



Council Meeting

Minutes

Wednesday 16 April
2025

Commencing at 7:00 pm

Wycheproof Supper Room
367 Broadway, Wycheproof

Wayne O'Toole
Chief Executive Officer



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Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 April 2025.**CHAIRPERSON:**

Cr Alan Getley (Mayor)

Mallee Ward

COUNCILLORS:

Cr Bernadette Hogan

Mallee Ward

Cr Stephen Barratt

Lower Avoca Ward

Cr Bruce Stafford

Lower Avoca Ward

Cr Graeme Milne (Deputy Mayor)

Mount Jeffcott Ward

Cr Charmaine Delaney

Mount Jeffcott Ward

OFFICERS:

Wayne O'Toole

Chief Executive Officer

Daniel McLoughlan

Director Infrastructure and Delivery

Gaynor Atkin

Director Community Development

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

Jenna Allan Director Corporate and Organisational Performance

3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**MOTION**

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

MOVED: Cr Stephen Barratt

SECONDED: Cr Bruce Stafford

CARRIED.

(R/25/021)

4 REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Cr Bernadette Hogan has made a request for a leave of absence for the period from 28 April 2025 to 26 May 2025.

MOTION

Cr Bernadette Hogan's leave of absence has been approved from 28 April 2025 to 26 May 2025.

MOVED: Cr Graeme Milne

SECONDED: Cr Charmaine Delaney

**CARRIED
(R/25/022)**

5 DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

6 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Person: James Goldsmith

Question 1: Would you please provide the total cost to ratepayers that council has spent on all legal costs from 1 April 2024 to March 31 2025 regarding the Esoteric and the Esoteric site?

Council Response: Council has incurred \$95,426.54 in legal fees attributed to the Esoteric Event.

Question 2: Is there evidence of any communication to the land owner or the event organiser of alleged inspection by Wayne Wilkie's representative making a site inspection on February 22 2025?

Council response: Officers have checked council records and can confirm that Council's authorised planning officers were on site on 19 February 2025 and an Authorised Building Inspector was on site on 6 March 2025. There were no officers on site on Saturday 22 February 2025.

7 PROCEDURAL ITEMS

7.1 REPORT OF COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES

Author's Title: Executive Assistant to CEO

Directorate: Office of the CEO

File: GO/05/04

PURPOSE

To report on the Assembly of Councillors for March 2025.

MOTION

That Council note the report of Councillor Assemblies for 3 March 2025, 5 March 2025

MOVED: Cr Bernadette Hogan

SECONDED: Cr Graeme Milne

CARRIED.

(R/25/023)

KEY POINTS/ISSUES

Transparency is a fundamental principle of democratic governance.

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

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

As per the Council Meeting Schedule adopted 20 November 2024, Councillor Briefings are held for Councillors to meet to consider matters that are likely to be the subject of a Council decision or for the exercise of delegation.

A record of the Councillor Briefing held on 5 March 2025 is attached for public information.

Attachments:

1. Attachment 7.1.1 - Briefing Record Councillor Briefing 5 March 2025

Date	Meeting	Councillor Attendees
3/3/2025 12:30-1:15pm 2-3pm	Councillor Planning Session	Cr Getley, Cr Milne, Cr Hogan, Cr Barratt, Cr Delaney, Cr Stafford
5/3/2025 5:00pm	Councillor Briefing Nandaly Hall	Cr Getley, Cr Milne, Cr Hogan, Cr Delaney, Cr Barratt, Cr Stafford

7.2 STATUS OF ACTION OF PAST COUNCIL MEETING RESOLUTIONS

Author's Title: Executive Assistant/Administration Assistant

Directorate: Office of the CEO

File No:
Governance

PURPOSE

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

MOTION

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

MOVED: Cr Bruce Stafford

SECONDED: Cr Charmaine Delaney

CARRIED.
(R/25/024)

KEY POINTS/ISSUES

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

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

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

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

Attachments:

1. Attachment 7.2.1 - Action Taken on Council Res - Outstanding Items and items from 19 March CM

8 GENERAL BUSINESS
8.1 POLICY REPORTS

Nil.

