2026 - 36 ASSET PLAN
PREPARED FOR BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

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	Synopsis: *Lifecycle Asset Management Plan for Council's transport assets.*

CONSULTANTS DISTRIBUTION SCHEDULE

Version No.	Date	Distribution	Reference
1.0	15/05/2026	Buloke Shire Council	Draft
1.1	01/06/2026	Buloke Shire Council	Revised Draft
1.2	11/08/2026	Buloke Shire Council	Inclusion of Executive Summary and Key Changes

SCHEDULE OF ADOPTION

Version No.	Date	Comment	Reference

Disclaimer and Information Statement

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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 Executive Summary

The Asset Plan and Financial Plan are intrinsically linked and together provide Council with a framework for balancing service delivery, infrastructure sustainability and long-term financial capacity. The Asset Plan identifies the infrastructure investment required to maintain Council's $531 million asset portfolio and support community service expectations, while the Financial Plan establishes the funding parameters within which these asset investments can be delivered.

This Asset Plan has been developed in accordance with the affordability assessments and financial projections contained within the Financial Plan 2026-2036. Both Plans recognise the challenges associated with managing a large and ageing rural asset base in a rate-capped environment, including increasing maintenance costs, growing renewal obligations and reliance on external funding. As a result, Council's priority is to direct available resources towards maintaining and renewing existing infrastructure to support essential services and minimise long-term risk.

The Financial Plan forecasts increasing financial pressures over the longer term and highlights the importance of disciplined asset investment, service level reviews, operational efficiencies and asset rationalisation where appropriate. In response, the Asset Plan adopts a risk-based approach to prioritising renewal investment, while continuing to advocate for State and Federal funding to help address infrastructure renewal challenges and support community outcomes. Annual reviews of both Plans will ensure that asset investment priorities remain aligned with Council's financial capacity and evolving community needs.

This Asset Plan has been prepared as an update to the Asset Plan 2025-2035 adopted by Council in October 2025. While the strategic direction, asset management principles and community priorities remain largely unchanged, several important changes have occurred which have influenced the assumptions, forecasts and priorities contained within this Plan. Please refer to Section 8.5 for a detailed assessment of this Asset Plan update.

The most notable changes are:

- Reduction in total forecast expenditure from $222.0M to $205.1M (-$16.9M).
- Reduction in planned renewal expenditure from $104.8M to $80.6M (-$24.2M).
- Removal or substantial reduction of acquisition and upgrade funding.
- Increased recurrent expenditure requirements.

The 2026-2036 Asset Plan represents a materially more constrained financial position than the adopted 2025-2035 Asset Plan.

Key Risks Emerging from the Draft

Risk	Comment
Reduced asset renewal	Renewal spending drops by $24.2M despite ageing asset base.
Ongoing transport liability	Roads remain the largest sustainability challenge.
Heavy reliance on maintenance	Increased recurrent expenditure may defer rather than solve renewal issues.
Limited growth investment	Very little funding available for upgrades or new assets.
Stormwater knowledge gap remains	Condition data remains limited and future liabilities may increase.

While the strategic direction remains unchanged, the draft reduces total investment by approximately $17 million, reduces asset renewal expenditure by approximately $24 million, and significantly limits funding for new and upgraded assets.

The 2026-2036 Asset Plan places greater emphasis on maintaining existing infrastructure within current affordability constraints, while deferring a portion of future renewal activity. This has the effect of increasing long-term infrastructure risk, particularly within the transport network, and reinforces Council's ongoing reliance on external funding and advocacy to address future asset renewal requirements.

2 Introduction

2.1 Our Shire

The Buloke Shire is located in the north west of Victoria between 210 and 360 kilometres from Melbourne.

It is bounded by both the Mildura and Swan Hill Rural Cities in the north, Gannawarra and Loddon Shires in the east, Northern Grampians Shire in the south and Yarriambiack Shire in the west.

Buloke is a predominantly rural area. The main townships are Birchip, Charlton, Donald, Sea Lake and Wycheproof. The Shire also comprises of the smaller townships of Berriwillock, Culgoa,

Nandaly, Nullawil and Watchem. Buloke encompasses a total land area of 8,000 square kilometres and is approximately 140 kilometres long and 60 kilometres wide.

Land is used largely for agriculture, particularly grain (wheat, oats and barley) production and sheep grazing.

2.2 What is Asset Management?

The practice of 'asset management' refers to the range of coordinated activities that monitor and care for physical assets. These activities cover practices such as planning, inspections and maintenance, replacement, upgrade, improvement, or sometimes disposal of an asset.

