



Council Meeting

# Minutes

Wednesday 18 June  
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 18/06/2025.****CHAIRPERSON:**

Cr Alan Getley (Mayor)

Mallee Ward

**COUNCILLORS:**

Cr Bernadette Hogan

Mallee Ward

Cr Stephen Barratt

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

Jenna Allan

Director Corporate and Organisational Performance

Gaynor Atkin

Director Community Development

Salomme Menezes

Manager Financial Strategy

Jennifer Hewett

Manager Governance

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

The Mayor Cr Alan Getley welcomed 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**

Cr Bruce Stafford

Lower Avoca Ward

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

That Council adopt the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 21 May 2025.

**MOVED: Cr Stephen Barratt****SECONDED: Cr Charmaine Delaney****CARRIED.****(R25/043)**

#### **4 REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

There were no requests for leave of absence.

#### **5 DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

## **6 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

**Person:** Julia Pearse on behalf of Donald 2000

**Question:**

Is the Council in full support of the future of the Esoteric event by positively and proactively engaging with organisers to work collaboratively toward a successful 2026 even, in alignment with strong community expectations?

**Council response:**

Council will continue to support any event being planned for Buloke Shire to help ensure that all legislative health and safety requirements are met to enable a successful event to be held and celebrated.

**Person:** Julia Pearse on behalf of Donald 2000

**Question:**

What is the current status of employment of MBS Mr Wayne Wilkie?

**Council response:**

The fifth and final year of the Municipal Building Surveyor contract has not been exercised by mutual agreement.

## **7 PROCEDURAL ITEMS**

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

**Author's Title:** Executive Assistant/Administration Assistant

**Directorate:** Office of the CEO

**File No:**  
GO/05/04

#### **PURPOSE**

To report on the Assembly of Councillors from 15 May – 11 June 2025.

#### **MOTION**

1. That Council note the Assembly of Councillors from 15 May – 11 June 2025

**MOVED: Cr Bernadette Hogan**

**SECONDED: Cr Charmaine Delaney**

**CARRIED.**  
**(R/25/044)**

#### **Attachments:**

1. Attachment 7.2.1 - Councillor Briefing Record - 4 June 2025

Date	Cr Attendees	Meeting Item
4/6/25 2pm Culgoa Hall	Cr Getley, Cr Milne, Cr Delaney, Cr Hogan, Cr Barratt	Councillor Briefing
11/6/25 11:30am Wycheproof Hall Supper Room	Cr Getley, Cr Milne, Cr Hogan, Cr Barratt and Northern Grampians Shire Councillors Cr Justine Hide, Cr Karen Probst, Cr Murray Emerson	Minister D'Ambrosio

## 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 21 May 2025 Council Meeting Resolutions.

### MOTION

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

**MOVED: Cr Stephen Barratt**

**SECONDED: Cr Graeme Milne**

**CARRIED.**  
**(R/25/045)**

### 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 21 May 2025 Council Meeting Resolutions.

**Attachments:**

1. Attachment 7.3.1 - Action Taken on Council Res - Outstanding Items and items from CM 21 May 2025 to be tabled 18 June

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

Nil.



## 8.2 MANAGEMENT REPORTS

### 8.2.1 WIMMERA SOUTHERN MALLEE DEVELOPMENT LTD - MEMBERSHIP

<b>Author's Title:</b>	Coordinator Economic Development
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**Directorate:** Community Development

**File No:** CS/18/14

**Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025**

**Strategic  
Objective:**

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider withdrawing its Municipal membership to Wimmera Southern Mallee Development.

#### SUMMARY

At the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 9 August 2023, Council resolved that it:

1. Accepts the invite and applies to become a Member Municipality of Wimmera Southern Mallee Development Limited, for the term of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU); and if accepted
2. Nominates the Mayor of the day to be the Member Director under Clause 3.3(a) of the (MOU).

Clause 6.3 of the MOU states that 12-months' notice of intention to withdraw membership is required.

#### MOTION

That Council:

1. Withdraws its membership of Wimmera Southern Mallee Development
2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to provide Wimmera Southern Mallee Development Limited with the required 12-months' notice of its intention to withdraw as a Municipal Member, as per the MOU

**MOVED: Cr Graeme Milne**

**SECONDED: Cr Charmaine Delaney**

**CARRIED.  
(R/25/046)**

**DISCUSSION**

An assessment has been undertaken of the services provided through the Wimmera Southern Mallee Development (WSMD) membership and the value of Council's annual financial contribution.