8.2 MANAGEMENT REPORTS

8.2.1 APPOINTMENT OF AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE CHAIR

Author's Title: Director Corporate and Organisational Performance

Directorate: Corporate and Organisational Performance

File No:
FM/02/09

Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025

Strategic Objective: A Well Governed and Healthy Organisation

PURPOSE

The Audit and Risk Committee (Committee) operates in accordance with a Charter adopted by Council on 9 November 2022 and provides for the appointment of the Audit and Risk Committee Chairperson, setting a maximum consecutive term of two years. The Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee must be an independent member of the Committee.

This report presents a recommendation to Council for the appointment of Mr Dean Sleigh as Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee for the remainder of his second term, concluding on 15 November 2025.

SUMMARY

Mr Sleigh will conclude his second term as an Independent Member on Council's Committee in November 2025. This report recommends his appointment to the position of Chairperson for a shortened term to align with the remainder of Mr Sleigh's second term, concluding on 15 November 2025.

MOTION

That Council:

1. Appoint Mr Dean Sleigh as Chairperson for the Audit and Risk Committee.
2. Note that the appointment will be for a shortened term, concluding on 15 November 2025 in alignment with the conclusion of Mr Sleigh's second term as an Independent Member of the Audit and Risk Committee.

MOVED: Cr Bernadette Hogan

SECONDED: Cr Graeme Milne

CARRIED.
(R/24/025)

DISCUSSION

The Committee consists of five members comprising of three independent members as well as the Mayor and another Councillor (Councillor Bernadette Hogan as the delegate in 2025), as the representatives of Council.

In November 2024, Ms Margaret Abbey PSM concluded her final term as both an independent member and as the Audit and Risk Committee Chairperson. The appointment of a third independent member was made at the December 2024 meeting of Council, with an interim chair being appointed by the Committee for the December and February Audit and Risk Committee meetings.

Mr Dean Sleigh has served on the Committee since his appointment in November 2019 and will conclude his second term on 14 November 2025.

Following advice from the independent members Mr Stephen Gardner and Bernard Young, who did not consider themselves able to take on the Committee Chair duties at this time, it was nominated that Mr Sleigh be recommended to Council for appointment to the position of Chairperson for the remainder of his second term. Mr Sleigh is a financial executive in the private sector and has extensive experience in financial governance roles.

Under the Committee Charter, a Chair may serve two consecutive 24 month terms.

RELEVANT LAW

Section 53 of the Local Government Act 2020 outlines the requirement of Council to prepare and approve an Audit and Risk Committee Charter.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Committee was established by Council on 12 August 2020 and the Charter was adopted on 9 November 2022.

Ms Margaret Abbey PSM was originally appointed to her second term as independent member and Committee Chair at the Council Meeting on 13 October 2021.

Mr Bernard Young was appointed to his first term as independent member at the Council Meeting on 13 November 2019.

Mr Dean Sleigh was appointed for his second term as independent member at the Council Meeting on 9 November 2022.

Mr Stephen Gardner was appointed for his first term as independent member at the Council Meeting on 18 December 2024.

OPTIONS

The Council has the option to determine not to appoint Mr Sleigh as Committee Chair, however that is not advisable due to availability of other independent members for this role at this time.

If Mr Sleigh is not appointed before the May Committee Meeting, then Mr Sleigh may be considered for a temporary Chair role at the May Committee Meeting, until such time as a Chair can be appointed.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not Applicable

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not Applicable

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not Applicable

COLLABORATION

Not Applicable

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Fees are paid to Independent Members of the Audit Committee on a per meeting basis in accordance with the section 53(6) of the Local Government Act 2020. Payment of fees for Independent Members are provided for as operational expenses in the adopted Budget.

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 the Council's website. Minutes of the Audit Committee are made available to the public through adoption of Council Meeting Minutes, other than those matters considered confidential.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Not Applicable

Attachments: Nil

8.2.2 VARIATION TO CONTRACT C125 - ADDITIONAL SCOPE OF WORKS

Author's Title: Senior Manager Assets and Delivery

Directorate: Infrastructure and Delivery

File No: DR/28/05

Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025

Strategic Objective: An Attractive and Well Maintained Buloke

PURPOSE

To report is presented to Council to consider a proposed contract variation to Contract C125 2024/25 - AGRN1037 – Flood Recovery Works – Major Patching Package CE-0004 and CE-0005 (Contract C125). The proposed contract variation seeks to vary the Works Under Contract and the Lump Sum contract value.

