



Council Meeting **Agenda**

Wednesday 16
September 2026

Commencing at 7:00pm

Wycheproof Supper Room
367 Broadway, Wycheproof

Daniel McLoughlan
Chief Executive Officer



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1 COUNCIL WELCOME AND STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

WELCOME

The Mayor Cr Graeme Milne will welcome all in attendance.

STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Mayor Cr Graeme Milne will acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we are meeting and pay our respects to their Elders and to the Elders from other communities who may be here today.

2 RECEIPT OF APOLOGIES

3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 19 August 2026.

4 REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

5 DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

In accordance with Section 130 (2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* Councillors who have a conflict of interest in respect of a matter being considered at this meeting, must

- a) Disclose the conflict of interest in the manner required by the Council's Governance Rules 2022; and
- b) Exclude themselves from the decision-making process in relation to that matter, including any discussion or vote on the matter at any Council meeting or delegated committee, and any action in relation to the matter.

Disclosure must occur immediately before the matter is considered or discussed.

6 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

7 PROCEDURAL ITEMS

7.1 GOVERNANCE REPORT - SEPTEMBER 2026

Author's Title: Acting Manager Governance

Directorate: Corporate and Organisational Performance

File No: GO/05/04

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide a single reporting platform for a range of statutory compliance, transparency, and governance matters.

The Governance report is prepared as a monthly report to the Council.

The Governance report includes:

- Record of Councillor Assemblies and Meetings held.
- Record of Councillor Briefings, at Attachment 7.1.1, 7.1.2 and 7.1.3 to this report.
- Chief Executive Officer Activity Report.
- The Status of Actions Report for Council resolutions at Attachment 7.1.4 to this report.
- Contracts awarded in accordance with the increased Financial Delegation provided to the Chief Executive Officer.
- The summary of minutes from the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held Wednesday, 9 September 2026 at Attachment 7.1.5 to this report.
- Free Green Waste.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the Record of Councillor Assemblies and Meetings held.
2. Notes the Record of Councillor Briefings, at Attachment 7.1.1, 7.1.2 and 7.1.3 to this report.
3. Notes the Chief Executive Officer Activity Report.
4. Notes the Status of Actions Report for Council resolutions at Attachment 7.1.4 to this report.
5. Notes there were no contracts entered into for this period, in accordance with the increased Financial Delegation provided to the Chief Executive Officer of \$1,500,000 (excluding GST).
6. Notes the summary of minutes from the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held Wednesday, 9 September at Attachment 7.1.5 to this report.
7. Provides free access to Council's landfill and transfer stations from Saturday, 3 October 2026 to Sunday, 1 November 2026 for the purpose of disposing green waste in preparation for the annual fire season.
8. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to extend the free access period for the purpose of disposing of green waste based on forecast weather conditions if required.

KEY POINTS/ISSUES

The Governance Report is prepared as a monthly report to Council to provide a single reporting platform for a range of statutory compliance, transparency, and governance matters.

In accordance with best practice principles of good governance practice, and to ensure compliance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*, this report incorporates matters including records of meetings held, organised or hosted by Council, items relating to the delegation of Council powers and duties, and policy and strategy reporting.

Record of Councillor Assemblies and Meetings held from 6 August 2026 to 2 September 2026

Records of matters discussed at meetings organised or hosted by Buloke Shire Council that involve Councillors and Council officers are kept in accordance with the Governance Rules.

Meeting records must include attendees, including organisations represented by external presenters; the title of matters discussed; and any conflicts of interests disclosed and whether the declarant of a conflict of interest excused themselves from the meeting.

Date/Time/Venue	Councillor Attendees	Meeting Type
12 August 2026 4:30pm <i>Online</i>	Cr Milne, Cr Getley, Cr Barratt, Cr Stafford, Cr Delaney	Additional Councillor Briefing
13 August 2026 5:30pm <i>Online</i>	Cr Milne, Cr Getley, Cr Barratt, Cr Stafford, Cr Delaney	CEO and Councillor Only Time
19 August 2026 1:00pm <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>	Cr Milne, Cr Hogan, Cr Getley, Cr Barratt, Cr Stafford, Cr Delaney	Strategic Councillor Briefing
19 August 2026 7:00pm <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>	Cr Milne, Cr Hogan, Cr Getley, Cr Barratt, Cr Stafford, Cr Delaney	Council Meeting
25 August 2026 1:00pm <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>	Cr Milne, Cr Hogan, Cr Getley, Cr Barratt, Cr Stafford, Cr Delaney	CEO Mid-Term Review
2 September 2026 5:00pm <i>Donald Council Chambers</i>	Cr Milne, Cr Hogan, Cr Getley, Cr Barratt, Cr Delaney	Councillor Briefing

Chief Executive Officer Activity Report from 6 August 2026 to 2 September 2026

Record of meetings attended by the Chief Executive Officer on behalf of the Buloke Shire Council. Activity record includes the date, activity and location.

Daniel McLoughlan – Chief Executive Officer (6 August 2026 – 2 September 2026)		
Date	Activity	Location
06/08/2026	Victorian Advocacy Network Meeting 3	Online
06/08/2026	Dinner with Xavier Csar, on behalf of Matt Carrick, Secretary, DJSIR	Mildura
07/08/2026	Resource Readiness Nine Council Engagement and Governance Framework	Online
07/08/2026	Emergency Management: Standing Water Risk	Online
10/08/2026	Gold FM Radio	Radio
10/08/2026	Mallee Regional Partnership Meeting #55	Online

11/08/2026	VP Minerals Update <i>(Director Community Development; Director Infrastructure and Delivery attended on behalf of CEO)</i>	Wycheproof
12/08/2026	NGSC Transmission Forum <i>(Proud Mary Consulting attended on behalf of CEO)</i>	Online
12/08/2026	Additional Councillor Briefing	Online
12/08/2026	GWMT Dinner	Sea Lake
13/08/2026	Loddon Campaspe Councils CEOs - Online Meeting	Online
13/08/2026	BSC IMT - Situation Update	Online
13/08/2026	WSMCA CEO Meeting	Horsham
13/08/2026	BSC IMT - Weather Event SitRep	Online
13/08/2026	CEO and Councillor Only Time	Online
13/08/2026	Loddon Campaspe CEO Network Catch Up	Bendigo
14/08/2026	BSC IMT SitRep - August Weather Event and Flooding	Online
14/08/2026	BSC IMT SitRep - August Weather Event and Flooding	Online
18/08/2026	VNI West CRG Meeting #17	Online
19/08/2026	Joint State/Local Government CEO Forum	Online
19/08/2026	Strategic Councillor Briefing	Wycheproof
19/08/2026	Council Meeting	Wycheproof
20/08/2026	GWM Tourism Pre-Board Meeting Discussion	Online
20/08/2026	Robin Letts OAM Funeral	Donald
24/08/2026	Gold FM Radio	Radio
25/08/2026	CEO Mid-Term Review	Wycheproof
25/08/2026	Meeting with Energy Commissioner and Team	Online
25/08/2026	Donald Family Precinct (Recreation Reserve) Meeting	Donald
26/08/2026	Buloke Shire Council / DEECA Loddon Mallee Catch Up (monthly)	Online
27/08/2026	Loddon Campaspe Councils CEOs	Online
28/08/2026	Resource Ready Discussion with HRCC, BSC, YSC and RDV	Online
31/08/2026	Gold FM Radio	Radio
31/08/2026	Charlton Community Bank: 2026 Community Investment Night	Charlton
02/09/2026	LUAA Information Session - Local Government Executives	Horsham
02/09/2026	Councillor Briefing	Donald

Status of Action of past Council Meeting Resolutions

To provide Council with a list of the Status of Action of Council resolutions outstanding for completion of action since the last Council Meeting.

Exercise of Delegated Authority

Council delegates powers, duties and functions to the Chief Executive Officer to support the efficient operation and delivery of Council services.

The Chief Executive Officer has been delegated authority by Council to award contracts up to \$300,000 (exclusive of GST) through an Instrument of Delegation made on 29 October 2025 (S5 Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer).

Council at its meeting held Wednesday, 17 December 2025 resolved as follows:

That Council:

- 1) *Increase the Financial delegation provided to the Chief Executive Officer from \$300,000 (excluding GST) to \$1,500,000 (excluding GST).*
- 2) *Authorised the Chief Executive Officer to exercise the increased financial delegation of \$1,500,000 (excluding GST) for the procurement of goods, services and works only when the following conditions are satisfied:*
 - a. *Contracts and works are directly related to projects associated with the 2022 and 2023 flood events, namely:*
 - i. *AGRN 1037 (October 2022 Flooding Event).*
 - ii. *AGRN 1096 (December 2023 Flooding Event).*
 - b. *Council Flood Support Fund Approved Works Schedule (AGRN 1037, AGRN 1096, AGRN 1108).*
 - c. *Funded flood studies and Laser imaging Detection and Ranging projects (funded due to the 2022 and 2023 flood events).*
- 3) *Receive a report at the next available Council Meeting clearly identifying each Contract awarded via exercising of the temporary increased financial delegation.*
- 4) *Authorises the temporary increase of the CEO financial delegation up to 30 June 2027, or earlier by resolution of Council.*

There have been no contracts awarded in the past month.

Audit and Risk Committee Minutes

A summary of the minutes from the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held Wednesday, 9 September 2026 is provided at Attachment 7.1.5.

Free Green Waste

Council has previously endorsed an adjustment to the timeframes relating to the current Free Green Waste period, which occurs annually in October ahead of the Fire Season at all Council Waste sites.

In line with Council's resolution at its meeting held Wednesday, 15 October 2025, a Free Green Waste Period will be conducted from 3 October 2026 to 1 November 2026 inclusive.

For a number of years, a Free Green Waste Period has been offered to support the community in Fire Prevention activities. Rather than this being offered across the month of October, these dates provide access to free green waste disposal across five weekends as per the 2025 recommendation.

Attachments:

1. Attachment 7.1.1 - Additional Councillor Briefing Record - 12 August 2026
2. Attachment 7.1.2 - Strategic Councillor Briefing Record - 19 August 2026
3. Attachment 7.1.3 - Councillor Briefing Record - 2 September 2026
4. Attachment 7.1.4 - Council Resolution SOA - Tabled 16 September 2026
5. Attachment 7.1.5 - Summary of Minutes - Audit and Risk Committee September 2026



Councillor Briefing - Record

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

Date:	Wednesday, 12 August 2026	Time:	4:00pm
Location:	Online - via Teams		

NO.	MATTER FOR DISCUSSION
1	Councillor Only Time (4:00pm – 4:30pm)
1.1	Welcome: Cr Graeme Milne welcomed all in attendance.
1.2	Apologies: - Cr Bernadette Hogan
1.3	Guests: - Nil.
1.4	Attendees: <u>Councillors:</u> Cr Graeme Milne; Cr Stephen Barratt; Cr Bruce Stafford; Cr Alan Getley; Cr Charmaine Delaney <u>Officers:</u> Daniel McLoughlan – Chief Executive Officer; Jenna Allan – Director Corporate and Organisational Performance; Sarah Kernohan – Director Community Development; Travis Fitzgibbon – Director Infrastructure and Delivery; Rory White – Acting Manager Community Partnerships; Anthony Smith – Acting Manager Governance; Georgia Brown – Senior Executive Assistant
1.5	Declaration of Pecuniary and Conflicts of Interest - Nil.
2	Briefing Reports
2.1	Future of Community Grant Program – <i>Rory White and Sarah Kernohan (4:30pm)</i>
2.2	Appointment of new Independent Member Audit and Risk Committee – <i>Anthony Smith (4:50pm)</i>
3	CEO Updates
3.1	Charlton Flood Update
3.2	Aerodrome Strategy (<i>Travis Fitzgibbon</i>)
4	Close Meeting
	Time: 5:14pm



Strategic Councillor Briefing - Record

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

Date:	Wednesday, 19 August 2026	Time:	1:00pm
Location:	Wycheproof Supper Room		
Acknowledgement of Country:	The Mayor will acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we are meeting and pay our respects to their Elders and to the Elders from other communities who may be here today.		