Asset Management is a structured approach to aligning strategic planning with assets and service delivery. It answers the following fundamental questions:

- What assets does the community need now and in the future?
- How can we best manage the assets to serve the community?

2.3 The Assets We Manage

Infrastructure is at the heart of everything we do. As infrastructure assets help provide services over extended periods of time, the choices we make today can impact the quality of life for future generations.

We manage a portfolio of infrastructure assets that have a combined value of **$531 million**. These assets have been established and invested in progressively over many years, by multiple generations.

The standard to which our assets are maintained and the extent to which they are improved are a key consideration in setting and delivering on our Community Vision and Council Plan.

2.4 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

2.5 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 2025.

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

3 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.

3.1 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.

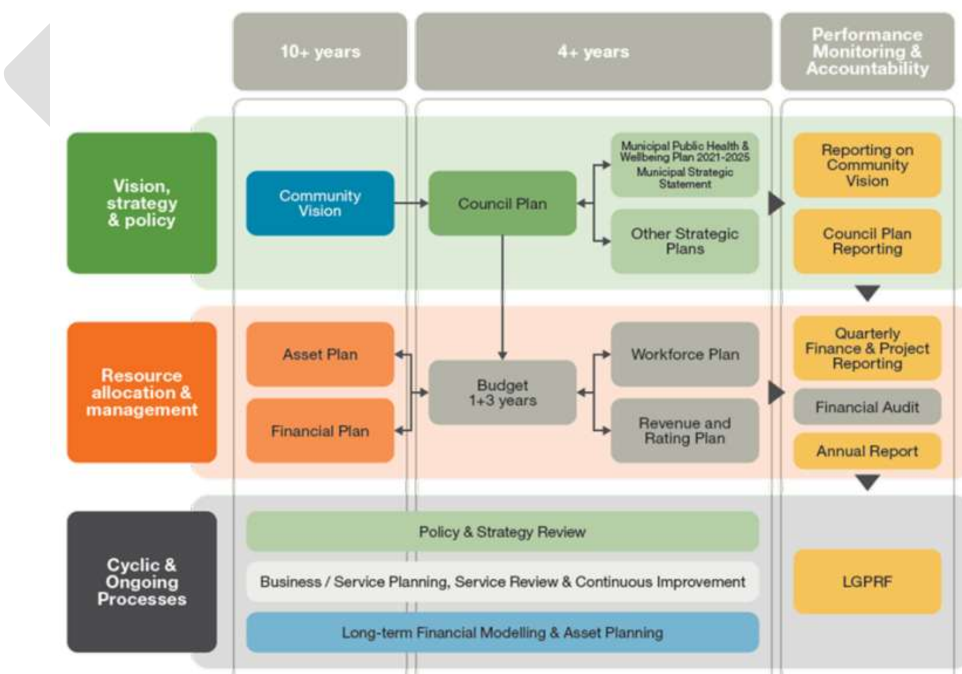


Figure 1 - Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework

3.2 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.

4 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.

Buildings

Total Replacement Cost: **$111 million**
Includes: 484 buildings and minor structures.

Current Average Condition: ● ***Fair***

Open Space

Total Replacement Cost: **$20.2 million**
Includes: Sporting fields, playing courts, playgrounds, park furniture, lighting, etc

Current Average Condition: ● ***Fair***

Stormwater Drainage

Total Replacement Cost: **$8.2 million**
Includes: 33 km of underground pipes, 1,113 drainage pits

Current Average Condition: ● ***Fair****

We do not have a structured condition assessment for stormwater assets. Condition information shown here is based on what we know about asset age.

Transport

Total Replacement Cost: **$392 million**
Includes: 1,029 km sealed roads, 4,305 km unsealed roads, 63 km of footpaths, 35 bridges and major culverts.

Current Average Condition: ● ***Good***

Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
New or near new	Signs of minor wear and tear	Needs minor work	Needs major work	Needs replacing soon

5 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

5.1 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 and legal requirements and needs. These inform our key directions which helps us to develop our asset management policies, strategies, and plans.