SUMMARY

As part of the 2024/25 adopted Council Budget, a budget allocation of \$1,850,000 was allocated to road renewal works, in particular the Road Reseal Program and the Road Resheeting Program. Each year the condition of the sealed and unsealed road network is assessed to determine what roads will be renewed from the Capital Budget allocation.

Typically, the works associated with the Capital Renewal Program are delivered by external contractors, that are engaged via a procurement process that aligns with the requirements of Council's Procurement Policy.

There is an opportunity to leverage the existing Contract C125 to deliver Council's Road renewal program via a variation. The scope of works to be delivered by Contract C125 is similar to the works required to complete Council's resheeting and shoulder resheeting works program, and as such the use of Contract C125 is a logical fit to deliver Council's Road renewal program.

MOTION

That Council:

1. Approve the increase of the Lump Sum Contract Value of Contract C125 2024/25 – AGRN1037 Flood Recovery Works – Major Patching CE-004 and CE-005 to \$2,567,399.38 (excl GST).

MOVED: Cr Stephen Barratt

SECONDED: Cr Charmaine Delaney

CARRIED.
(R/25/026)

DISCUSSION

The variation process to include additional works and associated contract value increase is an administrative process that is enabled by the Conditions of Contract. The consideration for whether the variation of an existing contract to include a significant package of additional work needs to satisfy Council's Procurement requirements detailed within the Procurement Policy. Considerations include opportunity for suppliers to bid for Council work, delivery of contract works that provide best value to Council, and the capacity for the works to be completed within the required timeframe.

Given Contract C125 was recently advertised via a public Request For Tender process and subsequently evaluated and awarded, it is reasonable to determine Council has undertaken a recent market assessment and that the pricing of works will provide best value for Council; in short, the probability of obtaining a better price to complete the road renewal works is considered very low by returning to the market and completing a public Request For Tender process.

The value of works to be added to Contract C125 is \$643,525.96 excluding GST, which represents a lump sum Contract Value increase of 33%, noting the awarded Contract Value for Contract C125 is \$1,923,873.42, and approval of the inclusion of addition Works Under Contract and associated pricing would adjust the Contract Value to \$2,567,399.38.

RELEVANT LAW

The variation of the Contract C125 lump sum value has been conducted in accordance with the requirements of Council's Procurement Policy.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

At the September 2024 Council Meeting, Council resolved to award Contract C125 2024/25 - AGRN1037 – Flood Recovery Works – Major Patching Package CE-0004 and CE-0005 (Contract C125) to Greg's Digging Pyt Ltd.

OPTIONS

To progress the Capital Road renewal program, in particular the resheeting and shoulder resheeting program, the following options are available;

Option 1:

Forward a variation for determination to Contract C125 to include additional Works Under Contract and approve the adjustment of the Lump Sum Contract Value to the April 2025 Council Meeting. This is the preferred option as it ensures Buloke Shire Council can progress with the delivery of road renewal works within this financial year.

Option 2:

Undertake a public Request for Tender procurement process for the delivery of the Capital road renewal program to seek submissions from contractors, and following evaluation consider the award of Contract. This option is not preferred as the time requirements to complete a new procurement process will not allow for the works to be completed this financial year.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no identified sustainability implications relating to this matter.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The community will be informed of works to be completed if they are likely to be impacted or inconvenienced in the delivery of the road renewal projects.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

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

COLLABORATION

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

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The road renewal projects to be included within the Works Under Contract of Contract C125 are fully funded within the 2024-25 Adopted Council Budget.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable to this report.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

The variation of an existing Contract to include additional Works Under Contract and subsequent increase in the Lump Sum Contract Value is provided for within Council's Procurement Policy.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

The report is provided within the Council agenda to provide transparency of decisions of Council.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No Council Officer declared a conflict of interest when considering this matter.

Attachments: Nil

8.2.3 COMMUNITY GRANTS

Author's Title: Manager Community Partnerships

Directorate: Community Development

File No: GS/09/42

Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025

Strategic Objective: Increased Community Wellbeing

PURPOSE

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

SUMMARY

Each year, Council allocates funds in the Annual Budget to support community initiatives that align with Council priorities and vision as outlined in the Council Plan.

The purpose of these grant programs 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, improve the environment or effectively conserve resource usage.

