, it aims to –

- Outline how Councils' will fund services and infrastructure over the next 10 years.
- Ensure long-term financial sustainability and responsible use of resources.
- Align spending and investment with the Council Plan and Community Vision.
- Guide annual budgets and decision-making on rates, fees and capital works.
- Provide transparency and accountability to the community

The plan must align with and support key Council documents, including the Council Plan, Annual Budget, Community Vision and other long-term strategies such as the Asset Plan. Council is required to formally adopt a Financial Plan every four years, by 31 October in the year after each election. The current plan is due to be adopted by 31 October this year.

Preparation of the draft Financial Plan

The working and preparation of the draft Financial Plan has been done internally. The plan lays down the following details for the period of 10 years –

- Comprehensive Income Statement
- Balance Sheet
- Statement of Changes in Equity
- Statement of Cash Flows
- Statement of Capital Works
- Statement of Human Resources

Keeping the annual budget of FY2025-2026 as base, key assumptions have been applied to develop the 10 years of the Financial Plan. These assumptions have been described in detail within the plan.

Council held 2 deliberative community engagement session in the month of August 2025 and as such outcomes from those workshops have also been considered, where appropriate.

Overall, a moderately measured approach has been used in preparation of the Plan to ensure Buloke has a sustainable and strong financial future.

RELEVANT LAW

Section 91 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to review its Financial Plan and adopt a new 10-year Financial Plan no later than 31 October 2025.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable.

OPTIONS

Option 1 – Endorse placing the draft Financial Plan for public exhibition

This option is recommended by officers, as the Financial Plan is based on well-founded assumptions and incorporates key market factors—such as rate capping and the consumer price index—in its financial modelling.

Option 2 – Endorse placing Plan on public exhibition with amendments

This option is not recommended by officers as this plan is of sound modelling and is consistent with other plans being presented to Council.

Option 3 – Do not endorse the exhibition of the Plan

This option is not recommended by officers as Council has a legislative requirement to adopt the plan no later than 31 October, and it is important that community views are sought before it is finalized.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

It is proposed the draft Plan be placed on public exhibition alongside the draft Asset Plan. As mentioned, outcomes from community engagements held have been considered, where appropriate

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

It is proposed the draft Plan be placed on public exhibition alongside the draft Asset Plan. Community input has been provided to date through deliberative engagement sessions undertaken in August 2025 for both the Asset and Financial Plans.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

There are no direct innovation and continuous improvement activities associated with this report.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The draft Financial Plan seeks to ensure the sustainability of Council's resources to deliver Council services efficiently and to meet the community's future needs.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Consideration has been given to other regional, state and national plans and policies as required.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

The draft Financial Plan has been developed to ensure alignment with other key strategic plans and policies, including Council Vision, Community Plan, Council Plan, Asset Plan and Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This plan is to be placed on exhibition with the draft Asset Plan to ensure there is full transparency of how the plans are consistent with and support one another.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

Attachments: 1. Attachment 8.2.1.1 - Draft Financial Plan 2025 - 2035

Buloke Shire Council - Financial Plan

2025 - 2035

DRAFT VERSION FOR PUBLIC EXHIBITION – GRAPHIC DESIGN VERSION TO BE ADDED AT ADOPTION STAGE
(SEPTEMBER 2025) VERSION 1

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1. Purpose

The Buloke Shire Council Financial Plan establishes Council's 10-year plan for achieving financially sustainable service delivery for the community from 2025 - 2035. The financial plan is a long term forecast which demonstrates how Council's key strategic objectives will be resourced and monitored to achieve the actions within the Council Plan and the aspirations of the Community Vision.

2. Executive Summary

Council is committed to establishing a long-term financial planning model which not only guides sustainable service delivery, but one which adds and monitors value for our community.

As a remote, rural municipality operating within a rate-capped environment, Council depends heavily on its annual rating income base to be supported with external funding for the ongoing delivery of services and key community projects. This reliance presents Council with both risks and opportunities for long term financial forecasting that must demonstrate a responsible and well-informed approach. Major grants and funding opportunities require significant advocacy and are a necessary part of Council's operations if it is to achieve the aspirations of the community.

Whilst the nature of this long-term plan is to strategically forecast Council's financial position over the next decade, equally important is the ongoing monitoring and review of service levels and the outputs required to achieve value for money. In delivering a broad range of essential and discretionary services to meet community expectations, the costs associated to their delivery must be regularly measured against available resources.

In early 2024, the Minister for Local Government appointed a Municipal Monitor to the Buloke Shire Council and an independent external review of Council's financial position was undertaken. The findings from this review have provided important guidance in shaping Council's financial principles and modelling for the years ahead.

In June 2025, Council adopted its **Council Plan 2025–2029**, which establishes the strategic objectives of the community and the actions to be undertaken by Council in either a delivery, advocacy or partnership capacity.

The **10-year Financial Plan** has been prepared in accordance with statutory requirements and is underpinned by Council's commitment to maintaining a sound and sustainable financial position. Close alignment between the Asset Plan and the Financial Plan ensures that infrastructure renewal and service delivery priorities are matched with Council's financial capacity.

Council recognises that maintaining long-term financial sustainability may require making difficult decisions in the future. This could involve asset rationalisation, adjustment of service levels, or improving expenditure efficiency. Decisions must be guided by thorough, deliberative engagement, sound data and information, transparent processes and a practical understanding of balancing community expectations and financial capacity. To strengthen projected financial performance and maintain resilience within our community, Council has adopted a cash-balanced budgeting approach.

The key objectives of this Financial Plan are to:

- Maintain a strong cash position to safeguard long-term financial sustainability.
- Actively pursue recurrent State and Federal government funding for strategic capital projects.
- Prioritise investment across Council's asset portfolio to address renewal gaps.
- Enhance delivery and value for money of Council's current services and improve community understanding of Council's service levels.
- Ensure adequate funding to support the actions and initiatives set out in the Council Plan and Community Vision.

3. Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework

Council's Financial Plan is a key component of the Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework required under the *Local Government Act 2020*. Section 89 of the Act requires Council to maintain an integrated strategic planning and reporting framework that aligns community aspirations with Council's financial and service delivery capacity. Within this framework, Section 91 of the Act mandates the preparation of a Financial Plan for at least the next 10 financial years, setting out the resources required to deliver the objectives of the Council Plan and the Asset Plan. The Financial Plan provides the financial context for the annual budget and ensures consistency between long-term strategy and short-term decision making.

By embedding the Financial Plan within this integrated framework, Council can demonstrate compliance with legislative requirements, ensure transparent stewardship of community resources, and maintain a clear line of sight from community priorities through to service delivery, funding, and performance monitoring. This alignment is essential for balancing affordability, meeting community expectations, and ensuring intergenerational equity.

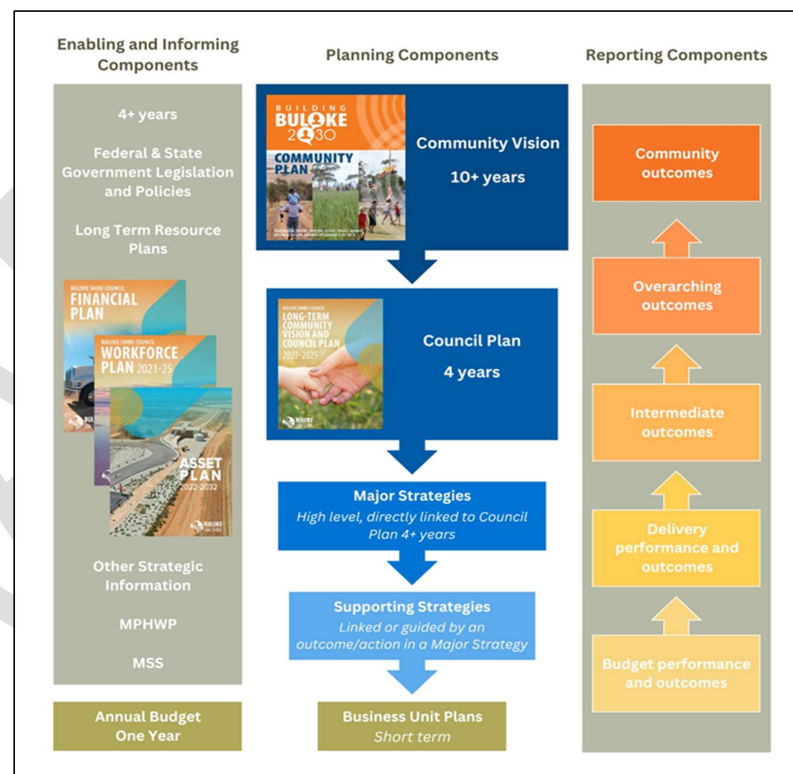


Image 1: Integrated Strategic Planning and Planning Reporting Framework

4. Legislative Requirements

The Financial Plan is one of the strategic plans subject to the Strategic planning principles in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*. Section 89 of the Act sets out the Strategic planning principles as follows:

4.1 Strategic planning principles

- (1) *A Council must undertake the preparation of its Council Plan and other strategic plans in accordance with the strategic planning principles.*
- (2) *The following are the strategic planning principles —*
 - *an integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting is to be adopted;*
 - *strategic planning must address the Community Vision;*
 - *strategic planning must take into account the resources needed for effective implementation;*
 - *strategic planning must identify and address the risks to effective implementation;*
 - *strategic planning must provide for ongoing monitoring of progress and regular reviews to identify and address changing circumstances.*

4.2 Financial Plan

- (1) *A Council must develop, adopt and keep in force a Financial Plan in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices.*
- (2) *The scope of a Financial Plan is a period of at least the next 10 financial years.*
- (3) *A Financial Plan must include the following in the manner and form prescribed by the regulations—*
 - *statements describing the financial resources required to give effect to the Council Plan and other strategic plans of the Council;*
 - *information about the decisions and assumptions that underpin the forecasts in the statements specified in paragraph (a);*
 - *statements describing any other resource requirements that the Council considers appropriate to include in the Financial Plan;*
 - *any other matters prescribed by the regulations.*
- (4) *A Council must develop or review the Financial Plan in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices and adopt the Financial Plan by 31 October in the year following a general election.*
- (5) *The Financial Plan adopted under subsection (4) has effect from 1 July in the year following a general election.*

Section 91(1) and section 91(4) refer to deliberative engagement practices. The Act requires deliberative engagement practices to be incorporated into a council's community engagement policy.

4.3 Financial management principles

Division 4 of Part 4 of the *Local Government Act 2020* addresses financial management. Section 101 of the Act sets out the financial management principles as follows:

The following are the financial management principles—

- (1) revenue, expenses, assets, liabilities, investments and financial transactions must be managed in accordance with a Council's financial policies and strategic plans; financial risks must be monitored and managed prudently having regard to economic circumstances;*
- (2) financial policies and strategic plans, including the Revenue and Rating Plan, must seek to provide stability and predictability in the financial impact on the municipal community;*
- (3) accounts and records that explain the financial operations and financial position of the Council must be kept.*

For the purposes of the financial management principles, financial risk includes any risk relating to the following—

- o the financial viability of the Council;*
- o the management of current and future liabilities of the Council;*
- o the beneficial enterprises of the Council.*

4.4 Service performance principles

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires Victorian councils to plan and deliver services in accordance with the service performance principles. Part 5 of the Act addresses council operations. Section 106 of the Act sets out the service performance principles as follows:

A Council must plan and deliver services to the municipal community in accordance with the service performance principles.

The following are the service performance principles—

- o services should be provided in an equitable manner and be responsive to the diverse needs of the municipal community;*
- o services should be accessible to the members of the municipal community for whom the services are intended;*
- o quality and costs standards for services set by the Council should provide good value to the municipal community;*
- o a Council should seek to continuously improve service delivery to the municipal community in response to performance monitoring;*
- o service delivery must include a fair and effective process for considering and responding to complaints about service provision.*

4.5 Community engagement and public transparency

The *Local Government Act 2020* includes community engagement principles (section 56) and public transparency principles (section 58). The Act requires Victorian councils to adopt and maintain a public transparency policy (section 57) and to adopt and maintain a community engagement policy (section 55).

The Financial Plan is specifically referenced in section 55(2)(g) of the Act which requires (amongst other provisions) that a community engagement policy must:

- o include deliberative engagement practices which must include and address any matters prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this paragraph and be capable of being applied to the development of the Community Vision, Council Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan.*

4.6 Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020

The *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* (the regulations) came into operation on 24 October 2020. Part 2 of the regulations prescribe the information to be included in a Financial Plan as follows:

- *For the purposes of section 91(3)(a) of the Act, the statements describing the financial resources must be in the form set out in the Local Government Model Financial Report.*
- *For the purposes of section 91(3)(d) of the Act, the prescribed matters include a statement of capital works for the financial years to which the statements describing the financial resources referred to in section 91(3)(a) of the Act relate.*

For the purposes of section 91(3)(d) of the Act, the prescribed matters include the following—

- *a statement of human resources;*
- *a summary of planned expenditure in relation to the human resources referred to in the statement of human resources, categorised according to the organisational structure of the Council and classified separately*
- *a summary of the planned number of full time equivalent Council staff referred to in the statement of human resources, categorised according to the organisational structure of the Council and classified separately*

5. Engagement Principles

As part of the development of the 10-Year Financial Plan, Council undertook a deliberative engagement process with a Community Reference Group (CRG). The CRG was established through an expression of interest process advertised to the broader community through Council's media channels. All applications were invited to partake, and the resulting group included a concentrated mix of community members from across the municipality, offering diverse outlooks, experiences and perspectives.

Workshop 1 – Exploring Value for Money

The first workshop introduced participants to Council's strategic and financial context, the Community Vision, and the purpose of the Financial Plan. Members worked in facilitated groups to identify and discuss the value for money factor of the services and priorities most important to the community. This session also explored the potential for changing future service levels and what service areas would be most critical to demonstrate value for money and long-term affordability.

Workshop 2 – Understanding the Gaps

The second workshop built on the discussions held within the first workshop and presented participants with financial scenarios and service delivery options with a particular focus on Asset Management. The CRG considered how Council should balance investment across services, infrastructure, and community needs, and provided feedback on priorities through the lens of value for money, equity, and intergenerational fairness.

Outcomes

The insights and recommendations from the CRG were documented and have been presented to Council for consideration within a separate workshop session. These three sessions, along with the more recent community survey and public submissions process undertaken for the 2025/26 Annual Budget, have informed the development of this Financial Plan by grounding strategic and financial decisions in community values and expectations, ensuring that the resulting plan reflects both local priorities and the legislative requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

5.1 Asset Plan

Integration with the Asset Plan is a core principle of Council's financial planning. It ensures funding decisions support both service delivery and the sustainable management of Council's assets. The Asset Plan identifies renewal, maintenance, and backlog requirements across asset categories, informed by condition, risk, and service levels.

This information directly informs the 10-year Financial Plan, aligning financial capacity with asset needs. Together, these two critical strategic Plans enable Council to manage assets responsibly and sustainably over their lifecycle.

Council currently has individual Asset Management Plans for the following asset classes:

- Transport and Drainage Asset Management Plan
- Buildings and Open Spaces Asset Management Plan

5.2 Revenue and Rating Plan

The Revenue and Rating Plan explains how Council generates the income required to fund its activities and how this is distributed fairly among ratepayers and other service users. Prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, the Plan sets out Council's approach to rating, along with the principles that guide the administration of user fees, charges, and other revenue sources. It provides a strategic framework for determining and collecting revenue in a fair and transparent manner, without setting specific revenue targets.

The Plan works alongside the 10-Year Financial Plan by defining the revenue framework within which long-term forecasts and financial strategies are developed, ensuring that Council's service delivery and infrastructure investment remain sustainable and aligned with community priorities.

Council has adopted its Rating and Revenue Plan 2025-2029 in June 2025.

6. Financial Plan

6.1 Context

The Financial Plan has used the Council Plan 2025 - 2029, as well as Council's recent annual budgets and financial reports as the basis for financial modelling and planning for future service delivery.

Council sets its priorities via its annual and four-year forecast budget along with the Council Plan development.

Strategic Directions and major priorities incorporated in the Financial Plan include –

- Balancing its budgets on a cash basis meaning that investments in its operations are limited to revenues generated through operational activities. Where operational cash surpluses exist, Council seeks to allocate these funds toward capital works, with a focus on addressing the 'renewal gap' identified in the Asset Plan 2026–2035
- Delivering efficient and effective service levels ensuring value for money in all service areas
- Support a vibrant community through investments in infrastructure that enhance community and economic development
- Promote clear and transparent budgeting process through regular financial and performance reporting.

6.2 Assumptions to Comprehensive Income Statement

Buloke Shire Council follows xero-based budgeting, which forms the base of preparing the annual budget of FY2026. This section presents information regarding the assumptions to the Comprehensive Income Statement for the preparation of the 10-year Financial Plan 2025 - 2035. The assumptions comprise the annual escalations or movement for each line item of the Comprehensive Income Statement.

Escalation factors	Budget 2025/26	Projections								
		2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35
Income / Revenue										
Rates and charges	Budgeted	3%	2.75%	2.75%	2.75%	2.75%	2.75%	2.75%	2.75%	2.75%
Statutory fees and fines	Budgeted	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
User fees	Budgeted	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Grants - operating	Budgeted	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Grants - capital	Budgeted									
Other income	Budgeted	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
					Based on specific capital projects					
Expenses										
Employee costs	Budgeted	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Materials and services	Budgeted	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Depreciation	Budgeted	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Amortisation - right of use assets	Budgeted									
Other expenses	Budgeted	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%

Rates and Charges – Buloke Shire Council operates within a rate-capped environment, with annual increases budgeted in line with the rate cap assumption of 2.75%

Statutory fees – These comprise fees and charges set by the State Government, such as planning permits and registration charges. They are forecast to increase annually in line with CPI, assumed at 3%.

User fees and charges – These represent discretionary charges levied by Council to recover the cost of specific services. They are projected to increase in line with CPI, assumed at 3%

Grants Operating – Recurrent operating grants including the Financial Assistance Grants are expected to grow at 3% annually

Grants Capital - Capital grants, received from state and federal governments to support the capital works program, can fluctuate from year to year depending on the projects undertaken. For this Financial Plan, projections are based on estimated funding allocations for identified capital projects.

Other Income - Other income primarily comprises investment earnings and minor revenue sources, assumed to increase at 3% per annum.

Employee Costs - From 2026, Buloke Shire Council's new Enterprise Agreement is assumed to result in annual employee cost increases of 3%, covering wages, superannuation, WorkCover, training, and other employment-related expenses.

Materials and Services – This category includes the costs of operating Council services, maintaining roads and major assets, consumables, and utilities. It also incorporates reliance on external contractors for specialised services (e.g. legal advice and technical expertise). Costs are assumed to increase annually in line with CPI at 3%.

Depreciation – It has been calculated in lines with anticipated capital expenditure as per mentioned in this Plan

Amortisation of right of use assets – Council leases light vehicles, with fleet numbers expected to remain stable. Accordingly, amortisation costs are forecast to remain constant.

Other expenses - his category comprises administrative and corporate costs, including Councillor allowances, election expenses, community grants, fire services property levy, audit fees, and other day-to-day operating expenses. These are projected to increase annually at 3%.

Other Considerations – Transmission Planning and Renewable Energy Developments

Council recognises that the current situation regarding the State-Government led transmission projects and large-scale renewable energy developments proposed for the local area presents both opportunities and significant challenges for our community in a variety of ways.

Council also acknowledges community concerns surrounding land use, accessibility, infrastructure pressures and the limited consultation that has been facilitated by the State Government at this point in time.

In undertaking the development of this Financial Plan, Council is wary of its inability to accurately forecast or analyse factual data which may or may not have substantial material impacts on Council's future financial position.

Buloke Shire Council is preparing early monitoring proposals and will undertake engagement with the wider community to ensure local voices are heard when reviewing this plan, particularly as progress over time is made and factual information can be provided to accurately inform changes. This proactive approach seeks to balance the impacts of transmission planning and renewable energy developments with community wellbeing and the Shire's long-term financial sustainability.

7. Financial Statements

This section presents details regarding the Financial Plan Statements for the 10-year period from 2025/26 to 2034/35.

- Comprehensive Income Statement
- Balance Sheet
- Statement of Changes in Equity
- Statement of Cash Flows
- Statement of Capital Works
- Statement of Human Resources

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7.1 Comprehensive Income Statement

	Budget					Projections				
	2025/26 \$'000	2026/27 \$'000	2027/28 \$'000	2028/29 \$'000	2029/30 \$'000	2030/31 \$'000	2031/32 \$'000	2032/33 \$'000	2033/34 \$'000	2034/35 \$'000
Income / Revenue										
Rates and charges	15,905	16,382	16,833	17,296	17,772	18,260	18,762	19,278	19,809	20,353
Statutory fees and fines	124	128	131	135	139	144	148	152	157	162
User fees	499	514	529	545	561	578	596	613	632	651
Grants - operating	9,455	9,739	10,031	10,332	10,642	10,962	11,290	11,629	11,978	12,337
Grants - capital	35,304	30,439	3,559	3,559	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600
Contributions - monetary	608	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net gain (or loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other income	1,324	1,644	1,405	1,447	1,490	1,535	1,581	1,628	1,677	1,727
Total income / revenue	63,243	58,846	32,489	33,314	32,205	33,078	33,977	34,901	35,852	36,830
Expenses										
Employee costs	13,415	14,240	14,667	15,107	15,561	16,027	16,508	17,004	17,514	18,039
Materials and services	10,817	10,503	10,818	11,142	11,477	11,821	12,176	12,541	12,917	13,305
Depreciation	8,852	9,118	9,392	9,673	9,963	10,262	10,570	10,887	11,214	11,550
Amortisation - right of use assets	465	465	465	465	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bad and Doubtful Debt	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78
Finance costs - leases	54	56	58	59	61	63	65	67	69	71
Other expenses	747	770	793	817	841	866	892	919	947	975
Total expenses	34,410	35,213	36,255	37,329	38,435	39,574	40,747	41,956	43,201	44,483
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	28,833	23,633	(3,767)	(4,015)	(6,230)	(6,496)	(6,770)	(7,055)	(7,348)	(7,653)
Other comprehensive income										
Items that will not be reclassified to surplus or deficit in future periods										
Net asset revaluation gain /(loss)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total comprehensive result	28,833	23,633	(3,767)	(4,015)	(6,230)	(6,496)	(6,770)	(7,055)	(7,348)	(7,653)

7.2 Balance Sheet

	Budget					Projections				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Assets										
Current assets										
Cash and cash equivalents	15,621	15,267	15,299	14,965	15,011	14,910	14,815	14,726	14,642	14,563
Trade and other receivables	5,160	5,541	5,468	5,843	5,845	6,005	6,170	6,340	6,514	6,694
Inventories	223	248	240	241	248	255	263	271	279	287
Prepayments	503	518	534	550	566	583	601	619	637	657
Non-current assets classified as held for sale	280	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other assets	277	277	277	277	277	277	277	277	277	277
Total current assets	22,065	21,852	21,818	21,876	21,947	22,031	22,126	22,233	22,351	22,478
Non-current assets										
Property, infrastructure, plant & equipment	342,623	366,318	362,614	358,665	352,502	346,076	339,377	332,396	325,124	317,550
Right-of-use assets	1,189	1,189	1,189	1,189	1,189	1,189	1,189	1,189	1,189	1,189
Total non-current assets	343,812	367,506	363,803	359,854	353,691	347,265	340,566	333,585	326,313	318,738
Total assets	365,877	389,358	385,621	381,730	375,639	369,296	362,692	355,818	348,663	341,217
Liabilities										
Current liabilities										
Trade and other payables	2,832	2,665	2,665	2,745	2,827	2,912	3,000	3,090	3,182	3,278
Trust funds and deposits	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
Contract and other liabilities	1,089	980	882	794	714	643	578	521	469	422
Provisions	3,653	3,763	3,876	3,992	4,112	4,235	4,362	4,493	4,628	4,767
Lease liabilities	417	417	417	417	417	417	417	417	417	417
Total current liabilities	8,010	7,844	7,859	7,967	8,090	8,226	8,377	8,540	8,715	8,903
Non-current liabilities										
Provisions	487	501	516	532	548	564	581	598	616	635
Lease liabilities	824	824	824	824	824	824	824	824	824	824
Total non-current liabilities	1,310	1,325	1,340	1,355	1,371	1,388	1,405	1,422	1,440	1,459
Total liabilities	9,321	9,169	9,199	9,322	9,461	9,614	9,781	9,962	10,155	10,361
Net assets	356,557	380,189	376,423	372,408	366,177	359,681	352,911	345,856	338,508	330,855
Equity										
Accumulated surplus	157,932	181,164	176,998	172,583	165,952	159,057	151,886	144,431	136,683	128,630
Reserves	198,625	199,025	199,425	199,825	200,225	200,625	201,025	201,425	201,825	202,225
Total equity	356,557	380,189	376,423	372,408	366,177	359,681	352,911	345,856	338,508	330,855