NO.	MATTER FOR DISCUSSION
1	Welcome
1.1	Welcome:
1.2	Apologies: - Nil.
1.3	Guests: Michael Wheelahan – <i>Proud Mary Consulting</i>
1.4	Attendees: <u>Councillors:</u> Cr Graeme Milne – Mayor; Cr Bernadette Hogan – Deputy Mayor; Cr Alan Getley; Cr Bruce Stafford; Cr Charmaine Delaney; Cr Stephen Barratt <u>Officers:</u> Daniel McLoughlan – Chief Executive Officer; Jenna Allan – Director Corporate and Organisational Performance; Sarah Kernohan – Director Community Development; Travis Fitzgibbon – Director Infrastructure and Delivery; Georgia Brown – Senior Executive Assistant; Paula Gardiner – Senior Manager Assets and Delivery; Salomme Menezes – Manager Financial Strategy; Anthony Smith – Acting Manager Governance
1.5	Declaration of Pecuniary and Conflicts of Interest - Daniel McLoughlan declared a general conflict of interest to item 3.4 Continuation of Trial Hard Waste Collection.
2	Confirmation of Notes of Previous Briefing
2.1	Notes of the Councillor Briefing held on 1 July, 8 July and 27 July 2026 - Accepted.
3	Briefing Reports
3.5	Draft Financial Plan 2026 - 2036 – <i>Salomme Menezes (1:00pm)</i>
3.6	Draft Asset Plan 2026 - 2036 – <i>Travis Fitzgibbon and Paula Gardiner (2:00pm)</i>
3.7	Organisational Performance Preliminary Year End Notes – <i>Jenna Allan (3:00pm)</i>
<i>Tea Break (3:30pm)</i>	
3.3	Local Government Legislation Amendment (Stronger Communities) Bill – <i>Anthony Smith (3:45pm)</i>
3.4	Continuation of Trial Hard Waste Collection – <i>Lee Patten (4:20pm)</i> - Daniel McLoughlan declared a general conflict of interest to item 3.4 Continuation of Trial Hard Waste Collection. (Daniel left the briefing prior to the commencement of the presentation and did not return.)



	Western Region Sustainable Water Strategy WSMCS – <i>Michael Wheelahan (4:40pm)</i>
3.1	Future of Community Grants Program – Update – <i>Rory White (5:00pm)</i>
3.2	Audit and Risk Committee Independent Member Appointment – <i>Anthony Smith (5:10pm)</i>
4	Presentation
	WycheAlive Inc Community Group – <i>Martin and Mary-Anne Duke (5:45pm)</i>
5	Next Briefing
	The next Councillor Briefing will be held in Donald at the Donald Shire Office on Wednesday, 2 September at 5:00pm.
6	Close Meeting
	Time: 6:05pm



Councillor Briefing - Record

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

Date:	Wednesday, 2 September 2026	Time:	5:00pm
Location:	Donald Shire Office – Council Chambers		

NO.	MATTER FOR DISCUSSION
1	Welcome / Councillor Only Time (5:00pm)
1.1	Welcome:
1.2	Apologies: - Cr Bruce Stafford.
1.3	Guests: James Goldsmith and Ashton Jane – Proposed ParkRun Organising Group by extension of Donald 2000
1.4	Attendees: <u>Councillors:</u> Cr Graeme Milne (Mayor); Cr Bernadette Hogan (Deputy Mayor); Cr Stephen Barratt; Cr Bruce Stafford; Cr Alan Getley; Cr Charmaine Delaney <u>Officers:</u> Daniel McLoughlan – Chief Executive Officer; Jenna Allan – Director Corporate and Organisational Performance; Sarah Kernohan – Director Community Development; Travis Fitzgibbon – Director Infrastructure and Delivery; Paula Gardiner – Senior Manager Assets and Delivery; Rory White – Acting Manager Community Partnerships; Georgia Brown – Senior Executive Assistant
1.5	Declaration of Pecuniary and Conflicts of Interest: - Nil.
2	Confirmation of Notes of Previous Meeting
2.1	Notes of the Councillor Briefings held 12 August and 19 August 2026 - Accepted.
3	Presentations
3.1	Proposed Donald ParkRun – <i>James Goldsmith & Ashton Jane (5:30pm)</i>
4	Dinner (6:00pm)
	VNI West Environmental Effects Statement (EES) – Sarah Kernohan and Daniel McLoughlan
5.2	Draft Buloke Aquatic Strategy - Response to Submissions – <i>Rory White (6:45pm)</i>
5	Briefing Reports
5.3	2026 Community Summit – <i>Sarah Kernohan and Jenna Allan (7:45pm)</i>
5.1	Draft Terms of Reference - Roads and Buildings Advisory Groups – <i>Paula Gardiner (8:10pm)</i>
5.4	Public Asset List – <i>Jenna Allan (8:20pm)</i>
5.5	S181 Recovery through Sale Update – <i>Jenna Allan (8:55pm)</i>
	Wooroonook Lake Cabins <i>(9:15pm)</i>
6	Next Briefing
	The next Councillor Briefing will be held in Birchip in the Birchip Shire Office - Council Chambers on Wednesday, 7 October 2026 at 5:00pm.



7	Close Meeting
	Time: 9:26pm

Meeting Date	Item No.	Item	Department	Action Required	Latest Action Taken	Status
08-02-2024	8.2.1	110 Sutcliffe Street Subdivision Community Engagement Outcomes	Infrastructure and Delivery	That Council: - Notes following consultation process in accordance with its Community Engagement Policy, one submission was received to the proposed nine-lot subdivision sale of land at 110 Sutcliffe Street, Sea Lake; - Sells nine-lot subdivision surplus land at 110 Sutcliffe St, Sea Lake by private treaty or auction in accord sec 114 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> and Council's Sale of Land Policy; and - Authorises the CEO to execute the Transfer of Land documents and any other documents required to affect the sale of the land.	11/09/2026 Director Infrastructure and Delivery - Complete - Underway. Council has appointed a conveyancer to progress the release of individual titles in accordance with the approved plan of subdivision. The conveyancer now has control of the title and has lodged the necessary documentation to facilitate the release of the nine individual titles. It is anticipated that the titles will be issued by early October 2026. Once titles are released, the sale of land process can commence, including the preparation of a report to Council seeking endorsement of the proposed sale methodology and timeline. - Not started.	In progress
18-12-2024	8.1.2	Draft Governance Rules and Council Election Period Policy	Corporate and Organisational Performance	Please action as per resolution. MOTION That Council: - Having prepared the Revised Draft Governance Rules in accordance with section 60 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>, approves and commences a 9-week process of community consultation in relation to the Revised Draft Governance Rules and Draft Election Period Policy, and makes the Revised Draft Governance Rules and Draft Election Period Policy available for Public Exhibition via Council's website; - Allows persons to make submissions in writing in relation to any proposal contained within the Revised Draft Governance Rules and/or Draft Election Period Policy; and - Allows presentations in support of written submissions to be heard at the Council Meeting on 19 March 2025 prior to the proposed adoption of the Draft Governance Rules and Draft Election Period Policy at this Meeting. MOVED: Cr Graeme Milne SECONDED: Cr Stephen Barratt CARRIED. (R/24/123)	14/05/2026 Director Corporate and Organisational Performance Progress has been delayed due to impending Model Governance Rules being published for public exhibition.	On hold

Meeting Date	Item No.	Item	Department	Action Required	Latest Action Taken	Status
17-06-2026	8.2.1	Contract Award - Contract C133 2025/26 - External Plant Hire – Panel of Suppliers	Infrastructure and Delivery	Please action as per resolution. MOTION That Council: - Awards the panel contract of Contract C133 2025/26 – External Plant Hire – Panel of Suppliers to: - AP Earthmoving Pty Ltd - Berne Fleming Civil Pty Ltd - Bild Infrastructure Pty Ltd - Gregs Digging Pty Ltd - MF & JL Willmore Pty Ltd - Pipe Doctor Pty Ltd - Reeves Earthmoving Pty Ltd - Whitfield Excavations - Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to sign the contract documents on behalf of Council. - Delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to approve payments to the Contractor for undertaking the works associated with the Contract. - Delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to approve all variations under the Contract. - Notes and declares the attachments to this report as confidential on the grounds that it relates to (g) (ii) private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage as described in s 3(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>. MOVED: Cr Bruce Stafford SECONDED: Cr Charmaine Delaney CARRIED. (R/26/36)	30/07/2026 Senior Manager Assets and Delivery Awaiting the return of a signed Contract from one contractor. All other contracts have been executed and are now active.	In progress
19-08-2026	7.1	Governance Report - August 2026	Governance	Please action as per resolution. MOTION	21/08/2026 Acting Manager Governance Completed, no further action required as the reporting was for noting.	Completed

Meeting Date	Item No.	Item	Department	Action Required	Latest Action Taken	Status
				That Council: - Notes the Record of Councillor Assemblies and Meetings held. - Notes the Record of Councillor Briefings, at Attachment 7.1.1 and 7.1.2 to this report. - Notes the Chief Executive Officer Activity Report. - Notes the Status of Actions Report for Council resolutions at Attachment 7.1.3 to this report. - Notes there were no contracts entered into for this period, in accordance with the increased Financial Delegation provided to the Chief Executive Officer of \$1,500,000 (excluding GST). - Receives the Audit and Risk Committee Chair Biannual Report June 2026 at Attachment 7.1.4 to this report. MOVED: Cr Stephen Barratt SECONDED: Cr Bernadette Hogan CARRIED. (R/26/50)		
19-08-2026	8.2.1	Community Grants Guidelines and Community Support Policy Review	Community Partnerships	Please action as per resolution. MOTION That Council adopt the Community Grants Guidelines 2026 and Community Support Policy 2026 as attached. MOVED: Cr Bernadette Hogan SECONDED: Cr Stephen Barratt CARRIED. (R/26/51)	08/09/2026 Director Community Development The Community Grants Program Round 1 opened on 1 September 2026. A copy of the updated Community Support Policy has been uploaded to Councils Policies and Procedures webpage.	Completed
19-08-2026	8.2.2	Audit and Risk Committee Independent Member Appointment	Financial Strategy	Please action as per resolution. MOTION That Council:	08/09/2026 Senior Executive Assistant Council has finalised the two appointments mentioned as Independent Members to Council's Audit and Risk Committee. The members will commence their roles in	Completed

Meeting Date	Item No.	Item	Department	Action Required	Latest Action Taken	Status
				1. Appoint Andrew Johnson and Ben Vale as Independent Members of the Buloke Shire Council Audit and Risk Committee for a period of three years commencing 9 September 2026. 2. Amend the Audit and Risk Committee Charter to include the Committee membership of up to six members comprising four independent members, the Mayor and one other Councillor. 3. Notes that the Audit and Risk Committee will further review the Audit and Risk Committee Charter and recommend any changes back to Council for consideration. MOVED: Cr Charmaine Delaney SECONDED: Cr Bernadette Hogan CARRIED. (R/26/52)	accordance with Council's Audit and Risk Committee Charter.	
19-08-2026	8.2.3	Municipal Association of Victoria - Quarterly Delegate Update	Governance	Please action as per resolution. MOTION That Council notes the Municipal Association of Victoria Quarterly Delegates Report for the period of April to June 2026. MOVED: Cr Alan Getley SECONDED: Cr Charmaine Delaney CARRIED. (R/26/53)	21/08/2026 Acting Manager Governance Completed, no further action required as the reporting was for noting.	Completed
19-08-2026	8.4.1	MAV State Council October 2026 Motions	Office of the CEO	Please action as per resolution. MOTION That Council: 1. Advocates to the Victorian Government through the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), in conjunction with the six (6) member Councils of the Wimmera Southern Mallee Council Alliance to endorse four (4) motions as attached at appendix one (1) to this report; 2. Endorse the motion to be lodged with the MAV for consideration at the State Council Meeting on 23 October 2026.	11/09/2026 Chief Executive Officer Horsham Rural City Council has confirmed lodgment.	Completed

Meeting Date	Item No.	Item	Department	Action Required	Latest Action Taken	Status
				MOVED: Cr Bruce Stafford SECONDED: Cr Alan Getley CARRIED. (R/26/54)		
19-08-2026	9.3.1	Urgent Business		Please action as per resolution MOTION That Council urgently calls on the Minister for Energy and Resources, the Honourable Jaclyn Symes MLC to: - intervene and immediately withdraw the fines issued to the Victorian farmers for denying access to their properties. - ensure the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) Authorised officers are suitably trained in the Wimmera Mallee farming practices. - listen to all farmers in a timely manner who have raised concerns in relation to property access. - provide a full bio security plan for access to farms at least seven days prior to the requested access date. MOVED: Cr Alan Getley SECONDED: Cr Stephen Barratt CARRIED. (R/26/56)	21/08/2026 Director Community Development A letter was sent to The Hon. Jaclyn Symes MLC on 21 August 2026 advised of the urgent business item.	Completed



Summary of Minutes - Audit and Risk Committee September 2026

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

Date:	9 September 2026	Time	10:04 am – 12:08pm
Location:	Wycheproof Supper Room		

NOTE: This is a summary of the minutes of the meeting only – full minutes are circulated and moved through the meeting formally.