MOTION

That Council:

1. Approves the following allocation of funds under the Community Grants Program:
\$2,000 – Birchip Buds - Planting the Seeds of Sustainability (Birchip Playgroup)
\$180 – Mahjong table and tile set (Donald Senior Citizen Centre Incorporated)

MOVED: Cr Graeme Milne

SECONDED: Cr Charmaine Delaney

CARRIED.

(R/25/027)

DISCUSSION

Three Community Grant applications have been received since the Ordinary Meeting of Council in February 2025.

As per the current Community Grant Guidelines, each application was assessed by an Assessment Panel. The Panel of three assessors consisted of three Council officers from across the Community Development Directorate.

Two of the three applications received have been assessed. Additional information is currently being sought for the third application received.

Based on their assessment against the selection criteria, the Panel recommends the following two grants for Council's consideration and approval.

Name of Organisation	Birchip Playgroup
Project Title	Birchip Buds - Planting the Seeds of Sustainability
Grant Type	Quick Action Sustainability Grant - Up to \$2,000
Total Amount Requested	\$2,000.00
Funding Amount Recommended	\$2,000.00
Full project cost	\$2,446.00
Project Description	<p>The Birchip Playgroup is seeking assistance towards the costs of purchasing fun, play-based sustainability incursions through the 'Little Sprouts' and 'EnviroEDU' Sustainability Programs that support children to become environmentally responsible.</p> <p>The programs focus on many of society's issues – waste, pollution and habitat degradation and what impacts these have on our environment. They also highlight a number of measures we can employ to ensure a sustainable future by implementing the five 'Rs' of waste management- Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Recycle.</p>
Project Benefit	Engaging children in environmental sustainability education at an early age can help them to become active global citizens in later life.
Average Score:	Average score = 20 out of 20

Name of Organisation	Donald Senior Citizen Centre Incorporated
Project Title	Mahjong Table and Tile Set
Grant Type	Small Capital Equipment Grant - Up to \$1,000
Total Amount Requested	\$180.00
Funding Amount Recommended	\$180.00
Full project cost	\$180.00
Project Description	The project is to provide a second purpose-built Mahjong Table and a second Mahjong Tile Set to cater for the growing number of Mahjong players currently active within the club.
Project Benefit	The project will provide our growing number of Mahjong players with the appropriate tools to fully enjoy their game.
Assessment Panel Scoring:	12 + 18 + 18 = 48
Average Score:	Average score = 16 out of 20

RELEVANT LAW

Not applicable to this report.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable to this report.

OPTIONS

Council has the option to 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.

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 application recommended for funding will come from the Community Grants Program budget (\$20,000) in Council's Annual Budget 2024-25.

There is currently \$10,338 remaining in the adopted Community Grants Program budget for the 2024-25 financial year.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable to this report.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Buloke Shire Council Plan 2021-2025 and Long-Term Community Vision

Community Grant Guidelines

Community Engagement Policy

Community Support Policy

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable to this report.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

Attachments:

Nil

8.3 FINANCIAL REPORTS

8.4 ORGANISATIONAL REPORTS

Nil.