7.3 Statement of Changes in Equity

	Total	Accumulated Surplus	Revaluation Reserve	Other Reserves
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
2026 Budget				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	327,724	129,099	195,356	3,269
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	28,833	28,833	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	-	-	-	-
Transfers to other reserves	(400)	(400)	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	400	-	-	400
Balance at end of the financial year	356,557	157,532	195,356	3,669
2027				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	356,557	157,532	195,356	3,669
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	23,633	23,633	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	-	-	-	-
Transfers to other reserves	-	-	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	-	-	-	-
Balance at end of the financial year	380,189	181,165	195,356	3,669
2028				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	380,190	181,165	195,356	3,669
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(3,767)	(3,767)	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	-	-	-	-
Transfers to other reserves	(400)	(400)	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	400	-	-	400
Balance at end of the financial year	376,423	176,998	195,356	4,069
2029				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	376,422	176,998	195,356	4,069
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(4,014)	(4,015)	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	-	-	-	-
Transfers to other reserves	(400)	(400)	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	400	-	-	400
Balance at end of the financial year	372,408	172,583	195,356	4,469
2030				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	372,408	172,583	195,356	4,469
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(6,230)	(6,230)	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	-	-	-	-
Transfers to other reserves	(400)	(400)	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	400	-	-	400
Balance at end of the financial year	366,177	166,953	195,356	4,869

	Total \$'000	Accumulated Surplus \$'000	Revaluation Reserve \$'000	Other Reserves \$'000
2031				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	366,177	165,953	195,356	4,869
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(6,496)	(6,496)	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	-	-	-	-
Transfers to other reserves	(400)	(400)	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	400	-	-	400
Balance at end of the financial year	359,681	159,057	195,356	5,269
2032				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	359,681	159,057	195,356	5,269
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(6,770)	(6,770)	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	-	-	-	-
Transfers to other reserves	(400)	(400)	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	400	-	-	400
Balance at end of the financial year	352,911	151,886	195,356	5,669
2033				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	352,911	151,886	195,356	5,669
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(7,054)	(7,055)	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	-	-	-	-
Transfers to other reserves	(400)	(400)	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	400	-	-	400
Balance at end of the financial year	345,856	144,432	195,356	6,069
2034				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	345,856	144,432	195,356	6,069
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(7,348)	(7,348)	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	-	-	-	-
Transfers to other reserves	(400)	(400)	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	400	-	-	400
Balance at end of the financial year	338,508	136,683	195,356	6,469
2035				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	338,508	136,683	195,356	6,469
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(7,652)	(7,653)	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	-	-	-	-
Transfers to other reserves	(400)	(400)	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	400	-	-	400
Balance at end of the financial year	330,855	128,631	195,356	6,869

7.4 Statement of Cash Flows

	Forecast Actual 2024/25 \$'000	Budget 2025/26 \$'000	Projections								
	Inflow s (Outflow s)	Inflow s (Outflow s)	2026/27 \$'000 Inflow s (Outflow s)	2027/28 \$'000 Inflow s (Outflow s)	2028/29 \$'000 Inflow s (Outflow s)	2029/30 \$'000 Inflow s (Outflow s)	2030/31 \$'000 Inflow s (Outflow s)	2031/32 \$'000 Inflow s (Outflow s)	2032/33 \$'000 Inflow s (Outflow s)	2033/34 \$'000 Inflow s (Outflow s)	2034/35 \$'000 Inflow s (Outflow s)
Cash flows from operating activities											
Rates and charges	14,963	15,889	15,940	16,842	16,855	17,703	18,030	18,526	19,035	19,558	20,096
Statutory fees and fines	176	124	128	131	135	139	144	148	152	157	162
User fees	402	499	514	529	545	561	578	596	613	632	651
Grants - operating	9,812	10,522	9,739	10,031	10,332	10,642	10,962	11,290	11,629	11,978	12,337
Grants - capital	3,512	35,183	30,330	3,461	3,471	1,521	1,529	1,536	1,542	1,548	1,553
Contributions - monetary	455	608	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other receipts	1,388	1,353	1,899	1,412	1,447	1,483	1,527	1,573	1,620	1,669	1,719
Net GST refund / payment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Employee costs	(12,371)	(13,295)	(14,116)	(14,539)	(14,976)	(15,425)	(15,888)	(16,364)	(16,855)	(17,361)	(17,882)
Materials and services	(11,399)	(10,824)	(10,670)	(10,818)	(11,063)	(11,394)	(11,736)	(12,088)	(12,451)	(12,824)	(13,209)
Short-term, low value and variable lease payments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Trust funds and deposits repaid	(287)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other payments	(1,031)	(767)	(785)	(808)	(833)	(858)	(883)	(910)	(937)	(965)	(994)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	5,622	39,291	32,979	6,242	5,914	4,372	4,262	4,306	4,349	4,391	4,432
Cash flows from investing activities											
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(10,932)	(46,735)	(32,813)	(5,688)	(5,724)	(3,800)	(3,836)	(3,871)	(3,907)	(3,941)	(3,976)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and	-	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net cash provided by/ (used in) investing activities	(10,932)	(46,710)	(32,813)	(5,688)	(5,724)	(3,800)	(3,836)	(3,871)	(3,907)	(3,941)	(3,976)
Cash flows from financing activities											
Interest paid - lease liability	(72)	(54)	(56)	(58)	(59)	(61)	(63)	(65)	(67)	(69)	(71)
Repayment of lease liabilities	(454)	(465)	(465)	(465)	(465)	(465)	(465)	(465)	(465)	(465)	(465)
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities	(527)	(519)	(520)	(522)	(524)	(526)	(527)	(529)	(531)	(533)	(535)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash & cash equivalents	(5,837)	(7,938)	(354)	32	(334)	46	(102)	(95)	(89)	(84)	(79)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial	29,396	23,559	15,621	15,267	15,299	14,965	15,011	14,910	14,815	14,726	14,642
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial	23,559	15,621	15,267	15,299	14,965	15,011	14,910	14,815	14,726	14,642	14,563

7.5 Statement of Capital Works

	Forecast Actual 2024/25	Budget 2025/26	Projections								
	\$'000	\$'000	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35
Property											
Land	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Land improvements	334	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total land	334	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Buildings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Heritage buildings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Building improvements	5	395	117	106	108	374	380	386	392	398	404
Leasehold improvements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total buildings	5	395	117	106	108	374	380	386	392	398	404
Total property	339	395	117	106	108	374	380	386	392	398	404
Plant and equipment											
Heritage plant and equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Plant, machinery and equipment	372	2,101	237	213	216	330	335	341	346	351	356
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	19	91	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Computers and telecommunications	137	161	119	106	108	-	-	-	-	-	-
Library books	9	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total plant and equipment	537	2,371	356	319	324	330	335	341	346	351	356
Infrastructure											
Roads	2,161	39,687	32,103	5,050	5,075	2,568	2,584	2,599	2,615	2,630	2,646
Bridges	-	30	-	-	-	31	31	32	32	33	33
Footpaths and cycleways	137	278	-	-	-	22	22	23	23	23	24
Drainage	-	202	142	128	130	110	112	114	115	117	119
Kerb and Channel	-	-	-	-	-	35	36	36	37	37	38
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	238	463	71	64	65	154	157	159	161	164	166
Waste management	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Parks, open space and streetscapes	3,830	2,606	24	21	22	154	157	159	161	164	166
Aerodromes	20	100	-	-	-	22	22	23	23	23	24
Off street car parks	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other infrastructure	-	603	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total infrastructure	6,386	43,969	32,341	5,263	5,292	3,096	3,120	3,145	3,168	3,192	3,216
Total capital works expenditure	7,262	46,735	32,814	5,688	5,724	3,800	3,836	3,871	3,907	3,941	3,976
Represented by:											
New asset expenditure	3,791	3,930	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asset renewal expenditure	3,196	42,403	32,814	5,688	5,724	3,800	3,836	3,871	3,907	3,941	3,976
Asset expansion expenditure	-	250	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Asset upgrade expenditure	275	152	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total capital works expenditure	7,262	46,735	32,814	5,688	5,724	3,800	3,836	3,871	3,907	3,941	3,976
Funding sources represented by:											
Grants	3,688	35,304	30,439	3,559	3,559	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600
Contributions	-	587	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Council cash	3,574	10,844	2,374	2,129	2,165	2,200	2,236	2,271	2,307	2,341	2,376
Borrowings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total capital works expenditure	7,262	46,735	32,813	5,688	5,724	3,800	3,836	3,871	3,907	3,941	3,976

7.6 Statement of Human Resources

Statement of Planned Human Resource Expenditure

	Forecast Actual 2024/25	Budget 2025/26	Projections								
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35
Staff expenditure (in '000)											
Employee costs - operating	12,184	13,355	14,118	14,542	14,978	15,427	15,890	16,367	16,858	17,364	17,884
Employee costs - capital	148	60	122	126	129	133	137	141	146	150	155
Total staff expenditure	12,332	13,415	14,240	14,667	15,107	15,561	16,027	16,508	17,003	17,514	18,039
Staff numbers											
Employees	97.8	117.8	117.9	118.0	118.1	118.1	118.1	118.1	118.1	118.1	118.1
Total staff numbers	97.8	117.8	117.9	118.0	118.1	118.1	118.1	118.1	118.1	118.1	118.1

A summary of human resources expenditure categorised according to the organisational structure of Council is included below :

Department	Budget 2025/26 \$'000	Budget 2026/27 \$'000	Budget 2027/28 \$'000	Budget 2028/29 \$'000	Budget 2029/30 \$'000	Budget 2030/31 \$'000	Budget 2031/32 \$'000	Budget 2032/33 \$'000	Budget 2033/34 \$'000	Budget 2034/35 \$'000
Community Development	3,142	3,236	3,333	3,433	3,536	3,642	3,752	3,864	3,980	4,100
Corporate and Organisational Performance	2,092	2,155	2,219	2,286	2,355	2,425	2,498	2,573	2,650	2,730
Infrastructure & Delivery	6,157	6,704	6,905	7,113	7,326	7,546	7,772	8,005	8,245	8,493
Office of the CEO	1,663	1,713	1,764	1,817	1,872	1,928	1,986	2,045	2,107	2,170
Total permanent staff expenditure	13,054	13,808	14,222	14,649	15,089	15,541	16,007	16,488	16,982	17,492
Other employee related expenditure	301	310	319	329	339	349	359	370	381	393
Capitalised labour costs	60	122	126	129	133	137	141	146	150	155
Total expenditure	13,415	14,240	14,667	15,107	15,561	16,027	16,508	17,004	17,514	18,039

Statement of Planned Human Resource Expenditure – service areas

	2025/26 \$'000	2026/27 \$'000	2027/28 \$'000	2028/29 \$'000	2029/30 \$'000	2030/31 \$'000	2031/32 \$'000	2032/33 \$'000	2033/34 \$'000	2034/35 \$'000
Community Development										
Permanent - Full time	1,740	1,792	1,846	1,901	1,958	2,017	2,078	2,140	2,204	2,270
Women	989	1,019	1,049	1,081	1,113	1,147	1,181	1,216	1,253	1,290
Men	751	774	797	821	845	871	897	924	951	980
Persons of self-described gender	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Permanent - Part time	952	981	1,010	1,040	1,071	1,104	1,137	1,171	1,206	1,242
Women	752	775	798	822	846	872	898	925	953	981
Men	200	206	212	219	225	232	239	246	253	261
Persons of self-described gender	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Community Development	2,692	2,773	2,856	2,942	3,030	3,121	3,214	3,311	3,410	3,512
Corporate and Organisational Performance										
Permanent - Full time	1,629	1,678	1,728	1,780	1,833	1,888	1,945	2,003	2,064	2,125
Women	1,064	1,096	1,129	1,163	1,198	1,233	1,270	1,309	1,348	1,388
Men	565	582	599	617	636	655	675	695	716	737
Persons of self-described gender	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Permanent - Part time	378	389	401	413	425	438	451	465	479	493
Women	341	351	362	373	384	395	407	419	432	445
Men	37	38	39	40	42	43	44	46	47	48
Persons of self-described gender	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Corporate and Organisational Performance	2,007	2,067	2,129	2,193	2,259	2,327	2,396	2,468	2,542	2,619
Infrastructure & Delivery										
Permanent - Full time	5,495	5,660	5,830	6,005	6,185	6,370	6,561	6,758	6,961	7,170
Women	618	637	656	675	696	716	738	760	783	806
Men	4,877	5,023	5,174	5,329	5,489	5,654	5,823	5,998	6,178	6,363
Persons of self-described gender	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Permanent - Part time	662	682	702	723	745	767	790	814	839	864
Women	393	405	417	429	442	456	469	483	498	513
Men	269	277	285	294	303	312	321	331	341	351
Persons of self-described gender	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Infrastructure & Delivery	6,157	6,342	6,532	6,728	6,930	7,138	7,352	7,572	7,800	8,033
Office of the CEO										
Permanent - Full time	1,562	2,093	2,156	2,220	2,287	2,356	2,426	2,499	2,574	2,651
Women	912	1,423	1,466	1,510	1,555	1,602	1,650	1,700	1,751	1,803
Men	650	670	690	710	732	754	776	799	823	848
Persons of self-described gender	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Permanent - Part time	101	104	107	110	114	117	121	124	128	132
Women	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	79	81
Men	39	40	41	43	44	45	47	48	49	51
Persons of self-described gender	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Office of the CEO	1,663	2,197	2,263	2,331	2,401	2,473	2,547	2,623	2,702	2,783
Casuals, temporary and other expenditure	836	861	887	914	941	969	998	1,028	1,059	1,091
Capitalised labour costs	60.0	122	126	129	133	137	141	146	150	155
Total staff expenditure	13,415	14,240	14,667	15,107	15,560	16,027	16,508	17,003	17,513	18,038

Statement of Human Resources – Full Time Employment

	2025/26 FTE	2026/27 FTE	2027/28 FTE	2028/29 FTE	2029/30 FTE	2030/31 FTE	2031/32 FTE	2032/33 FTE	2033/34 FTE	2034/35 FTE
Community Development										
Permanent - Full time	14.8	14.8	14.8	14.8	14.8	14.8	14.8	14.8	14.8	14.8
Women	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8
Men	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Persons of self-described gender	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Permanent - Part time	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8
Women	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8
Men	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Persons of self-described gender	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Community Development	23.6	23.6	23.6	23.6	23.6	23.6	23.6	23.6	23.6	23.6
Corporate and Organisational Performance										
Permanent - Full time	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0
Women	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0
Men	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Persons of self-described gender	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Permanent - Part time	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1
Women	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Men	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Persons of self-described gender	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Corporate and Organisational Performance	18.1	18.1	18.1	18.1	18.1	18.1	18.1	18.1	18.1	18.1
Infrastructure & Delivery										
Permanent - Full time	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0
Women	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0
Men	51.0	51.0	51.0	51.0	51.0	51.0	51.0	51.0	51.0	51.0
Persons of self-described gender	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Permanent - Part time	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3
Women	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Men	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8
Persons of self-described gender	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Infrastructure & Delivery	65.3	65.3	65.3	65.3	65.3	65.3	65.3	65.3	65.3	65.3
Office of the CEO										
Permanent - Full time	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0
Women	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Men	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Persons of self-described gender	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Permanent - Part time	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Women	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Men	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Persons of self-described gender	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Office of the CEO	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0
Casuals and temporary staff	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
Capitalised labour	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Total staff numbers	117.8	117.9	118.0	118.1	118.1	118.1	118.1	118.1	118.1	118.1

8. Financial Indicators

Indicator	Measure	Forecast	Budget	Projections									
		2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	
Operating position													
Adjusted underlying result (an adjusted underlying surplus is generated in the ordinary course of business)	Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit) Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit) / Adjusted underlying revenue	-17%	-17%	-10%	-12%	-12%	-19%	-20%	-20%	-20%	-20%	-21%	
Liquidity													
Unrestricted cash (sufficient cash that is free of restrictions is available to pay bills as and when they fall due)	Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities Unrestricted cash / current liabilities	163%	181%	182%	183%	178%	176%	173%	170%	166%	162%	159%	
Obligations													
Loans and borrowings (level of interest bearing loans and borrowings is appropriate to the size and nature of Council's activities)	Loans and borrowings compared to rates Interest bearing loans and borrowings / rate revenue	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Loans and borrowings (level of interest bearing loans and borrowings is appropriate to the size and nature of Council's activities)	Loans and borrowings repayments compared to rates Interest and principal repayments on interest bearing loans and borrowings / rate revenue	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Indebtedness (level of long term liabilities is appropriate to the size and nature of a Council's activities)	Non-current liabilities compared to own-source revenue Non-current liabilities / own source revenue	7%	7%	6%	6%	6%	7%	7%	7%	7%	6%	6%	
Stability													
Rates effort (rating level is set based on the community's capacity to pay)	Rates compared to property values Rate revenue / CIV of rateable properties in the municipal district	0.25%	0.26%	0.24%	0.24%	0.24%	0.24%	0.24%	0.24%	0.24%	0.24%	0.24%	
Efficiency													
Revenue level (resources are used efficiently in the delivery of services)	Average rate per property assessment General rates and municipal charges / no. of property assessments	\$2,139	\$2,198	\$2,264	\$2,327	\$2,391	\$2,456	\$2,524	\$2,593	\$2,665	\$2,738	\$2,813	

9. Strategies and Plans

9.1 Borrowing Strategy

At present, Buloke Shire Council has zero debt funding (loans).

Debt funding is not a revenue source but a financing tool that enables Council to bring forward capital works, provided it remains affordable. The use of loan funds is considered where projects deliver long-term benefits, ensuring costs are shared equitably across current and future generations through annual loan repayments.

For this equity benefit to apply, the Council will only consider using future loan funding on projects that have a wider regional benefit rather than a capital project that benefits any township.

9.2 Reserves Strategy

Buloke Shire Council establishes and manages discretionary reserve funds responsibly. It sets clear rules for creating, transferring, and using these reserves, ensuring they are fully cash-backed and aligned with Council's financial strategy. The Policy supports sustainable financial management, transparency, and accountability by designating funds from specific income sources for future use in line with Council's priorities. Council does not hold any statutory reserves at the time of modelling this plan.

9.3 Treasury Management

The Investment Policy guides the management, investment, and redemption of Council funds in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*. It seeks to maximize returns while prioritizing security, prudent risk management, and preservation of capital.

Surplus funds not required for short-term commitments will be invested by Council, productively to support recurrent and capital expenditure, with all investments undertaken responsibly, not speculatively, and ensuring principal is protected. Council maintains, at a minimum, working capital equal to one quarter of annual operating expenditure.

9.4 Investment Strategy

Buloke Shire Council currently holds no long-term liquid assets, such as term deposits exceeding two to three years. Its overall asset base is above average compared to other Small Rural Councils.

As part of its Financial Plan, Council will review its asset holdings to identify surplus assets not essential to service delivery. While asset sales are a one-off revenue source, they can support the Council's cash position and demonstrate prudent financial management—particularly relevant when considering a rate cap variation application.

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8.2.2 DRAFT 2025 - 2035 ASSET PLAN

Author's Title: Interim Director Infrastructure and Delivery

Directorate: Infrastructure and Delivery

File No: GO/05/02

Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025

Strategic Objective: Built and natural environment
Advocate and plan for, and manage community buildings, roads and transport networks

Council leadership and engagement
Responsible leadership and decision making

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Councils endorsement to place the draft 2025 – 2035 Asset Plan on public exhibition.

SUMMARY

Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council are required to adopt an Asset Plan by October in the year following a Council Election.

The plan is a critical 10-year strategic, public facing document that outlines how Council will manage infrastructure assets to achieve the Community Vision.

Council's current Asset Plan has been reviewed, and a new draft plan has been developed in partnership with the Financial Plan. The 2025 – 2035 Asset Plan (Asset Plan) is informed by up-to-date asset data and modelling of funding available for asset renewal in the adopted 2025-2026 Budget.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Endorse the 2026 – 2035 Asset Plan for public exhibition.
2. Gives public notice of the draft 2025 – 2035 Asset Plan on Council's website and invites written submissions from Thursday, 18 September 2025 until Thursday 9 October 2025.
3. Notes that in accordance with Section 93 and 96(1)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, consultation will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy.
4. Notes that any person who makes a written submission in relation to the draft 2025 – 2035 Asset Plan may be heard by Council on Wednesday 8 October 2025.
5. Notes that the 2025 – 2035 Asset Plan will be considered for adoption at the Council Meeting to be held 15 October 2025.

DISCUSSION

Purpose of the Asset Plan

The Asset Plan is intended to be a strategic public facing document that informs the community on how the Council controlled infrastructure and other assets are to be managed to achieve the Council Plan objectives and Community Vision statement.

This Asset Plan has been prepared to meet the requirements of section 92 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. Its purpose is to:

- Ensure that assets support the achievement of the Community Vision and Council Plan.
- Demonstrate that we will responsibly manage our assets to meet the service delivery needs of our community in a cost-effective way.
- Provide a method to integrate our asset management planning outcomes with our Council Plan, Financial Plan, and Annual Budget.
- Support the continued advocacy for Federal and State Government support for the improvement of community assets.
- Make sure that we comply with our statutory and legislative obligations.

The plan should align with and complement the other Council planning and reporting documents, including the Council Plan and Council Budget as well as the other longer-term planning documents, the Community Vision, and the Financial Plan.

The integration of the Asset Plan within the ISPRF ensures that:

- assets are appropriate for current and future plans of the Council
- they remain fit for purpose, and
- optimum use is achieved through appropriate maintenance, renewal, and replacement programs.

An Asset Plan, with a focus of at least ten financial years, should set out how Council's stewardship of the community's assets will respond to the Community Vision within the Financial Plan parameters. An Asset Plan must inform and respond to changing community needs and expectations.

Council is required to adopt an Asset Plan every four years, by 31 October in the year after each election. The current plan is due to be adopted by 31 October this year.

Preparation of the Draft Plan

The Asset Plan adopted in 2022 has been reviewed and a new draft plan has been prepared for Council consideration.

The draft Plan has been developed in partnership with the draft Financial Plan and is informed by up-to-date asset condition data and modelling of funding available for asset renewal in the adopted 2025-26 four-year budget. Outcomes of the deliberative engagement process undertaken in August 2025 have also been used in developing the Asset Plan.

RELEVANT LAW

Section 92 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to review its Asset Plan and adopt a new Asset Plan no later than 31 October 2025.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable.

OPTIONS

Option 1 – Endorse placing the draft Asset Plan on public exhibition.

This option is recommended by officers as it meets the legislative requirements and is based on up-to-date asset condition data and robust modelling of asset performance.

The Plan has been prepared so that it is consistent with the draft Financial Plan. Changes to this plan would likely require changes to the other plans. It is considered that the plan proposes a reasonable investment in renewal of current assets in line with Council's financial position.

Council will need to actively seek government grants to enable asset upgrades to occur.