Whilst WSMD has had a focus on addressing the housing shortage throughout the region, Buloke Shire has yet to receive any funding or demonstrated benefit from this focus of work.

The positive position of WSMD on renewables and transmission lines also does not reflect the Council's neutral position and the open letter issued by the WSMD CEO in December 2024 relating to transmission lines, wind energy parks and mining was not reflective of Council's views.

This letter was developed without consultation and created significant concern throughout the Buloke community.

It is felt that Council's feedback to WSDM on these matters has not been adequately responded to, therefore highlighting the inability of WSMD to accurately represent and advocate for Buloke Shire Council.

**RELEVANT LAW**

Not Applicable

**RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS**

Council resolved to apply to become a member of WSMD at its Ordinary Meeting of Council on 9 August 2023.

**OPTIONS**

Council could choose to not accept the recommendation and continue its WSMD membership.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Not Applicable

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Not Applicable

**INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Not Applicable

**COLLABORATION**

Not Applicable

**FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

The financial contribution for WSDA membership for the 2025/2026 year is \$62,844. This contribution has been allocated in the 2025/2026 Annual Budget.

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

Constitution of the Wimmera Southern Mallee Development Limited.

**COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES**

Long-Term Community Vision and Council Plan 2021-2025.

**TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS**

This report outlines what Council may consider in relation to its WSMD membership.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

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

<b><i>Attachments:</i></b>	Nil
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## 8.3 FINANCIAL REPORTS

### 8.3.1 ANNUAL BUDGET FY2025/26

<b>Author's Title:</b>	Manager Financial Strategy
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**Directorate:** Corporate and Organizational Performance

**File No:**  
FM/05/02

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

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

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to present to Council the Annual Budget 2025/26 for adoption in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, the *Local Government Act 1989*, and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014*.

#### **SUMMARY**

The Annual Budget 2025/26 is presented for adoption, reflecting Council's priorities from the Long-Term Community Vision and 2021–2025 Council Plan.

The Annual Budget seeks to maintain Council services and planned capital works within the State Government's 3.00% rate cap.

The budget forecasts a \$28.8 million operating surplus. Council's financial sustainability is heavily reliant on external funding sources and whilst in the immediate short term this will ensure Council can continue to provide current services, the underlying deficit demonstrates the substantial impact should it be removed. Council's projected underlying deficit is \$5.8 million for this financial year.

Councils' external funding sources includes \$33.6 million in non-recurrent grants and \$587,000 in capital contributions expected in 2025/26. This allocation is largely due to disaster recovery funding arrangements with the State and Federal Governments.

Community consultation on the draft budget was conducted as outlined in the report.

#### **MOTION**

That Council, having complied with its obligations under the *Local Government Act 2020*:

1. Adopts the 2025/26 Annual Budget as the final Adopted Annual Budget of Council for the 2025/26 financial year (as attached and circulated) with adjustments identified from the Draft Annual Budget to the Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Human Resources, and User Fees and Charges, as outlined within this Report;
2. Notes the changes adopted from the Draft Annual Budget 2025/26 as a result of submissions heard by Council and as outlined within this Report;

3. Authorises the Director of Corporate and Organisational Performance to respond in writing to community budget submissions in accordance with this Report;
4. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to effect minor administrative (wording) changes to the 2025/26 Annual Budget which may be required;
5. Adopts and declares the fees and charges as listed within the 2025/26 Annual Budget for the 2025/26 financial year;
6. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to levy and recover the general rates and annual service charges in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989*;
7. Declares an amount of \$15.7 million which Council intends to raise by General Rates and Annual Service Charges for the period 1 July 2025 – 30 June 2026 calculated as follows:
  - General Rates (including estimated supplementary rates) \$13.27 million.
  - Municipal Charges \$830,000; and
  - Annual Service Charges (Waste Management) \$1.58 million
8. Declares a Municipal Charge of \$186 for each rateable assessment in respect of which a Municipal Charge may be levied in the 2025/26 financial year;
9. Declares an Annual Service Charge of \$450 for kerbside garbage and recycling collection for the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026;
10. Declares the rate in the dollar for each type of rate to be levied for the period as follows:

Type of Rate	Cents in \$ on CIV
Rateable residential properties	0.486016
Rateable commercial and industrial properties	0.561970
Rateable farming properties	0.223567