NO.	MATTER FOR DISCUSSION	
1.	Welcome & Statement of Acknowledgement	
2.	Present Dean Sleigh (Chair and Independent Member), Stephen Gardner (Independent Member), Andrew Johnson (Independent Member), Ben Vale (Independent Member), Cr Graeme Milne (Mayor - Member), Cr Bernadette Hogan (Member), Cr Charmaine Delaney (Observer), Daniel McLoughlan (CEO), Jenna Allan (Director Corporate and Organisational Performance), Sarah Kernohan (Director Community Development), Travis Fitzgibbon (Director Infrastructure and Delivery), Anthony Smith (Acting Manager Governance), Salomme Menezes (Manager Financial Strategy), Paula Gardiner (Senior Manager Assets and Delivery), Kathryn Gerbes (Governance Officer), Brad D Bohun (Crowe), Mazin Hussain (Crowe), Brad Ead (AFS)	
3.	Apologies Nil declared	
4.	Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting Noted	
5.	Chief Executive Briefing - Welcome to the new Independent Audit and Risk Committee Members - Industrial Relations Update - Emergency Management Update - Renewables, Mining and Transmission Planning - Appointment of Sarah Kernohan, Director Community Development - Appointment of Jessie Holmes, Executive Lead: Regional Growth and Strategic Advocacy - Roads and Bridges Revaluation	
6.	Declaration of Pecuniary and Conflicts of Interest Nil declared	
7.1	Outstanding Action Items Noted	



7.2	Draft Financial Statements 2025/26 Motion That the Audit and Risk Committee: 1. Receives and endorses the Draft Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2026 under Attachment 1 to this report subject to receiving the final audited Financial Statements; 2. Recommends that Council approves the Draft Annual Financial Statements in principle. Moved, Seconded and Carried.	
7.3	Draft Performance Statement 2025/26 Motion That the Audit and Risk Committee: 1. Endorse the draft Performance Statement for the year ended 30 June 2026 subject to receiving the final audited Performance Statement. 2. Recommends that Council record its approval in principle to the draft Performance Statement for the year ended 30 June 2026. Moved, Seconded and Carried.	
7.4	Victorian Auditor-General's Office Interim Audit Management Letter That the Audit and Risk Committee note the interim management letter from Crowe Australasia, on behalf of VAGO for financial year ending June 2026. Noted	
7.5	Draft External Audit Closing Report That the Audit and Risk Committee endorses the draft external audit closing report 2025-2026. Noted	
7.6	Victorian Auditor-General's Office Status Reports Noted	
7.7	Internal Audit Report Past Issues Review June 2026 Noted	
7.8	Internal Audit – Publications of Interest Noted	
7.9	Internal Audit Program Annual Review and Update on Status Noted	
7.10	Draft Financial Plan 2026 - 2036 Noted	
7.11	Draft Asset Plan 2026 - 2036 Noted	
7.12	Asset Management Quarterly Update Noted	



7.13	Emergency Management Update – August 2026 Noted	
7.14	Innovation and Technology Quarterly Update Noted	
7.15	Insurance Program Noted	
7.16	Review of Annual Work Plan Noted	
7.17	Legislative Compliance Register Noted	
7.18	Quarterly Investment Report as at 30 June 2026 Noted	
7.19	Debtor Write Offs That the Audit and Risk Committee 1. Notes the debtor balances written off during the reporting period 01 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 as Attachment 1 to this report. 2. Notes the creation of provision for doubtful debts for financial year ended 30 June 2026 as reported under Attachment 1 to this report. Noted	
7.20	Councillor and CEO Reimbursements Noted	
8.	Other Business No other business.	
9.	Meeting Close Meeting closed at 12.08 pm	

8 GENERAL BUSINESS

8.1 POLICY REPORTS

Nil.

8.2 MANAGEMENT REPORTS

8.2.1 BULOKE AQUATIC STRATEGY

Author's Title: Manager Community Partnerships

Directorate: Community Development

File No: CP/10/06

Relevance to Council Plan 2025 - 2029

Strategic Objective: Services supporting our communities to thrive
Accessible and responsive health and community services

Vibrant and connected communities
Strengthen community activity and connections

Prosperous and growing economy
Attract innovative, creative and sustainable businesses
Promote Buloke as a great place to visit, live and invest

PURPOSE

That Council adopt the Buloke Aquatic Strategy following public exhibition, consideration of community feedback, and review of submissions received.

SUMMARY

The draft Buloke Aquatic Strategy was endorsed by Council for public exhibition and was exhibited from 21 May 2026 until 2 July 2026. During this period, Council received 46 submissions from community members, schools, community organisations and stakeholder groups. Seven submitters presented to Council at the public submissions hearing held on 27 July 2026.

Feedback demonstrated strong community support for the continued operation of Buloke Shire's aquatic facilities and highlighted the significant role swimming pools play in water safety, health and wellbeing, social connection, recreation, and community liveability. Officers reviewed all submissions and prepared a response to key themes raised through consultation. Several amendments were subsequently made to the Strategy to strengthen community outcomes while maintaining the objective of improving the long-term financial sustainability of Council's aquatic services

The revised Strategy continues to provide a 10-year framework for the management and operation of Council's seven outdoor swimming pools. It focuses on increasing participation, activation, programming opportunities, and efficient service delivery while ensuring equitable access to aquatic facilities across the municipality. Adoption of the Strategy will enable implementation of the identified actions and establish a consistent operating season for Council's aquatic facilities.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the outcomes of the public exhibition process for the draft Buloke Aquatic Strategy, including the receipt of 46 submissions and the public submissions hearing conducted on 26 July 2026.

2. Notes the officer responses to submissions and the amendments made to the draft Buloke Aquatic Strategy as a result of community feedback (Attachment 2).
3. Adopts the Buloke Aquatic Strategy (Attachment 1).
4. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to make minor administrative and formatting amendments to the Strategy where required.
5. Notes that implementation of the Strategy will be undertaken through future operational planning and budget processes.

DISCUSSION

The Buloke Aquatic Strategy has been developed to provide a sustainable and strategic framework for the management of Council's seven outdoor swimming pools over the next ten years. The Strategy seeks to balance community access and participation with the financial sustainability of aquatic service delivery.

Following Council endorsement for public exhibition, the draft Strategy was made available for community review between 21 May 2026 and 2 July 2026. Community consultation resulted in 46 submissions from a broad range of stakeholders, demonstrating a high level of community interest in the future direction of aquatic facilities across the Shire. Seven submitters attended the public submissions hearing to present directly to Council.

Submissions consistently identified the importance of swimming pools in supporting water safety, health and wellbeing, recreation, social connection and the attractiveness of Buloke communities. Feedback also highlighted opportunities to increase participation through enhanced programming, partnerships and activation initiatives.

As a result of consultation, several amendments have been made to the final Strategy, including:

- Amend text to revise the proposed operating model for Berriwillock and Watchem pools to a five-day-per-week service across the full swimming season.
- Amend text to introducing an equitable fee structure for private providers and school swimming and water safety programs that recognises Department of Education funding arrangements.
- Amend text to clarify that the 25°C opening temperature threshold would not apply to pre-arranged bookings, school programs, learn-to-swim, or other scheduled activities.
- Including new text *"Explore the introduction of voluntary place based aquatic membership options, including family memberships and flexible pricing arrangements, to support increased participation and encourage ongoing engagement with Council aquatic facilities"*.
- Including new text *"Investigate opportunities to utilise trained volunteers, qualified teachers and community partners to support closed-group aquatic activities, subject to legislative, safety and policy requirements"*.

The proposed amendments respond directly to community feedback while maintaining the Strategy's focus on long-term service sustainability. Adoption of the Strategy will provide clear direction for future aquatic service delivery and investment decisions.

RELEVANT LAW

The development, exhibition and adoption of the Buloke Aquatic Strategy have been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Council's Community Engagement Policy. Public consultation was conducted consistent with Sections 93 and 96 of the Act.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council previously:

- Endorsed the Draft Buloke Aquatic Strategy for public exhibition.

- Authorised public consultation from 21 May 2026 to 2 July 2026.
- Provided an opportunity for submitters to be heard by Council.
- Considered the outcomes of consultation prior to adoption of the final Strategy.

OPTIONS

Option 1

Adopt the Buloke Aquatic Strategy incorporating the amendments arising from community consultation.

Option 2

Adopt the Buloke Aquatic Strategy with further amendments as determined by Council.

Option 3

Do not adopt the Buloke Aquatic Strategy and request further review. This option is not recommended as it would delay implementation of a long-term framework for the sustainable management of Council's aquatic facilities.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The Strategy supports social sustainability through ongoing provision of aquatic facilities that contribute to health, wellbeing, water safety and social connection across Buloke Shire. It also promotes operational sustainability by focusing on increased participation, improved programming, efficient service delivery and alignment of services with available resources.

Environmental sustainability is supported through more efficient operation of existing aquatic assets and a planned approach to future service delivery.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The draft Buloke Aquatic Strategy was publicly exhibited between 21 May 2026 and 2 July 2026 following Council endorsement. Public engagement activities provided residents, schools, community organisations and stakeholders with an opportunity to review the Strategy and make submissions. A total of 46 submissions were received.

Seven submitters elected to present their submissions to Council at a public submissions hearing held on 27 July 2026. Feedback received throughout the consultation process was reviewed and considered in preparing the final Strategy and associated amendments.

The consultation process demonstrated significant community support for retaining aquatic facilities and provided valuable feedback to strengthen the final Strategy.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Strategy promotes innovation through a stronger focus on activation, participation and programming within existing aquatic facilities. The inclusion of actions to investigate membership options, flexible pricing arrangements, and community partnership models supports continuous improvement and increased utilisation of Council's aquatic assets.

Ongoing monitoring and review of participation levels and service outcomes will inform future improvements and ensure aquatic services remain responsive to community needs.

COLLABORATION

The development and refinement of the Strategy has involved collaboration between Council, community members, schools, aquatic service users, community organisations and other stakeholders. The extensive public consultation process ensured that community perspectives were considered in the final Strategy.

The Strategy also identifies opportunities for future collaboration with schools, community organisations, private providers and volunteers to enhance aquatic programming and participation outcomes.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Council has budgeted \$983,726 in the 2026/27 financial year for the operation and maintenance of aquatic facilities, including \$212,724 for asset maintenance and renewal works. Adoption of the Strategy does not require additional budget allocation beyond current approved budgets.

The Strategy has been developed to improve the long-term financial sustainability of aquatic service delivery while maintaining equitable access across the municipality. Future capital improvements will largely depend on external funding opportunities, including State and Federal Government grants.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

The Strategy aligns with:

- Active Victoria Strategy 2022-2026.
- Fair Access Policy Roadmap 2022-2030.
- Sport and Recreation Victoria Strategic Directions.
- Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.
- *Local Government Act 2020*.
- *Climate Change Act 2017*.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

The Strategy supports and aligns with:

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

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

The development of the Strategy has included a comprehensive public consultation and submissions process. Community feedback was considered, documented, and responded to through the preparation of a submission's response report and "What We Heard" summary document (Attachment 2). Adoption of the Strategy occurs following an open and transparent decision-making process that has provided multiple opportunities for community participation.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

Attachments:

1. Attachment 8.2.1.1 - Buloke Aquatic Strategy - September 2026
2. Attachment 8.2.1.2 - Buloke Aquatic Strategy Community Consultation Summary What We Heard



BULOKE AQUATIC STRATEGY

SEPTEMBER 2026



Photo Source: Buloke Shire Council

Acknowledgments

Project Acknowledgment

Otium Planning Group would like to acknowledge the staff, user groups and community from the Buloke Shire Council that have provided their expertise and input to the **Buloke Aquatic Strategy**.

Their valuable insights and feedback have been instrumental in shaping the strategic directions for this Strategy, which has been prepared by Buloke Shire Council and Otium Planning Group in partnership with the Victorian Government.

Acknowledgment of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, Jupagulk people and Dja Dja Waurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and live. We pay our respect to their Elders both past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge Aboriginal people as the original inhabitants of the land and their long and continuing connection to Country.

We are committed to national reconciliation and respect for indigenous peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land and waters, and their rich contribution to society.

Lake Tyrrell is the largest inland salt lake in Victoria. This lake is a significant Aboriginal site of cultural and spiritual value known as Direl. It is a place of reflections in the night sky used to experience the Dream Time. It is also a place of ceremony, gathering and trade.

Wominjeka

Figure 1: Lake Tyrrell

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1. THE PROJECT

The Buloke Aquatic Strategy is a ten-year strategy that will guide decision making and investment priorities by developing a framework for future strategic direction, infrastructure development and operational enhancement of swimming pools across Buloke Shire.

The Strategy has involved the following steps:



2. WHY DO WE NEED AN AQUATIC STRATEGY?

Swimming pools in Buloke Shire have played a key social and recreation role for our rural communities, whilst offering a safe, regulated place for people to swim and keep cool. This is important when experiencing high temperatures and there are unregulated and unsupervised places to swim, such as rivers, creeks, lakes, dams and water channels.