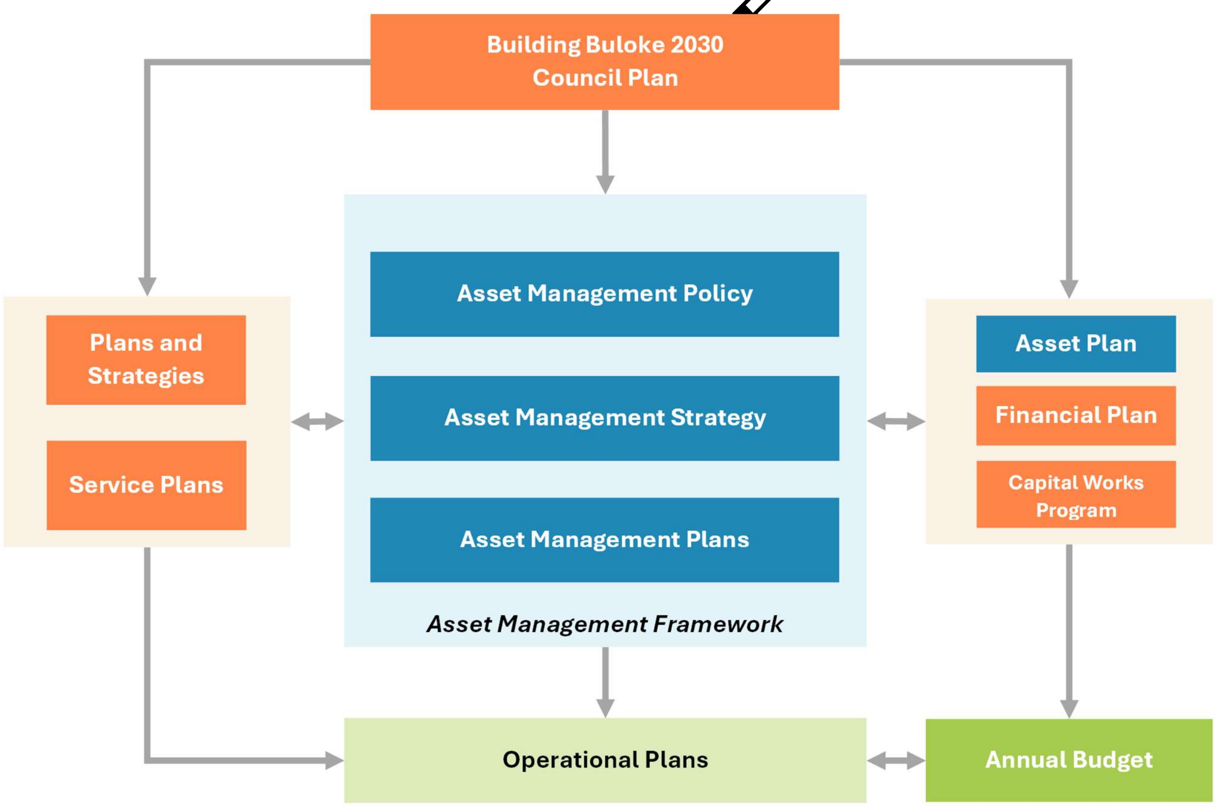


Figure 2 - Asset Management Framework

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.

5.2 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.

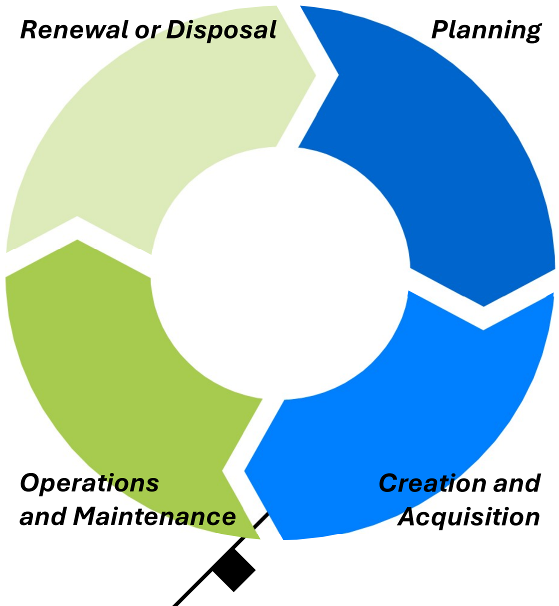
5.3 Lifecycle Management

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.

5.4 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.

5.5 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.

5.6 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.

6 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.

7 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.

7.1 Community Panel Outcomes

7.1.1 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 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.

7.1.2 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.

7.1.3 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.

8 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.

8.1 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.

8.2 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.