Option 2 – Endorse exhibition with amendments.

This option is not recommended by officers as the plan has been based on sound modelling and is consistent with other plans being presented to Council.

Option 3 – Do not endorse the exhibition of the Plan.

This option is not recommended by officers as Council has a legislative requirement to adopt the plan no later than 31 October, and it is important that community views are sought before it is finalised.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no implications arising from this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

It is proposed the draft Plan be placed on public exhibition alongside the draft Financial Plan.

Community input has been provided to date through deliberative engagement sessions undertaken in August 2025 for the Asset and Financial Plans.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

There are no direct innovation and continuous improvement activities associated with this report.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The draft Asset Plan seeks to ensure the sustainability of Council's assets to meet the community's future needs. The funding model contained within the Asset Plan aligns with the Financial Plan which is also being presented to Council for consideration at this meeting.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Consideration has been given to other regional, state and national plans and policies as required.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

The draft Asset Plan has been developed to ensure alignment with other key strategic plans and policies, including Council Vision, Community Plan, Council Plan, Financial Plan and Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This plan is to be placed on exhibition with the draft Financial Plan to ensure there is full transparency of how the plans are consistent with and support one another.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

Attachments: 1. Attachment 8.2.2.1 - Draft 2026 - 2035 Asset Plan



**2025 - 35 ASSET PLAN
PREPARED FOR BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL**

SEPTEMBER 2025
STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL



DRAFT

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

CT Management Group P/L PO Box 1374 GEELONG VIC 3220 Email: admin@ctman.com.au Web: www.ctman.com.au	Document: Buloke Shire Council_Asset Plan 2026 Draft v 1.2.docx
	Project Manager: Alfonso Della Monica
	Author: Adam Lehmann
	Date: September 2025
	Synopsis: <i>Lifecycle Asset Management Plan for Council's transport assets.</i>

CONSULTANTS DISTRIBUTION SCHEDULE

Version No.	Date	Distribution	Reference
1.0	09/09/2025	Buloke Shire Council	Draft

SCHEDULE OF ADOPTION

Version No.	Date	Comment	Reference

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Acknowledgement

Buloke Shire Council acknowledges the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk Nations and the Dja Dja Wurrung 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.

Buloke has a significant number of cultural heritage places including an Aboriginal historical place, burials, artefact scatters, earth features, low density artefact distributions, scarred trees and a stone feature.

1.4 Scope of the Asset Plan

While we manage an extensive portfolio of assets, this Asset Plan focuses on our physical infrastructure. The majority of our infrastructure falls into major asset classes, being:



Transport



Buildings



Open Space Assets



Stormwater Drainage

1.5 Purpose of the Asset Plan

The Asset Plan is part of our Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework and sets out we will acquire, build, look after, and use assets over the next 10 years and beyond. This version of the Asset Plan is a revision and update of the Plan adopted by Council in 2021.

This Asset Plan has been prepared to meet the requirements of section 92 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. Its purpose is to:

- Ensure that assets support the achievement of the Community Vision and Council Plan.
- Demonstrate that we will responsibly manage our assets to meet the service delivery needs of our community in a cost-effective way.
- Provide a method to integrate our asset management planning outcomes with our Council Plan, Financial Plan, and Annual Budget.
- Support the continued advocacy for Federal and State Government support for the improvement of community assets.
- Make sure that we comply with our statutory and legislative obligations

2 Strategic Context

We are committed to sustainably planning for the future of Buloke. We do this by working directly with our community to understand the vision for our shire and its people.

This vision is delivered through a set of strategic plans including this Asset Plan. These plans inform and guide our decision making and set out the outcomes and priority initiatives that compel action towards a thriving future.

2.1 Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework

Our strategic plans are developed in accordance with the integrated approach to planning and reporting driven by the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The *Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework* (ISPRF) outlines our commitment to building a strategic planning and reporting system that is connected, inter-dependent, and outcomes focused.

The framework is designed to give the Council and the community a clear picture of:

- The long term vision for our shire – Community Vision
- What we will deliver to get there – Council Plan
- The resources we need to deliver – Financial Plan and Asset Plan
- How progress towards the vision is measured - Annual Reporting

Strategic planning provides us with a clear direction, informs our resource planning, and helps to ensure we deliver on our commitments. Our Asset Plan fits together with our other strategic planning documents, all working toward achieving our Community Vision, and how we track our progress against them.

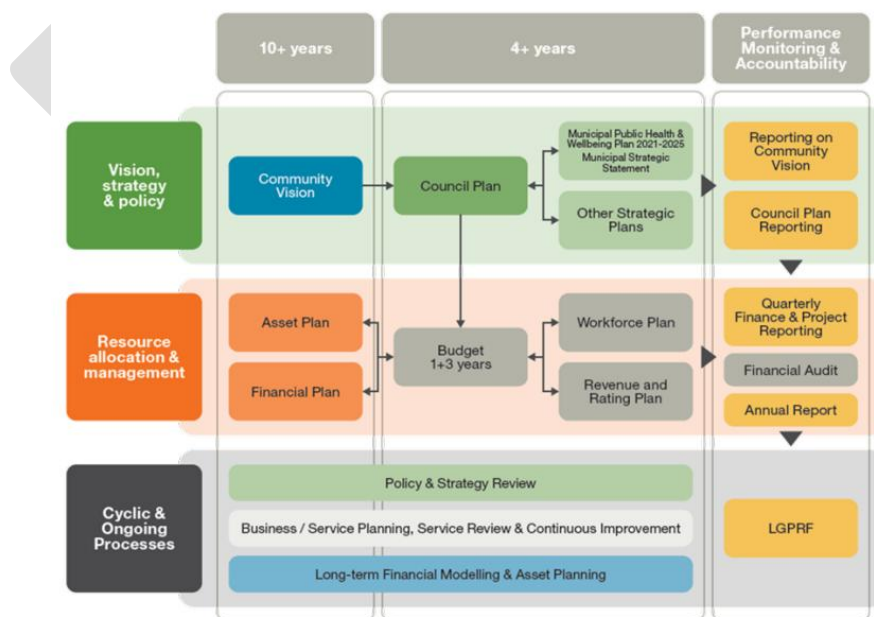


Figure 1 - Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework

2.2 Assets and Services

Infrastructure assets play a critical role in helping us achieve the goals and aspirations we share with our community as articulated in the Community Vision and Council Plan.

Physical assets provide the places and networks that are the backbone of the delivery of services to the community.

A service, or service level (what we agree to deliver to the community), is what drives the need or requirement for an asset.

For example: A recreation reserve building or stadium is an asset which provides a space for the community to participate in recreational services, community sport and other activities which promote healthy and active lifestyles.

A bridge is an asset which provides the community safe access over a waterway or terrain which is difficult to navigate, or access between communities.

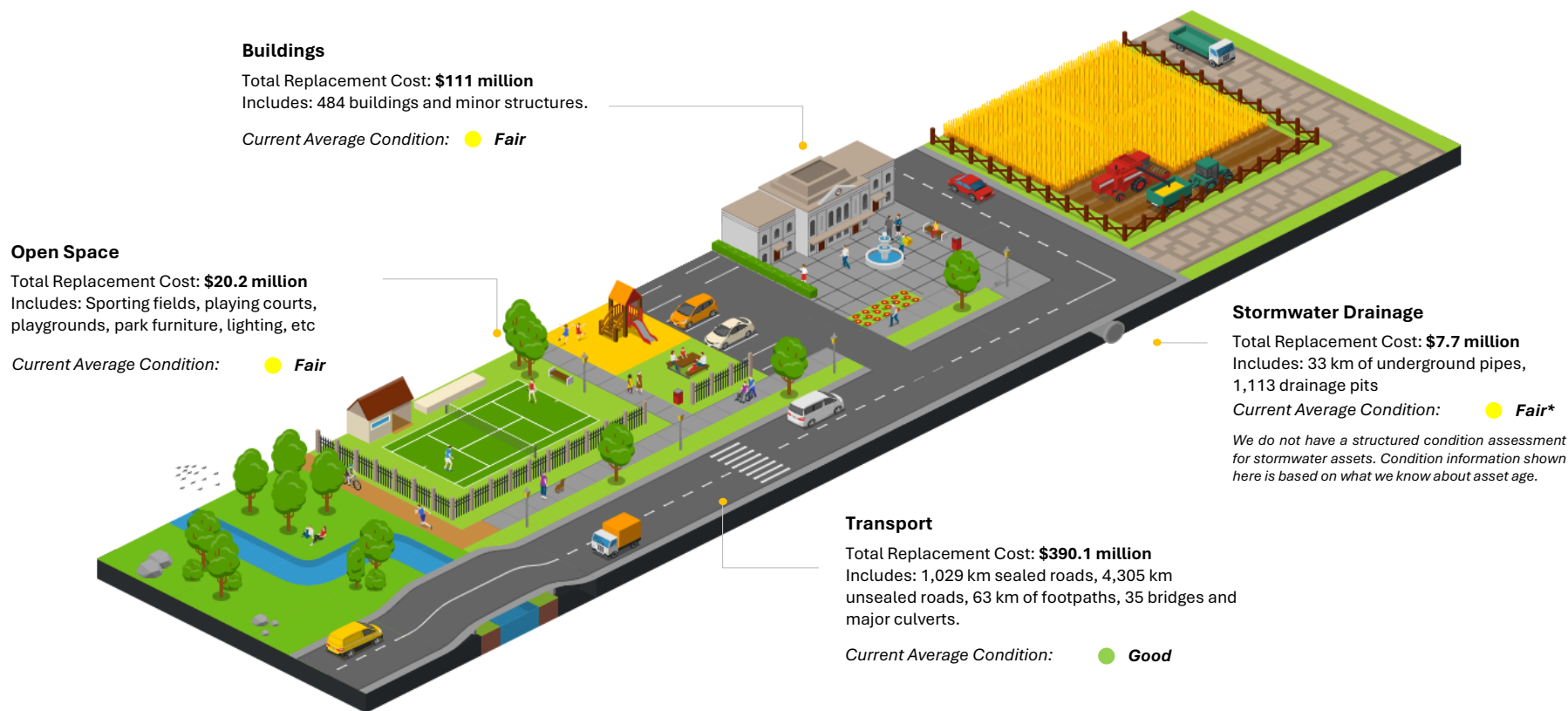
We deliver over 100 different services to our community. We must make sure the assets supporting these services are managed to optimise performance for the lowest cost.

Without fit for purpose, safe, and well managed assets, the quality and standards of our services can adversely suffer.



3 Our Assets

All our infrastructure assets, with a collective replacement cost of close to **\$529 million**, belong to our ratepayers and are cared for by us on their behalf. Ensuring our assets are appropriate for the community's needs enables us to deliver the services that make our shire a great place to live, work, and visit.



4 How Do We Manage Our Assets?

To provide the right assets to the right standards which support affordable and quality outcomes for our community and the environment.

In doing this Council will comply with all legal, regulatory, safety and environmental requirements placed upon it and will not compromise the safety of its employees or the public.

Our Asset Management Vision

4.1 Asset Management Framework

Our Asset Management Framework shows the connection between our strategic objectives and asset planning. It aims to ensure that we follow a systematic approach to the way we practice asset management.

Asset management planning commences with defining our stakeholder needs, legal requirements and needs. These inform our key directions which helps us to develop our asset management policies, strategies, and plans.

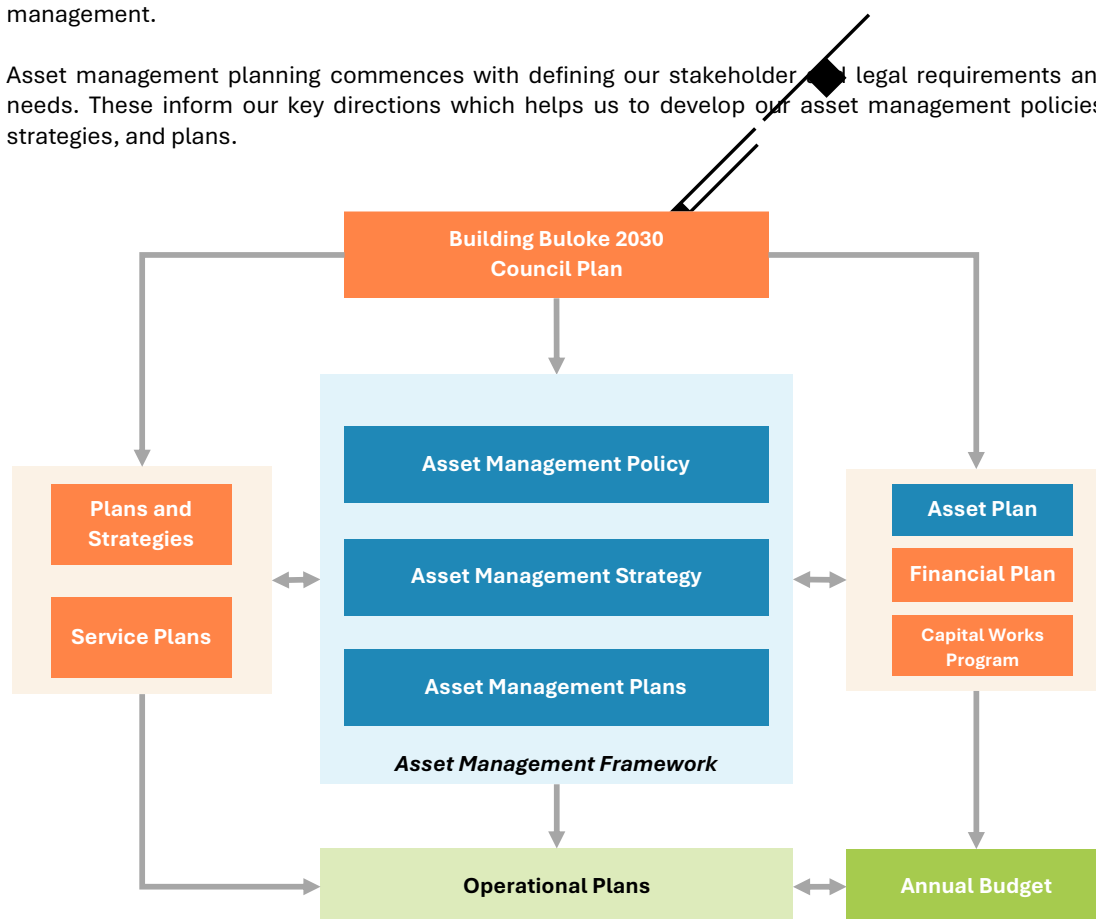


Figure 2 - Asset Management Framework

The key elements of our Asset Management Framework are:

Asset Management Policy

Summarises our vision and asset management objectives.

Asset Management Improvement Plan

Provides the framework for the ongoing enhancement of our asset management practices and outlines how we will meet our asset management objectives

Asset Management Plans

Our Asset Information Plans provide details on how we intend to manage each of our asset classes to meet the demands of our community in the future - Achieving value from our assets by optimising cost, risk, and performance across the lifecycle of an asset.

4.2 Our Asset Management Principles

We are committed to making all asset decisions in accordance with our asset management principles articulated in our Asset Management Policy.

These principles are:



People first approach - We will be driven by understanding the needs and aspirations of our community so that our assets support social and economic wellbeing.



Access, inclusion, and equity - We will work towards having safe, accessible, and functional assets that respond continuously to changing needs.



Resilience and environmental care - Our assets will be good for the environment and will be climate resilient. Through our actions we will care for and respect the Traditional owners of Country.



Lifecycle approach - We will take a whole-of-life approach to managing our assets that minimises risk, ensures compliance, and optimises our asset spending.



Financial responsibility - We will aspire to provide sustainable levels of funding and resources for the benefit of current and future generations.



Leadership and innovation - Through innovation and good governance, we will embed good practice where the whole organisation plays an integral role in the overall management of our assets.

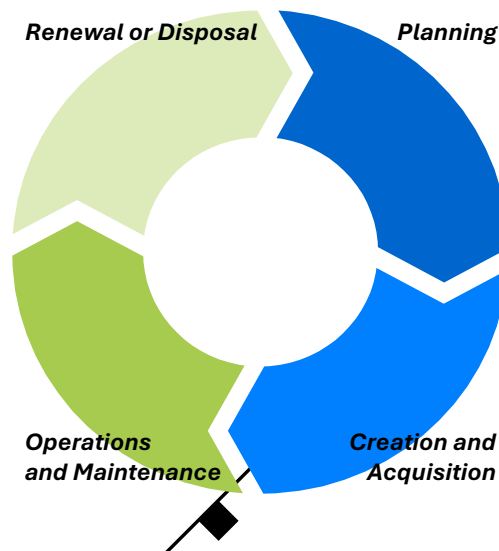
4.3 Lifecycle Management

Our approach to asset management is centred on asset life-cycle management decision making processes that are used to manage our infrastructure.

This ensures we optimise our management practices at each phase in an asset's lifecycle and results in cost-effective asset management.

Underpinning this approach are our asset risk management processes to support decision making through each lifecycle phase.

The management strategies we follow in each lifecycle phase are:



Planning

- > Asset requirements are identified to meet service needs over the long term.
- > Asset design considers affordability, equity, maintainability, and the environment.
- > Evidence based decision-making is used to consider the whole-of-life implications of acquiring, operating, maintaining, and disposing of assets.

Creation and Acquisition

- > All projects are comprehensively defined so that their objectives are clear.
- > All projects are evaluated for alignment with our strategic objectives and priority through our capital work evaluation and budget planning processes.
- > We focus on asset renewal needs before we decide to upgrade or construct new assets.

Operations and Maintenance

- > We act to enable existing assets to operate to their service potential over their useful life within our available budget envelopes.
- > Regular inspections, servicing, and maintenance of our assets is performed so that they are safe, compliant, and are continuously available for use.
- > Systems and processes are used to record information about assets and the work undertaken on them.
- > Maintenance is prioritised to preserve safety, to avoid asset failure, and comply with our legal responsibilities.

Renewal or Disposal

- > We continuously assess the condition of our assets which is used to inform our renewal plans.
- > Strategic modelling, along with our prioritisation frameworks, are used to prepare our renewal plans.
- > The timing of the renewal or replacement of assets is so that they remain safe, functional, and minimise overall lifecycle costs.
- > Where assets do not directly support service objectives they are considered for rationalisation or co-location with other assets to reduce lifecycle costs.

4.4 Gender Equality, Access, and Inclusion

So that every resident and visitor to our Shire can fully participate in community life, our infrastructure must be usable, welcoming, relevant, and safe for all.

Many disadvantaged groups may miss out on opportunities to improve their lives as the infrastructure around them is not provided with their needs in mind. This means that services are likely to be experienced differently and have different outcomes for people of different genders or backgrounds.

We are committed to considering gender equality and social inclusion in planning, delivering, maintaining, and managing our assets to support equal access to services.

This commitment begins with an inclusive design so that our public spaces and facilities are accessible, equitable, safe, and remove barriers that may be experienced by members of our community. This is so our infrastructure works for everyone.

4.5 Intergenerational Equity

We are committed to evaluating intergenerational equity when considering borrowings for building assets for current and future generations. This is achieved through maximising the benefits for current generations while also ensuring financial decisions do not unduly burden future generations with repayment obligations.

We will continue to:

- Review the timelines and funding of upgrades, renewals and delivery of new assets.
- Ensure residents have access to quality health, community, and sporting infrastructure.
- Analyse when further borrowings are required to fund major projects.
- Review levels of service to make sure they align with our community's capacity to pay.
- Manage risk and make sure our activities remain compliant with our various obligations.
- Assess the performance of our infrastructure and use our data to inform our planning and decision making.

4.6 Climate Change Adaptation

It is important that we ensure that our assets are planned and developed to incorporate climate resiliency and to also mitigate our impact on the environment. How climate change impacts our assets will vary depending on the location and the type of services provided, as will the way in which we respond and manage those impacts.

We are working towards a more climate adapted shire. This includes how we will plan and manage our assets to create resilience to climate change particularly for infrastructure that provide the most critical services to the community.

We will continue to make sure that our decisions are based on:

- Climate-proofing our assets.
- Improving the resilience of buildings and road infrastructure to withstand extreme weather.
- Limiting high-risk assets
- Investing in eco-friendly materials and adopting circular economy principles where appropriate.
- Providing facilities that are sustainable and energy efficient.

5 Future Drivers

An essential starting point for effective service and asset planning is building a comprehensive understanding of external factors that have the potential to impact the decisions we make about our assets and how we look after them.

As we continue to strengthen our asset management capabilities the resilience of our assets and services to potential future threats and risks will increase.



Population and Demographic Shift

The population of Buloke is expected to decline over the next decade. It is also forecast to get older. Our community experiences high socio-economic disadvantage placing pressure on their capacity to pay. We will need to adjust the provision of services to accommodate our changing community. We will also need to maintain a focus on providing services that are affordable and promote universal access and equity.



Meeting Current and Future Needs

Our community expects us to quickly respond to emerging needs, and in some cases, to deliver higher levels of service for the same amount of money. We will need to plan assets that are responsive and adaptable to meet shifting community demands – this may involve making hard decisions about service levels or rationalising some of our assets so that we remain a financially sustainable organisation.



Ageing Assets

As our assets continue to age, more investment in maintenance and renewal expenditure will be required to ensure that the standard of assets and services enjoyed by our community continue to be delivered.



Rising Costs

Cost increases to items such as electricity, petrol, and raw materials all impact on our ability provide value for money services. We will need to aim to continually balance the affordable provision of services against the needs of our community.



Climate Change

We are working towards a more climate adapted shire. Our assets will need to be planned and developed to incorporate climate resiliency and to also mitigate our impact on the environment.



Technology Change

People, businesses, and governments are increasingly moving online to deliver and access services, obtain information and to perform day to day activities. We will need to continue to explore new and innovative ways we engage with our community and others.



Renewable Energy Development

This is a major focus in Buloke Shire due to its suitable environment, but faces significant concerns and opposition regarding land use, impact on rural lifestyles and local infrastructure, and a perceived lack of genuine community engagement. While these developments may be some way off, we are positioning ourselves towards the strong need for increased community input, improved financial compensation from projects, and substantial State Government investment in local infrastructure to address impacts from the energy transition.

6 Our Community and Asset Management

This Asset Plan along with our Community Vision and Council Plan has been developed with input from our community via detailed deliberative engagement processes in line with our Community Engagement Policy and the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

A dedicated Buloke Shire Community Reference Group was established in July 2025 to discuss and identify the key issues that will shape how we will manage our services and assets over the next 10 years.

Community engagement was undertaken through two separate workshops held in August 2025.

The members of the Community Reference Group worked together to deliberate over the following important question to inform the development of our Asset Plan:

Council's limited budget must serve diverse and broad community needs.

How do we fairly prioritise what we deliver to maximise positive outcomes for our community while also achieving financial sustainability?

In deliberating over this remit, the Reference Group considered the following:

- Which services and assets are most important to the community.
- Future opportunities and challenges.

The process resulted in a set of key themes driven by community input for us to consider in shaping our asset planning and decision making.

6.1.1 Community Panel Outcomes

Priority Services

The Community Panel told us that of the many different types of services, the following were the most important in supporting the health, wellbeing, and prosperity of our community.



Road Services

Why are they important?

- > Our shire is large, and roads keep us connected.
- > Roads are essential to our economy.
- > With limited alternative transport options roads are sometimes the only way we can travel.



Property Maintenance

- > Keeps our community facilities safe and useable.
- > Contributes to community pride and helps preserve our history.
- > Helps encourage use by locals and visitors alike.



Waste and Environment

- > Traditional Council responsibility.
- > Means we can dispose of our waste in a responsible way.
- > Keeps our community and places clean.

6.1.2 Future Opportunities and Challenges

The Community Reference Group worked together to identify the following priority opportunities and challenges that will impact the way our services assets will be planned and managed in the future.