11. Adopts to levy the general rates and service charges referred to in this resolution by the service notice on each person liable to pay such rate or charge in accordance with section 158 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, and;
12. In accordance with section 167 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, adopts the rates and charges declared by the Council for the 2025/26 financial year and declare that they must be paid as follows:

*By four instalments made on or before the following dates:*

Instalment 1 – 30 September 2025;

Instalment 2 – 30 November 2025;

Instalment 3 – 28 February 2026;

Instalment 4 – 31 May 2026

OR

*By a lumpsum payment made on or before 15 February 2026*

**MOVED: Cr Graeme Milne****SECONDED: Cr Charmaine Delaney****CARRIED.  
(R/25/047)****DISCUSSION**

Council is required to prepare and adopt a Budget for each financial year, and the subsequent three financial years by 30 June of the preceding year.

Annual Budget figures may change between the Draft stage and the final adoption of the document due to new developments. The Draft 2025/26 Budget has been updated to reflect material changes to date, as outlined below.

Further adjustments may occur in October 2025 when the September quarterly report is reviewed, following completion of the 2024/25 audit. These will include majorly - carryover of unfinished 2024/25 projects.

Once adopted, the revised October budget becomes the official budget for reporting for the remainder of the financial year.

As a result of further analysis and review post-public exhibition of the Draft Annual Budget 2025/26, the following adjustments have been made:

<b>Income Statement</b>		
<b>Operating Surplus - Proposed Budget</b>		<b>27,180,000</b>
<b>Income/expenditure</b>	<b>Detail</b>	
Rates and charges	General rates due to stage 4 valuations	(6,000)
Grants - capital	Safer Local Roads	1,750,000
Grants - capital	Birchip Cenotaph	53,000
Grants - capital	Donald Secondary levee (net)	(26,000)
Grants - capital	Tiny towns - Nandaly	50,000
Contributions - monetary	Tiny towns - Nandaly Tennis Court	12,050
Materials and services	Shire wide Airstrip Strategy	(120,000)
Materials and services	Birchip Court House repairs	(20,000)
Materials and services	Direct injection trial on footpaths	(40,000)
<b>Revised Operating Surplus in Budget for Adoption</b>		<b>28,883,000</b>
<b>Capital Works - Proposed Budget</b>		<b>44,594,000</b>
Replacement of existing toilet facility at Watchem		40,000
Secondary Donald Levee		225,000

Safer Local Roads	1,750,000
Birchip Cenotaph	53,000
Tiny Towns - Nandaly	73,000
<b>Revised Capital Works Program in Budget for Adoption</b>	<b>46,735,000</b>
<b>Balance Sheet - Cash - Proposed Budget</b>	<b>16,087,000</b>
Adjustments to operating and capital	(466,000)
<b>Revised Balance Sheet - Cash - Budget for Adoption</b>	<b>15,621,000</b>

Since the proposed draft budget was endorsed for public exhibition, minor valuation increases for commercial and industrial properties have been received (see table below). Although small, these changes require a slight adjustment to the rate in the dollar to ensure compliance with the Essential Services Commission's rate cap. Even minor breaches could result in non-compliance, so the updated rate in the dollar which has been applied is now:

Rate in Dollar	Draft	Revised	Reduced
Residential	0.486245	0.486016	0.000229
Commercial and Industrial	0.562235	0.561970	0.000265
Farming	0.223673	0.223567	0.000105

#### RELEVANT LAW

The Annual Budget has been prepared in accordance with relevant statutory requirements, including the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) and *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014* (the Regulations).

#### RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council has completed its community engagement and public exhibition process for the Draft 2025/26 Annual Budget.

#### SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct sustainability implications associated with this report; however, the Annual Budget does include planned resource allocations toward sustainability, social and environmental services and projects.

#### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

At the Council Meeting held on 8 May 2025, the Draft Annual Budget 2025/26 was endorsed for the purposes of commencing community engagement. This community engagement process completed on May 29, 2025, and submissions therein were considered by Council at its briefing held on 4 June 2025.