8.3 Financial Summary

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

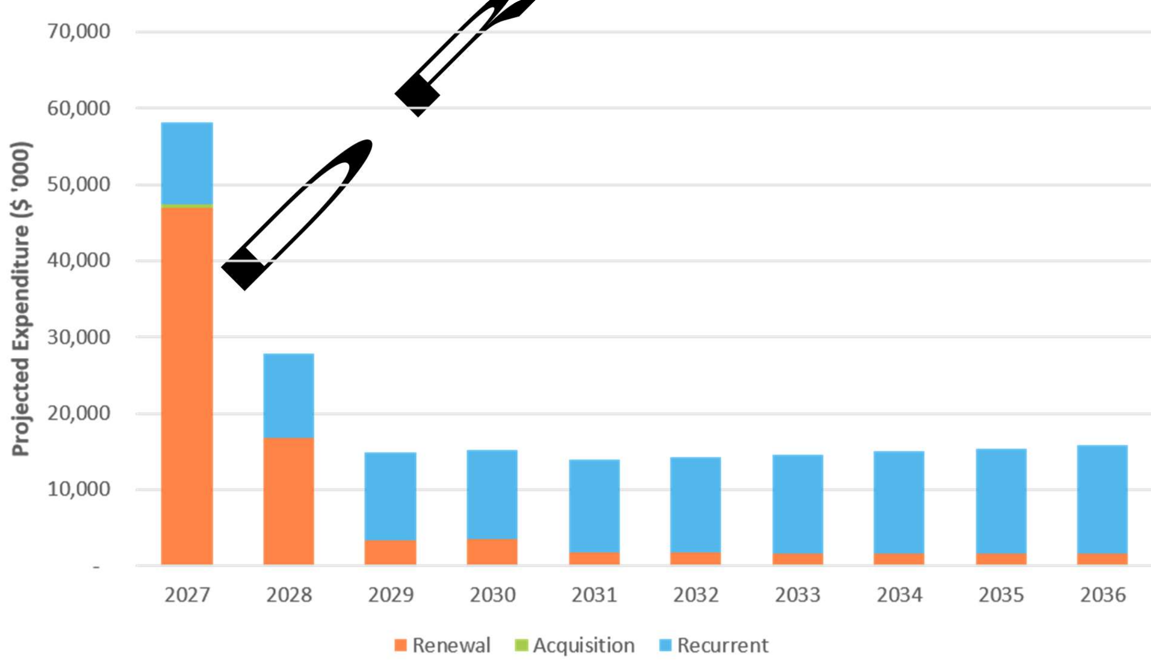


Figure 3 - Projected Total Asset Expenditure

This is further summarised in Table 2. which shows the total planned expenditure related to renewal, growth, and recurrent activities associated with our infrastructure assets over the next 10 years.

Asset Class	Renewal ($'000)	Acquisition ($'000)	Recurrent ($'000)	Total ($'000)
Transport	77,704	-	65,796	143,500
Buildings	700	-	15,663	16,363
Open Space	1,695	450	41,754	43,899
Stormwater Drainage	465	-	864	1,329
Total	**80,564**	**450**	**124,076**	**205,090**

Table 2 - Forecast Expenditure by Asset Class

We plan to spend an estimated total of **$205.1 million** on our assets over the 10 years. Of this:

- Around **39%** ($80.5 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 $49.6 million. This is for the repair of critical infrastructure that was damaged during recent flood events that have impacted our shire.
- Around **61%** ($124 million) relates to caring for our assets through ongoing maintenance and other activities to make sure that they are safe and functional.
- Our current financial position significantly limits our capacity to invest in new and improved infrastructure, with only modest expenditure currently forecast for these activities over the next 10 years. As a result, we remain reliant on external grants and other funding sources to deliver new and upgraded assets and will continue to strongly advocate for investment in the region to support future growth, connectivity and community outcomes.

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.

8.4 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.

Over the next 10 years, we project that approximately **$104.3 million** will be required to renew our infrastructure assets.

Current renewal funding available through our Financial Plan totals **$30.9 million**[1] over the same period, meaning renewal needs are expected to exceed available funding. The apparent surplus in renewal funding shown in 2027 reflects the carry-forward of budget allocations from the previous financial year rather than an ongoing increase in funding capacity.