8.5 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

8.5.1 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

Cr Delaney

- 12.02.25 Municipal Emergency Management Meeting @ Wycheproof
- 12.02.25 Buloke Shire Audit & Risk Committee Meeting via Teams
- 20.02.25 Buloke Shire VNI West Proposed Transmission Lines & Mineral Sands Mines
- 23.02.25 Dr Anne Webster Q & A on Transmission Lines & Mineral Sands Mines
- 25.02.25 Buloke Shire 1st Councillor Budget Development Workshop @ Wycheproof
- 26.02.25 Donald Mineral Sands Project @ Minyip
- 26.02.25 Donald 2000 Donald Railway Station
- 28.02.25 Curyo Wind Farm online briefing session
- 03.03.25 Buloke Shire Council Plan Workshop no 1
- 03.03.25 Buloke Shire Esoteric Briefing @ Wycheproof
- 03.03.25 Buloke Shire Esoteric Special Council Meeting
- 03.03.25 Buloke Shire Council Ordinary meeting @ Wycheproof
- 05.03.25 Buloke Shire CEO & Senior Staff Briefing @ Charlton
- 06.03.25 Safe Talk Workshop @ Donald
- 09.03.25 Lions Club Wycheproof Show & Shine
- 15.03.25 Buloke Shire Buloke West Medal Presentation @ Donald Fire Station
- 17.03.25 Buloke Shire Youth Community Summit @ Wycheproof
- 19.03.25 Buloke Shire Council Meeting @ Wycheproof
- 19.03.25 ACEN Aust. Corack East Wind @ Charlton Park
- 22.03.25 Buloke Shire Put on the Brakes and take a break @ Charlton
- 23.03.25 Buloke Shire Celebrating St Andrews Uniting Church 100 years
- 24.03.25 Buloke Shire Wallaloo & Gre Gre District Alliance via Teams
- 26.03.25 Buloke Shire Donald Community Precent Meeting @ Donald
- 26.03.25 Mr Pearse Funeral
- 31.03.25 Buloke Shire Council Plan workshop no 2 @ Wycheproof
- 31.03.25 Buloke Shire Aquatic Strategy Workshop @ Wycheproof
- 31.03.25 Wimmera Mallee Environment & Ag Protection Ass @ Warracknabeal
- 02.04.25 Buloke Shire CEO Review @ Wycheproof
- 02.04.25 Buloke Shire Councillor Briefing @ Watchem Hall
- 08.04.25 Buloke Shire Watchem Progress Association @ Watchem
- 09.04.25 NGSC Transmission Forum via Teams

Cr Hogan

- 23/3/2025 - Neighbourhood House Resilient Women Luncheon – Charlton
- 24/3/2025 - Birchip Forum Meeting – Birchip
- 25/2/2025 - Budget Development Workshop – Wycheproof
- 31/03/2025 - Council Plan Workshop – Wycheproof, Advance Sea Lake Meeting – Sea Lake
- 02/04/2025 - CEO Review – Wycheproof, Watchem Walk-Around – Watchem, Council Briefing - Watchem
- 14/04/2025 - Council Plan Workshop - Wycheproof
- 15/04/2025 - NCLLEN Board Meeting – Zoom
- 16/04/2025 - Council Meeting – Wycheproof

Cr Milne

Mar 22 - Discussions with Matt McLoughlan and others re a proposed underground option to VNI west proposals.

Mar 23 - Attended the 100 year celebration of the current St Andrew's building in Donald. Including the service, morning tea, choir and commentary.

Mar 24 - Watchem Hall annual meeting.

Mar 24 - Wallaroo and Gre Gre zoom with Yarriambiack Shire Council.

Mar 30th - Watchem Panthers Cricket club break up and B Grade premiership celebration.

Mar 31st - Council Plan workshop and Aquatic Strategy update.

April 1 - MFMPC zoom meeting.

April 2 Mid year CEO review

April 2 - information gathering session for councillors and staff in Watchem prior to Watchem Briefing. To show new councillors and anyone interested, the state of current and future works in the town and district.

Watchem Briefing at Hall.

April 8 - Watchem Progress - Alycia O'Sullivan attended

April 9 - Litchfield Hall Meeting. Update on works completed and a vote on priorities going forward.

April 14- planning 2nd workshop at Wycheproof.

Cr Stafford

22 March – Bogged in Charlton – Men’s Mental Health Event **Are You Bogged Mate? – Charlton Event**

On 22nd March, at the invitation of the Charlton Football Club, I had the privilege of attending a mental health event, “Bogged in Charlton” which is a part of the Are You Bogged Mate? initiative — a grassroots movement tackling mental health in rural communities, especially amongst men. It’s all about starting honest conversations and reminding us that when life gets tough, it’s okay to reach out.

The initiative was started by a woman named Mary O’Brien, who has a strong background in agriculture and rural training. Mary saw first-hand how many blokes in the bush were doing it tough but didn’t have the tools or language to talk about it — so she created this program that really speaks their language. No jargon, just straight-up talk about mateship, mental health, and not being afraid to ask for a tow when you’re bogged, whether it’s in the paddock or in life.

We were also lucky to have Tom Boyd, former Western Bulldogs premiership player, share his story. He spoke openly about his own battles with mental health during and after his footy career, and his message really hit home. It was a powerful reminder that it doesn’t matter who you are — mental health doesn’t discriminate.

It was a well-attended, heartfelt event and a credit to everyone who helped bring it to life in Charlton. These are the kinds of conversations that strengthen communities, and I’d love to see more events like this supported across our region.