- Excess buildings and machinery, combined with ageing assets, present a chance to consolidate and modernize infrastructure.
- The presence of alternate service providers and competition with private industry (e.g., nurses) opens the door to hybrid models or partnerships.
- Prioritising needs of different towns and addressing “community against community” tensions allow for more targeted, equitable planning.
- Rate capping and non-revenue-generating assets force creative financial planning.
- A low and ageing population, along with population decline, signals the need for future-proofed service models.
- There’s a strong case for rethinking assets, services, and community engagement to build a more resilient and responsive Council.
- Local communities are proud of their history and that of their facilities. They strive to protect and preserve this.

6.1.3 Key Considerations

The Community Reference Group told us that we need to:

- Have an emphasis on **alternative engagement methods** to broaden participation and improve responsiveness.
- Set a vision that **sees Buloke as one cohesive community**, with shared goals and resources.
- Focus on **asset rationalisation or repurposing assets** to unlock liquidity and reinvest locally.
- Encourage **shared asset models** across the Shire to reduce duplication and improve access.
- Drive to **attract new businesses** and **reduce red tape** to stimulate local enterprise.
- Promote a “**Build Business in Buloke**” approach as a regional economic identity.
- Have intent to **increase population the base** and shift our community’s demographic profile.
- Explore **diverse housing models, local training, and trade development** to support growth.
- Commit to **long-term sustainability** over short-term fixes.
- Be forward thinking but also pay recognition to **local history and cultural heritage**.

These themes suggest that while the environment is constrained, there is a strong case for **transformational thinking** - rethinking assets, services, and community engagement to build a more resilient and responsive Council.

We are committed to making our future asset management and investment decisions in line with our asset management planning framework and the important feedback provided by our Community Reference Group.

7 Funding Our Asset Plan

The main theme underpinning our Asset Plan and broader asset management planning principles is ensuring responsible stewardship of our assets to meet the needs of tomorrow's community.

This acknowledges the many and varied factors that influence the delivery of our community's infrastructure.

Some of these challenges are legacy issues, others are simply the demands of a progressive society that is constantly seeking to improve. Either way, we are responsible for ensuring that our infrastructure contributes to us achieving our long term aspirations and supports a healthy, well connected, and prosperous community.

7.1 Asset Investment Strategy

Looking ahead to the next 10 years, our approach is to be prudent in our investment decisions using a holistic lifecycle approach to asset management. We will aim to plan our assets so that they continue to support quality living, economic development, and the environmental integrity of our shire.

We consider the following key questions when making asset investment decisions:

- > How much does it cost ratepayers to retain the current asset portfolio, that is, what is the long-term average cost of renewal plus maintenance?
- > What assets support service delivery and therefore should be renewed and retained as opposed to assets which are surplus and should be rationalised?
- > How much will need to be spent in the short term (relative to the renewal expenditure in the recent past)?
- > How much more management effort (financial and operational) will be required of Council as assets age?
- > What assets are at the risk phase or intervention level of their lifecycle and will ultimately result in their being unserviceable and unsafe?
- > What outcomes would the community and Council like to achieve with respect to asset upgrades?
- > Are the assets providing the level of service expected by the community currently and into the future?
- > What assets should the community manage for decline to free up funds to improve levels of service for other assets?

As part of our annual budget process judgement is required to determine the allocation of our available funding.

Available funding is allocated between capital and operating expenditure, and between discretionary and non-discretionary funding. Renewing and maintaining our existing infrastructure is our highest priority.

When making investment decisions, we always seek to deliver the best overall outcome for the community in line with the goals articulated in our Community Vision and Council Plan.

7.2 Asset Expenditure Categories

For the purposes of this Asset Plan, spending on our infrastructure is categorised as follows:

Expenditure Category	Activity	Description
Non-Discretionary - Recurrent	Maintenance	Ongoing work required to keep an asset performing at the required level of service.
	Operations	Recurrent expenditure that is continuously required to provide a service.
Non-Discretionary - Renewal	Renewal	Returns the service potential or the life of the asset up to that which it had originally.
Discretionary - Acquisition	Upgrade	Enhancements to an existing asset to provide a higher level of service.
	Expansion	Extends or expands an existing asset at the same standard as is currently enjoyed by residents, to a new group of users.
	New	Creates a new asset that provides a service that does not currently exist.

Table 1 - Expenditure Categories

Classifying our expenditure in this way helps us to plan our budgets and track how we spend our money on our assets and services.

7.3 Financial Summary

Figure 3 shows our planned expenditure across our infrastructure assets included in this Asset Plan over the next 10 years.

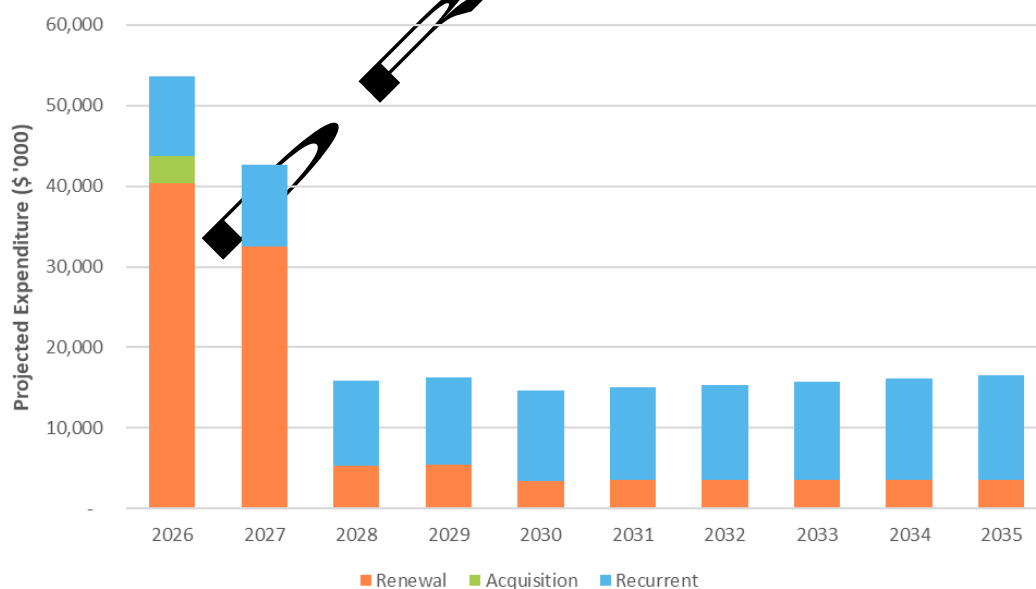


Figure 3 - Projected Total Asset Expenditure

This is further summarised in Table 2, which shows the total planned expenditure related to renewal, growth, and recurrent activities over the next 10 years for each asset class.

Asset Class	Renewal (\$'000)	Acquisition (\$'000)	Recurrent (\$'000)	Total (\$'000)
Transport	97,459	955	59,710	158,124
Buildings	3,298	-	13,807	17,105
Open Space	2,911	2,347	39,427	44,685
Stormwater Drainage	1,137	152	840	2,129
Total	104,805	3,454	113,784	222,043

Table 2 - Forecast Expenditure by Asset Class

We plan to spend an estimated total of **\$222 million** on our assets over the 10 years. Of this:

- Around **47%** (\$104.8 million) is renewal expenditure for replacement of assets that are reaching the end of their lives. This includes financial assistance through Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) totalling \$53.8 million. This is for the repair of critical infrastructure that was damaged during separate flood events that occurred in October 2022 and December 2023.
- Around **2%** (\$3.5 million) is allocated to improving existing and creating new assets.
- Around **51%** (\$113.8 million) relates to caring for our assets through ongoing maintenance and other activities to make sure that they are safe and functional.

What we spend on our assets represents a significant investment that is made on behalf of the community. It is fundamental in enabling us to meet ever changing demands and to safeguard future use of our infrastructure. We have made every effort to accurately determine the financial outlays necessary to renew, improve, and care for our infrastructure over the next 10 years.

The outlays made in this Asset Plan have been determined based on the affordability assessments made in our Financial Plan.

Our Asset Plan outlines a fuller picture of the future demand on our assets so that we can make informed decisions around prioritisation of our finite funding resources. Actual funding will be guided by the Financial Plan and determined in our Annual Budget.

Projected funding allocations may change depending on shifting priorities, our need to react to immediate or emerging issues, or as grant opportunities become available.

Our Asset Plan will therefore be agile and responsive to make sure it is reflective of our plans and is closely integrated with our Financial Plan.

The State of Our Assets Profiles provide a detailed breakdown of the projected expenditure requirements for each infrastructure asset class over the next 10 years.

7.4 Managing the Asset Renewal Funding Gap

In simple terms, the renewal funding gap is the difference between what we are planning to spend on renewing existing assets and the level of funding we forecast we need to replace our assets when they need to be.

Our projections tell us we will need to spend a total of approximately **\$104.3 million** to renew our infrastructure over the next 10 years.

When compared with how much we have to spend in our Financial Plan over the same period (**\$41.3 million¹**), we are faced with a total asset renewal funding gap of **\$63 million**.

Looking at our projections (Figure 4), right now we are faced with significant challenges in funding the renewal of our assets due to the affordability limits in our Financial Plan.

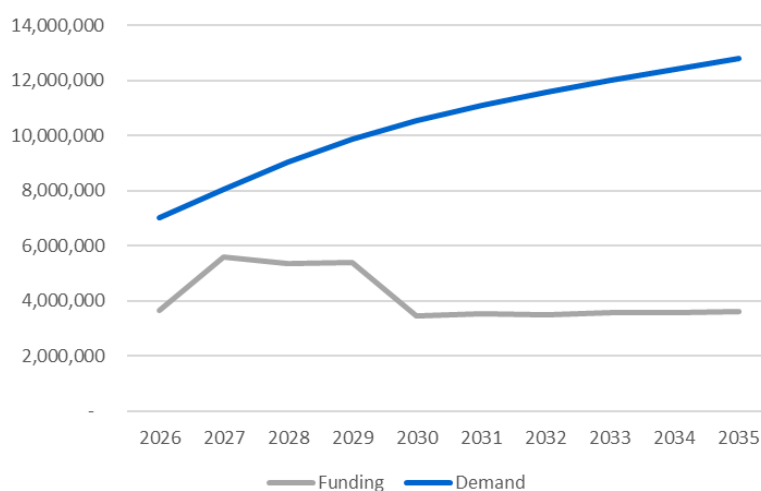


Figure 4 - Asset Renewal Projections

In this constrained funding environment, we will need to make sure our capital works plans are directing funding towards to critical areas of need.

We may also need to review how we distribute our spending so that it is prioritised towards the replacement of our ageing assets. Along with reviewing our funding there are a number of other options available to help manage or mitigate the asset renewal gap. These include:

- Further strengthening our asset condition data, renewal modelling and community needs data which is necessary for efficient and cost-effective planning of renewal and maintenance works.
- Reviewing major procurements and contracts to secure the best value for money and ensure renewal and maintenance funds achieve as much as possible.
- Improving efficiency as part of our ongoing commitment to continuous innovation. Operational efficiencies with how we manage our assets, from maintenance, construction, replacement, and longer term planning can reduce overall costs.
- Continue our advocacy efforts to attract support through government grants to increase the available sources of funding and reduce our direct cost burden.
- Adapting or consolidating existing assets to maximise multiuse potential resulting in the divestment or rationalisation of unnecessary assets.
- Forming or strengthening alliances with strategic partners to find opportunities for finding non-asset solutions to the delivery of services. This can reduce direct costs to us.

Our imperative is to continually strive to responsibly fund the renewal of our assets to ensure that they are safe, fit for purpose and meet the needs of our community.

¹ This excludes DRFA financial assistance which is allocated to assets damaged through natural disasters and does not form part of our ongoing asset renewal programs.

8 Monitoring and Review

This Asset Plan will be reviewed following Council elections in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Intermediary reviews of the Asset Plan may be undertaken from time to time as improvements are implemented, or major financial decisions are made. This is to make sure that it retains consistency with our strategic goals and objectives. having regard to:

- Our available financial resources.
- Long term capital works programs that are reviewed annually.
- The consideration of any external factors that are likely to influence the Asset Plan.

8.1 Reporting

Reporting on service levels and other performance measures will be undertaken as part of Annual Report.

8.2 Continuous Improvement

This Asset Plan is strongly aligned with our Financial Plan. Both of these documents incorporate forecasts and predictions of factors that will influence their accuracy, including assumptions about future demand, revenue, and our operating environment.

These assumptions have been derived using the best data and information we currently have available to us.

We are committed to managing our assets in accordance with recognised best practice and are continuously working to improve what we know about our assets and enhance the tools we use to manage them.





State of Our Assets

The following asset class summaries provide the current state and projected expenditure requirements for each key asset class over the next 10 years.

These funding requirements have been determined based on what we know about the current performance of our assets and the affordability assessments made in our Financial Plan.

The projections represent the investment that is necessary to renew, improve, and care for our infrastructure over the next 10 years.

Buildings

Our buildings provide essential spaces for community services, governance, and recreation. They support a range of functions that benefit residents, businesses, and visitors to our city.



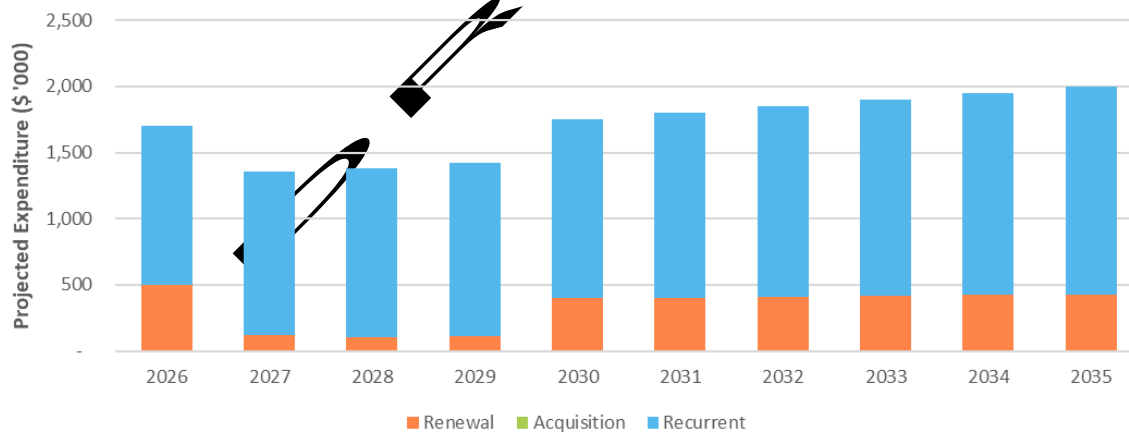
Current Condition

The current condition of the building asset portfolio is considered to be fair with a small number of buildings in poor and very poor condition. These buildings will be prioritised for full or part renewal in our forward capital works program.



Financial Projections

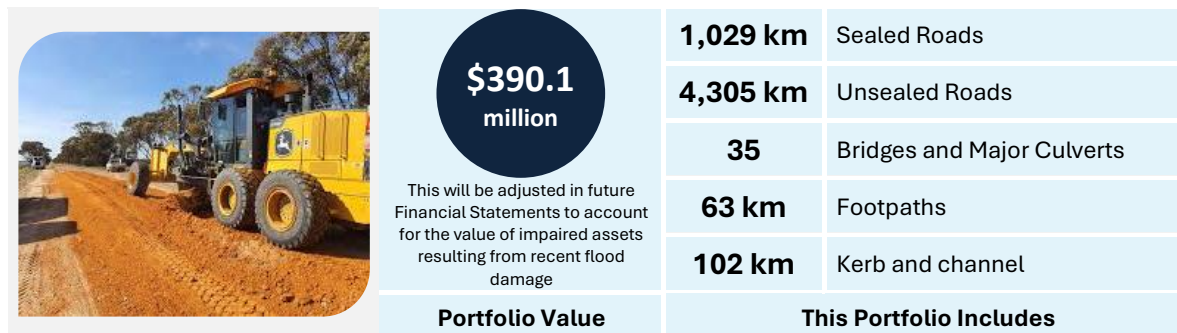
Our challenge will be striking a balance between maintaining the condition of our buildings as they age and deteriorate and providing facilities that are accessible, environmentally sustainable, and meet the service needs of our changing community.



	2026 (\$'000)	2027 (\$'000)	2028 (\$'000)	2029 (\$'000)	2030 (\$'000)	2031 (\$'000)	2032 (\$'000)	2033 (\$'000)	2034 (\$'000)	2035 (\$'000)	10 year Total
Recurrent	1,204	1,241	1,278	1,316	1,356	1,396	1,438	1,481	1,526	1,572	13,807
Renewal	495	117	106	108	396	402	409	415	421	428	3,298
Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1,699	1,358	1,384	1,424	1,752	1,799	1,847	1,896	1,947	1,999	17,105

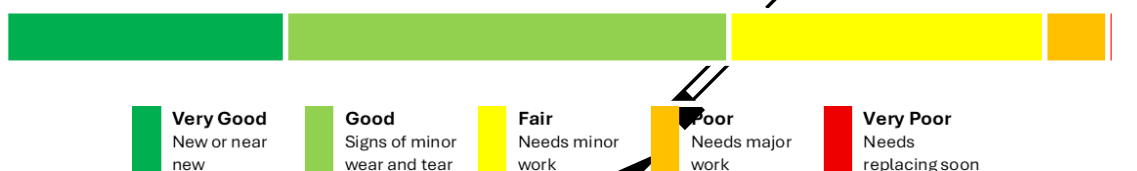
Transport

Our roads and footpaths aid movement across Buloke and connect people to places in a safe and easily accessible way.



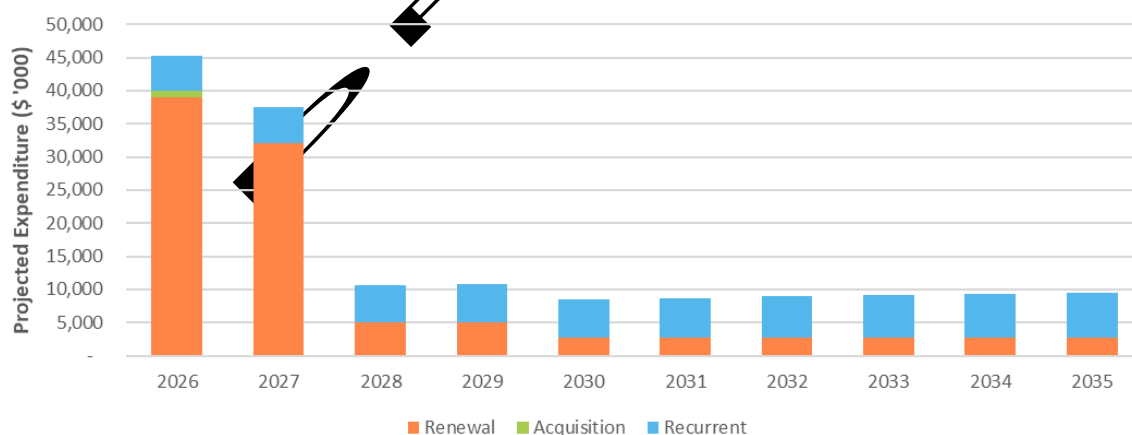
Current Condition

Most of our transport infrastructure, being our local roads, bridges, footpaths, etc. are generally in 'Fair' condition or better. We have a strong emphasis on monitoring the performance of these assets through regular inspections. This is to inform our planning and make sure that we are investing enough to maintain our transport assets.



Financial Projections

Our roads are a very high value asset class that pose the greatest threat to our long term financial sustainability. The lifecycle costs for our road network must be very closely managed with all funding set aside being allocated to maintenance and renewal. The funding peaks in 2026 and 2027 are from DRFA financial assistance.



	2026 (\$'000)	2027 (\$'000)	2028 (\$'000)	2029 (\$'000)	2030 (\$'000)	2031 (\$'000)	2032 (\$'000)	2033 (\$'000)	2034 (\$'000)	2035 (\$'000)	10 year Total
Recurrent	5,208	5,365	5,526	5,691	5,862	6,038	6,219	6,406	6,598	6,796	59,710
Renewal	39,040	32,103	5,050	5,075	2,656	2,673	2,690	2,707	2,724	2,741	97,459
Acquisition	955	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	955
Total	45,203	37,468	10,576	10,766	8,518	8,711	8,909	9,113	9,322	9,536	158,124

Open Space

Our open spaces help create a healthier, greener, and more liveable shire.



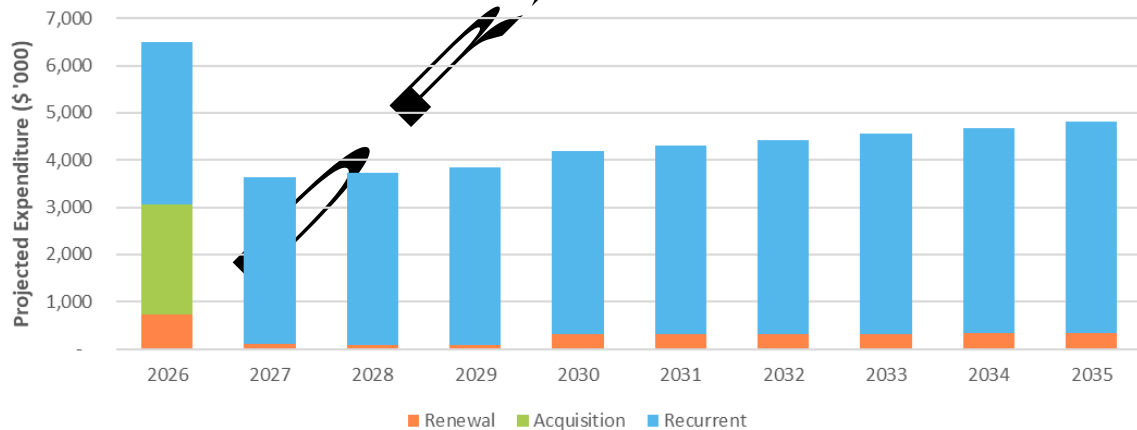
Current Condition

Our open space assets are providing a reasonable level of service with the majority of assets reported here being in 'Very Good' to 'Fair' condition. Assets that are in poor condition will need to be prioritised for renewal or replacement at an appropriate time within our capital works plan.



Financial Projections

The great majority of funding is allocated to our maintenance and operations activities and programs. This large recurrent budget is needed to maintain the standard and appearance of our valuable parks, sporting reserves, playgrounds, and other public spaces.



	2026 (\$'000)	2027 (\$'000)	2028 (\$'000)	2029 (\$'000)	2030 (\$'000)	2031 (\$'000)	2032 (\$'000)	2033 (\$'000)	2034 (\$'000)	2035 (\$'000)	10 year Total
Recurrent	3,439	3,542	3,649	3,758	3,871	3,987	4,107	4,230	4,357	4,487	39,427
Renewal	722	95	85	87	308	313	318	323	328	333	2,911
Acquisition	2,347	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,347
Total	6,508	3,637	3,734	3,845	4,179	4,300	4,425	4,553	4,685	4,820	44,685

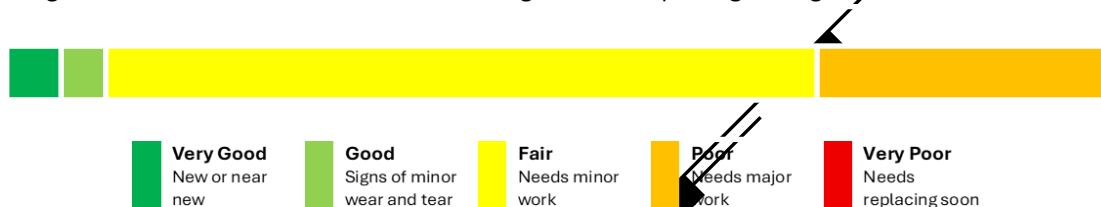
Stormwater Drainage

Our stormwater drainage network helps manage rainwater runoff, prevent flooding, and protect the environment.