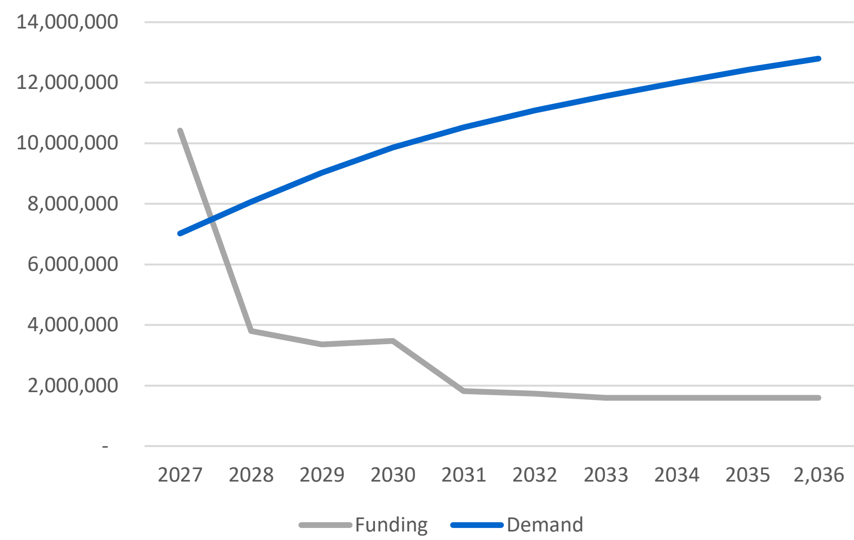


Figure 4 - Asset Renewal Projections

This does not mean all assets will fail or require immediate replacement. Rather, it highlights the growing challenge of maintaining ageing infrastructure within a constrained financial environment and the need to carefully prioritise investment over time.

Our focus will be on directing available funding towards the highest priority renewal needs, managing risk, and ensuring assets continue to provide safe and reliable services to the community. We will continue to refine our understanding of asset condition, performance and community expectations so that investment decisions are informed, targeted and financially sustainable.

To help respond to this challenge, we will continue to:

- Improve asset data, condition information and renewal modelling to support better long-term decision making.
- Seek efficiencies in the way we maintain, renew and deliver infrastructure projects.
- Review procurement approaches and contracts to maximise value for money.
- Advocate for external funding and grant opportunities to support infrastructure investment.
- Explore opportunities to adapt, consolidate or rationalise assets where appropriate.
- Work with partners and stakeholders to identify innovative and sustainable service delivery approaches.

Through these actions, we aim to balance community expectations, asset performance and long-term financial sustainability while continuing to provide safe, fit-for-purpose infrastructure for 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.

8.5 Key Changes from the 2025-2035 Asset Plan and Implications for Asset Management

This Asset Plan has been prepared as a review and update of the Asset Plan 2025-2035 adopted by Council in October 2025. The review incorporates updated asset information, revised financial forecasts, updated asset valuations and a reassessment of Council's long-term infrastructure funding requirements. While the strategic direction, asset management principles and community priorities remain largely unchanged, several important changes have influenced the forecasts and priorities contained within this Plan.

8.5.1 Key Changes

Since the adoption of the previous Asset Plan:

- The total value of Council's infrastructure portfolio has increased from approximately $529 million to $531 million following updated asset valuations and improved asset information.
- Forecast infrastructure expenditure over the next ten years has reduced from approximately $222.0 million to $205.1 million following updated affordability assessments and long-term financial projections.
- Forecast renewal expenditure has reduced from $104.8 million to $80.6 million. This reflects Council's forecast funding capacity rather than a reduction in future asset renewal needs.
- Forecast recurrent expenditure has increased from $113.8 million to $124.1 million, reflecting increasing costs associated with maintaining and operating an ageing asset portfolio.
- Forecast expenditure on upgrades and new assets has reduced, reinforcing Council's commitment to prioritising existing infrastructure and service sustainability.

These changes reflect the increasing challenges associated with managing a large rural infrastructure network in an environment of constrained revenue growth, rising costs and increasing infrastructure renewal requirements.

8.5.2 Implications for Asset Management

The revised forecasts highlight an increasing gap between the long-term investment required to renew Council's infrastructure and the funding currently available through Council's Financial Plan. As a result, Council's approach to asset management must continue to focus on balancing service outcomes, affordability, risk and asset performance.

If renewal requirements continue to exceed available funding over the longer term, Council may experience:

- Increased numbers of ageing assets remaining in service beyond their planned intervention points.
- Greater reliance on maintenance and operational expenditure to preserve asset functionality.
- Higher lifecycle costs associated with extending the life of deteriorating assets.
- Increasing risk of service disruptions, asset failures or declining service performance.
- Reduced capacity to invest in new or upgraded infrastructure without external funding support.
- Greater pressure to prioritise investment towards assets that support critical services and community outcomes.