The following public submissions were received from the public exhibition process:

Submission No.	Submission	Actions from Council
1	Birchip Netball Club – 3 <sup>rd</sup> temporary court development	Council has determined not to allocate funding in response to this submission for FY25/26 due to the status of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> court damages and the impending insurance outcome. Council are in favour of a resolution to the issue

		and will consider the project dependent on the outcome of the insurance matter in future years.
2	Birchip Forum - Birchip Township Upgrades	Council have not allocated funding directly towards a capital project in alignment with this submission, however some minor maintenance requests have been considered in Council's maintenance programs.
3	Birchip RSL Sub-Branch - Cenotaph Upgrades	Council are in favour of this project and seek to allocate Council funding within the FY2025/26 capital budget.
4	Donald Community Precinct - Recreation Reserves Upgrade	Council have not allocated funding directly towards a capital project in alignment with this submission, however this project will be considered in future years with the intent to seek external funding in support of the total project costs required.
5	Charlton Neighbourhood House - Charlton Civic Centre	Council has not allocated funding toward this submission for the 2025/26 financial year.
7	Donald 2000 - Pool Fee Waiver	Council will seek to waive this fee for pool use.
8	Community Hall Committee - Pub Hall bin charges	Council has decided to waive this charge for the public hall garbage charge, along with other small community hall charges.
9	Birchip P12 College - Pool Hire for schools	Council has decided to waive this hire charge for Buloke schools in the 2025/26 financial year.
10	Donald History Group	No further action – as submission was already considered in the draft budget under operational activities.
11	Birchip Court House	Council has decided to consider the proposed maintenance works within the operational budget.
12	Watchem Walking Track Trees	No further action – as submission was already considered in the draft budget under operational activities.
13	Watchem Park Toilet Block	Council has decided to consider this project within the 2025/26 financial year capital budget.
14	Direct Injection trial on footpaths	Council has decided to consider this proposal within the operational budget.
15	Hard Rubbish Collection	Council will consider and implement a financially viable and targeted, staged approach to hard rubbish collection in 2025/26.
16	Sea Lake Advance – Sea Lake Airstrip	Council has decided to undertake a 'shire-wide' airstrip strategy under its 2025/26 operational activities. This project is supported by Council however requires further investigation and qualified expert recommendations prior to targeted infrastructure funding being allocated.
17	Individual Community Member - General commentary and suggestions for consideration	Council has made a note of these comments and considered changes.

## INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The 2025/26 Annual Budget identifies how Council proposes to resource strategic objectives related to continued service improvement for efficient and flexible services.

## COLLABORATION



Council have undertaken 3 detailed workshops in developing the 2025/26 Annual Budget with Council Staff.

#### **FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

The Annual Budget is for the financial year 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 and contains financial statements including:

- Comprehensive Income Statement,
- Balance Sheet,
- Statement of Changes in Equity,
- Statement of Cash flows,
- Statement of Capital Works, and
- Statement of Human Resources.

The Annual Budget also includes information about the rates and charges to be levied, the capital works program to be undertaken, the human resources required, and other information.

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

Consideration has been given to other regional, state, and national plans and policies as required throughout the preparation of this budget.

#### **COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES**

The Annual Budget provides resourcing to enable continued implementation of Council's current plans and strategies.

#### **TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS**

Council's engagement approach has provided for the receipt and consideration of submissions following the advertisement of the Draft Budget. Council Officers will respond to each person or group in relation to the matters raised in their submission.

#### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

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

**Attachments:**            1.      Attachment 8.3.2.1 - Annual Budget FY 2025-2026 Buloke Shire Council

## 8.4 ORGANISATIONAL REPORTS

### 8.4.2 COUNCIL PLAN 2025 - 2029

**Author's Title:** Director Community Development

**Directorate:** Community Development

**File No:**  
CM/13/09

**Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025**

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

#### PURPOSE

To present the Council Plan 2025-2029 for adoption by the Council.

#### SUMMARY

The Local Government Act 2020 states that a '*Council must adopt and prepare a Council Plan for a period of at least the next four financial years after a general election in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices*'.

The Council Plan 2025-2026 has been developed under the following 5 Strategic Objective areas:

1. Services supporting our communities to thrive
2. Vibrant and connected communities
3. Built and Natural environment
4. Prosperous and growing economy
5. Council leadership and engagement

Unlike previous Council Plans, the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan has not been integrated into the Council Plan 2025-2029. A separate Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029 will be developed as a stand-alone document.

#### MOTION

That Council:

1. Adopts the Council Plan 2025-2029.
2. Notes the recommended changes made to the Draft Council Plan 2025-2029 that are based on the public submissions and Council officer feedback received.
3. Provides a written response to community members and stakeholders who provided feedback on the Draft Council Plan 2025-2029.