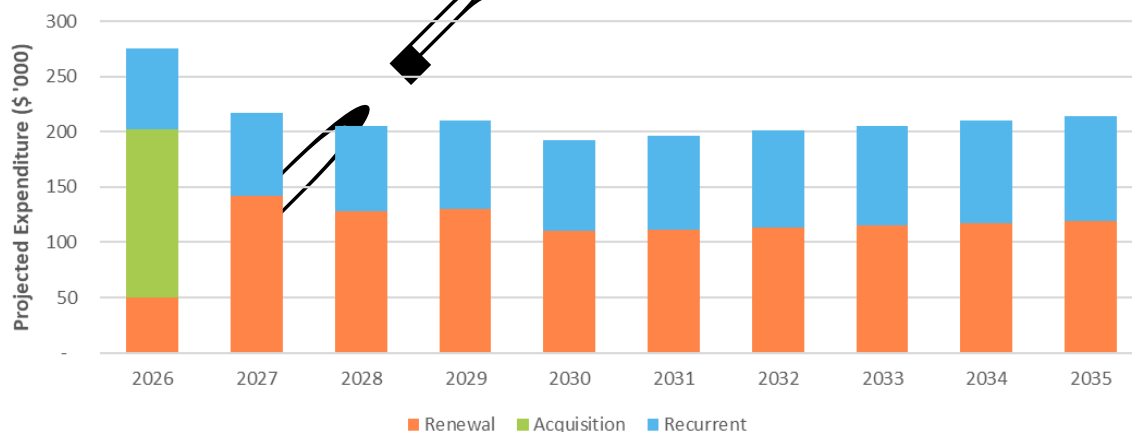
Current Condition

In the absence of having detailed condition information for large portions of the drainage network, we have made some conservative estimates on the condition of our drainage assets based information we have about their age. The lack of condition data is due to the high cost of inspecting underground assets.



Financial Projections

We have more work to do to understand the performance of our drainage network to make sure we are allocating sufficient funds towards the management these assets. Our financial projections will be refined as our knowledge of the condition and capacity of the drainage system improves. This will help in optimising the replacement and upgrade of parts of the network that are in most need.



	2026 (\$'000)	2027 (\$'000)	2028 (\$'000)	2029 (\$'000)	2030 (\$'000)	2031 (\$'000)	2032 (\$'000)	2033 (\$'000)	2034 (\$'000)	2035 (\$'000)	10 year Total
Recurrent	73	75	78	80	82	85	88	90	93	96	840
Renewal	50	142	128	130	110	112	114	115	117	119	1,137
Acquisition	152	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	152
Total	275	217	206	210	193	197	201	205	210	214	2,129

8.2.3 DRAFT ROAD MANAGEMENT PLAN

Author's Title: Interim Director Infrastructure and Delivery

Directorate: Infrastructure and Delivery

File No: RO/20/03

Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025

Strategic Objective: Built and natural environment
Advocate and plan for, and manage community buildings, roads and transport networks

Council leadership and engagement
Responsible leadership and decision making

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Councils endorsement to place the draft Road Management Plan on public exhibition.

SUMMARY

Under the *Road Management (General) Regulations* 2016, Councils that have established a Road Management Plan (RMP) must complete a review of the plan at the same time as preparing their Council Plan.

The draft Road Management Plan has been written based on best practice guidelines and feedback received from key internal stakeholders. It is presented for Council for endorsement to place the draft Road Management Plan on public exhibition.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Endorse the draft Road Management Plan for public exhibition.
2. Gives public notice of the draft Road Management Plan on Council's website and invites written submissions from Thursday, 18 September 2025 until Thursday 9 October 2025.
3. Notes that consultation will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy.
4. Notes that any person who makes a written submission in relation to the draft Road Management Plan may be heard by Council on Wednesday 8 October 2025.
5. Notes that the draft Road Management Plan will be considered for adoption at the Council Meeting to be held 15 October 2025.

DISCUSSION

There were a number of changes made to the Road Management Plan to respond to the feedback provided from key internal stakeholders. A full list of changes can be found in “Appendix A – Amendments to RMP” within the attached Draft Road Management Plan.

A summary of the key changes include;

- Administrative improvements were made to improve document clarity and ease of understanding.
- Inclusion of new sections to improve clarity and expectations of the Road Management Act.
- Removal of sections that were not applicable to the current scope and intent of the Road Management Plan.
- Redrafted list of assets covered by the Road Management Plan to improve clarity and understanding.
- Inclusion of Strategic Context to establish a clear line of sight between the Road Management Plan and Council’s broader strategic framework.
- Expansion of key stakeholders to clearly identify relevant stakeholders and their respective obligations and responsibilities.
- Removal of asset classification information as it was not applicable to the current scope and intent of the Road Management Plan.
- Inclusion of tables to present the quantities of various asset types.
- Improved clarity of the description of Hazards and Hazard Response Time.
- Revision of inspection frequencies and hazard response times.

RELEVANT LAW

Road Management Plans provide a legal mechanism for Councils under the *Road Management Act 2004* to confirm the manner in which they will manage their road management functions based on policy, operational objectives and available resources.

Standards are established for inspection frequencies for various road related assets, intervention levels for damage of road related assets, and time frames for rectification of asset damage when intervention levels are exceeded. Although it is termed a ‘plan’ in the legislation, it is functionally an operational protocol document, describing the systems and rules the Council uses to make decisions and meet obligations within its available resources.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable.

OPTIONS

Option 1 – Exhibit the draft Road Management Plan

This option is recommended by officers as the draft Road Management Plan has undergone extensive review by key internal stakeholders.

Option 2 – Exhibit the draft Road Management Plan with amendments

This option is not recommended by officers as there will be further opportunity to make changes to the draft Plan following public feedback being received. Any changes to the Plan need to be carefully reviewed to understand their implications for road users and the cost of Council inspection and maintenance activities.

Option 3 – Not Exhibit the draft Road Management Plan

This option is not recommended by officers as there is a requirement for the Plan to be finalised and adopted by 31 October 2025. There has been a thorough review of the plan and as noted above, there will be further opportunities to make changes to the draft plan following public feedback being received.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no implications arising from this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

It is proposed the draft Road Management Plan be placed on public exhibition.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

There are no direct innovation and continuous improvement activities associated with this report.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The changes proposed in the draft Road Management Plan are not expected to have any impact on the current resource required to undertake proactive inspections or defect rectification works.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Consideration has been given to other regional, state and national plans and policies as required.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Under the *Road Management (General) Regulations* 2016 the Council must complete a review of its Road Management Plan at the same time as it is preparing its Council Plan as described in the *Local Government Act* 2020. The Act in section 90(3) states: 'A Council must develop or review the Council Plan in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices and adopt the Council Plan by 31 October in the year following a general election.'

The current review has taken into account best practice guidelines, and it is proposed to seek public submissions through a formal notice process. This process will allow the Council to finalise the plan by 31 October 2025.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This draft Road Management Plan is to be placed on exhibition to ensure there is full transparency in how the Council will manage the road network.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

Attachments:

1. Attachment 8.2.3.1 - Draft Road Management Plan



Road Management Plan (RMP)

July 2025

DRAFT

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DRAFT

Introduction

The Buloke Shire Council Road Management Plan (RMP) has been developed to demonstrate Council's commitment to providing a safe, efficient, and well-maintained road network for its community. The Plan supports the Buloke Shire Council Plan 2021–2025 and the Long-Term Community Vision, aligning with Council's objective to deliver accessible and quality infrastructure that supports liveability, safety, and economic development.

This Plan outlines Council's responsibilities as a road authority under the Road Management Act 2004 and provides a structured and transparent approach to the maintenance, inspection, and repair of municipal roads and associated infrastructure. It sets out defined levels of service and intervention standards to manage risk, optimise available resources, and meet community expectations.

By establishing clear maintenance responsibilities, performance standards, and inspection frequencies, the RMP ensures that Council delivers an accountable, responsive, and sustainable road network management framework.

Legislation

The RMP aligns with relevant legislation and regulations, including:

- Road Management Act 2004
- Road Management (General) Regulations 2016
- Road Management (Works and Infrastructure) Regulations 2015
- Local Government Act 2020
- Road Safety Act 1986
- Wrongs Act 1958

Road Management Act

The Road Management Act 2004 (Victoria) provides the legislative foundation for the coordinated and efficient management of public roads across the state. It clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of road authorities, including local councils, VicRoads, and utility providers, ensuring that road infrastructure is maintained in a safe and sustainable manner.

The Act aims to promote a proactive and transparent approach to road management by enabling road authorities to establish reasonable standards for road inspection, maintenance, and repair. It encourages accountability and consistency in service delivery while allowing for the development of RMP to guide operational practices.

By setting out legal protections and performance-based obligations, the Road Management Act ensures that road users and the community can expect a clear standard of service, while also supporting councils in managing risks and meeting their duty of care.

Road Authority

Under Sections 36 and 37 of the Road Management Act 2004 (Victoria), a Road Authority is the entity responsible for the management of a road or class of roads. This includes responsibilities such as inspecting, maintaining, and repairing road infrastructure.

Section 36 identifies the coordinating road authority. According to subsection (c), if the road is a municipal road, the coordinating road authority is the municipal council of the municipal district in which the road or part of the road is located.

However, different authorities may be responsible for various components within a road reserve. Section 37 of the Act outlines which authority is responsible in particular circumstances.

Depending on the classification of the road, the responsible road authority may be:

- A municipal council for local roads,
- VicRoads (now the Department of Transport and Planning) for arterial roads, or
- Another agency or authority prescribed under the Act or associated Regulations.

Road Authorities are also responsible for setting and implementing road management policies, standards, and service levels, and have statutory obligations relating to duty of care and the provision of a safe and functional road network.

Public Road

For the purposes of this RMP, a public road is defined in accordance with Section 17 of the Road Management Act 2004 (Vic) as:

“A municipal road which the Buloke Shire Council, as the Coordinating Road Authority, has determined is reasonably required for general public use and is recorded on Council’s Register of Public Roads.”

Only roads listed on the Register of Public Roads maintained by Buloke Shire Council are considered public roads for the purposes of this Plan and are subject to the inspection, maintenance, and intervention standards described herein.

This definition does not apply to private roads, unused government roads, unregistered Crown roads, or any other roads not formally included in the Register.

Scope of RMP

This Plan applies to all roads and pathways for which Council is the Coordinating Road Authority, in accordance with Sections 36 and 37 of the Road Management Act. These roads are identified in Council's Register of Public Roads (the Register).

The Register lists the roads under Council's responsibility and includes, where applicable, the following assets:

- Road pavement and surface
- On-street car parking
- Traffic control devices and signage
- Footpaths and shared paths
- Bridges (limited to road pavement, surface, and footpath components; other structural elements are managed under the Bridge Asset Management Plan)

Council has determined that the roads and footpaths listed in the Register are those reasonably required for public use. The Register is formally adopted by Council and updated as necessary. It is available for public inspection at Council's Wycheproof District Office and on Council website.

Exclusions from RMP

This RMP does not apply to the following infrastructure elements:

Private Driveways and Pathways: Any driveway or pathway that provides access from private property to a public road is excluded from this Plan.

Off-Road Paths: Walking tracks, trails, and paths not located on public roads and not listed in Council's Road Register are excluded from this Plan. These off-road paths are typically situated within recreation reserves, parklands, or other Council-managed properties. While excluded from the Plan, these assets are inspected and maintained by Council in a manner similar to Minor Roads, as outlined in the Appendices of this Plan.

Underground Drainage Infrastructure: Including underground pipes, culverts, table drains, and drainage pits.

Roadside Areas: Management of roadside vegetation and conservation zones is addressed separately in the Roadside Conservation Management Plan.

Bridge Structures: Substructure and superstructure components of bridges are excluded from this Plan.

Vehicle Crossings: Driveway crossovers that provide access from public roads to private properties are excluded.

Council-Owned Off-Street Car Parks: These are managed separately and are not included within the scope of this Plan.

Kerb and Channel: While kerb and channel may influence road drainage and edge definition, they are not included in the maintenance and inspection obligations defined within this Plan.

Force Majeure

Council is committed to delivering the service levels outlined in this Plan to the best of its ability. However, there may be circumstances that significantly impact Council's operations, limiting its ability to meet these commitments. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to, natural disasters (e.g. fire, flood, or storm), prolonged labour or resource shortages, the redeployment of staff and equipment due to competing priorities, or the impacts of a pandemic or government intervention.

In such instances, where the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has assessed the implications of the event on Council's available financial resources and broader priorities, and determines that service levels cannot be achieved, the CEO may invoke provisions under Section 83 of the Wrongs Act 1958.

In doing so, the CEO will formally notify the responsible officer of the Plan that some or all timeframes and service responses outlined in the Plan are to be suspended until circumstances allow for their resumption.

Suspension of Service Levels Due to Exceptional Circumstances

In situations where Council is unable to meet the service levels outlined in its RMP due to exceptional circumstances (e.g., natural disasters, pandemics, resource constraints), the following actions will be undertaken:

- The event and its impact on Council's operations will be internally documented.
- Relevant stakeholders — including Council officers, contractors, and affected community members, will be informed of the disruption and expected implications.
- Inspection and response logs will be updated to reflect any changes or delays in service delivery.
- A formal record of the CEO's decision to suspend or modify service levels under Section 83 of the Wrongs Act 1958 will be documented.

Council will also communicate with the community regarding any temporary suspension or reduction in service delivery under its Plan. Public information will include:

- The rationale for prioritising specific works or services; and
- The expected duration of the suspension or reduced service levels.

This information will be made available on Council's website where the Plan is published and disseminated through other appropriate communication channels such as media releases and social media platforms.

All associated documentation, such as communication records, meeting minutes, and adjusted schedules, will be formally recorded and securely stored in accordance with Council's document management protocols.

Time frame for RMP Review

Under the Local Government Act 1989, Victorian councils were required to review their Council Plan within six months of a general election or by 30 June of the following year, whichever was later. This allowed councils to reassess their strategic priorities and resource allocations in line with the objectives of the newly elected council.

With the introduction of the Local Government Act 2020, these requirements were revised. Section 90(3) of the new Act mandates that councils must complete their Council Plan review by 31 October in the year following a general election. This update provides a clearer and more streamlined timeframe, allowing councils additional time to engage with the community and develop well-informed, strategic plans following an election cycle.

The legislative change reinforces the importance of timely strategic planning while aligning with modern governance expectations and ensuring councils remain responsive to evolving community needs.

Public Notification of Amendments to the RMP

When Council proposes amendments to its RMP that affect standards of construction, inspection, maintenance, or repair, it must give public notice of the proposed changes. The notice must outline the purpose of the amendment, the areas or roads affected, details of where the proposed amendment can be inspected, and provide the community with at least 28 days to make written submissions.

This notice must be published in the Victoria Government Gazette and in a local newspaper that is generally circulated within the municipality. Council may also directly notify individuals or groups likely to be affected by the proposed changes.

However, public notice is not required where:

- The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) certifies that the amendment will increase existing service standards (e.g. more frequent inspections or shorter repair response times);
- The CEO certifies that the amendment applies only to new or reclassified roads, or roads newly designated as public roads; or
- The amendment relates solely to administrative changes (e.g. a road name changes or status correction).

All amendments to the RMP will take effect once formally adopted by Council.

Key Stakeholders

The RMP has been developed to address the needs and expectations of a broad range of stakeholders who use, manage, or are impacted by Buloke Shire Council's municipal road network. These stakeholders include:

- General Community – Residents and ratepayers who rely on the road network for daily travel, recreation, business, and access to services.
- Adjoining Property Owners and Businesses – Those directly affected by road access, maintenance, and amenity.
- Road Users – Including pedestrians, cyclists, motorists (cars, trucks, buses, motorcycles), and users of mobility aids such as wheelchairs, motorised scooters, prams, and bicycles.
- Visitors and Tourists – Temporary users who depend on safe, navigable road infrastructure.
- Emergency Services – Agencies such as Victoria Police, CFA, Ambulance Victoria, and SES that require reliable access during routine operations and emergencies.
- Defence and Military Authorities – In instances of national emergency or conflict.
- Utility Providers – Entities managing infrastructure within the road reserve, including water, sewerage, gas, electricity, and telecommunications.
- Developers – Parties involved in land development activities that influence or depend on road infrastructure.
- State and Federal Governments – As regulators and funding bodies for transport and infrastructure programs.
- Elected Representatives (Councillors) – Advocating for the interests and priorities of the local community.
- Council Officers and Contractors – Personnel responsible for planning, inspecting, maintaining, and renewing road assets.
- Special Interest Groups – Organisations or individuals advocating for transport safety, accessibility, and sustainability.
- Traffic and Transport Planners/Managers – Involved in shaping future road network use and efficiency.

By acknowledging these diverse stakeholder groups, the RMP ensures the planning and management of Buloke's road infrastructure aligns with community expectations, operational needs, and statutory obligations.

Strategic Context

This Plan has been developed within the context of Buloke Shire Council's integrated planning and reporting framework, which provides strategic direction for meeting community needs and aspirations. The framework includes key documents such as the Long-Term Community Vision, Council Plan 2021–2025, Financial Plan, Asset Plan, and Annual Budget. These strategic documents collectively guide informed decision-making and prioritisation of resources, while supporting the development and alignment of a range of supporting strategies and operational plans.

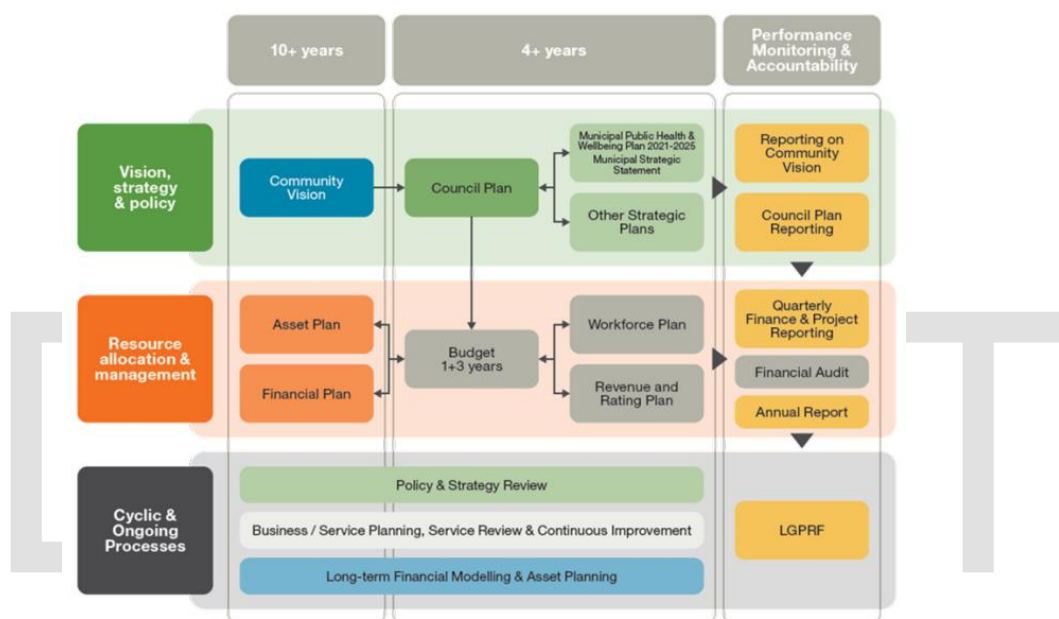


FIGURE 1: INTEGRATED PLANNING FRAMEWORK -BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL

Council has initiated the development of a robust strategic asset planning framework, guided by a policy foundation informed by economic capacity, risk mitigation, and defined service standards. A strong link has been established between asset maintenance, renewal planning, and annual budget decision-making, ensuring that investment decisions are based on an informed understanding of required resources and service outcomes.

Expenditure on road infrastructure, both capital and maintenance are prioritised based on a range of factors including road category, traffic type and volume, current condition, rate of maintenance consumption, associated risks, and community feedback. A formal process for evaluating asset improvement requests has been developed and is being progressively implemented.

The annual works program is informed by a rolling review of the 10-year forward capital works program, with current-year projects prioritised using the same evidence-based criteria. The forward program itself is regularly reviewed by Council to ensure alignment with available funding, asset condition trends, and evolving community needs.

Transport Asset Management Implementation Plan (TAMIP)

The Council's Transport Asset Management Implementation Plan (TAMIP) is a key strategic document that outlines the guidelines and priorities for maintaining, renewing, and upgrading the road network. It incorporates several recommendations from the 2022 RMP Review, which was undertaken by Council in consultation with the Buloke community.

Asset Management Policy

Buloke Shire Council's Asset Management Policy outlines the Council's commitment to the responsible stewardship of community assets to ensure the sustainable delivery of services across the Shire. The Policy sets out guiding principles for the planning, maintenance, renewal, and disposal of assets in alignment with Buloke's strategic objectives. It provides a clear foundation for informed decision-making and establishes a framework to support effective asset management practices that balance service performance, financial sustainability, and risk mitigation.

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Asset Management Strategy

Buloke Shire Council's Asset Management Strategy provides a structured and coordinated approach to managing the Shire's assets in order to meet the current and future needs of the community. It translates the principles of the Asset Management Policy into clear objectives and actionable strategies. The Strategy focuses on optimising asset performance, ensuring long-term sustainability, and aligning asset management practices with Council's broader strategic priorities. It acts as a roadmap for maintaining, renewing, and improving infrastructure to support the delivery of cost-effective, reliable, and community-focused services.

10 Year Asset Plan

Buloke Shire Council's 10-Year Asset Plan provides a clear and forward-looking roadmap for the sustainable management of community assets over the coming decade. It outlines long-term strategies for the maintenance, renewal, and improvement of assets to ensure they continue to support service delivery and respond to the evolving needs of the Buloke community. The Plan is aligned with Council's strategic objectives, with a strong focus on financial sustainability, risk management, and optimising service levels. By forecasting future asset requirements and associated costs, the 10-Year Asset Plan enables informed decision-making and reinforces Council's commitment to responsible, transparent, and proactive asset stewardship.

Transport and Drainage Asset Management Plan

Buloke Shire Council's Transport and Drainage Asset Management Plan (AMP) is a critical document guiding the efficient and sustainable management of Council's transport and drainage infrastructure. It plays a central role within Council's broader Asset Management Framework, ensuring strategic alignment across planning, service delivery, and investment decisions.

The Plan outlines a long-term strategy for the maintenance, renewal, and enhancement of the road and drainage network, ensuring these assets continue to support service delivery and meet the needs of the Buloke community. It provides clear direction on the level of investment required over the short, medium, and long term to maintain existing service levels while managing risks and optimising asset performance.

The Plan is reviewed every three years to ensure it remains relevant and effective, offering confidence to Councillors, ratepayers, and other stakeholders that infrastructure is being responsibly managed. It is directly linked to Council's Financial Plan, Annual Budget, and other key strategies to ensure a consistent and integrated approach to infrastructure planning and delivery.

A detailed road and drainage asset summary, including the established road hierarchy, enables evidence-based prioritisation of works based on usage, condition, risk exposure, and community expectations. The annual works program is informed by regular reviews of the 10-Year Capital Works Program, ensuring the best use of available resources in alignment with Council's strategic objectives. In essence, the Transport and Drainage AMP serves as both a strategic and operational roadmap, supporting Buloke Shire Council's commitment to long-term, sustainable asset stewardship.

Obligations, Rights, and Responsibilities

Obligations of Road Users

While Council holds responsibilities for the maintenance of public roads under the Road Management Act, road users also have a duty to exercise care when using the road network. Section 17A of the Road Safety Act 1986 (as amended) outlines the obligations of road users to act safely and responsibly.