These challenges are particularly significant for transport infrastructure, which continues to represent the largest proportion of Council's asset portfolio and future renewal demand.

8.5.3 Managing the Challenge

To respond to these challenges, Council will continue to strengthen its asset management practices by:

Improving Asset Knowledge
Council will continue investing in asset condition assessments, data quality improvement, lifecycle modelling and risk-based planning to ensure decisions are supported by reliable information and evidence.

Prioritising Renewal and Risk
Greater emphasis will be placed on directing investment towards assets that:

- Support critical services.
- Present the highest risk.
- Deliver the greatest community benefit.
- Provide the best long-term value for money.

This approach supports responsible stewardship of assets while operating within available funding constraints.

Reviewing Service Levels and Asset Provision
Council will continue to review asset portfolios, service levels and utilisation patterns to ensure infrastructure remains aligned with community needs and financial capacity. This may include:

- Consolidation of facilities.
- Shared-use asset arrangements.
- Repurposing of existing infrastructure.
- Rationalisation of assets that no longer support strategic service outcomes.

Maintaining Long-Term Financial Sustainability
Council's financial projections indicate increasing pressure on future operating results as the cost of maintaining and renewing infrastructure continues to grow. This requires ongoing integration between asset management planning and financial planning to ensure investment decisions remain affordable and sustainable over the long term.

Advocacy and External Funding
Council will continue advocating for State and Federal Government investment, disaster recovery funding and infrastructure grants to assist in addressing renewal requirements and reducing the financial burden on local ratepayers.

Looking Forward
Council remains committed to delivering safe, reliable and fit-for-purpose infrastructure that supports the wellbeing, prosperity and resilience of the Buloke community. Achieving this objective will require continued focus on asset renewal prioritisation, service sustainability, risk management and evidence-based decision making.

Through responsible stewardship and integrated financial and asset planning, Council will continue to work towards maintaining infrastructure that meets community needs while managing the financial challenges associated with an ageing and extensive rural asset base.

9 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.

9.1 Reporting

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

9.2 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.

A key aspect to achieving continuous improvement in the management of Council's assets is the progression and development of key strategies that articulate what assets Council has, what assets are required to service our community and what investment is required to provide necessary assets. This strategy work is underway with Council committing to and undertaking the development of;

- Heavy Plant and Fleet Strategy
- Aerodrome Strategy
- Disposal of Assets Strategy
- Key Asset Class Asset Management Plans

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.

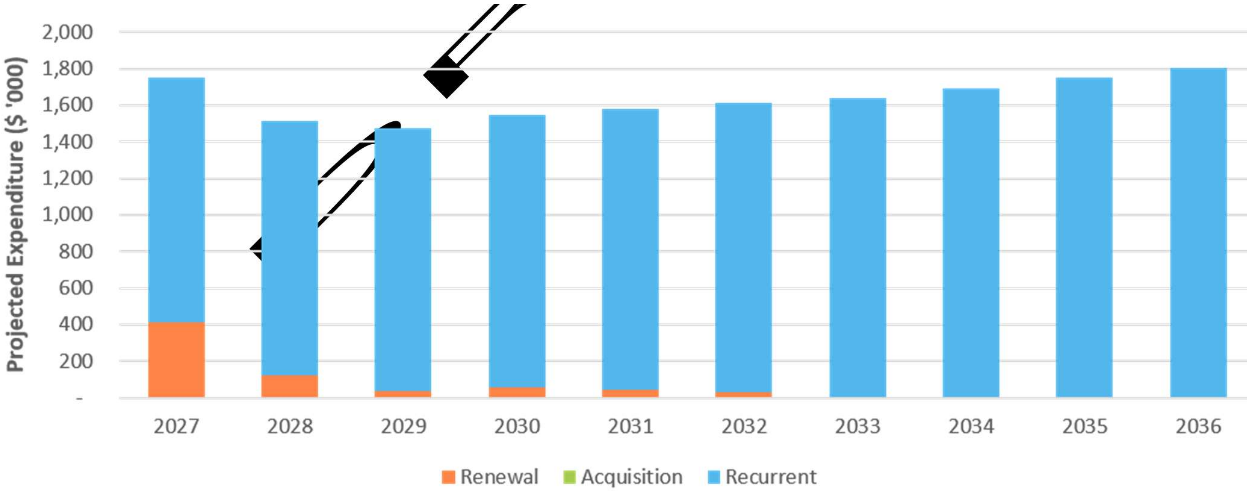
Portfolio Value	This Portfolio Includes	
$111 million	484	Council buildings and minor structures
	Our portfolio of buildings incorporates public toilets, libraries, swimming pools, club houses, community centres and halls, saleyards, etc. Other minor structures such as shelters, shade sails, rotundas, etc are also included in this portfolio.	