**MOVED: Cr Bernadette Hogan**

**SECONDED: Cr Graeme Milne**

**CARRIED.**  
**(R/25/048)**

## DISCUSSION

The Council Plan 2025-2029 has been prepared following an extensive community consultation and engagement process and an analysis of other interacting strategies and plans.

The document presents the following Strategic Objectives and Strategies to guide Council for the next four years:

<b>Strategic Objective 1: Services supporting our communities to thrive</b>
Our vision is to create an environment where all members of our community enjoy good physical and mental wellbeing, and have fairer access to services and programs.
<b>Strategies:</b> 1.1 Active advocacy and participation in service networks 1.2 Accessible and responsive health and community services
<b>Strategic Objective 2: Vibrant and connected communities</b>
Our vision is for communities to celebrate their unique identities, and for community members to have opportunities locally to participate in, and connect with, others in their community.
<b>Strategies:</b> 2.1 Strengthen community activity and connections 2.2 Empower and support organisations to make a difference in their communities
<b>Strategic Objective 3: Built and natural environment</b>
Our vision is to achieve a balance between the infrastructure needs of our communities and protecting and nurturing the natural environment.
<b>Strategies:</b> 3.1 Advocate and plan for, and manage community buildings, roads and transport networks 3.2 Welcoming and accessible parks and open space 3.3 Caring for our environment
<b>Strategic Objective 4: Prosperous and growing economy</b>
Our vision is for a prosperous and growing economy providing diverse employment opportunities to sustain towns and communities, attract new residents, and support the future aspirations of our young people.
<b>Strategies:</b> 4.1 Attract innovative, creative and sustainable businesses 4.2 Invest in our young people 4.3 Promote Buloke as a great place to visit, live and invest
<b>Strategic Objective 5: Council leadership and engagement</b>
Our vision is to be responsive, innovative, engaged and accountable. We will make informed decisions based on sound evidence, be financially sustainable, and actively advocate on community priorities and aspirations.
<b>Strategies:</b> 5.1 Responsible leadership and decision making

5.2 Advocacy and partnering to deliver on priorities

5.3 Consulting with and informing our community

The Plan, its Strategic Objectives and Strategies will have an annual review, and an annual plan developed which will be reported on quarterly.

#### **RELEVANT LAW**

The Local Government Act 2020 states that a *'Council must adopt and prepare a Council Plan for a period of at least the next four financial years after a general election in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices'*.

#### **RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS**

Council decisions around other key strategic documents will interact with Council Plan 2025-2029 once adopted.

#### **OPTIONS**

Council has the option to not adopt the Council Plan 2025-2029.

#### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

The Council Plan 2025-2029 presents several strategies that will support sustainability initiatives and respond to the requirement that Local government is identified in the Climate Change Act 2017.

#### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The development of the Council Plan 2025-2029 acknowledged the engagement activities undertaken with the community, and relevant stakeholders, on a range of issues and projects over the last two years. During this time over 1,500 people shared their ideas and experiences, raised issues and provided feedback through surveys, workshops and focus groups, drop-in sessions, emails and written submissions.

This information was further explored through specific consultation undertaken between March and April 2025 with over 140 people engaged through conversations, surveys and community summits.

The Draft Council Plan 2025-2029 was considered at the Ordinary Council Meeting on 8 May 2025. In considering the draft Plan, Council resolved to endorse the Draft Council Plan 2025-2029 to go on public exhibition for feedback from Friday 9 May 2025 to Thursday 29 May 2025.

This public exhibition period was promoted on the Council website, social media, local papers and radio. In addition, hardcopies were made available for review at the Wycheproof Customer Service Centre and by request by contacting Council.

At the conclusion of the exhibition period Council had received two formal submissions from the community. The submissions were received from:

- Community member
- Dja Dja Wurrung Corporation (DJAARA)

In addition to the recommended changes in response to the public submissions received, Council officers also provided feedback on a number of minor changes and corrections to the Draft Plan.

**INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

The Council Plan 2025-2029 outlines several innovative strategies building on community feedback as well as indicators to identify areas for continuous improvement.

**COLLABORATION**

The development of the Council Plan 2025-2029 incorporates collaboration efforts undertaken with a range of local and Regional and State stakeholders.

**FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

The delivery of the Council Plan 2025-2029 will be supported through Annual Budgets adopted each year as well as the Long-Term Financial Plan. External funding will also be sought to provide additional funding, as required.