Drivers

A person driving a motor vehicle on a highway must ensure safe driving by considering all relevant factors, including but not limited to:

- Physical characteristics of the road: Such as curves, gradients, and road surface conditions.
- Prevailing weather conditions: Like rain, fog, or high winds that might impact visibility or traction.
- Level of visibility: Including factors such as time of day, lighting, or obstructions.
- Condition of the motor vehicle: Ensuring the vehicle is roadworthy, including brakes, tires, and lights.
- Prevailing traffic conditions: Such as congestion, presence of pedestrians, or other vehicles.
- Relevant road laws and advisory signs: Compliance with speed limits, traffic signals, and warning signs.
- Physical and mental condition of the driver: Ensuring the driver is alert, not fatigued, impaired, or under the influence of substances.

These considerations are critical for ensuring the safety of all road users and maintaining the functionality of the road network.

Other Road Users

Road users who are not driving a motor vehicle must also use highways safely, considering all relevant factors. They must respect the rights of other road users and the community by taking reasonable care to avoid actions that may:

- Endanger safety and welfare: Preventing harm to themselves and others on the road.
- Damage road infrastructure: Ensuring their actions do not compromise the condition of roads, signs, or other structures.
- Harm the environment: Avoiding activities that could negatively impact the natural or built environment within the road reserve.

These obligations are essential to maintaining a safe, functional, and sustainable road network for all users.

Utility Infrastructure and Service Providers

Within the Buloke Shire Council road network, a range of utility and service providers (including water, gas, electricity, telecommunications, and sewerage authorities) operate infrastructure within the road reserve. These providers, defined as "utilities" under the Road Management Act 2004, play a vital role in delivering essential services to the community.

To ensure safe, efficient and coordinated use of the road reserve, Buloke Shire Council works collaboratively with these providers in accordance with the Act and relevant Codes of Practice.

Utility Responsibilities Include:

- Providing notification to Council before undertaking works within the road reserve, except in emergency situations.
- Restoring the road or road-related infrastructure to Council's satisfaction following the completion of works.
- Complying with relevant standards and practices, including traffic management, reinstatement quality, and environmental considerations.

Council's Role Includes:

- Coordinating works to minimise disruption to the public and protect the long-term integrity of the road network.
- Monitoring utility works and seeking remediation where works are non-compliant or the road has not been satisfactorily reinstated.
- Ensuring timely communication with utility providers to facilitate safe and efficient service delivery while maintaining community access and amenity.

Buloke Shire Council recognises the importance of utility infrastructure in supporting community wellbeing and economic activity and is committed to working with service providers to manage the shared road reserve effectively.

Demarcation and Transfer of Responsibility Between Road Authorities

Under the Road Management Act 2004, clear mechanisms are established for resolving boundary and responsibility issues between road authorities. These provisions are particularly relevant for Buloke Shire Council where roads intersect or adjoin assets managed by other authorities such as the Department of Transport and Planning (VicRoads), neighbouring councils, or public authorities.

Demarcation Agreements

Road authorities may enter into a formal agreement (called a Demarcation Agreement) to clearly define which authority is responsible for which part of a road or road-related infrastructure.

These agreements:

- Can apply to any function under the Act (e.g. maintenance, inspection, or capital renewal).
- must be documented in the Register of Public Roads.
- Remain in force until superseded or revoked.

Boundary Roads of Buloke Shire Council

Buloke Shire Council shares responsibility for boundary roads with several neighbouring councils. These include Gannawarra Shire Council, Swan Hill Rural City Council, Northern Grampians Shire Council, Yarriambiack Shire Council, and Mildura Rural City Council. Road management responsibilities along these boundaries are subject to agreement between the respective councils to ensure clarity in inspection, maintenance, and response activities.

Current Agreements

Buloke Shire Council has previously undertaken work to establish road boundary agreements with adjoining councils. Formal agreements are in place with Swan Hill Rural City Council and Mildura Rural City Council, while draft agreements exist with Gannawarra Shire Council and Northern Grampians Shire Council. Although a formal agreement with Yarriambiack Shire Council could not be located at the time of this update, the Yarriambiack Shire Council Road Register identifies the roads for which Buloke Shire Council is responsible.

An updated and consolidated register of all boundary road agreements is currently being compiled by the Council.

Access to Private Property

The vehicle crossing (including Cross-over), located between the carriageway and the property boundary, must be maintained by the adjoining property owner. However, Council is responsible for the portion of the driveway where the constructed pathway is reasonably required by the public in accordance with the following diagrams.

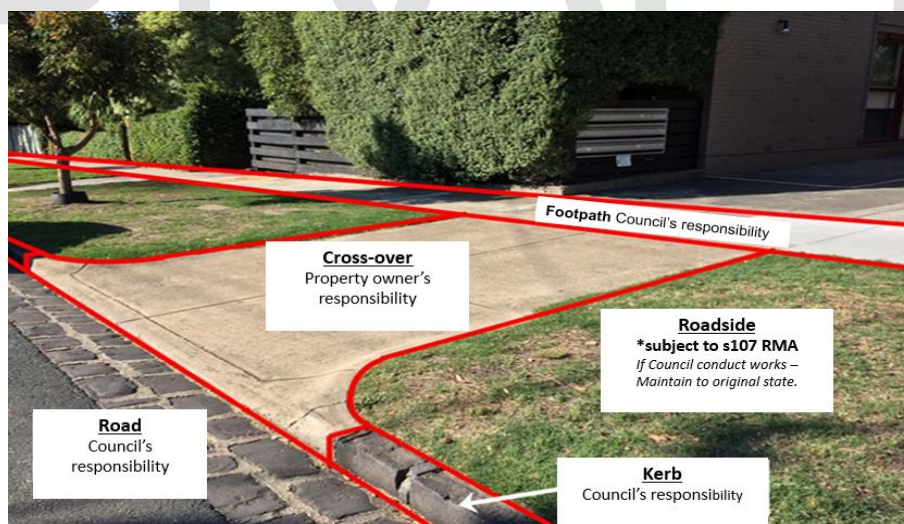


FIGURE 2: RESPONSIBILITIES- ACCESS TO PRIVATE PROPERTY (DRIVEWAY)

*S.107 Liability of road authority

A road authority does not have a statutory duty or a common law duty to perform road management functions in respect of a public highway which is not a public road or to maintain, inspect or repair the roadside of any public highway (whether or not a public road).



FIGURE 3: RESPONSIBILITIES- ACCESS TO PRIVATE PROPERTY (CULVERT CROSSING)

Hazards Created by Infrastructure Owned by Other Parties

Where Council becomes aware of a hazard created by the defective condition of assets/ infrastructure owned by another party, Council may at its absolute discretion:

- If located within assets / infrastructure for which Council is responsible (e.g. footpaths, road surfaces, etc.), or otherwise presents an immediate and significant risk to members of the public, undertake temporary measures to reduce the risk to members of the public until such time as the respective owner can implement permanent repairs (subject also to Council's available resources),
- Report in writing (e.g. email or letter) the presence of the hazard to the responsible party and request that repairs be implemented within a reasonable timeframe.
- Where repairs are not completed by the responsible party within the respective timeframe, Council may complete necessary repairs and invoice the responsible party for the costs.

However, where another party has a duty in relation to the asset / infrastructure, and Council has a discretionary power to take remedial action in relation to that matter, only that other party with the duty is liable in a subsequent proceeding, in accordance with s.104 of the Road Management Act 2004.

Assets Covered by the RMP

This RMP applies to assets located within the road reserves of roads listed in Council's Register of Public Roads, as required under Section 19 of the Road Management Act 2004. The plan outlines the inspection, maintenance, and repair standards for these assets to ensure safe and efficient use by the community.

The assets covered include road pavements, road shoulders, footpaths, shared paths, signage, drainage infrastructure, and other road-related infrastructure for which Council has accepted responsibility. Only roads identified as "public roads" in the Register are subject to the service levels and responsibilities described in this RMP.

Register of Public Roads

Under Section 19 of the Road Management Act 2004 (RMA), all responsible road authorities are required to maintain a Register of Public Roads. Buloke Shire Council meets this requirement by maintaining a current and accessible register that clearly defines roads for which it is responsible.

Access and Inspection

- The Register of Public Roads is maintained and updated regularly.
- It is available for public inspection at Council's Customer Service Centres with 24 hours' prior notice.
- A digital version is also accessible via Council's website under the Public Road Register section.

Definition of Public Roads

- Public roads include freeways, arterial roads, and all other roads that are reasonably required for general public use, as defined in Section 17 of the RMA.
- Council assesses whether a road meets the public use criteria using its adopted Public Road Procedure, which is also publicly available on the Council's website.

Requests for Inclusion

- Requests to add roads to the Register or for Council to assume maintenance responsibility are assessed through the Public Road Procedure.
- Each request is evaluated based on suitability, demonstrated public use, and overall need.

Content of the Register

- Each road included in the Register is recorded with the following details:
- Road Name
- Location and Segment Information
- Road Register Classification

Additionally, roads are categorised according to a functional hierarchy, which informs Council's operational, inspection, and maintenance practices.

Limitations under the RMA

- Section 40(2) of the RMA clarifies that road authorities are not obliged to upgrade roads or maintain them to a higher standard than their existing condition at the time they were included in the register.

This framework ensures transparency in road ownership and management, supports consistent maintenance practices, and provides the public with clarity regarding Council's responsibilities.

Road and Footpath Classification

A functional classification system has been developed for both roadways and footpaths to support appropriate management, engineering standards, and planning practices based on the role each asset plays within the network.

This function-based approach ensures that resources are used efficiently by prioritising investment in higher-use or higher-importance roads and footpaths, where the need and benefit are greatest.

The following guiding principles have informed the development of the classification system:

- The system is aligned with the Austroads National Functional Road Classification framework.
- Classifications are determined based on function, not physical attributes.
- Key factors considered include traffic volumes, vehicle types, existing road structure, adjacent land use, and future demand.

Characteristics such as road width or whether the surface is sealed are not primary criteria for classification.

Road Classification	
Link Road	<p>A Link Road primarily provides the means for collecting and distributing traffic from local areas to the wider Arterial Road Network.</p> <p>It provides connectivity to significant town and rural industries including farm produce, quarry, and tourist activities.</p> <p>Link Roads cater generally for higher traffic volumes (>150 Average Daily Traffic (ADT)), heavy vehicles and higher travel speeds.</p>

Collector Road	<p>A Collector Road primarily provides a feeder service to Link Roads. It provides access to local properties in both rural and urban areas, and access to moderate local rural industries, including farm produce, quarry, and tourist activities.</p> <p>Collector Roads generally cater for moderate traffic volumes (50-100 ADT) and medium travel speeds.</p>
Access Road	<p>An Access Road primarily provides all-weather direct access to occupied residential properties and industries in urban and rural areas.</p> <p>It provides access to limited local rural industries, including some farm produce, quarry, and tourist activities.</p> <p>Access Roads cater generally for lower traffic volumes (20-100 ADT) and low travel speeds.</p>
Minor Road	<p>A Minor Road primarily provides dry-weather access to underdeveloped properties in rural areas.</p> <p>It is not required to provide daily access to residences and may be used for paddock access and fire access.</p> <p>Minor Roads cater for low speeds and low traffic volumes (<10 ADT).</p>

TABLE 1: ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Footpath Classification	
Primary Access Route	A Primary Access Route provides services to areas with expected high volumes of pedestrian traffic and is generally confined to commercial areas.
Secondary Access Route	A Secondary Access Route provides services to areas with moderate expected volumes of pedestrian traffic and is predominantly confined to residential areas.
Tertiary Access Route	A Tertiary Access Route provides services with low volumes of pedestrian traffic and is predominantly confined to areas where the population density is low, and foot traffic is relatively low. These Routes provide connectivity to secondary footpaths and occasionally to primary footpaths.

TABLE 2: FOOTPATH CLASSIFICATION

Road and Footpath Network – Asset Quantities

The following tables provide a summary of the total lengths of roads and footpaths within Buloke Shire Council's road network. These lengths are grouped according to the adopted road and footpath classification systems. This information supports planning, maintenance, and renewal activities by aligning asset quantities with functional priorities across the network.

Road Classification	Length (km)
Link Road	212.07
Collector Road	311.59
Access Road	1199.86
Minor Road	3594.49

TABLE 3: LENGTH OF ROADS BY CLASSIFICATION

Footpath Classification	Length (km)
Primary Access Route	12.2
Secondary Access Route	46.4
Tertiary Access Route	0.3

TABLE 4: LENGTH OF FOOTPATHS BY CLASSIFICATION

Levels of Service

Inspection Frequency

Council undertakes regular inspections of all roads under its responsibility to identify safety hazards and defects that exceed established maintenance standards.

The inspection program is informed by the road hierarchy and classification system, ensuring that higher-priority roads are inspected more frequently and resources are used efficiently. The table below outlines the inspection frequencies based on the classification of roads and footpaths.

Inspection Type	Inspection Frequency by Road and Footpath Classification				
	Footpaths (All)	Link Road	Collector Road	Access Road	Minor Road
Day Time	Annually	Twice per year	Twice per year	Annually	No periodic inspections – by necessity or request only
Night	No night inspections	Annually	Annually	Only by request	No periodic inspections – by necessity or request only

TABLE 5: INSPECTION FREQUENCIES – ROADS AND FOOTPATHS

Monitoring System and Response

In addition to defects identified through routine inspections, Council also records issues reported via its Customer Service Request System. These may come from members of the public, road users, or other external sources.

When a defect is identified—either through routine monitoring or customer notification—it is logged electronically. Each entry captures the nature and location of the defect, the responsible officer, and the required response. Bridge structures are inspected annually using the VicRoads Level 1 Bridge Inspection form to ensure consistency and compliance.

All reported or observed defects are assessed and responded to in accordance with Council’s hazard response procedures, as outlined in “Intervention Levels and Hazard Response Times”, which details response times based on road classification.

Where practicable, Council will rectify identified hazards within the nominated response time. If immediate rectification is not possible due to the nature of the repair, resource availability, or workload, appropriate warnings will be put in place and maintained until the issue is resolved.

Examples of temporary hazard warnings may include:

- Installation of warning signs
- Traffic control measures
- Diversions around the site
- Temporary speed limits
- Lane closures
- Load restrictions
- Full road closures
- Any other reasonable action to manage public safety

Minor roads are inspected on an as-needed basis, and repair works on these roads will be scheduled when resources become available.

Intervention Levels and Hazard Response Times

The following tables outline the intervention levels and corresponding response times for defects and hazards identified within the road network. These standards have been developed in accordance with the principles of the Road Management Act 2004 (Victoria) and reflect Council's commitment to providing a safe and accessible road network.

Intervention levels define the threshold at which maintenance action is triggered, while response times represent the maximum period allowed to address the identified issue following inspection or notification. These service levels are based on the function, classification, and usage of each asset type, and have been developed considering available resources, risk management principles, and community expectations.

Obstructions and Substances in Traffic Lane

Description of Hazard and Intervention level	Obstructions and Substances in Traffic Lane			
	Link Road	Collector Road	Access Road	Minor Road
Materials fallen from vehicles, dead animals, wet clay and other slippery substances, hazardous materials, accumulation of dirt or granular materials on the traffic lane of sealed roads	3 days	1 week	1 week	Not generally maintained – recognition of defects and hazards to be in accordance with instruction from Manager Works
Ponding of water >300mm deep, fallen trees, oil spills, stray livestock	3 days	1 week	1 week	As above

TABLE 6: HAZARD RESPONSE TIME – OBSTRUCTIONS AND SUBSTANCES IN TRAFFIC LANE

Pavement Structure

Description of Hazard and Intervention level	Pavement Structure			
	Link Road	Collector Road	Access Road	Minor Road
Damage affecting structural performance	24 hours	24 hours	1 week	Not generally maintained – recognition of defects and hazards to be in accordance with instruction from Manager Works

TABLE 7: HAZARD RESPONSE TIME – PAVEMENT STRUCTURE

Surface Defects

Description of Hazard and Intervention level	Surface Defects			
	Link Road	Collector Road	Access Road	Minor Road
Potholes in traffic lane of a sealed pavement >300mm in diameter and >100mm deep or in the traffic lane of an unsealed pavement >500mm in diameter and >150mm deep	2 months	2 months	3 months	Not generally maintained – recognition of defects and hazards to be in accordance with instruction from Manager Works
Deformations >100mm under a 3m straight edge	2 months	2 months	3 months	As above
Edge drops onto unsealed shoulder >100mm	3 months	3 months	3 months	As above

TABLE 8: HAZARD RESPONSE TIME – SURFACE DEFECTS

Drainage

Description of Hazard and Intervention level	Drainage			
	Link Road	Collector Road	Access Road	Minor Road
Damaged or missing drainage pit lids, surrounds, grates in pedestrian areas or traffic lanes	1 month	2 months	3 months	Not generally maintained – recognition of defects and hazards to be in accordance with instruction from Manager Works

TABLE 9: HAZARD RESPONSE TIME – DRAINAGE

Signs, Guideposts, and Linemarking

Description of Hazard and Intervention level	Signs, Guideposts, and Linemarking			
	Link Road	Collector Road	Access Road	Minor Road
Safety signs missing, illegible or damaged making them substantially ineffective	2 months	2 months	3 months	Not generally maintained – recognition of defects and hazards to be in accordance with instruction from Manager Works
Guideposts missing or damaged at critical locations making them substantially ineffective	6 months	6 months	12 months	As above
Pavement markings missing, illegible or confusing at a critical location	3 months	3 months	3 months	As above

TABLE 10: HAZARD RESPONSE TIME – SIGNS, GUIDEPOSTS, AND LINEMARKING

Roadside Vegetation – Trees, Shrubs and Grassed Areas

Description of Hazard and Intervention level	Roadside Vegetation – Trees, Shrubs and Grassed Areas			
	Link Road	Collector Road	Access Road	Minor Road
Tree limbs or trees which have been classified as in danger of falling and causing a danger to the public	3 days	3 days	1 week	Not generally maintained – recognition of defects and hazards to be in accordance with instruction from Manager Works
Trees, shrubs, or grasses which have grown to restrict design sight distance to intersections or restrict viewing of safety signs	2 months	2 months	3 months	As above
Vegetation intruding within an envelope over roadways from the back of shoulder and/or kerb and a minimum of 5m height clearance over pavement and the trafficable portion of the shoulders	6 months	6 months	12 months	As above

TABLE 11: HAZARD RESPONSE TIME – ROADSIDE VEGETATION

Footpaths and Pathways

Description of Hazard and Intervention level	Footpaths and Pathways		
	Primary Access Route	Secondary Access Route	Tertiary Access Route
Defective pedestrian areas with a step >25mm	6 months	12 months	12 months
Vegetation which presents a physical hazard to the public over pedestrian/bicycle paths, intruding into a clearance envelope between the edges of path and a minimum of 2.5m height clearance over path	6 months	12 months	12 months

TABLE 12: HAZARD RESPONSE TIME – FOOTPATHS

Appendix A – Amendments to RMP

The following amendments have been made to the RMP as part of this revision.

Section in Previous RMP	Description of the Amendment	Section in Current RMP
Structure of the RMP (Table of Contents)	The structure of the Road Management Plan (RMP) has been revised to improve readability and logical flow, making it easier for readers to navigate and understand the content. The revised format ensures that key information, responsibilities, and processes are presented clearly and effectively.	See new Table of Contents
Not Applicable	A brief overview of the Road Management Act 2004 was added to provide context and clarify the legislative framework underpinning the Road Management Plan.	Chapter - Introduction
Roads for Which this Plan Applies	A new section outlining the Scope of the Road Management Plan was added. The attribute list from the previous RMP was removed and replaced with a clear list of assets covered by the Plan.	Chapter - Introduction
Not Applicable	A new subsection titled 'Exclusions from the RMP' was added to clearly identify assets and responsibilities that fall outside the scope of the Plan.	Chapter - Introduction
Not Applicable	A new subsection titled 'Suspension of Service Levels Due to Exceptional Circumstances' was added to outline the process and conditions under which service levels may be suspended in accordance with force majeure provisions.	Chapter - Introduction
Not Applicable	A new subsection titled 'Timeframe for RMP Review' was added to clearly outline the statutory timeframes and requirements for reviewing the Road Management Plan.	Chapter - Introduction
Not Applicable	A new subsection titled 'Public Notification of Amendments to the Road Management Plan' was added to describe the process Council follows to notify the public of proposed changes to the Plan.	Chapter - Introduction

Not Applicable	A new Chapter 2: Strategic Context has been developed to establish a clear line of sight between the Road Management Plan and the Council's broader strategic framework. This chapter demonstrates how the RMP aligns with the Council Plan and key Asset Management (AM) documents, highlighting how specific actions within the RMP contribute to achieving overarching Council objectives. It also incorporates reference to the Asset Management Policy and Strategy, reinforcing their role in guiding asset management principles, setting objectives, and promoting consistency across Council operations. This alignment ensures the RMP supports both operational requirements and strategic goals.	Chapter - Strategic Context
Obligations of Road Users	The chapter was expanded to clearly identify all key stakeholders along with their respective obligations and responsibilities. To better reflect its content, the chapter was renamed 'Obligations, Rights, and Responsibilities'.	Chapter - Obligations, Rights, and Responsibilities
Access to Private Property - Culvert Crossing	A new diagram has been added to visually clarify Council's responsibilities in providing access to rural properties with piped driveway crossovers. The diagram illustrates the extent and boundaries of Council's involvement in maintaining rural road access, an essential aspect of property connectivity, emergency services access, and local transport. It serves as a clear reference point for stakeholders to understand the scope and limitations of Council's maintenance obligations.	Chapter - Obligations, Rights, and Responsibilities
Not Applicable	A new chapter titled 'Assets Covered by the RMP' was added to clarify that the Road Management Plan applies only to roads and footpaths listed in Council's Register of Public Roads. This chapter clearly defines the scope of assets subject to the inspection, maintenance, and management standards outlined in the RMP.	Chapter - Assets Covered by this RMP
Crossovers and Drive Classification	This section was deleted as it was deemed not applicable to the current scope and intent of the Road Management Plan.	Not Applicable
Road Drainage Classification	This section was deleted as it was deemed not applicable to the current scope and intent of the Road Management Plan.	Not Applicable
Roadside Trees Classification	This section was deleted as it was deemed not applicable to the current scope and intent of the Road Management Plan.	Not Applicable
School Bus Routes and Stops	This section was deleted as it was deemed not applicable to the current scope and intent of the Road Management Plan.	Not Applicable

Road Classification	The statement 'Upgrading of a Minor Road to an Access Road at the request of a landowner requires Council approval. Any works must be undertaken to...' was deleted, as it was incomplete and not applicable.	Chapter - Assets Covered by this RMP, Table 1
Footpath Classification	The following statement was deleted from the Primary Access Route definition: 'The Council may, as grants or funding become available, replace or build new footpaths. Requests from a resident or landowner for a new or additional footpath require Council approval. Any works must be undertaken to the Council's specification and shall be at the cost of the landowner unless otherwise agreed.' The deletion was made to ensure the definition remains focused and consistent with the intent of route classification, rather than footpath funding policy.	Chapter - Assets Covered by this RMP, Table 2
Footpath Classification	The following statement was deleted from the Secondary Access Route definition: 'The Council may, as grants or funding become available, replace or build new footpaths. Requests from a resident or landowner for a new or additional footpath require Council approval. Any works must be undertaken to the Council's specification and shall be at the cost of the landowner unless otherwise agreed.' This removal was made to keep the route classification definition focused on functional hierarchy, avoiding overlap with footpath funding or approval processes.	Chapter - Assets Covered by this RMP, Table 2
Footpath Classification	The following statement was deleted from the Tertiary Access Route definition: 'The Council may, as grants or funding become available, replace or build new footpaths. Requests from a resident or landowner for a new or additional footpath require Council approval. Any works must be undertaken to the Council's specification and shall be at the cost of the landowner unless otherwise agreed.' This change was made to maintain consistency across route definitions and to separate footpath funding and approval matters from the functional road hierarchy.	Chapter - Assets Covered by this RMP, Table 2
Not Applicable	Tables were added to present the quantities of assets, specifically the lengths of roads and footpaths, categorised by their respective classifications. This provides a clearer understanding of the network composition and supports planning and resource allocation.	Table 3 and Table 4
Appendix C - Description of Hazards and Hazard Response Time	The original table was separated into multiple tables based on asset type to improve clarity and readability. The heading of the subsection was updated to 'Intervention Levels and Hazard Response Times' to more accurately reflect the content presented.	Chapter - Assets Covered by this RMP