Participation in aquatic and leisure activities is an ingredient to improving community health and wellbeing. In Buloke, we have significant health concerns, and access to swimming pools and programs can help reverse this trend. However, our facilities and programs don't support our community's needs very well.



This Aquatic Strategy is an opportunity to increase the use of swimming pools to support the health and wellbeing outcomes of rural communities.



Council is committed to healthy communities, and to quality, safe and accessible swimming pools and aquatic services. But we need to do this in a financially sustainable way. These strategic objectives are outlined in Council's Building Buloke 2030 and the Council Plan. This Strategy builds on the Buloke Aquatic Strategy 2014-2024.



Buloke's swimming pools are ageing assets, and a strategic approach that maps out improvements that meet community needs and addresses asset condition issues is required.



The Buloke community has changed significantly since the swimming pools were built 70 years ago. Understanding the community's needs today and into the future may change the aquatic facilities and services required to meet those needs.



The local swimming pools are the heart of many townships and have been for generations. The community value them highly.



Our communities travel long distances for services. Having a local pool is one Council service that brings the community together.



A strategic approach that aligns with local, regional and state-level strategies will help the Council leverage external funding.

The Benefits

\$9.1B

RLSA 'The Social, Health and Economic Value of the Australian National Aquatic Industry Report' found the industry delivers \$9.1B annually in economic, health and social benefits.



Health Benefits

The aquatic industry **\$2.5B** annually in reduced burden of disease in Australia.



Economic Benefits

The aquatic industry supports **\$2.8B** annually to gross domestic product.



Social Benefits

The aquatic industry is a key driver of social benefit for Australians. **\$3.8B** annually in benefits from increased individual and community surplus.



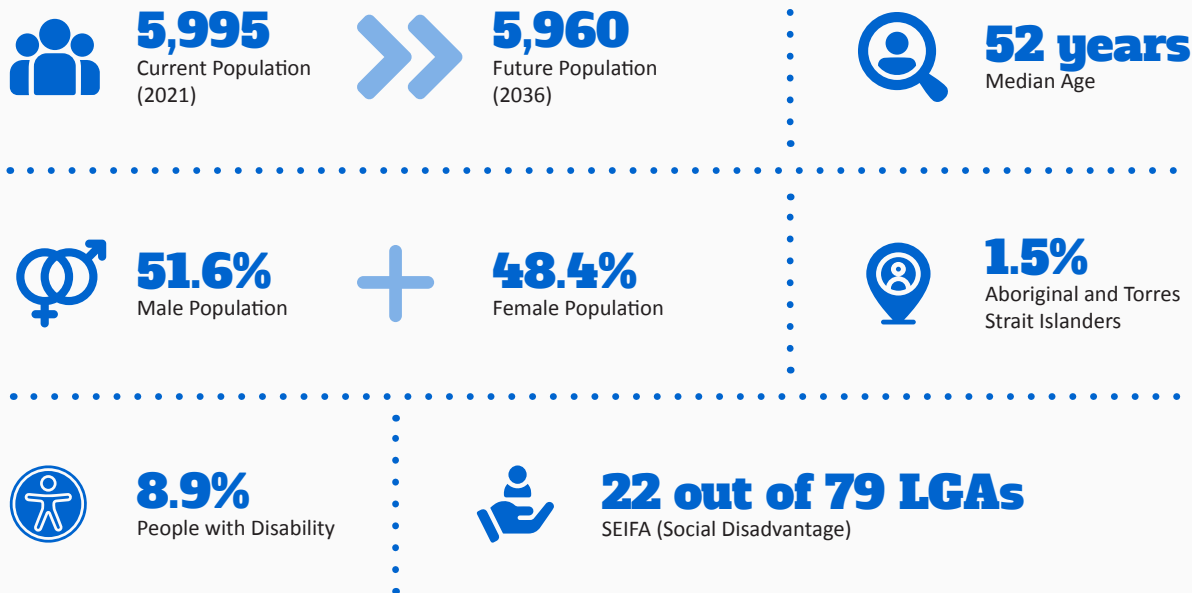
Social return on investment of \$2.18 for every \$1 spend on aquatic facility operations in regional Australia.



3. OUR COMMUNITY

Demographic snapshot

The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 Census, Victoria in Future Report 2023, and Loddon Malle Public Health Unit Buloke Data Profile 2024 have been used to inform the demographic snapshot.



Buloke is a rural council area within the Loddon Mallee region. The large (main) townships are Birchip, Charlton, Donald, Sea Lake and Wycheproof. These are supported by smaller townships of Berriwillcock, Culgoa, Nandaly, Nullawil, and Watchem.

The Buloke community is ageing and in decline. The current population of 5,995 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021) is predicted to decline to 5,721 by 2036 (Victoria in Futures Report, 2023). A smaller population will mean the Council will continue to rely on State and Federal Government to fund services and renew and improve assets.

The Buloke community is ageing with a higher proportion of older adults 60 years and older than the rest of Victoria, and a lower proportion of children and young people aged under 18 years. This will increase the need for social and therapy-based programs, intergenerational play and fitness opportunities and universally accessible aquatic facilities.

Within the region, there is a higher rate of people indicating they are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in Buloke when compared to the rest of Victoria. Developing culturally sensitive aquatic facilities and programs will be important to encouraging our Traditional Owners to access these services.

The median income for individuals, families and households is below the Regional Victoria average. This means providing affordable participation opportunities at Buloke swimming pools will be important to attract users.

The swimming pools designed 70+ years ago no longer support the programs and services needed to improve community health and wellbeing outcomes. Therefore, strategic investment into diversifying aquatic, fitness and community experiences at our swimming pool is needed to deliver community health outcomes.

This is particularly important because there is a need to encourage Buloke residents to move, which will improve the health and wellbeing of the community and address higher rates of cancer, diabetes, dementia, heart disease, mental health conditions and stroke compared to the rest of Victoria.

Access to places and services like aquatic facilities that facilitate and encourage people to be active is critical to reversing an alarming health statistic that sees higher rates of obesity in Buloke Shire compared to Regional Victoria.

4. OUR POOLS

A network of swimming pools services the Buloke community and includes:



Council-owned aquatic centres (outdoor swimming pools).



Facilities/services available from the **private sector** (e.g. fitness centres and personal training studios).



Sub regional and regional aquatic and leisure centres located in regional cities within the adjoining municipalities of Swan Hill Rural City Council (Swan Hill Aquatic and Leisure Centre), Horsham Rural City Council (Horsham Aquatic Centre) and Greater Bendigo City Council (Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre).

Within Buloke, Donald, Charlton, Birchip, Wycheproof and Sea Lake are the major service townships with the largest population catchments. Most residents can access a pool within an approximately 15-to-30-minute drive. There are overlapping catchments between:

- « Birchip and Watchem swimming pools
- « Charlton and Wycheproof swimming pools
- « Sea Lake and Berriwillock swimming pools.

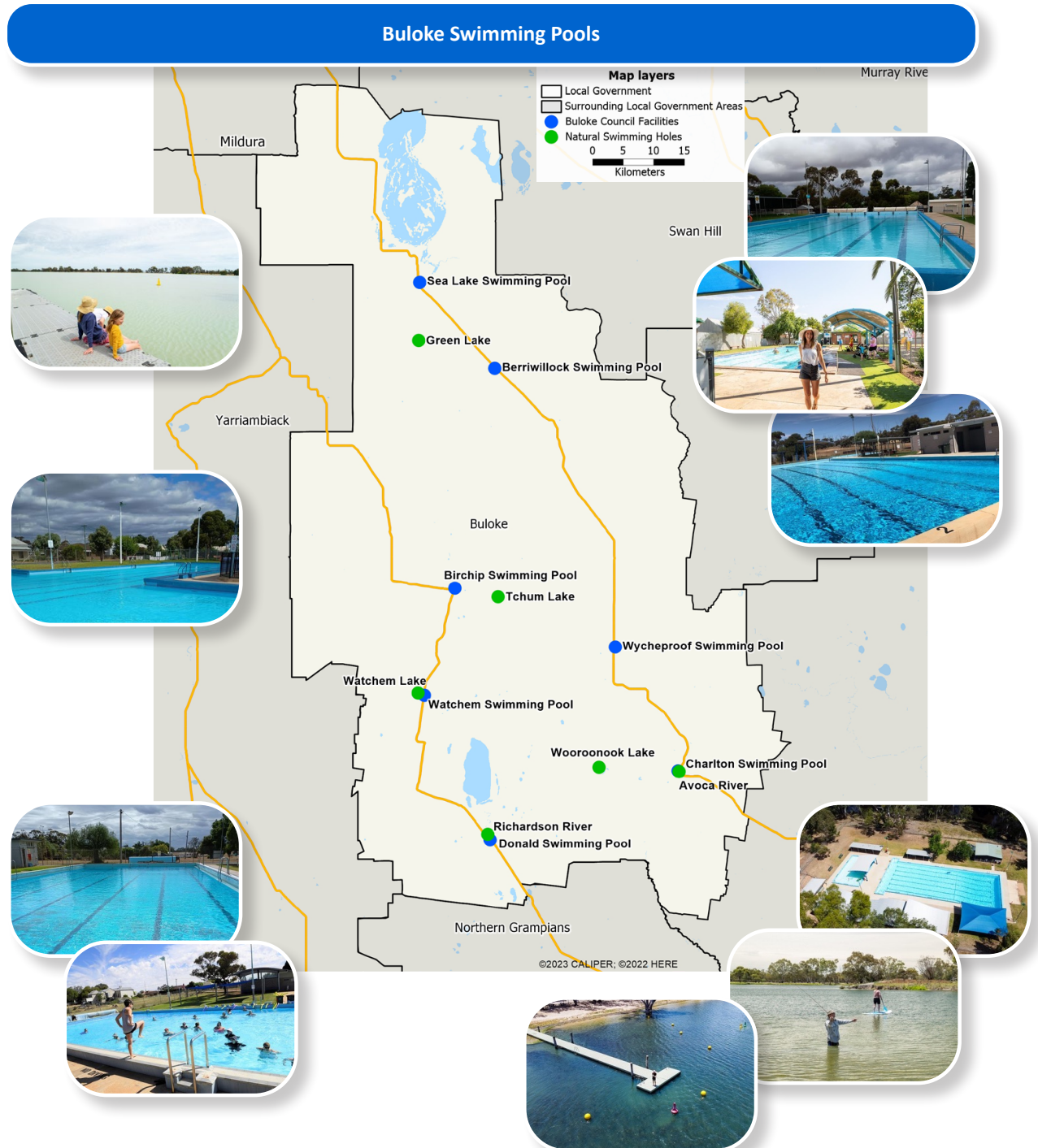
The following table outlines the hierarchy of the aquatic facilities.

Table 1: Facility Hierarchy

Service Hierarchy	Service Level Objective	Buloke and surrounding LGA Facilities
Local Local rural township catchment population (10 minutes)	« Provides a local aquatic experience i.e. pool or water play/leisure water. « Usually linked to other community facilities to share management and operation cost.	« Berriwillock Swimming Pool « Watchem Swimming Pool
District Major townships centre and district catchment population (20 minutes)	« Ability to provide program pool (generally one 25m pool) combined with water play/leisure water. « Consideration should be given to improving all abilities access to existing pools.	« Birchip Swimming Pool « Charlton Swimming Pool « Donald Swimming Pool « Sea Lake Swimming Pool « Wycheproof Swimming Pool
Sub Regional Major township centre with highest population area servicing a municipal catchment (30 minutes)	« Ability to separate program and leisure water. « Larger dry/gym facilities. « Additional limited facilities.	« Swan Hill Leisure Centre « Horsham Aquatic Centre
Regional Regional city catchment population servicing across municipal boundaries (30+ minutes)	« More extensive program and leisure water. « Consideration of indoor 50m pool and complementary warm water pool. « Increased gym and program space. « Additional complementary amenities, food and beverage.	« Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre

The following map shows the location of swimming pools and natural swimming holes in Buloke Shire.