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

The Council Plan 2025-2029 acknowledges the directions and objectives of other Regional, State and National plans and policies.

**COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES**

The Council Plan 2025-2029 acknowledges the actions and objectives of other key Council plans and strategies.

**TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS**

This report follows the public exhibition of the Council Plan 2025-2029 from Friday 9 May to Thursday 29 May 2025 to enable the public to make submissions and provide feedback on the proposed strategies and directions.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

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

- Attachments:**
1. Attachment 8.4.2.1 - Summary of Public Submissions Received Draft Council Plan 2025 2029
  2. Attachment 8.4.2.2 - Buloke Council Plan v 3
  3. Attachment 8.4.2.3 - cover 2

NB: Council Plan Attachment will be published separately on Council's Website.

### 8.4.3 REVENUE AND RATING STRATEGY

<b>Author's Title:</b>	Manager Financial Strategy
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**Directorate:** Corporate and Organisational Performance

**File No:** CM/14/20

**Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025**

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

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the Revenue and Rating Strategy 2025 – 2029 to Council for adoption.

#### MOTION

That Council:

1. Adopt the Revenue and Rating Strategy 2025 - 2029.

**MOVED: Cr Stephen Barratt**

**SECONDED: Cr Bernadette Hogan**

**CARRIED.**

**(R/25/049)**

#### DISCUSSION

Council is required to develop and adopt a four-year Rating and Revenue Strategy which establishes the framework of rates and charges to be applied by Council for the purpose of distributing the rating burden across the municipality on a fair and equitable basis.

#### RELEVANT LAW

The Local Government Act 2020 requires each council to prepare a Revenue and Rating Strategy to cover a minimum period of four years following each Council election.

The Valuation of Land Act 1960 is the principal legislation in determining the property valuations of which Council's rating revenue is established. Under the Valuation of Land Act 1960, the Victorian Valuer-General conducts Council's property valuations on an annual basis.

#### OPTIONS

The Revenue and Rating Strategy outlines Council's approach to fairly distributing the rating charges and Council's other revenue sources. Under the strategy, rating payments may be continued to be made in four instalments or alternatively in a lump sum. The strategy also allows Council to consider the application of a differential, should there be any shifts in valuation in a particular category, if the overall valuation for that category exceeds  $\pm 10\%$ . Other important aspects of the strategy include -

- Council will continue to use the Capital Improvement Value (CIV) as the rating valuation method,
- Council will continue to consider the differential rating application to ensure fair and equitable distribution of rate burden when/if a category exceeds  $\pm 10\%$ ,
- Council will levy a municipal charge on the grounds that all properties should contribute to its administrative costs to maintain municipal services,
- Council will continue to levy a charge for kerbside garbage and recycling services based on full cost recovery.

The Council may initiate a review of the Strategy during its 4 year term.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Draft Revenue and Rating Strategy was endorsed for public exhibition by Council at its meeting on 8 May 2025, for the purposes of community engagement. Submissions to the draft strategy closed on 29 May 2025, and received 1 submission as detailed as below -

Submission	Council position
<i>'Page 19 - Special Rates and Charges. The description of the purpose needs to be a bit broader than that shown in paragraph 3, so as not to limit the opportunities for lateral ideas or initiatives especially for Special Rates. For example, in the past some municipalities have charged tourism and retail advertising programs through Special Rates. Thus, it could be other operational type programs with identifiable beneficiaries that get charged a Special Rate (after a very lengthy consultation process). '</i>	<i>Draft policy does include a statement that these provisions are flexible. Thus, the suggested specific wording as mentioned in the submission is not considered to be required to update the strategy.</i>

### COLLABORATION

This report has been prepared and developed internally. Council has conducted 1 detailed workshop with Councillors, officers, Council's rating valuation firm and a representative from Valuer General Victoria.

### SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

### FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The Revenue and Rating Strategy 2025 – 2029 defines Council's ability to generate the necessary revenue it requires to remain financially viable for the variety of services it provides to the community.

The strategy considers and aligns closely with Council's four year Council Plan and Annual Budget. It considers policy goals and the social, economic, and environmental benefits of subsidies and discounts which may be available to it.

It also identifies and manages financial and revenue-related risks.

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

None Identified

**COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES**

Financial policies and strategic plans, including the Revenue and Rating Strategy, Financial Plan and Annual Budget, form part of Council's integrated strategic planning and reporting framework. These and other strategies and policies will be considered by Council in the period leading up to 30 October 2025.

**TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS**

Council has ensured transparency in developing this policy and decisions made around it.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

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

<b><i>Attachments:</i></b>	1. Attachment 8.4.3.1 - Revenue and Rating Strategy 2025-2029
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## 8.5 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

### Cr Charmaine Delaney May - June 2025

07/05/25	Briefing Berriwillock
08/05/25	Special Meeting Wycheproof
09/05/25	Donald Art Show
13/05/25	Buloke Shire Council Emergency Management Meeting
13/05/25	Watchem Progress Association
14/05/25	NGSC Transmission Forum
14/05/25	Buloke Shire Council Audit Risk Committee Meeting
14/05/25	Renewable Statement from Mayor Getley & Buloke Shire Council
21/05/25	Council Meeting
22/05/25	VLGA Course (Civility in Public Life)
23/05/25	Donald High School Fete
28/05/25	Donald Community Precinct Meeting
28/05/25	Donald 2000 Meeting
04/06/25	Councillor Briefing in Culgoa
14/06/25	Farwell for Sargent Nigel MacDonald & wife Sue from Victoria Police

### Cr Bernadette Hogan June 2025

28/05/2025	North Central LLEN AGM & Stakeholder Event – Charlton
02/06/2025	Sea Lake Advance Meeting – Sea Lake
04/06/2025	Culgoa Briefing & Budget Submissions – Culgoa
10/06/2025	Nullawil Progress Meeting - Nullawil
11/06/2025	Minister D'Ambrosio Meeting – Wycheproof
12/06/2025	Cubico Information Session - Woomelang
18/06/2025	Council Meeting – Wycheproof

**Cr Milne** – Question from Donald Family Precinct Committee, who is responsible for the defibrillator policy in the Family Precinct building, as well as the Fire Extinguisher policy agreement?  
**to be tabled**

#### **MOTION**

That Council write a letter of congratulations to Mr Mick Giddings of Wycheproof in recognition of his recent receipt of an OAM award.

**MOVED: Cr Stephen Barratt**

**SECONDED: Cr Bernadette Hogan**

**CARRIED.**

**(R/25/050)**

## **9 OTHER BUSINESS**

### **9.1 NOTICES OF MOTION**

Nil.

### **9.2 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

**Cr Barratt** – Wycheproof Recreation Reserve, if I could please have an update on what is happening to the funding from Council.

**Response CEO** - There is an allocation in the current budget as well as next year's budget, which Council adopted for us to provide to each of our Recreation Reserves around the Shire.

I'm happy for the relevant director to perhaps prepare a briefing for Councillors and we can bring that to a future briefing in the coming months.

**Cr Milne** –

1. Birchip Forum – Police shortage in Buloke – have requested if Council could please advocate on behalf of the Shire and towns on the shortage of Police officers in Buloke, to try and speed up the placement of officers.

2. Birchip Forum - Sunraysia Highway, Cumming Ave, Wycheproof Rd 5 ways intersection, in Birchip – has asked if this is still a priority with Council? Cr Milne advised that Sunraysia Highway Committee has listed as a first or second priority.

**Response CEO** – Yes this is a priority and still remains a part of our advocacy strategy, and of course, with the new Council plan we are due to update that strategy. That is a piece of work that will happen shortly. Any opportunity we get to meet with Vic Roads, Department of Transport and Planning, we do remind them of the necessity of that intersection to be upgraded. Because it has been designed and looked at a number of times, however the funding hasn't been forthcoming to this point.

3. Library Policy review – Clarification around procedure after adoption of service review. Can you please clarify if it is still to go out for community consultation.

**Response CEO** - Yes, we did endorse the service review that was on library services and contained within that service review was a number of recommendations.

The next step in that process would be for officers to go away and do a piece of work with Council which will be looking at each of those recommendations. Those that have merit, we would look at costing them and coming back with a list of priorities for Councillors then to have another look at and also at the same time we would be consulting with the Community as well so that we can bring through the Council as a fully informed view on what we think we should be doing next with that service.

### **9.3 URGENT BUSINESS**

Nil.

### **9.4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Nil

## **10 MEETING CLOSE**

Meeting closed at 7:51pm

## **NEXT MEETING**

The next Meeting of Council will be held on Wednesday 16 July in the Wycheproof Hall Supper Room 7pm.