Inspection Frequency	Inspection frequencies were revised as follows: night inspections for footpaths were removed, and access roads are now inspected only upon request. These changes reflect a more targeted and resource-efficient inspection approach.	Table 5
Hazard Response Time -Obstruction and Substance in Traffic Lane	Response times for hazards such as ponding of water exceeding 300 mm depth, fallen trees, oil spills, and stray livestock were updated. For Link Roads, the response time changed from 24 hours to 3 days, and for Collector Roads, from 3 days to 1 week. These adjustments align with available resources and revised risk assessments.	Table 4
Hazard Response Time -Surface Defects	Response times for potholes in the traffic lane of sealed pavements (greater than 300 mm in diameter and 100 mm deep) or unsealed pavements (greater than 500 mm in diameter and 150 mm deep) were revised for Link Roads, from 1 month to 2 months. This change reflects an updated assessment of risk and resource prioritisation.	Table 8
Hazard Response Time -Surface Defects	The response time for deformations greater than 100 mm under a 3 m straight edge was changed from 1 month to 2 months for Link Roads. This adjustment reflects updated prioritisation based on risk and resource availability.	Table 8
Hazard Response Time -Surface Defects	Response times for edge drops onto unsealed shoulders greater than 100 mm were updated as follows: for Link Roads, the response time was changed from 1 month to 3 months; and for Collector Roads, from 2 months to 3 months. These changes were made to reflect revised risk assessments and resource considerations.	Table 8
Hazard Response Time -Roadside Vegetation	The response time for tree limbs or trees identified as posing a danger to the public was changed from 24 hours to 3 days for Link Roads. This change aligns with updated risk management practices and available response capabilities.	Table 11
Hazard Response Time -Roadside Vegetation	The response time for trees, shrubs, or grasses that obstruct design sight distances at intersections or restrict visibility of safety signs was changed from 1 month to 2 months for Link Roads. This adjustment reflects a revised assessment of risk and operational priorities.	Table 11

Hazard Response Time -Roadside Vegetation	The response time for vegetation intruding within the clearance envelope—defined as encroachment from the back of shoulder and/or kerb, and less than 5 metres in height clearance over the pavement and trafficable shoulder, was changed from 3 months to 6 months for Link Roads. This change aligns with revised vegetation management priorities and available maintenance resources.	Table 11
Hazard Response Time -Roadside Vegetation	The response time for safety signs that are missing, illegible, or damaged to the point of being substantially ineffective was changed from 1 month to 2 months for Link Roads. This update reflects revised prioritisation based on risk and available resources.	Table 10
Hazard Response Time -Roadside Vegetation	The response time for guideposts that are missing or damaged at critical locations, rendering them substantially ineffective, was changed from 3 months to 6 months for Link Roads. This revision is based on updated assessments of criticality and resource allocation.	Table10
Hazard Response Time -Roadside Vegetation	Response times for pavement markings that are missing, illegible, or confusing at critical locations were updated as follows: for Link Roads, the response time was changed from 1 month to 3 months; and for Collector Roads, from 2 months to 3 months. These adjustments reflect revised maintenance priorities and resource availability.	Table10
Assets Standards	This section was removed as it was deemed not applicable to the current scope and objectives of the Road Management Plan.	Not Applicable
Standards for Upgrade and Renewal of Road Assets	This section was deleted as it was determined to be outside the current scope and intent of the Road Management Plan.	Not Applicable
Maintenance Standards	This section was deleted as it was considered not applicable to the current scope and intent of the Road Management Plan.	Not Applicable
Off-Road Paths	This section was deleted and its content incorporated into the new subsection 'Exclusions from the RMP' to ensure clearer alignment with the Plan's defined scope.	Chapter - Introduction
Appendix A - Asset Management System	Deleted. This information has been incorporated into Chapter 2 – Strategic Context to improve cohesion and ensure alignment with the broader strategic framework of the Road Management Plan.	Chapter - Strategic Context
Appendix B - Standards for Upgrading and	This section was deleted as it was determined to be outside the current scope and purpose of the Road Management Plan.	Not Applicable

Renewal of Road Assets		
Appendix D - Road and Footpath Hierarchy Maps	Deleted to maintain the conciseness of the Road Management Plan. It is recommended that this information be provided as a separate document, linked alongside the RMP on the Council's website.	Not Applicable

DRAFT

8.2.4 DRAFT BULOKE HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN 2025-2035

Author's Title: Director Community Development

Directorate: Community Development

File No: PH/14/08

Relevance to Council Plan 2025 - 2029

Strategic Objective:

- Services supporting our communities to thrive
- Active advocacy and participation in service networks
- Accessible and responsive health and community services
- Vibrant and connected communities
- Strengthen community activity and connections
- Council leadership and engagement
- Advocacy and partnering to deliver priorities

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the Draft Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035 for consideration and endorsement to go on public exhibition.

SUMMARY

The development of a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is a legislative requirement under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. The development of a Disability Action Plan is also a legislative requirement under the *Disability Act 2006*.

Previously, the Buloke Shire Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan has been incorporated within the Council Plan 2025, and its Disability Action Plan incorporated within its Inclusiveness Plan.

From 2025, both legislative requirements will be combined as a standalone four-year strategy known as the Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035. This will ensure a greater focus on the overall health and wellbeing of the Buloke Shire community.

The Draft Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035 has been developed under four health and wellbeing priority areas - active and healthy, inclusive and connected, respectful and safe, and growing and liveable.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Endorses the Draft Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035 to go on public exhibition for feedback from Thursday 18 September 2025 to Wednesday 8 October 2025.

DISCUSSION

In accordance with the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*:

A Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan must:

- *Include an examination of data about health status and health determinants in the municipal district;*
- *Identify goals and strategies based on available evidence for creating a local community in which people can achieve maximum health and wellbeing;*
- *Provide for the involvement of people in the local community in the development, implementation and evaluation of the public health and wellbeing plan; and*
- *Specify how the Council will work in partnership with the Department and other agencies undertaking public health initiatives and projects.*
- *A Council must review its municipal public health and wellbeing plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the municipal public health and wellbeing plan.*
- *A Council's municipal public health and wellbeing plan must be consistent with its Council Plan*

In accordance with the *Disability Act 2006*:

A public sector body must ensure that a Disability Action Plan is prepared for the purpose of

- (a) reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities;*
- (b) reducing barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment;*
- (c) promoting inclusion and participation in the community of persons with a disability;*
- (d) achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability.*

Previously, the Buloke Shire Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan has been incorporated within the Council Plan 2025, and its Disability Action Plan incorporated within its Inclusiveness Plan.

From 2025, both legislative requirements will be combined as a standalone four-year strategy known as the Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035. This will ensure a greater focus on the overall health and wellbeing of the Buloke Shire community.

The Draft Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035 has been developed and informed by:

- local data on the health and wellbeing needs of the community
- an environmental scan of the relevant legislative and policy context
- surveys and workshops in parallel with the consultation on the Council Plan 2025-2029
- workshops with local community groups, forums and health service providers

The consultation undertaken thus far has provided four health and wellbeing priority areas:

1. **Active and healthy:** Our community is more physically active, has equal access to healthy food and has a healthier diet.

Outcomes we are working towards:

- Creating towns and places that make it easy for our community to be physically active*
- Encouraging our community to be physically active

- Increasing the accessibility and availability of healthy food
 - Improving our community's understanding about how healthy food and drink is good for their health and good for the environment
2. **Inclusive and connected:** Our community is welcoming of everyone, and people are connected to each other and to their local community.
Outcomes we are working towards:
- Welcoming and celebrating diversity in all its forms and removing the barriers which drive discrimination and make it harder for people to participate in community life*
 - Increasing participation in community activities, groups and volunteering, particularly for new residents and people who experience social isolation*
 - Strengthening connections and the sharing of knowledge, information and resources between communities
 - Increasing our community's understanding of mental wellbeing and what supports people to have good wellbeing
3. **Respectful and safe:** Our community is respectful and supportive, and everyone feels safe and is free from harm.
Outcomes we are working towards:
- Demonstrating leadership about equity and respect is and encouraging our community to embrace this in all parts of their life*
 - Preventing violence in all its forms and improving access to information, services and programs for those impacted by family violence
 - Supporting the community to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergency situations
 - Increasing understanding about the harm caused by alcohol, tobacco, vaping and other drugs and how to access support services
4. **Growing and liveable:** Our community is growing and has access to the services, infrastructure and opportunities which support them to be healthy and well.
Outcomes we are working towards:
- Improving the availability of and access to key services such as public transport, health and disability services, emergency services, and strengthen local training and education pathways*
 - Increasing the diversity and supply of housing to assist in attracting new and retaining existing residents
 - Increasing connections, and shared ways of working with partner organisations and agencies to reduce the fragmentation and uneven distribution of services*
 - Increasing access to information about services and supports available in our community and what it means to be healthy and well

Outcomes marked with an asterisk (*) indicate the outcomes that Council will work towards to support the rights and needs of people living with disabilities.

RELEVANT LAW

The development of a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is a legislative requirement under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. The development of a Disability Action Plan is also a legislative requirement under the *Disability Act 2006*.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council decisions around other key strategic documents will interact with the Draft Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035 once it is adopted.

OPTIONS

Council has the option to not endorse the Draft Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035 to go on public exhibition from Thursday 18 September 2025 to Wednesday 8 October 2025.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not Applicable

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Draft Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035 has acknowledged the extensive engagement undertaken with the community, and relevant stakeholders, on a range of issues and projects over the last two years, including the recent engagement undertaken to develop the Council Plan 2025-2029.

This information has influenced the development of the Draft Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035 and been further developed through specific consultation on the Plan which included conversations, surveys and workshops with local community groups, forums and health service providers.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Draft Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035 aims to present an innovative approach to health and wellbeing that builds on community feedback and provides opportunities for continuous improvement.

COLLABORATION

The development of the Draft Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035 incorporates collaboration efforts undertaken with local and regional stakeholders, community organisations and health service providers and networks.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The delivery of the Draft Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035 will be supported through Annual Budgets adopted each year as well as the Financial Plan. External funding will also be sought to provide additional funding, as required.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

The Draft Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035 acknowledges the directions and objectives of other Regional, State and National plans and policies.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

The Draft Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035 acknowledges the actions and objectives of other key Council plans and strategies, including the Council Plan 2025-2029.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report recommends that the Draft Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035 goes on public exhibition from Thursday 18 September 2025 to Wednesday 8 October 2025 to enable the public to make submissions and provide feedback on the proposed health and wellbeing priority areas.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

- Attachments:***
1. Attachment 8.2.4.1 - DRAFT Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035 V 4

DRAFT Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035

(Working Document)

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VERSION CONTROL

Version	Issued By	Date
Version 1	Michelle Read – Planning for Communities	29 July 2025
Version 2	Michelle Read – Planning for Communities	31 July 2025
Version 3	Michelle Read – Planning for Communities	25 August 2025
Version 4	Gaynor Atkin – Buloke Shire Council	12 September 2025

Acknowledgement of Country

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

Mayor's message

We are excited to present the Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025–2035. The Plan has been developed with careful consideration of the factors that influence the health and wellbeing of our community, and it reflects our vision for building a Better Buloke - a healthy connected, inclusive and prosperous community.

Central to the Plan is its connection to the Council Plan, which outlines our strategic direction and key priorities for the next 4 years. The Health and Wellbeing Plan supports the Council Plan by identifying health and wellbeing needs in our community and identifying what Council and its partners will focus on to address those needs and strengthen health and wellbeing outcomes for our community.

Good health and wellbeing underpin quality of life for individuals, families and communities. When we are healthy and well, we can do the things which bring us happiness, allow us to connect with family, friends and neighbours, and have a sense of purpose and wellbeing.

We know our community is experiencing some critical health and wellbeing challenges including high rates of overweight and obesity, low physical activity levels amongst adults, poor access to specialist health services and essential infrastructure, concerns about mental wellbeing, and the social, economic and health impacts of our changing climate. These challenges are real and significant, and require Council and its partners to pursue new approaches which will fundamentally improve health and wellbeing outcomes for our community

Together with our partners and the broader community, we are committed to strengthening the health and wellbeing of all community members in Buloke, supporting them to lead healthy, fulfilling and meaningful lives.

Our Health and Wellbeing Plan

The Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan is a strategic, evidence-based document which in partnership with the Council Plan and Community Vision guides Council's planning, policy and strategic direction. The Plan incorporates the Disability Action Plan and meets the requirements of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 and the Disability Act 2006. It ensures Council and its partners:

- demonstrate they understand the health and wellbeing needs of the community, are clear about the priorities for improving health and wellbeing, and are committed to improving health outcomes for everyone in the community
- support the rights and needs of people living with disabilities, ensuring they receive fair treatment, can access high quality services and supports and promoting inclusion and participation in the community.

Council has responsibility for developing and implementing the Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan but to do this effectively, we need to partner with agencies, organisations and our community. Key partner agencies and organisations include:

- Neighbourhood houses and community centres
- Primary, secondary and tertiary education providers and enablers of education and training pathways
- Health services and agencies
- Local businesses, industries and associations
- Community service providers
- Crisis support agencies
- Government agencies
- Community organisations
- Sport and recreation organisations
- Arts and cultural organisations
- First Nations organisations.

The Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan is underpinned by:




- **Research about the health and wellbeing profile** of our community.
- **Analysis of the policy framework** influencing the development of the Plan.
- **Consultation and engagement** with our community and with internal and external stakeholders who have a role in supporting the development and implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Plan. We have engaged extensively with our community on a range of issues and projects in the last two years and built upon this by consulting with the community about the Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan, and with health and wellbeing partners.

Health and wellbeing priorities

1 Active and healthy	Our community is more physically active, has equal access to healthy food and has a healthier diet.
2 Inclusive and connected	Our community is welcoming of everyone, and people are connected to each other and to their local community.
3 Respectful and safe	Our community is respectful and supportive, and everyone feels safe and is free from harm.
4 Growing and liveable	Our community is growing and has access to the services, infrastructure and opportunities which support them to be healthy and well.

Buloke's health and wellbeing profile

Decreasing and aging population¹

 <p>6,201 IN 2016 6,178 IN 2021 5,881 BY 2031</p>	 <p>52 MEDIAN AGE UP FROM 48 (2011) much higher than regional Vic. (43) 60-64 YRS LARGEST AGE GROUP (536 people)</p>	 <p>High% of couples without children 51% regional Vic. 28% High % of lone person households 34.6% regional Vic. 27.5%</p>
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More disadvantaged²

<p>Higher socio economic disadvantage SEIFA of 975 compared with 985 for regional Vic.</p>	<p>Lower tertiary education attainment Fewer people with vocational, diploma or degree qualifications</p>	<p>Low digital inclusion 65.6 compared with 73.2 for wider Vic. Significant improvement since 2020 (55)</p>	<p>High % of low-income households 33.2% regional Vic. 26.7% – less than \$800 per week</p>
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Disability and health conditions³

<p>High % with a need for assistance 8.3% regional Vic. 6.9%</p>	<p>High % with at least 1 long term health condition 38.5% regional Vic 37.2%, wider Vic. 31.4%</p>
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Diversity⁴

<p>Increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population 1.5% in 2021 up from 1% in 2016</p>	<p>Low cultural diversity 5.9% born overseas, regional Vic. 12.4%</p>
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Gender equity⁵

<p>More females have a Bachelor or Higher Degree 412 v 189</p>	<p>Fewer females are managers or professionals 479 V 661</p>	<p>Females undertake more unpaid care than males</p>	<p>More females earn less than \$800 per week</p>
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¹ ABS, Quickstats, Buloke Shire, 2021, 2016 and 2011

² ABS, Quickstats, Buloke Shire, 2021; Australian Digital Inclusion Index, The national picture – ADII score comparison Vic, Buloke, 2022

³ ABS, Quickstats, Buloke Shire, 2021

⁴ ABS, Quickstats, Buloke Shire, 2021

⁵ ABS, Quickstats, Buloke Shire, 2021

Children and young people⁶

A high % of children in their first year of school are vulnerable on 1 or more developmental domains 37.5% wider Vic. 22.3%	A high % of children and young people identified as being in the bottom quarter of Socio-Education Disadvantage in schools across Buloke e.g. 45% Donald Primary School, 40% Charlton College, 37% Donald High School 36% Birchip P – 12 and Wycheproof P - 12	Children and young people in Buloke are most concerned about mental health, boredom, body image, friendship problems and bullying
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Family violence⁷

Low levels of reported incidents of family violence 1164.4 per 100,000, Vic avg. 1465. Reported incidents decreased in 2023 but increased in 2024	80% of people impacted by family violence are female
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Housing⁸

Home ownership is high 56% 28.1% regional Vic.	23.2% of household's experience housing stress 14.2% of renters, 9% of homeowners
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Physical activity and nutrition⁹

High participation in community sport 29.3% BUT high % of adults do NO moderate to vigorous physical activity 26%, Vic avg. 16.8%	Very high % of adults are overweight or obese 70.1% Vic avg. 54.4% Buloke is the highest in Vic.	Very high % of adults consume sugary beverages 44.2% Only Hume and Campaspe LGAs are higher	8% experienced food insecurity Consistent with wider Vic.
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Drugs and alcohol¹⁰

High % of adults smoke tobacco 16.2% Vic avg. 10%	High % of adults at risk of harm from alcohol related disease or injury 18.7% Vic avg. 13.1%
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Mental wellbeing¹¹

Lower % of adults reported experiencing loneliness 20.9%, Vic avg 23.3%	Lower % of adults reported experiencing high or very high psychological distress 16.8%, Vic avg 19.1%
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⁶ Australian Early Dev. Census, Community Data Explorer, 2024; Aust. Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, My School, 2024; Buloke SC, The State of Buloke's Children and Young People Report, 2020

⁷ Victorian Crime Statistics Agency 2023 and 2024

⁸ ABS, Quickstats, Buloke Shire, 2021

⁹ Victorian State Government Department of Health, 2023, Victorian Population Health Survey

¹⁰ Victorian State Government Department of Health, 2023, Victorian Population Health Survey

¹¹ Victorian State Government Department of Health, 2023, Victorian Population Health Survey

What influences our health and wellbeing planning

Social determinants of health

There are many factors which influence the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. We make decisions every day about what we eat, whether we exercise, drink alcohol or smoke tobacco. While these impact on our health and wellbeing, there are many other factors which may be beyond our control. These are known as the social determinants of health, and are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources and are mostly responsible for health inequities – the health inequalities that are unfair and avoidable.

Key social determinants are



Other social determinants include:

- Transportation
- Psychosocial risk factors
- The social environment
- Social support networks
- Community and civic engagement
- Social and civic trust
- The physical environment, including the natural environment.¹²

¹² Victorian Department of Health, Your Health: Report of the Chief Health Officer, Victoria, 2018, Social Determinants of Health

State and regional planning framework

Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

The Victorian Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023 - 2027 identifies high level priorities for improving the health and wellbeing of the Victorian community. These must be considered by each Council when developing their public health and wellbeing plan.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Improving sexual and reproductive health | 6. Reducing harm from alcohol and drug use |
| 2. Reducing harm from tobacco and e-cigarette use | 7. Tackling climate change and its impacts on health |
| 3. Improving wellbeing | 8. Preventing all forms of violence |
| 4. Increasing healthy eating | 9. Decreasing antimicrobial resistance across human and animal health |
| 5. Increasing active living | 10. Reducing injury. |

Key elements underpinning the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan are:

- collaborative action across all levels of government, health sector partners, organisations and communities
- supporting safe and health-sustaining environments
- promoting the health and wellbeing of all Victorians, with targeting action towards those who need it most to advance health equity.¹³

Population Health Plan Loddon Mallee¹⁴

The Loddon Mallee Population Health Plan 2023 - 2025 aims to support delivery of state-wide public health and wellbeing priorities in the Loddon Mallee region in alignment with associated planning cycles. It reflects and supports implementation of existing Victorian and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans and provide a basis for action in Loddon, Mallee and Murray sub-regional areas.

Regional priorities	Sub-regional priorities	Priority groups
Healthy food systems Climate change and health	Mental wellbeing	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Communities experiencing systemic disadvantage CALD communities Young people Farmers People with disabilities Older persons LGBTIQA

¹³ Victorian State Government, 2023, Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023 - 2027

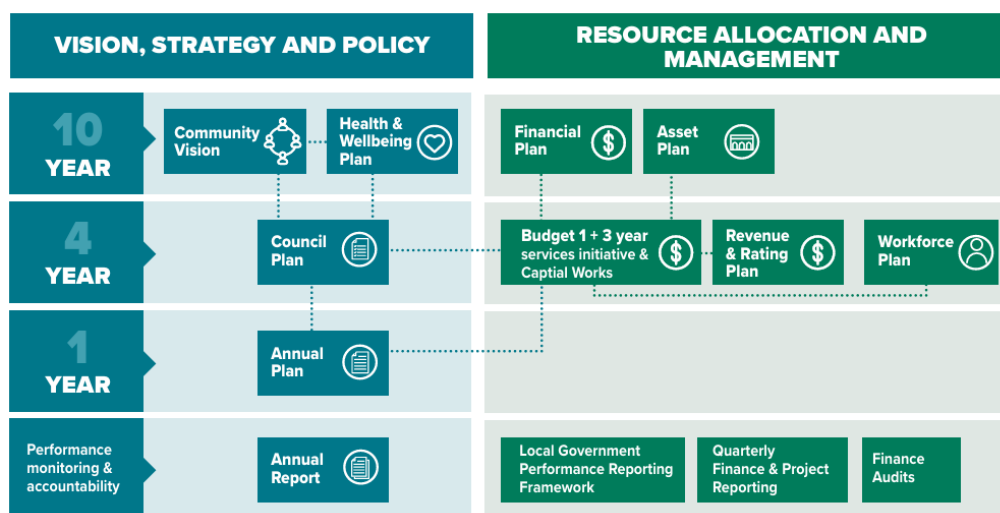
¹⁴ Bendigo Health, Population Health Plan 2023 – 2025 Loddon Mallee Region

Council's planning framework

The Council Plan and Community Vision are key to shaping the Health and Wellbeing Plan. The Council Plan 2025 – 2029 outlines Council's and the community's vision for the future, what Council will focus on for the next 4 years, and how it will measure progress as it strives towards that vision.



How the Health and Wellbeing Plan fits into our planning framework



Council's role in health and wellbeing

Council supports the community to live healthy and well lives by:

- working in partnership with other organisations and agencies to improve the health and wellbeing of our community;
- enabling our community to access services and supports;
- promoting inclusion and encouraging community members to be involved in and connect to their local community;
- planning neighbourhoods and spaces that are safe and accessible, encourage our community to be physically active, providing places for people to meet and participate in community activities, and will support our community as our climate changes;
- taking a leadership role in facilitating equitable access to services and facilities, and growing our community's understanding of what it means to be equitable, respectful and inclusive of all;
- advocating to other levels of government about changes that are needed to reduce harm and improve the health of our community.

We also have some statutory responsibilities for improving health outcomes including:

- developing and enforcing public health standards and intervening if the health of the Buloke community is affected;
- coordinating immunisation services; and
- maintaining Buloke in a clean and sanitary condition.¹⁵

Every day Council delivers more services to the community and manages and maintains community assets such as recreation and leisure facilities, local roads, bridges, footpaths, drains, parks, playgrounds, community buildings and much more. Each of these services and assets contributes to the health and wellbeing of our community. Key service areas are outlined below.

Community development	Public health	Local laws
Libraries	Recreation and aquatics	Finance
Emergency management	Flood recovery	Governance
Environmental compliance	Asset planning and delivery	Community facilities
Immunisation	Engineering	Roads
Maternal and child health	Planning and building	Waste and environment
Youth development	Urban and parks	Economic development and tourism

¹⁵ Victorian State Government, 2008, Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act

Our health and wellbeing priorities

Summary of key considerations

The following information provides a summary of the key considerations for identifying priorities for the Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025 – 2035.