Current Condition

The current condition of the building asset portfolio based on our most recent condition assessment is considered to be fair with a small number of buildings in poor and very poor condition. These buildings will be priortised 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	1,342	1,389	1,439	1,486	1,535	1,586	1,638	1,693	1,749	1,807	15,663
Renewal	412	124	37	58	43	27	-	-	-	-	700
Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1,754	1,513	1,475	1,544	1,578	1,613	1,638	1,693	1,749	1,807	16,363

Transport

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

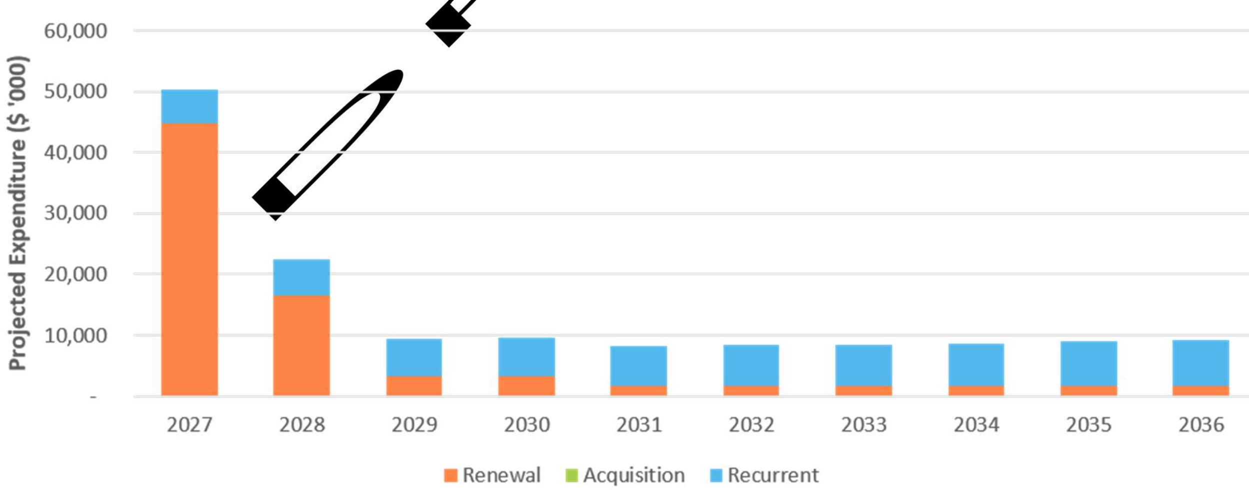
Portfolio Value	This Portfolio Includes	
$392 million	**1,029 km**	Sealed Roads
This will be adjusted in future Financial Statements to account for the value of impaired assets resulting from recent flood damage	**4,305 km**	Unsealed Roads
	35	Bridges and Major Culverts
	63 km	Footpaths
	102 km	Kerb and channel

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 2027 and 2028 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	5,640	5,850	6,068	6,261	6,460	6,665	6,877	7,096	7,323	7,556	**65,796**
Renewal	44,755	16,528	3,282	3,342	1,721	1,676	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	**77,704**
Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**-**
Total	**50,395**	**22,378**	**9,350**	**9,603**	**8,181**	**8,341**	**8,477**	**8,696**	**8,923**	**9,156**	**143,500**