Figure 2: Locations of Swimming Pools and Natural Swimming Holes in Buloke Shire



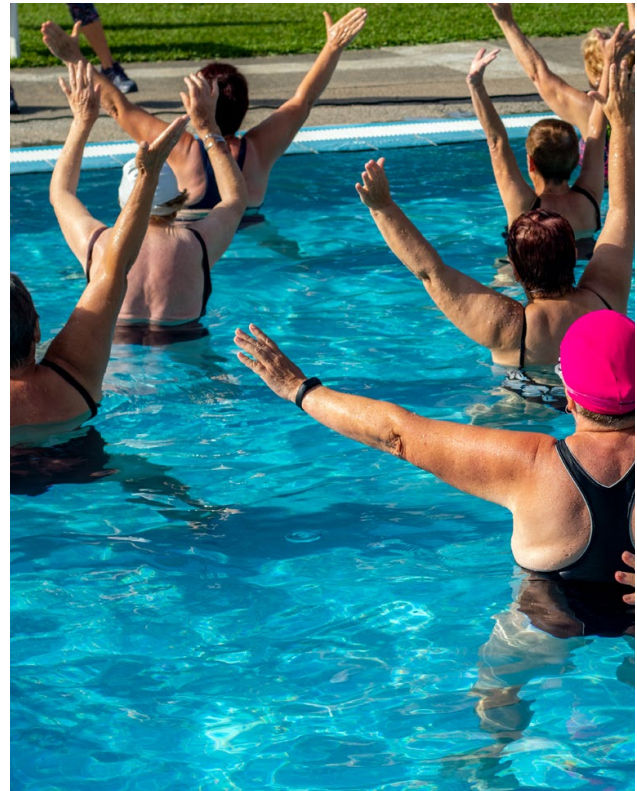
4.1. BULOKE SWIMMING POOLS

Buloke Shire Council manages seven seasonal (November to March) outdoor public swimming pools located in Birchip, Berriwillock, Charlton, Donald, Sea Lake, Watchem and Wycheproof.

The swimming pools support the following range of aquatic activities including school and private swim lessons, school carnivals and fun days, aqua aerobics, lap swimming including early morning swims, swim club squad, inflatable days and recreational use.

Shire pools are not the only pools servicing Buloke residents. If residents wish to participate in aquatic programs i.e. learn to swim lessons or swim year-round, they will drive to Bendigo, Swan Hill or Horsham indoor aquatic facilities.

There are also 153 private pools/spas registered with Buloke Shire Council.



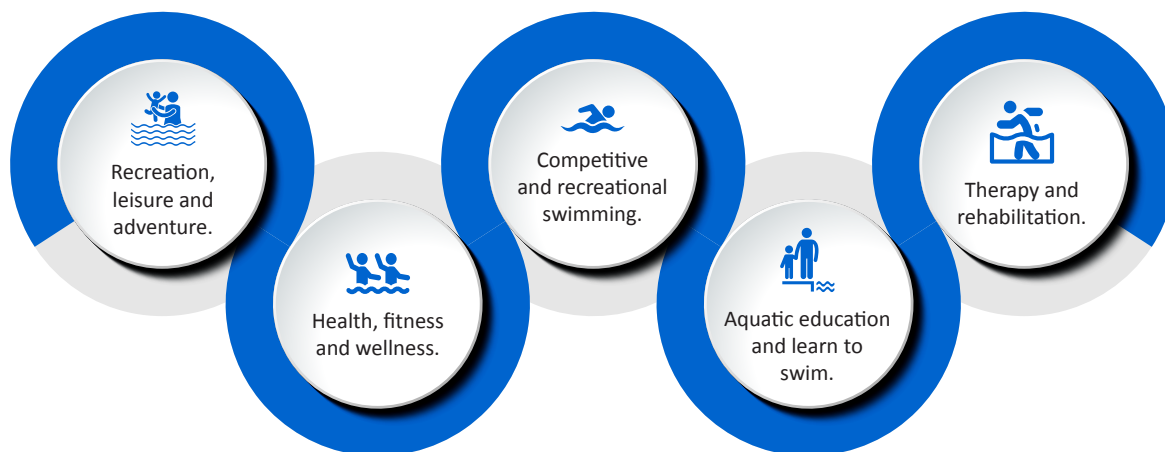
5. KEY CHALLENGES

The Council is facing key challenges in providing an aquatic service.



5.1. CURRENT FACILITIES DON'T PROVIDE FOR ALL

The key factors of successful swimming pools are providing diverse participation opportunities and programmable components. This Strategy has explored a range of contemporary 'wet' and 'dry' facilities in rural and regional areas that appeal to broader market segments:



The outdoor pools in Buloke Shire are missing key markets of leisure adventure facilities and therapy users, which impacts participation and financial position. They also do not meet industry standards for pool depths to support fitness and training and education users.

Providing equitable access to aquatic and leisure facilities (and other services like health, education, cultural, recreational and other community services) in rural and regional areas is a challenge, particularly in smaller townships. This is further impacted by the capital and operational costs of aquatic and leisure facilities having risen significantly over the last ten to 20 years, and even more so in recent times post the COVID-19 global pandemic.

5.2. OPERATIONAL COSTS CONTINUE TO ESCALATE AND ARE BECOMING UNSUSTAINABLE

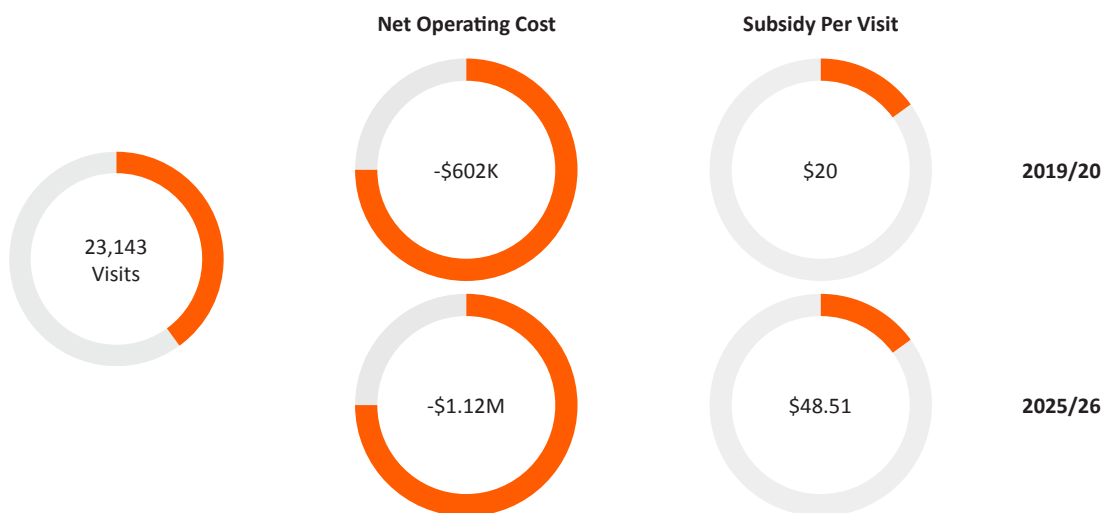
A key challenge facing the Council is that, despite the patronage over several years remaining stable, the maintenance and operational costs of the aquatic services are increasing, the facilities have accessibility issues, and there is a lack of a year-round facility.

The aquatic service review identifies that the seven outdoor swimming pools in Buloke Shire are attracting approximately 30,000 visits per annum. The Council is subsidising the use of the aquatic facilities by approximately \$36 per visit. This has increased by 76% over the last five years from \$20 per visit in 2019/20, mainly due to operating and maintenance costs almost doubling in five years.

Aquatic facility management and operations are subject to increasing costs across the industry. The higher cost of qualified staffing, chemical supply and utilities are major contributing factors for rural facilities. Staff (lifeguards) and chemicals (water treatment) are the major factors in managing operational risks and if underfunded, the risk to the Council and community increase.



Operational Performance



Subsidy includes net operational cost and asset maintenance costs

Visitation

23,143

A total of 23,143 visits were recorded in the 2025/26 season, compared to 22,637 visits in 2024/25 season.

2025/26 Season							
Swimming Pool	Berriwillock	Birchip	Charlton	Donald	Sea Lake	Watchem	Wycheproof
Casual Visits	749	2,484	3,538	4,567	1,015	514	1,851
Bookings	75	2,325	1,907	2,084	995	0	1,043
Total Visits	824	4,809	5,445	6,651	2,010	514	2,894

Monthly Totals				
November	December	January	February	March
1,886	5,818	7,793	6,153	1,497
Daily Averages				
95	178	233	259	128

The Council’s objective is to maintain the current funding levels in the long-term financial plan.

To maintain the current aquatic service, which is a seven day per week operation from the start of November to end of March, the annual aquatic budget would need to increase by \$56,158 for the next 10-year period (total of \$565,178).

The Council supports maintaining access to all swimming pools; however, the Strategy recommends operational changes that, whilst delivering on the strategic objectives, reduce the current service level. This is required to maintain the current funding levels.



5.3. MOST POOLS ARE REACHING THE END OF LIFE

The funding of asset management works identified by the facility condition audit will only enable the status quo to be maintained and does not account for major failure or the ability to address identified community needs or new user markets. Due to the age of the outdoor pools and if asset renewal improvements are not undertaken, they will likely reach a catastrophic condition.

To help inform the Strategy, Structural Engineers undertook a detailed Technical Assessment of the swimming pools and has identified recommended asset renewal improvement and maintenance requirements of the facilities over the next five to 10 years. The total cost to maintain the current benefit, with no additional services, is about \$900,000 over this period.

That said, the Council investment in asset maintenance and improvements over the last decade has been worthwhile and extended the life of the pools. The pools can remain operational over the next 10 years if identified asset renewal improvement and maintenance costs are funded. Improvements include replacing plant and filtration and new amenities.

Case Study: Charlton Swimming Pool Improvements

New amenities, plant upgrade, lighting and shade structures at Charlton Swimming Pool.

Figure 4: Charlton Swimming Pool Amenities



5.4. COMMUNITY HIGHLY VALUE POOLS, BUT IT COMES AT A HIGH COST

The Council recognises that the Buloke Shire community highly values having access to swimming pool facilities and there is strong support for them. Pools are viewed as essential to supporting health and social connections in rural communities that don't have access to many free community services. It is especially important to the community during hot weather and school holidays.

A survey of the Buloke community generally rated the swimming pool facilities and programs as very good. The main activities during visits to the swimming pools were:

 **58.3%**
(144 responses) - Cool down from hot weather

 **55.5%**
(137 responses) - Recreation swimming/fun

 **47%**
(116 responses) - Take child to pool

 **27.1%**
(67 responses) - Lap swim/fitness

 **16.2%**
(40 responses) - Aqua aerobics



There is a strong interest in longer operating hours, improved adventure and water play, shade, social spaces and an increase in community programming.

Swimming lessons, water safety programs, and inclusive activities are seen as increasingly important due to declining swim competency across the diverse Buloke Shire communities and students with special needs. Schools are eager to expand their use of swimming pools for both education and events.

Unfortunately, the high cost of swimming pools is placing considerable pressure on Council's capacity to fund them amongst other competing community and infrastructure needs. A strategic approach to addressing this issue is critical.

Community Engagement Key Themes

Aquatic facilities are well-used by locals and schools, with peak attendance during holidays and afternoons.

There is interest for longer opening hours on warmer days and longer seasons with flexible lifeguard models.

Key concerns include aging infrastructure and safety hazards.



Pools are viewed as essential, inclusive community hubs that support health, social connection, and access for all, particularly in remote areas.



Residents consistently called for more shade, water play areas, slides, and updated amenities to make pools more inviting and family friendly.



There is strong community interest in structured programs like learn-to-swim, fitness classes, early morning swimming, inclusion initiatives, and community events.



6. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

6.1. VISION

The Council aims to:



Provide sustainable, safe and accessible swimming pools that activate Buloke residents and connects communities.

The following strategic objectives and actions have been developed to achieve this vision. A road map of improvements (renewal and improvements) supports the objectives and actions.

6.2. OBJECTIVES

The Council aims to:





Activate aquatic facilities and communities

How?

- « Partner with Neighbourhood Houses and aquatic providers to facilitate programming of swimming pools for community activities i.e. aqua aerobics and early morning swimming.
- « Deliver innovative approaches and encourage a diversity of activities, programming and events at swimming pools to increase visitation, such as inflatable days and the Vicswim program.
- « Partner with health and fitness providers to provide fitness classes at aquatic facilities, such as Active Farmers boot camps, yoga, and Pilates classes.
- « Partner with the community in hosting community events at the aquatic facilities, such as dive-in movie nights and music concerts at the pools.



Provide a diversity of aquatic experiences to encourage greater participation and use

How?

- « Take a strategic and place-making approach to the improvement of district swimming pools.
- « When assets are due for renewal, identify opportunities to diversify aquatic facility opportunities at district swimming pools and undertake an initial design to enhance the ability to attract external funding.
- « Prioritise improvements at district swimming pools that improve access, safety and diversify experiences (dry and wet) for young people, families and older adults. Consider opportunities for leisure and water play, fitness areas, and social seating and shade. Seek external funding for these works.
- « Partner with Traditional Owners and Lake Foreshore Committees in the development of reserve management plans. The plans should explore how to provide diverse recreation activities and utilise cultural (Traditional Owners) knowledge in sustainable water management.



Well-managed and maintained quality aquatic facilities

How?