Key data priorities	Key community concerns and priorities	Key partner concerns and priorities	Relevant State priorities	Regional priorities
Declining and aging population High% of lone person households Low tertiary ed. attainment High developmental vulnerability amongst children High % of low-income households High % of disability Increasing ATSI population Family violence and gender equity Low physical activity rates High% of overweight and obesity High smoking rates High % at risk of harm from alcohol Low digital inclusion	Community connections and mental health Preventing violence in all its forms Reducing alcohol and drug use Increasing physical activity levels Transport availability and connectivity Support for young people Access to health and early intervention services Accessing fresh, affordable food Lack of employment	Mental wellbeing Eco. determinants of health Safety Access to services e.g. childcare, health specialist, emergency services, culturally appropriate and safe services Limited housing options Isolation because of distance Public transport disadvantage Reduced volunteering Limited tertiary education and employment pathways Active transport routes / paths Lack of affordable, quality fresh foods Vulnerability to emergencies	Reducing harm from tobacco and e-cigarette use Improving wellbeing Increasing healthy eating Increasing active living Reducing harm from alcohol and drug use Tackling climate change and its impacts on health Preventing all forms of violence	Healthy food systems Climate change and health Mental wellbeing

Health and wellbeing priority areas

Council will focus on four health and wellbeing priority areas:

1. Active and healthy	Our community is more physically active, has equal access to healthy food and has a healthier diet.
2. Inclusive and connected	Our community is welcoming of everyone, and people are connected to each other and to their local community.
3. Respectful and safe	Our community is respectful and supportive, and everyone feels safe and is free from harm.
4. Growing and liveable	Our community is growing and has access to the services, infrastructure and opportunities which support them to be healthy and well.

Priority population groups

Although health is important for our whole community, not everyone has the same access to opportunities, knowledge, skills, or resources to achieve good health and wellbeing. For this reason, the Health and Wellbeing Plan highlights specific 'priority population groups' to be considered alongside our main health priorities.

This approach will help to ensure their needs and potential obstacles are recognised and addressed, with tailored programs, projects, and services designed to support these groups and help them reach the same level of health and wellbeing as the broader community.

The priority population groups are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- Communities experiencing systemic disadvantage
- CALD communities
- Young people
- Farmers
- People living with disabilities
- Older persons
- LGBTIQ

1. Active and healthy

Goal	Our community is more physically active, has equal access to healthy food and has a healthier diet.
Outcomes we are working towards	<p>1.1 Creating towns and places that make it easy for our community to be physically active. *</p> <p>1.2 Encouraging our community to be physically active.</p> <p>1.3 Increasing the accessibility and availability of healthy food.</p> <p>1.4 Improving our community's understanding about how healthy food and drink is good for their health and good for the environment.</p>

* Indicates outcomes Council is working towards to support the rights and needs of people living with disabilities

Why it is important
<p>Being physically active and eating healthily is important for good health and wellbeing. Together they help to improve our physical, social and mental wellbeing, reduce our risk of chronic disease and mitigate the impacts of our changing climate.</p> <p>Food insecurity is an issue of increasing concern. It occurs when people do not have access to safe, affordable and nutritious food and often results in poorer physical and mental wellbeing outcomes. Buloke is particularly impacted by this because of its isolated location, the high cost of accessing food locally and impacts of our changing climate on food supply systems.</p> <p>We need to focus on encouraging our community to be more physically active and supporting initiatives which deliver equal access to food and support healthy eating.</p>

Key information about our community	
70.1% of adults are overweight or obese, the highest in Victoria	38.5% have at least 1 long term health condition
26% of adults do NO moderate to vigorous physical activity,	8% experience food insecurity
44.2% of adults consume sugary beverages, only hume and Campaspe LGAs are higher	1 third of households are classified as low-income households (earning less than \$800/week), a risk factor for food insecurity.
Agriculture , is the largest industry in Buloke, and will be significantly impacted by our changing climate	Our community is aging and remaining physically active and having access to healthy and affordable food is key to aging well

What is important to our community and our partners

The natural environment, parks, playgrounds, recreation and sporting facilities are seen as key strengths of the Buloke community, along with the high level of involvement in community sport with clubs being welcoming of people of all abilities, free access to the local swimming pools, and the walkways between local towns and the lakes.

Key barriers to being healthy and well in Buloke are accessing quality and affordable fresh food, the increasing cost of participating in sport, the lack of active transport routes and paths, and the limited child / youth friendly spaces e.g. pump track, basketball court etc.

Increasing physical activity levels is a key priority for the Buloke community, and healthy food systems and climate change and health are key priorities in the Loddon Mallee Population Health Plan. Increasing healthy eating and increasing active living are two of the top ten priorities in the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

2. Inclusive and connected

Goal	Our community is welcoming of everyone, and people are connected to each other and to their local community.
Outcomes we are working towards	<p>2.1 Welcoming and celebrating diversity in all its forms and removing the barriers which drive discrimination and make it harder for people to participate in community life. *</p> <p>2.2 Increasing participation in community activities, groups and volunteering, particularly for new residents and people who experience social isolation. *</p> <p>2.3 Strengthening connections and the sharing of knowledge, information and resources between communities.</p> <p>2.4 Increasing our community's understanding of mental wellbeing and what supports people to have good wellbeing.</p>

* Indicates outcomes Council is working towards to support the rights and needs of people living with disabilities

Why it is important
<p>Having good mental wellbeing is key to living a full and meaningful life, benefitting individuals and the wider community through their contribution to the social, cultural, environmental and economic life of a community.</p> <p>Being socially connected to others and feeling like we belong is important for mental wellbeing. We feel like we belong when people are welcoming and supportive and we build connections through being involved in activities such as volunteering, social groups, recreation, sporting and cultural activities, environmental programs and community events.</p> <p>We need to focus on supporting our community to be welcoming of everyone and supporting their connections to each other and to their local community.</p>

Key information about our community	
34.6% of households are lone person households , much higher than wider regional Vic.	Increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population 1.5% in 2021 up from 1% in 2016
20.9% of adults reported experiencing loneliness, lower than the Vic. average	Low cultural diversity 5.9% born overseas, regional Vic. 12.4%
16.8% of adults reported experiencing high or very high psychological distress, lower than the Vic. average	8.3% have a need for assistance daily due to disability , notably higher than regional Vic.

What is important to our community and our partners

The sense of community and belonging, and participation in events and activities are seen as key strengths of Buloke, along with community organisations and the level of volunteering, the compassion individuals and communities show to each other, and the connections within communities.

The community identified not feeling valued and connected as key barriers to being healthy and well, while children and young people are most concerned about mental health, boredom, body image, friendship problems and bullying.

Health and wellbeing challenges identified by Council and its partners are the lack of communication and sharing of knowledge between towns, reduced volunteering levels, mental wellbeing.

Community connections and mental health are key priorities for the Buloke community, while the relevant priority in the Loddon Mallee Population Health Plan and the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is improving mental wellbeing.

3. Respectful and safe

Goal	Our community is respectful and supportive, and everyone feels safe and is free from harm.
Outcomes we are working towards	<p>3.1 Demonstrating leadership about equity and respect is and encouraging our community to embrace this in all parts of their life. *</p> <p>3.2 Preventing violence in all its forms and improving access to information, services and programs for those impacted by family violence.</p> <p>3.3 Supporting the community to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergency situations.</p> <p>3.4 Increasing understanding about the harm caused by alcohol, tobacco, vaping and other drugs and how to access support services.</p>

* Indicates outcomes Council is working towards to support the rights and needs of people living with disabilities

Why it is important
<p>The physical social, mental, and emotional wellbeing of communities and individuals is impacted by how respectful and safe a community is and feels. When we feel safe and respected, trust, social connections and mental wellbeing are strengthened in communities.</p> <p>Buloke is generally a safe place, but has some challenges related to our changing climate, being reliant on volunteer emergency responders, harm from alcohol, tobacco and drugs, and family violence. We are fortunate to have low levels of reported family violence, but this may be masked due to factors such as the remote location and the limited police presence.</p> <p>The regional nature and topography of our communities means access to emergency services is more challenging and we are at higher risk of experiencing emergency situations such as flooding and fire.</p> <p>Promoting gender equity, reducing family violence and discrimination, and strengthening the capacity of the community to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergency situations are key priorities.</p>

Key information about our community	
Low levels of reported incidents of family violence 1164.4 per 100,000, Vic avg. 1465	80% of people impacted by family violence are female
Females undertake more unpaid care than males	More females have a Bachelor or Higher Degree , but fewer females are managers or professionals
High % of adults smoke tobacco 16.2% Vic avg. 10%	High % of adults at risk of harm from alcohol related disease or injury 18.7% Vic avg.13.1%
Nearly a ¼ of household's experience housing stress i.e. spending more than 30% of their household income on housing	Each of the police stations in Buloke are single member stations and often not staffed

What is important to our community and our partners
<p>The volunteerism by community members in emergency situations is recognised as a key strength of the Buloke community, along with our young people, and the sense of community and belonging.</p> <p>Key areas of concern are the lack of police presence, and the high rates of smoking and vaping and the increasing number of vape shops opening.</p> <p>Preventing violence in all its forms and reducing alcohol and drug use are important health and wellbeing priorities for the Buloke community, and these also form part of the top priorities in the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, along with tackling climate change and its health impacts.</p>

4. Growing and liveable

Goal	Our community is growing and has access to the services, infrastructure and opportunities which support them to be healthy and well.
Outcomes we are working towards	<p>4.1 Improving the availability of and access to key services such as public transport, health and disability services, emergency services, and strengthen local training and education pathways. *</p> <p>4.2 Increasing the diversity and supply of housing to assist in attracting new and retaining existing residents.</p> <p>4.3 Increasing connections, and shared ways of working with partner organisations and agencies to reduce the fragmentation and uneven distribution of services. *</p> <p>4.4 Increasing access to information about services and supports available in our community and what it means to be healthy and well.</p>

* Indicates outcomes Council is working towards to support the rights and needs of people living with disabilities

Why it is important
<p>There are many factors which influence the health and wellbeing of our community including financial circumstances, the accessibility of services, education and employment opportunities and the availability of key infrastructure such as housing.</p> <p>Buloke has a number of critical challenges impacting the health and wellbeing of the community including a declining and aging population, low-income levels, limited housing availability and choice, limited access to transport, health, early intervention or crisis services, and to education and employment pathways.</p> <p>We need to focus on increasing the liveability of our communities through working with partners to grow housing supply and diversity, advocating for and facilitating improved access to services and supports, and strengthening education and employment pathways.</p>

Key information about our community	
A declining and aging population. The median age in 2021 was 52, much higher than regional Vic.	Higher socio-economic disadvantage than wider regional Vic.
Low digital inclusion rates compared with wider Vic. i.e. not having access to or knowledge about how to use technology	33.5% of households are low-income households , much higher than regional Vic.
37 % of children in their first year of school are vulnerable on 1 or more developmental domains	High % of children and young people are in the bottom quarter of Socio-Education Disadvantage in schools across Buloke
Hospital / health services in Wycheproof, Donald, Birchip, Charlton, and Sea Lake	Primary and secondary schools in Charlton, Wycheproof, Donald, Birchip, and Sea Lake

What is important to our community and our partners
<p>The improved access to childcare, having health services in major towns, and having great primary and secondary schools are seen as key strengths of Buloke.</p> <p>Key barriers identified by the community to being healthy and well in Buloke are accessing essential services including health and early intervention services, limited transport, financial stress and lack of employment. Population decline was identified as a key challenge by the community.</p> <p>Health and wellbeing challenges identified by Council and its partners are the retention and recruitment of staff for key services, housing availability and affordability, limited access to childcare, lack of tertiary education options, public transport disadvantage, lack of access to specialist medical services, womens health, and the limited availability and high cost of accessing the internet.</p> <p>Transport availability and connectivity, support for young people, housing availability and affordability are key priorities for the Buloke community.</p>

Monitoring progress

The outcomes of the Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025–2035 will be monitored through regular networks and forums with health and wellbeing partners and will be reported annually to Council. Adjustments will be made as needed in response to the emerging health needs of the Buloke Shire community, and as Council and its partners identify opportunities to better support our community to be healthy and well.

8.2.5 COMMUNITY GRANTS AND SPONSORSHIPS

Author's Title: Coordinator Community Development and 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 are:

- **Community Grants** – to support the strengthening of the capacity and capability of local organisations, assist with the organisation and management of events, or help with the purchase of small capital items.
- **Sustainability Grants** – to assist projects that contribute to reducing the community's carbon footprint, improving the environment, or effectively conserving resource usage.
- **Sponsorship Grants** – to help promote a strong and involved Buloke community by helping deliver successful local events, projects, services and other activities.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Approves the officer recommendation to fund the following projects under the Community Grants Program:
\$1,273.00 - Charlton Agricultural & Pastoral Society Inc. – Project Level Up! - Gaming Events
\$2,000.00 – Granite Community Church Incorporated – Project: Storage cupboard used for Youth Group
\$400.00 – Charlton Golden Grains Museum – Project: Victorian Collections Training
\$1,000.00 – Wheels on A79 (auspiced by Charlton Neighbourhood House) – Project: Wheels on A79 Show & Shine
2. Approves the officer recommendation to fund the following project under the Sustainability Grants Program:
\$2,169.33 – Donald Men's Shed – Project: Beating the Blues

3. Approves the officer recommendation to fund the following project under the Sponsorship Grants Program:
- \$500.00 – Donald Pastoral & Agricultural Society Inc.** – Project: Friday Family Evening - Shining a Light on the health and wellbeing in our community

DISCUSSION

Since the Ordinary Meeting of Council in August 2025, seven Community Grant applications have been assessed under the following categories: 4 x Community Grants, 2 x Sustainability Grants, and 1 x Sponsorship Grant Program.

In accordance with the Community Grant Program Guidelines, each application was reviewed by an Assessment Panel consisting of three Council officers from across the Community Development Directorate. Based on their assessment against the selection criteria, the Panel recommends that the following applications are funded:

Name of Organisation	Charlton Agricultural & Pastoral Society Inc.
Project Title	Level Up! - Gaming
Grant Type	Project Support Grant - Up to \$2,000
Total Amount Requested	\$1,273.00
Funding Amount Recommended	\$1,273.00
Full project cost	\$2,128.00
Project Description	This project will deliver a virtual reality gaming activity at the 2025 Charlton Show.
What will the project/ event achieve	This activity will provide a new attraction to the Charlton Show and an entertainment option that is quite different from traditional show offerings.
Assessment Panel Scoring out of 60	17 + 19 + 20 = 56
Average Score:	19 out of 20

Name of Organisation	Granite Community Church Inc.
Project Title	Storage cupboard used for Youth Group
Grant Type	Project Support Grant - Up to \$2,000
Total Amount Requested	\$2,000.00
Funding Amount Recommended	\$2,000.00
Full project cost	\$4,350.00
Brief Project Description	This project will improve the delivery of youth group activities by providing storage space within the building.
What will the project/ event achieve	The provision of storage cupboards will improve the processes involved with the transition of stored items and make them

	safer for the volunteer staff who conduct the youth group activities.
Assessment Panel Scoring out of 60	18 + 20 + 16 = 54
Average Score:	18 out of 20

Name of Organisation	Charlton Golden Grains Museum
Project Title	Victorian Collections Training
Grant Type	Organisational Support Grant - Up to \$1,000
Total Amount Requested	\$400.00
Funding Amount Recommended	\$400.00
Full project cost	\$817.00
Project Description	This project will provide museum volunteers with training in the Victorian Collections online cataloguing database.
What will the project/ event achieve	This training will improve the volunteers' understanding of the online program they use and will make them feel more confident in the work they do for the museum.
Assessment Panel Scoring out of 60	19 + 18 + 20 = 57
Average Score:	19 out of 20

Name of Organisation	Wheels on A79 (auspiced by Charlton Neighbourhood House)
Project Title	Wheels on A79 Show & Shine
Grant Type	Project Support Grant - Up to \$2,000
Total Amount Requested	\$1,000.00
Funding Amount Recommended	\$1,000.00
Full project cost	\$2,470.00
Project Description	This project will deliver a Show and Shine event of cars, trucks, tractors and motorbikes.
What will the project/ event achieve	The event will be a family-friendly social event and a drawcard for tourists to the area. It will provide the opportunity for car enthusiasts to connect with the local community and feature catering by local businesses and Year 10 work experience students.
Assessment Panel Scoring out of 60	16 + 18 + 20 = 54
Average Score:	18 out of 20

Name of Organisation	Donald Men's Shed
Project Title	Beating the Blues

Grant Type	Sustainability Grant - Up to \$10,000
Total Amount Requested	\$2,169.33
Funding Amount Recommended	\$2,169.33
Full project cost	\$3,255.00
Project Description	This project will enable the purchase and installation of a reverse cycle air conditioner for the Donald Men's Shed.
What will the project/ event achieve	An energy efficient reverse cycle air conditioner will reduce the current energy usage of the Donalds Men's Shed and make it a more comfortable and inviting space for current and future members.
Assessment Panel Scoring out of 75	19 + 18 + 18 = 55
Average Score:	18 out of 25

Name of Organisation	Donald Pastoral & Agricultural Society Inc
Project Title	Friday Family Evening - Shining a Light on the health and wellbeing in our community
Grant Type	Sponsorship Grant - Up to \$500
Total Amount Requested	\$500.00
Funding Amount Recommended	\$500.00
Full project cost	\$500.00
Project Description	This project will support the Friday Evening at the Donald Show event, themed "Shining a Light on the Health and Wellbeing in our Community."
What will the project/ event achieve	The aim of this event is to foster meaningful conversations around health, celebrating resilience, and creating a safe, welcoming space where everyone feels valued and supported.
Assessment Panel Scoring out of 60	12 + 13 + 20 = 45
Average Score:	15 out of 20

Council officers are also currently working with six applicants to assist them with the requirements to meet the Community Grant Program eligibility criteria. These will be presented at a future Council Meeting for consideration.

RELEVANT LAW

Not applicable to this report.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable to this report.

OPTIONS

Council has the option not to allocate the funds as recommended by the Assessment Panel. However, such amendments to the proposed funding recommendations may undermine the integrity and fairness of the assessment process.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable to this report.

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.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable to this report.

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.

There is currently \$14,650 available in the Community Grants Program budget and \$50,000 available in the Community Sustainability Grants budget for the 2025-26 financial year.

Previous Community Grants awarded for the 2025-26 financial year are:

Grant Amount	Community Group and Project Name	Type of Grant
\$1,000.00	Charlton Neighbourhood House Project: Pickleball for all: Serving Community Connection Across the Court	Small Capital Equipment
\$1,000.00	Donald Pastoral & Agricultural Society Inc. Project: Donald Show Photo Board Project	Small Capital Equipment
\$2,000.00	Birchip Playgroup Project: Strong Start Active Play for Birchip's Future	Project Support Grant
\$350.00	Combined Probus Club of Wycheproof Inc. Project: Probus Wycheproof Christmas Lunch	Project Support Grant
\$1,000.00	Mallee Creatives (through Charlton Neighbourhood House) Project: Charlton Weekend Coffee Stop – Volunteer Training & Equipment Initiative	Small Capital Equipment

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable to this report.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Buloke Shire Council Plan 2025-2029

Community Grant Guidelines 2025

Community Engagement Policy

Community Support Policy

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report recommends that Council approves the recommended allocation of funds under the Community Grants Program.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

Attachments: Nil

8.3 FINANCIAL REPORTS

Nil.

8.4 ORGANISATIONAL REPORTS

8.4.1 APPOINTMENT AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE INDEPENDENT MEMBER AND AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE CHAIR

Author's Title:	Manager Governance
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Directorate: Corporate and Organisational Performance

File No: FM//02/10

Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025

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

PURPOSE

The Audit and Risk Committee operates in accordance with a Charter adopted by Council on 9 November 2022 and provides for the appointment of independent members for a term of 3 years, that can be extended up to 2 additional terms, for a total of 3 consecutive terms, and the appointment of an Audit and Risk Committee Chair setting the term at 2 years, which can be extended a further 2 year term.

To recommend the reappointment of Mr. Dean Sleigh as an independent Member of the Audit and Risk Committee for a 3 year term, and reappoint Mr. Sleigh as the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee for a 2 year term.

SUMMARY

Mr. Sleigh will conclude his second term as an Independent member of the Audit and Risk Committee, and his first term as Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee on 14 November 2025. This report recommends his reappointment for a further 3 years as an independent member commencing on 15 November 2025, and reappoint Mr. Sleigh as the Chair for the Audit and Risk Committee for a period of 2 years commencing on 15 November 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Reappoint Mr Dean Sleigh as an independent member of the Audit and Risk Committee for a period of 3 years, commencing on 15 November 2025 and concluding on 14 November 2028.
2. Reappoint Mr Dean Sleigh as the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee for a period of 2 years, commencing on 15 November 2025 and concluding on 14 November 2027.

DISCUSSION

The Audit and Risk Committee consists of 5 members comprising of 3 independent members and 2 Councillors of which one of the Councillors must be the Mayor. The Audit and Risk Committee Charter provides for the appointment of Independent Members for an initial term of 3 years which may be extended up to a limit of two further terms. In accordance with the Charter, Mr. Sleigh has made application for a third term to commence at the conclusion of his second term on 14 November 2025.

The Audit and Risk Charter allows for the appointment of a Chair for a period of 2 years, which may be extended for a further 2 year term where the period of tenure for an independent member is also extended. Mr Sleigh was appointed as the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee at the conclusion of the previous chair's tenure as an independent member of the Audit and Risk Committee. Mr. Sleigh was appointed as Chair at a meeting of Council held on 16 April 2025 with the term concluding on 15 November 2025 to align with the conclusion of Mr. Sleigh's second term as an independent member.

RELEVANT LAW

Section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires the Councils to establish an Audit and Risk Committee which must consist of a majority of members who are not Councillors and cannot include a member of Council staff.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Audit and Risk Committee was established by Council at the Council Meeting held on 12 August 2020 as an advisory Committee of Council. Mr. Sleigh was appointed by Council to the Audit and Risk Committee at the Council meeting held on 13 November 2019 and reappointed for a second 3 year term at the Council meeting held on 9 November 2022.

OPTIONS

The Council may determine not to reappoint Mr. Sleigh to the maximum allowable term.

In the event the Council determines not to reappoint Mr. Sleigh for any further term, the Council will be required to seek expressions of interest to appoint a new independent member.

Should Council determine not to reappoint Mr. Sleigh as Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, an independent member of the Audit and Risk Committee would need to be nominated as an interim Chair until such time as a new Chair can be appointed.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable

COLLABORATION

Not applicable

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Sitting fees are paid to independent members of the Audit and Risk Committee on a per meeting basis in accordance with section 53(6) of the *Local Government Act 2020*. Payment of fees for the Independent Members are provided for as operation expenses in the adopted Budget.

Bona fide expenses incurred by independent members will be paid or reimbursed in accordance with the Council Expenses Policy.

Where independent members reside outside of Victoria, Council will not pay the expenses associated with interstate travel or accommodation to attend meetings.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Audit and Risk Committee Charter is available on Council's website. The Audit and Risk Committee is an advisory Committee of Council. Minutes are made available to Councillors. Topics discussed at an Audit and Risk Committee are compiled and a report is tabled at a Council Meeting.

Section 53(5) of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires the committee to provide a bi-annual report to the CEO which must be tabled at an open meeting of Council.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In providing this recommendation to the Council no officer involved in preparing this report has a conflict of interest.

Attachments: Nil

8.5 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

Nil.

9 OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 NOTICES OF MOTION

Nil.

9.2 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

9.3 URGENT BUSINESS

Nil.

9.4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Nil

9.5 MATTERS WHICH MAY EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

Nil.

10 MEETING CLOSE