Open Space

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

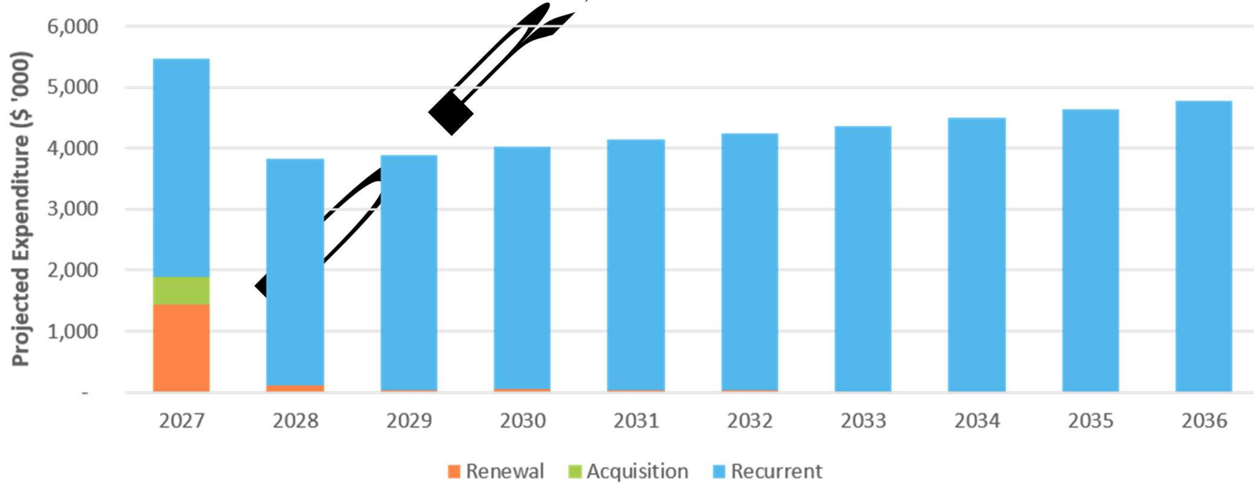
Portfolio Value	This Portfolio Includes	
$20.2 million	**388 ha**	Area of recreation open space managed
	31	Playgrounds
	5	Recreation reserves
	7	Tennis facilities
	10	Netball courts

Current Condition

Our open space assets are providing a resonable 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	3,587	3,723	3,864	3,982	4,104	4,230	4,360	4,494	4,632	4,775	**41,754**
Renewal	1,441	109	32	51	38	24	-	-	-	-	**1,695**
Acquisition	450	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**450**
Total	**5,478**	**3,832**	**3,896**	**4,034**	**4,142**	**4,254**	**4,360**	**4,494**	**4,632**	**4,775**	**43,899**

Stormwater Drainage

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

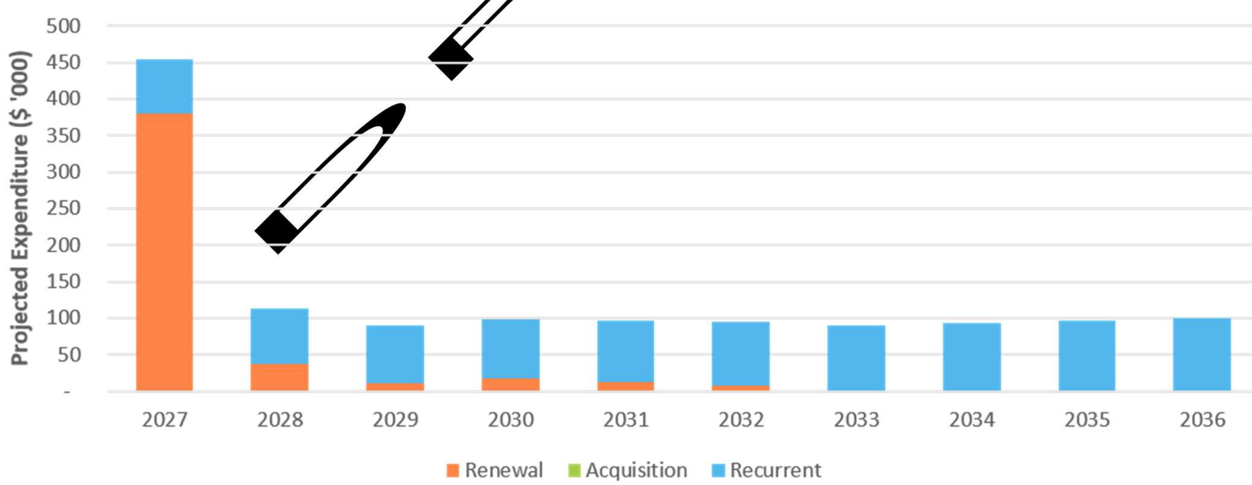
Portfolio Value	This Portfolio Includes	
$8.2 million	33 km	Underground drainage pipes
	1,113	Stormwater drainage pits
	Continued assessment of our stormwater assets will improve the quality of information we currently have about them.	

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	74	76	79	82	85	87	91	94	97	100	**864**
Renewal	380	36	11	17	13	8	-	-	-	-	**465**
Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**-**
Total	**454**	**113**	**90**	**99**	**97**	**95**	**91**	**94**	**97**	**100**	**1,329**