- « That Council undertake an annual review of the performance of all facilities in meeting key performance measures and progress made on the Strategy. The review should report on visitation and financial performance, including Council subsidy per visit, the condition of the assets and the level of risk to Council.
- « Apply a consistent standard to design and maintenance of swimming pools that responds to the planning framework (levels of service).
- « Develop an Asset Management Plan for aquatic facilities, informed by Structural Engineers Technical Condition Assessments and LSV Safety Audits, and regularly monitor and review the Asset Management Plan.
- « As part of Council's annual budget process provide funding for asset renewal of aquatic facilities as detailed in the Asset Management Plan.
- « Implement an off-season maintenance process for swimming pools.



Deliver a sustainable aquatic service

How?

- « Maintaining the existing pools is a priority in the short to medium term. However, if the cost of these works cannot be afforded over the long term, Council may be forced to close one or more of the existing pools. This will be considered if a pools asset renewal improvement and maintenance works exceed \$250,000 over five years.
- « Conducting close analysis and feasibility studies of individual pool locations. Upon catastrophic plant and/or pool failure, the Council will investigate alternative future aquatic experiences at these locations. This could include a water-play splash park or improvements at a local lake with a designated swimming area and would require external funding.
- « Delivering a flexible operating model that is supported by updated pool business rules and allows Council to operate within the current funding level. This approach will enable staff to adapt service delivery and consider:
 - Community demand and staffing capacity.
 - Reducing the season length from the start of November to the end of March to the start of December to mid-March (Labour Day weekend). This is in line with other rural Councils.
 - Increase the minimum weather temperature threshold for opening pools during normal public operating hours from 23°C to 25°C, in line with other rural councils. This threshold would not apply to pre-arranged bookings, school programs, learn-to-swim, or other scheduled activities.
 - Reduce operations at the local pools (Berriwillock and Watchem Swimming Pools) to a five-day-per-week operating model for the full swimming season to improve the long-term financial sustainability of Council's aquatic service delivery. These communities will continue to have access to a district swimming pool within 20 minutes operating seven days per week.
- « Monitor annual visitation trends across all Buloke Shire swimming pools, with a trigger point of a 20% or greater decline in participation over a rolling three-year period prompting a formal service viability review.
- « Apply a graduated response to declining participation and increased service delivery costs. Progressing through maintaining the current service levels, reducing service delivery (hours, season length or programs), temporary or permanent closure, or repurposing the facility for alternative community recreation or activation uses.
- « Integrate environmentally sustainable design and water-sensitive urban design features in aquatic facility renewal and improvement projects.
- « Introduce an equitable fee structure for private providers and school swimming and water safety programs that recognises Department of Education funding arrangements, including the different funding arrangements that apply to P–12 schools.
- « Investigate management models and partnering opportunities for aquatic facilities, e.g. Community partnership models, and regional management models with partnering councils. This includes what a possible transition of management models could look like.
- « Explore the introduction of voluntary place based aquatic membership options, including family memberships and flexible pricing arrangements, to support increased participation and encourage ongoing engagement with Council aquatic facilities.
- « Investigate opportunities to utilise trained volunteers, qualified teachers and community partners to support closed-group aquatic activities, subject to legislative, safety and policy requirements.

6.3. RECOMMENDED STRATEGY

The recommended strategy for Buloke aquatic facilities has taken into consideration the current condition of the assets, patronage, population catchment and cost of service. The recommended strategy aligns with the strategic directions and vision for the aquatic service in Buloke outlined above. This strategy supports a network approach that considers a fair and reasonable travel distance to access aquatic services. It is designed to provide a sustainable aquatic service for the next 10 years.

A road map has been prepared that applies the following strategic approach:



Improvement projects will be subject to external funding, e.g., grants, while asset renewal projects will be referred to the Council's annual budget or 10-year financial plan. In addition, the annual maintenance allowance will cover painting and minor repairs i.e. expansion joints.





BULOKE
SHIRE COUNCIL



BULOKE AQUATIC STRATEGY

Community Consultation Summary: What We Heard and How We Have Responded

The Draft Buloke Aquatic Strategy was placed on public exhibition from 21 May 2026 to 2 July 2026, providing the community, stakeholder groups and facility users with an opportunity to review the Strategy and provide feedback. A Public Hearing was also held on 27 July 2026, enabling submitters to present their views directly to Council.

A total of 46 submissions were received, Demonstrating strong community interest in Buloke Shire's aquatic facilities. Feedback highlighted the importance of local pools for water safety, health and wellbeing, recreation, education and community connection, while also identifying opportunities to improve sustainability and increase participation.

This document summarises the key themes raised through consultation and outlines how community feedback has informed updates to the Buloke Aquatic Strategy.

What We Heard

Community feedback demonstrated strong support for Buloke Shire's aquatic facilities and their ongoing role in supporting healthy, connected and vibrant communities. The key themes raised through submissions included:

Strong Support for Local Pools

Many residents and stakeholders view local pools as essential community infrastructure rather than discretionary facilities. Many submitters expressed concern about any future loss of aquatic services or reductions in community access. Feedback highlighted the importance of pools for:

- Water safety and swimming education
- Health and wellbeing
- Recreation and physical activity
- Social connection and community inclusion
- Heat relief during extreme weather
- Supporting community liveability and attracting families to rural towns

School Swimming and Water Safety Programs

Schools and community members highlighted the importance of maintaining affordable access to aquatic facilities for swimming and water safety education.

Key concerns included:

- Affordability of any future school user charges
- Clarification around supervision and lifeguard requirements



Maintaining Access While Improving Sustainability

Many submissions acknowledged the financial challenges of operating multiple aquatic facilities but encouraged Council to explore alternatives before reducing access. Suggestions included:

- Membership and user-pays models
- Community partnerships and volunteer involvement
- Expanded programming and events
- Flexible staffing and operational approaches

More Programming and Activation

Community members consistently identified opportunities to increase use of aquatic facilities through:

- Swimming lessons and water safety programs
- Aqua aerobics and fitness activities
- School and community partnerships
- Family events and special activity days
- Expanded recreational and social programs

Future Investment and Renewal

Many submissions encouraged Council to continue planning for future facility upgrades and renewal while seeking external funding opportunities to support long-term sustainability.

How We Have Responded

Based on community feedback, Council has made a number of changes to the Buloke Aquatic Strategy.

Equitable School Fee Structure

Introduce an equitable fee structure for private providers and school swimming and water safety programs that recognises Department of Education funding arrangements.

Membership and Pricing Options

Explore the introduction of voluntary place based aquatic membership options, including family memberships and flexible pricing arrangements, to support increased participation and encourage ongoing engagement with Council aquatic facilities.

Utilise Community Partners to Support Aquatic Delivery

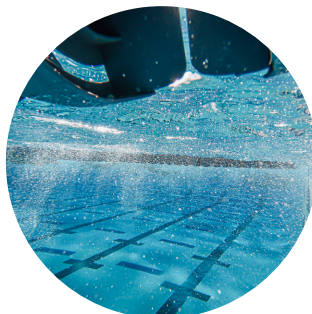
Investigate opportunities to utilise trained volunteers, qualified teachers and community partners to support closed-group aquatic activities, subject to legislative, safety and policy requirements.

Maintaining Equitable Access at Local Pools

Revise proposed service changes for Watchem and Berriwillock pools to a five-day-per-week operating model across the full swimming season rather than a shortened season.

Operating Temperature Clarification

Clarify that weather-related opening thresholds apply to general public operations and do not apply to approved bookings and programmed activities.



8.2.2 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL ROADS ADVISORY GROUP AND BUILDINGS ADVISORY GROUP

Author's Title: Senior Manager Assets and Delivery

Directorate: Infrastructure and Delivery

File No: GS/03/30

Relevance to Council Plan 2025 - 2029

Strategic Vibrant and connected communities

Objective: Strengthen community activity and connections

Built and natural environment

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

Council leadership and engagement

Responsible leadership and decision making

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of the Draft Terms of Reference for the establishment of a Roads Advisory Group and a Buildings Advisory Group.

SUMMARY

Council has identified the need to strengthen community engagement and advocacy regarding the planning, improvement, renewal and funding of Council key asset classes being roads and buildings.

The proposed Roads Advisory Group and Buildings Advisory Group (advisory groups) will provide a structured forum through which Council representatives, community members and key stakeholders can identify infrastructure priorities, provide strategic advice and support advocacy initiatives for transport infrastructure and building and facility projects.

The Committee will operate in an advisory capacity only and will have no delegated decision-making authority.

The attached draft Terms of Reference for each advisory group establishes the purpose, objectives, membership structure, governance arrangements and operating requirements of the Committees.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Adopt the Draft Terms of Reference for the Roads Advisory Group and Buildings Advisory Group as attached to this report.
2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to undertake an Expression of Interest process seeking nominations from community members for the Roads Advisory Group and Buildings Advisory Group.
3. Present all nominations to a future Council Meeting for endorsement and acceptance as community representatives for the Roads Advisory Group and Buildings Advisory Group.

DISCUSSION

Council manages a significant portfolio of roads and buildings across the municipality which require ongoing planning, renewal and investment to meet current and future community expectations.

Council has identified a benefit in establishing dedicated advisory groups that will focus on the transport asset class (roads) and the building asset class, that aim to:

- Provide community input into future infrastructure priorities.
- Assist Council in identifying advocacy opportunities.
- Support the development of funding submissions to State and Federal Governments.
- Promote transparency and collaboration in infrastructure planning.
- Improve communication between Council and community stakeholders.

The advisory groups will support these objectives by providing advice and recommendations to Council on matters relating to roads, community infrastructure and building assets.

The proposed Terms of Reference for both Roads and Buildings provide clear governance frameworks for the operation of each Committee.

For the Roads Advisory Group the Committee will support Council by:

- Identifying and prioritising road infrastructure needs and opportunities.
- Providing community perspectives on road and transport issues.
- Supporting evidence-based advocacy for road infrastructure funding and investment.
- Promoting road safety, accessibility, connectivity and network resilience.
- Facilitating communication between Council, government agencies, industry and the community.

For the Buildings Advisory Group the Committee will support Council by:

- Identifying and prioritising community infrastructure and building needs.
- Providing community perspectives on the condition, functionality and future requirements of public buildings and facilities.
- Supporting evidence-based advocacy for funding and investment in community infrastructure.
- Promoting accessibility, sustainability, resilience and community benefit in public buildings.
- Facilitating communication between Council, government agencies, user groups and the community.

The Terms of Reference for the advisory groups incorporate governance provisions addressing:

- Appointment and tenure of members.
- Attendance requirements.
- Confidentiality obligations.
- Conflict of interest management.
- Code of conduct requirements.
- Committee reporting responsibilities.
- Non-payment provisions for volunteer community representatives.

The advisory groups will operate in an advisory role and recommendations will be reported to Council for consideration.

RELEVANT LAW

Not applicable to this matter. The establishment of an Advisory Group is optional for Council and not governed by the *Local Government Act 2020*.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable.

OPTIONS*Option 1: (Officer Recommendation)*

Endorse the Draft Terms of Reference for the advisory groups.

Option 2: (Not Recommended)

Not endorse the Draft Terms of Reference for the advisory groups and require the documents to be redrafted.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The establishment of the advisory groups will provide an opportunity to increase community involvement in infrastructure planning and advocacy.

Following Council adoption of the Terms of Reference, an Expression of Interest process will be undertaken to recruit community representatives.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The establishment of the advisory groups will provide an opportunity for Council and the Committee to work together and consider, workshop and help resolve complex asset management challenges that are facing Council.

The draft Terms of Reference have ensured governance requirements are clear to provide guidance and clarity for each members role within the advisory groups. This will ensure the maximum benefits are realised from this innovative approach to community engagement and problem solving.

COLLABORATION

No applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The operation of the advisory groups is expected to be managed within existing operational budgets.

Costs are expected to be limited to:

- Administrative support.
- Preparation of agendas and minutes.
- Meeting facilities.
- Community engagement activities.
- Minor operational expenses.

Committee membership is voluntary and community members are not entitled to remuneration.

No additional capital expenditure commitments arise from this recommendation.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

No applicable to this matter.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

The proposed advisory groups supports the objectives of Council's:

- Community Plan
- Asset Plan
- Financial Plan
- Council Plan

The establishment of the advisory groups will contribute to improved community participation and informed decision-making regarding roads and building and community infrastructure priorities.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This matter is being considered in an open Council Meeting to ensure decision making of Council is transparent to the community.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No officer declared an interest in this matter.

Attachments:

1. Attachment 8.2.2.1 - DRAFT - Terms of Reference - Roads Advisory Group
2. Attachment 8.2.2.2 - DRAFT - Terms of Reference - Buildings Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

Roads Advisory Group Community Committee

1. Purpose

The Roads Advisory Group Community Committee ("the Committee") is established by Council to provide a structured forum for community representatives, stakeholders and Council to identify, discuss and advocate for improvements to the road transport network within the local government area.