24 March – Coffee with A Councillor – Charlton Neighbourhood House

31 March – Council Plan Workshop 2

2 April – CEO Review, Councillor Briefing (Watchem)

14 April – Council Plan Workshop 3

15 April – Charlton Forum Meeting

16 April – Council Meeting

CVGA Update

CVGA is aware that across the Loddon Mallee and Grampians regions, extreme climate events are putting growing pressure on council assets and infrastructure which in turn are disrupting essential services.

We are hearing that Councils want to plan ahead to manage these risks — to understand what's vulnerable, where the pressure points are, and how best to adapt.

To address this, the CVGA is making an application to Round 3 of the Federal Government's Disaster Ready Fund to deliver a region-wide, asset-level climate risk assessment to help councils identify vulnerable assets and prioritise adaptation efforts. The project will use the latest climate modelling to create easy-to-use spatial tools that councils can embed into their systems and processes to support planning and investment decisions when it comes to assets and infrastructure.

Ultimately, this is about helping councils plan smarter and build long-term resilience into the infrastructure and services our communities rely on. The CVGA Board has committed to covering any funding shortfall from its reserves, meaning councils will be able to access this support and the tools at no cost.

I'll provide further updates as they come to hand.

Cr Stafford

Have attended various meetings in the community last few weeks.

Being monthly meetings of Wyche Alive where Various matters have been discussed. Main concerns being raised are the customer service questions ie as in getting feedback on enquiries, lack of communication.

Wetland construction information and updates to the community would be very much appreciated Wycheproof Rec Reserve management and oversight needs to be reviewed. Historically they had two year terms but haven't met for four years.

Watering Median strip hopefully that is fully operational as has had issues in the past.

Mount street, where is council up to with declassifying it as a main road.

Had meetings along with the community members with the Wycheproof Hospital management team asking what council concerns were and if we needed to liaise with them on any health issues.

We spoke about housing as it is a issue with retaining staff numbers and encouraging them to stay locally. Where can we help or come up with some ideas. Also how to entice medical professionals as we need to be prepared for contingencies

Community garden needs help and I am looking into how to get it back on track.

Went into Wycheproof Men's Shed event with Mallee Family Health where there were many speakers talking about services available for the community with a specific emphasis on mens mental well being as our farming members sometimes need a push to get help.

Wycheproof Caravan Park is doing well and have a few concerns about trees in the park, they hope council can intervene, a few minor maintenance issues with some things in the cabins which relate to warranty I believe council need to investigate. Cabins are being well received and used and the park is looking forward to it continuing.

Attended Briefings in Nandaly, Watchem and many planning sessions for Budget and Council Planning as well as Community Summit which was an informative event.

Council of course have had numerous customer service surveys and community has responded to with some good positive returns and of course negative as well.

Attended a landcare general meeting, with a query to council around spraying on verges especially the weeds like Kahki and Boxthorn.

What can council do about many cats on a property in Wycheproof?

Met with Dr Anne Webster re: Wycheproof Recreation Reserve Netball funding, subject to Federal Election outcome.

Attended via invitation the Calder Lions home game at Nullawil, great day, plenty of supporters for all the teams great family atmosphere.

9 OTHER BUSINESS**9.1 NOTICES OF MOTION**

Nil.

9.2 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Cr Barratt – What is happening with cats within council, reports from Wycheproof community members around reporting cats?

Response – Director Community Development to follow up with her team.

Cr Milne – Donahue Road name situation. Some time ago communication to applicant suggesting that it was possibly hard to do the road that we had identified, and that maybe a Lane in Watchem was more appropriate.

Response - Taken on notice

Cr Milne - Railway lines, did we submit anything to the State Railway Strategy?

Response – CEO, yes regarding Lalbert crossing

Cr Milne - 20 Yrs of the Hobson Bay Alliance, either this year or next. If was this year should there have been something in the budget to do something? allowance to do something.

Response - Taken on notice

9.3 URGENT BUSINESS

Nil.

9.4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Nil

9.5 MATTERS WHICH MAY EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

Nil.

10 MEETING CLOSE

Meeting closed at 7.33pm.

NEXT MEETING

The next Council Meeting will be held on Thursday 8 May 2025 via Teams at 5:00pm.