The Committee will support Council by:

- Identifying and prioritising road infrastructure needs and opportunities.
- Providing community perspectives on road and transport issues.
- Supporting evidence-based advocacy for road infrastructure funding and investment.
- Promoting road safety, accessibility, connectivity and network resilience.
- Facilitating communication between Council, government agencies, industry and the community.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the Committee are to:

1. Represent community interests regarding road infrastructure and transport connectivity.
2. Assist Council in understanding local and regional road network issues.
3. Identify and prioritise road infrastructure projects for advocacy purposes.
4. Support Council's strategic planning and infrastructure investment objectives.
5. Advocate for funding from State and Federal Governments and other funding bodies.
6. Promote safe, efficient and sustainable transport outcomes.
7. Strengthen collaboration between Council, the community and key stakeholders.

3. Functions

The Committee may:

- Review road-related issues referred by Council.
- Consider community concerns regarding road infrastructure and safety.
- Identify road infrastructure priorities and advocacy opportunities.
- Review transport studies, strategies and planning documents.

- Recommend advocacy positions and submissions for Council consideration.
- Facilitate community and stakeholder engagement on road matters.
- Monitor progress of agreed advocacy priorities.

The Committee is advisory only and has no delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of Council.

4. Scope

The Committee's scope includes:

- Local roads and road infrastructure.
- Regional and State-controlled roads affecting the local government area.
- Road safety improvements.
- Freight and agricultural transport routes.
- Transport connectivity and access.
- Infrastructure resilience and disaster recovery.
- Advocacy for transport and road infrastructure funding.

The Committee will not:

- Determine Council policy.
- Consider individual development applications.
- Investigate operational complaints that are managed through Council's standard customer request processes.
- Direct Council staff, contractors or consultants.
- Exercise powers delegated to Council or the Chief Executive Officer.

5. Membership

The Committee shall comprise:

- Up to three (3) Councillors, representing each ward, appointed by Council.
- Up to ten (10) community representatives appointed by Council.
- Representatives of key stakeholder groups, as determined by Council.
- Relevant Council officers acting in an advisory and administrative capacity.

Council will seek membership that reflects:

- Geographic diversity across the municipality.
- A broad cross-section of community interests.
- Relevant lived experience, knowledge or expertise.

- Transport, freight, business, agricultural and community stakeholder interests.

6. Appointment and Term

- Members will be appointed by Council resolution.
- Community members will normally be appointed for a term of two (2) years and may be reappointed.
- Casual vacancies may be filled by Council for the remainder of the term.
- A member may resign at any time by providing written notice to Council.
- Council may terminate an appointment where a member:
 - Breaches these Terms of Reference.
 - Breaches Council's Code of Conduct.
 - Fails to disclose a conflict of interest.
 - Breaches confidentiality obligations.
 - Fails to meet attendance requirements.

7. Chairperson

- The Chairperson shall be appointed by Council.
- The Chairperson is responsible for:
 - Presiding over meetings.
 - Maintaining orderly and respectful discussion.
 - Ensuring meetings are conducted in accordance with these Terms of Reference.
 - Endorsing agendas and meeting records.
 - Presenting Committee recommendations to Council where required.

In the absence of the Chairperson, members present may elect an Acting Chairperson for that meeting.

8. Meetings

- Meetings will be held at least quarterly, or as determined by Council.
- Additional meetings may be convened by the Chairperson where required.
- Meeting agendas and supporting documentation will be circulated prior to meetings where practicable.
- Minutes will be prepared and maintained by Council.
- Meetings may be held in person, electronically or through a combination of both methods, as determined by Council.

9. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of:

- Fifty percent (50%) plus one of the appointed membership; and
- At least one Councillor member.

Where a quorum is not present, discussion may occur; however, no formal recommendations may be made.

10. Decision-Making

The Committee will seek to operate by consensus wherever possible.

Where consensus cannot be reached:

- Recommendations may be determined by a simple majority of members present.
- Each member shall have one vote.
- The Chairperson shall have a casting vote if required.

Committee recommendations are advisory only and are subject to Council consideration and approval.

11. Reporting

The Committee shall:

- Provide advice and recommendations to Council through meeting minutes and reports.
- Report annually to Council on activities, achievements and advocacy outcomes.
- Ensure recommendations align with Council's strategic objectives and infrastructure priorities.

12. Member Conduct

Members must:

- Act honestly, respectfully and in the public interest.
- Comply with Council's Code of Conduct.
- Treat fellow members, Council staff and stakeholders with courtesy and respect.
- Support constructive and collaborative discussion.
- Refrain from behaviour that may bring the Committee or Council into disrepute.

13. Non-Payment of Members

Membership of the Committee is voluntary.

- Community representatives shall not be entitled to sitting fees, wages, allowances, honorariums or other remuneration.
- Members are responsible for their own costs associated with attending meetings unless otherwise approved by Council.
- Council may provide meeting facilities, administration, approved training and reimbursement of authorised expenses where approved in advance.
- Appointment to the Committee does not create an employment, contractual or agency relationship with Council.

This clause does not apply to Councillors receiving statutory remuneration or Council employees acting within their employment duties.

14. Confidentiality

Members must maintain the confidentiality of information obtained through their participation on the Committee.

Members must:

- Treat confidential, sensitive or privileged information as confidential.
- Not disclose confidential information without Council authorisation.
- Not use confidential information for personal, financial or commercial benefit.
- Comply with applicable privacy and information management requirements.
- Refer media enquiries regarding Committee business to Council's authorised spokesperson unless otherwise approved.

Confidential information may include:

- Draft reports and submissions.
- Funding applications and negotiations.
- Commercially sensitive information.
- Personal information.
- Information provided in confidence by stakeholders or government agencies.

Confidentiality obligations continue after a person's membership ceases.

A breach of confidentiality may result in suspension or removal from the Committee.

15. Conflict of Interest

Members must act in the public interest and avoid situations where personal interests conflict, or could reasonably be perceived to conflict, with their responsibilities as Committee members.

Members must:

- Declare any actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest as soon as it arises.
- Disclose the nature of the conflict to the Chairperson.
- Ensure the conflict is recorded in the meeting minutes.
- Not participate in discussion, recommendations or voting relating to the matter unless otherwise determined by the Chairperson.
- Comply with Council's Conflict of Interest Policy and Code of Conduct.

Examples of conflicts may include:

- Financial interests in businesses affected by Committee recommendations.
- Employment or contractual relationships with affected organisations.
- Property ownership directly impacted by proposed road projects.
- Family, personal or business relationships that could influence decision-making.

Members must not use their appointment to obtain personal, financial or commercial advantage for themselves or any associated person or organisation.

Failure to disclose a conflict of interest may result in removal from the Committee.

16. Meeting Attendance

Members are expected to actively participate in the work of the Committee.

Members must:

- Attend scheduled meetings whenever reasonably possible.
- Notify Council or the Chairperson if they are unable to attend.
- Submit an apology in advance where attendance is not possible.
- Review meeting papers prior to meetings.

A member who is absent from three (3) consecutive meetings without an accepted apology may have their membership reviewed by Council and may be removed from the Committee.

Attendance records will be maintained by Council.

Persistent non-attendance or failure to actively participate may result in Council reviewing the member's appointment.

17. Administrative Support

Council will provide:

- Secretariat and administrative support.
- Meeting coordination.
- Agenda and minute preparation.
- Technical advice and information.
- Record keeping and reporting support.

18. Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed by Council every two (2) years, or earlier if required, to ensure they remain effective and relevant.

19. Dissolution

The Committee may be amended, suspended or dissolved at any time by resolution of Council.

Initial Advisory Priorities

The Committee may consider matters including:

- State and Federal road funding advocacy.
- Road safety and blackspot programs.
- Freight network improvements.
- Bridge upgrades and asset renewal.
- Disaster resilience and recovery projects.
- Regional transport connectivity.
- Strategic road corridor planning.
- Community access and mobility improvements.

Adopted by Council: _____

Date of Adoption: _____

Review Date: _____

Terms of Reference

Buildings Advisory Group Committee

1. Purpose

The Buildings Advisory Group Committee ("the Committee") is established by Council to provide a structured forum for community representatives, stakeholders and Council to identify, discuss and advocate for improvements, renewal and investment in Council-owned buildings and community facilities throughout the local government area.

The Committee will support Council by:

- Identifying and prioritising community infrastructure and building needs.
- Providing community perspectives on the condition, functionality and future requirements of public buildings and facilities.
- Supporting evidence-based advocacy for funding and investment in community infrastructure.
- Promoting accessibility, sustainability, resilience and community benefit in public buildings.
- Facilitating communication between Council, government agencies, user groups and the community.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the Committee are to:

1. Represent community interests relating to public buildings and community facilities.
2. Assist Council in understanding current and future infrastructure needs.
3. Identify priorities for the upgrade, renewal and expansion of community infrastructure.
4. Support Council's strategic asset planning initiatives.
5. Advocate for funding from State and Federal Governments and other funding bodies.
6. Promote accessible, sustainable, safe and inclusive facilities.
7. Strengthen collaboration between Council, community organisations and stakeholders.

3. Functions

The Committee may:

- Review building and facility-related matters referred by Council.

- Consider opportunities for improving community infrastructure.
- Identify infrastructure priorities and advocacy opportunities.
- Review relevant asset management plans, masterplans and building strategies.
- Recommend advocacy positions and submissions for Council's consideration.
- Facilitate community engagement regarding infrastructure needs.
- Monitor progress of agreed advocacy priorities.

The Committee is advisory only and has no delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of Council.

4. Scope

The Committee's scope includes:

- Community halls and meeting facilities.
- Libraries and cultural facilities.
- Sporting and recreation buildings.
- Public amenities and community centres.
- Heritage and civic buildings.
- Council administrative buildings.
- Community infrastructure renewal and upgrades.
- Accessibility and inclusion improvements.
- Sustainability and energy-efficiency initiatives.
- Advocacy for community infrastructure funding.

The Committee will not:

- Determine Council policy.
- Consider individual development applications.
- Investigate operational maintenance requests that are managed through Council's standard customer request processes.
- Direct Council staff, contractors or consultants.
- Exercise powers delegated to Council or the Chief Executive Officer.

5. Membership

The Committee shall comprise:

- Up to three (3) Councillors, representing each ward, appointed by Council.
- Up to ten (10) community representatives appointed by Council.

- Representatives of relevant user groups, sporting organisations, community organisations and stakeholder groups, as determined by Council.
- Relevant Council officers acting in an advisory and administrative capacity.

Council will seek membership that reflects:

- Geographic diversity across the municipality.
- A broad range of community interests.
- Experience in community facility use and management.
- Knowledge of infrastructure, accessibility, sustainability, recreation, heritage or community services.

6. Appointment and Term

- Members will be appointed by Council resolution.
- Community members will normally be appointed for a term of two (2) years and may be reappointed.
- Casual vacancies may be filled by Council for the remainder of the term.
- A member may resign at any time by providing written notice to Council.
- Council may terminate an appointment where a member:
 - Breaches these Terms of Reference.
 - Breaches Council's Code of Conduct.
 - Fails to disclose a conflict of interest.
 - Breaches confidentiality obligations.
 - Fails to meet attendance requirements.

7. Chairperson

- The Chairperson shall be appointed by Council.
- The Chairperson is responsible for:
 - Presiding over meetings.
 - Maintaining orderly and respectful discussion.
 - Ensuring meetings are conducted in accordance with these Terms of Reference.
 - Endorsing agendas and meeting records.
 - Presenting Committee recommendations to Council where required.

In the absence of the Chairperson, members present may elect an Acting Chairperson for that meeting.

8. Meetings

- Meetings will be held at least quarterly, or as determined by Council.
- Additional meetings may be convened by the Chairperson where required.
- Meeting agendas and supporting documentation will be circulated prior to meetings where practicable.
- Minutes will be prepared and maintained by Council.
- Meetings may be held in person, electronically or through a combination of both methods, as determined by Council.

9. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of:

- Fifty percent (50%) plus one of the appointed membership; and
- At least one Councillor member.

Where a quorum is not present, discussion may occur; however, no formal recommendations may be made.

10. Decision-Making

The Committee will seek to operate by consensus wherever possible.

Where consensus cannot be reached:

- Recommendations may be determined by a simple majority of members present.
- Each member shall have one vote.
- The Chairperson shall have a casting vote if required.

Committee recommendations are advisory only and are subject to Council consideration and approval.

11. Reporting

The Committee shall:

- Provide advice and recommendations to Council through meeting minutes and reports.
- Report annually to Council on activities, achievements and advocacy outcomes.

- Ensure recommendations align with Council's Community Strategic Plan, Asset Management Plans and Delivery Program.

12. Member Conduct

Members must:

- Act honestly, respectfully and in the public interest.
- Comply with Council's Code of Conduct.
- Treat fellow members, Council staff and stakeholders with courtesy and respect.
- Support constructive and collaborative discussion.
- Refrain from behaviour that may bring the Committee or Council into disrepute.

13. Non-Payment of Members

Membership of the Committee is voluntary.

- Community representatives shall not be entitled to sitting fees, wages, allowances, honorariums or other remuneration.
- Members are responsible for their own costs associated with attending meetings unless otherwise approved by Council.
- Council may provide meeting facilities, administration, approved training and reimbursement of authorised expenses where approved in advance.
- Appointment to the Committee does not create an employment, contractual or agency relationship with Council.

This clause does not apply to Councillors receiving statutory remuneration or Council employees acting within their employment duties.

14. Confidentiality

Members must maintain the confidentiality of information obtained through their participation on the Committee.

Members must:

- Treat confidential, sensitive or privileged information as confidential.
- Not disclose confidential information without Council authorisation.
- Not use confidential information for personal, financial or commercial benefit.
- Comply with applicable privacy and information management requirements.

- Refer media enquiries regarding Committee business to Council's authorised spokesperson unless otherwise approved.

Confidential information may include:

- Draft reports and submissions.
- Funding applications and negotiations.
- Commercially sensitive information.
- Personal information.
- Information provided in confidence by stakeholders, community organisations or government agencies.

Confidentiality obligations continue after a person's membership ceases.

A breach of confidentiality may result in suspension or removal from the Committee.

15. Conflict of Interest

Members must act in the public interest and avoid situations where personal interests conflict, or could reasonably be perceived to conflict, with their responsibilities as Committee members.

Members must:

- Declare any actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest as soon as it arises.
- Disclose the nature of the conflict to the Chairperson.
- Ensure the conflict is recorded in the meeting minutes.
- Not participate in discussion, recommendations or voting relating to the matter unless otherwise determined by the Chairperson.
- Comply with Council's Conflict of Interest Policy and Code of Conduct.

Examples of conflicts may include:

- Financial interests in organisations that may benefit from building or infrastructure projects.
- Employment or contractual relationships with construction, engineering, architecture or property organisations.
- Property ownership directly affected by proposed infrastructure developments.
- Family, personal or business relationships that could influence decision-making.

Members must not use their appointment to obtain personal, financial or commercial advantage for themselves or any associated person or organisation.

Failure to disclose a conflict of interest may result in removal from the Committee.

16. Meeting Attendance

Members are expected to actively participate in the work of the Committee.

Members must:

- Attend scheduled meetings whenever reasonably possible.
- Notify Council or the Chairperson if they are unable to attend.
- Submit an apology in advance where attendance is not possible.
- Review meeting papers prior to meetings.

A member who is absent from three (3) consecutive meetings without an accepted apology may have their membership reviewed by Council and may be removed from the Committee.

Attendance records will be maintained by Council.

Persistent non-attendance or failure to actively participate may result in Council reviewing the member's appointment.

17. Administrative Support

Council will provide:

- Secretariat and administrative support.
- Meeting coordination.
- Agenda and minute preparation.
- Technical advice and information.
- Record keeping and reporting support.

18. Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed by Council every two (2) years, or earlier if required, to ensure they remain effective and relevant.

19. Dissolution

The Committee may be amended, suspended or dissolved at any time by resolution of Council.

Initial Advisory Priorities

The Committee may consider matters including:

- Community facility renewal and upgrades.
- Sports and recreation infrastructure.
- Community halls and multipurpose centres.
- Accessibility and inclusion improvements.
- Heritage building preservation and enhancement.
- Library and cultural facility improvements.
- Sustainability and energy-efficiency upgrades.
- Disaster resilience and building renewal.
- New community infrastructure projects.
- State and Federal funding opportunities for community facilities.

Adopted by Council: _____

Date of Adoption: _____

Review Date: _____

Chairperson: _____

Council Contact Officer: _____

8.2.3 DRAFT ASSET PLAN 2026-2036

Author's Title: Senior Manager Assets and Delivery

Directorate: Infrastructure and Delivery

File No: GO/05/02

Relevance to Council Plan 2025 - 2029

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

Council leadership and engagement
Responsible leadership and decision making

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement to place the draft Asset Plan 2026 – 2036 on public exhibition.

SUMMARY

Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council is required to adopt an Asset Plan by October in the year following a Council Election, with the Asset Plan 2025 – 2035 adopted by Council on 29 October 2025.

In order to ensure Council's asset and financial planning and reporting remain current, it was determined a review and update of the Asset Plan and Financial Plan would be conducted each year as part of the annual budget preparation.

The Asset Plan has been reviewed and updated with the most current financial data as per the Financial Plan.

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

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Endorse the draft Asset Plan 2026 – 2036 for public exhibition;
2. Gives public notice of the draft Asset Plan 2026 – 2036 on Council's website and invites written submissions from Thursday, 17 September 2026 until Monday, 19 October 2026;
3. Notes that in accordance with Section 93 and 96(1)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, consultation will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy;
4. Notes that any person who makes a written submission in relation to the draft Asset Plan 2026 – 2036 may be heard by Council at a public submission hearing to be held on Monday, 26 October 2026;
5. Notes that the Asset Plan 2026 – 2036 will be considered for adoption at the Council Meeting to be held in November 2026.

DISCUSSION

Purpose of the Asset Plan

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

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

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

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

The integration of the Asset Plan within the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework (ISPRF) ensures that:

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

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

Council is required to adopt an Asset Plan every four years, by 31 October in the year after each election.

Preparation of the draft Asset Plan 2026 – 2036

The Asset Plan was adopted in 2025 and has been reviewed as part of the preparation of the 2026/27 annual budget. The purpose of an annual review, in line with the review of the Financial Plan is to ensure the Asset Plan contains the most current and relevant financial and asset data available to Council.

RELEVANT LAW

Local Government Act 2020.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council adopted the 2025 - 2035 Asset Plan at the Council Meeting held on 29 October 2025.

OPTIONS

Option 1 – Endorse placing the draft Asset Plan 2026 – 2036 on public exhibition.

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

The draft Asset Plan 2026 – 2036 has been prepared so that it is consistent with the draft Financial Plan 2026 – 2036. Changes to this plan would likely require changes to the other plans. It is considered that the plan proposes a reasonable investment in renewal of current assets in line with Council's financial position.

Option 2 – Endorse exhibition with amendments.

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

Option 3 – Do not endorse the exhibition of the draft Asset Plan 2026 – 2036.

This option is not recommended by officers as it is important that community views are sought before it is finalised.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

No sustainability implications have been identified by this proposal.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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

Community input can be provided through deliberative engagement sessions scheduled to be undertaken in October 2026 for the draft Asset and Financial Plans.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

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

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

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

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

The decision will be made in an open Council Meeting to promote openness and accountability.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

Attachments:

1. Attachment 8.2.3.1 - Draft Asset Plan 2026 - 2036



**2026 - 36 ASSET PLAN
PREPARED FOR BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL**

MAY 2026
STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL



DRAFT

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

CT Management Group P/L PO Box 1374 GEELONG VIC 3220 Email: admin@ctman.com.au Web: www.ctman.com.au	Document: Buloke Shire Council_Asset Plan 2027 Draft v 1.1.docx
	Project Manager: Alfonso Della Monica
	Author: Adam Lehmann
	Date: May 2026
	Synopsis: <i>Lifecycle Asset Management Plan for Council's transport assets.</i>

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

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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.

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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.

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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.

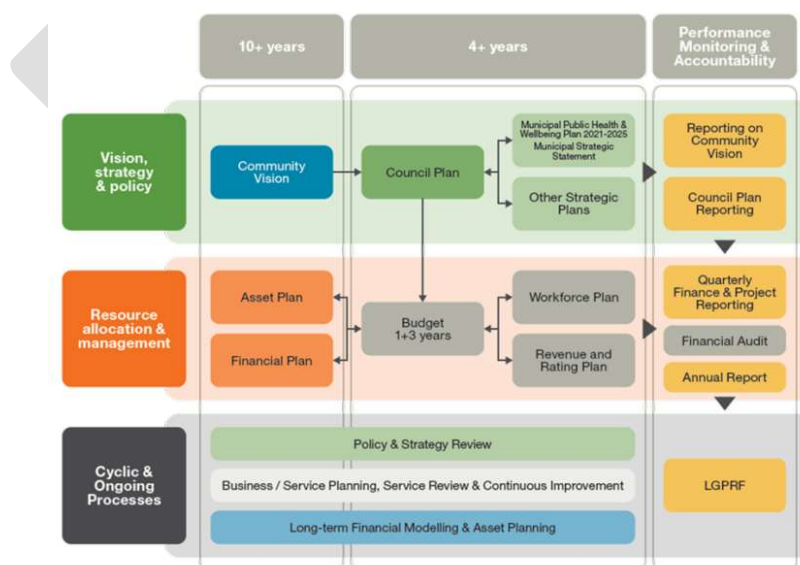


Figure 1 - Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework

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.

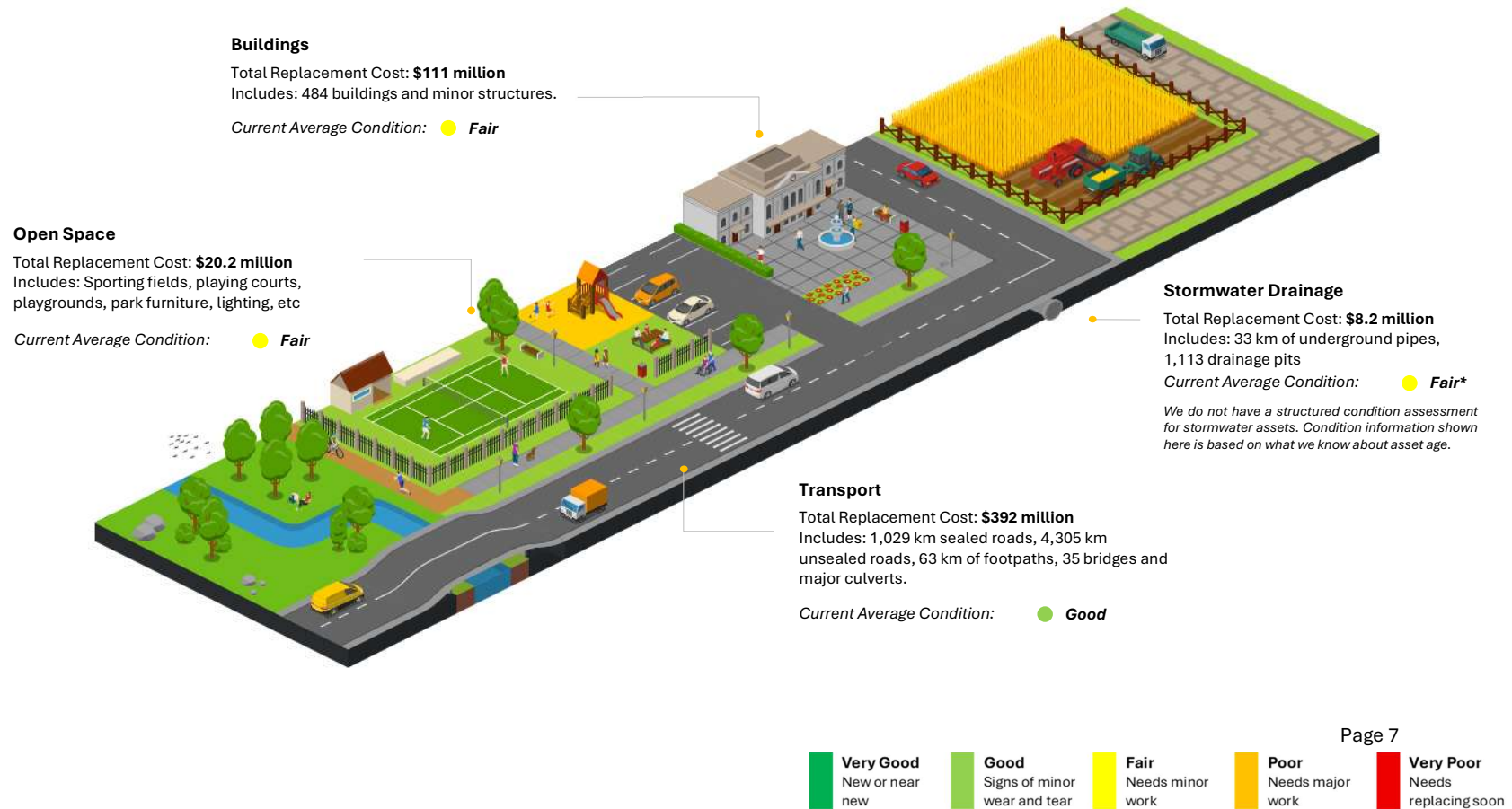
We deliver over 100 different services to our community. We must make sure the assets supporting these services are managed to optimise performance for the lowest cost.

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.



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.

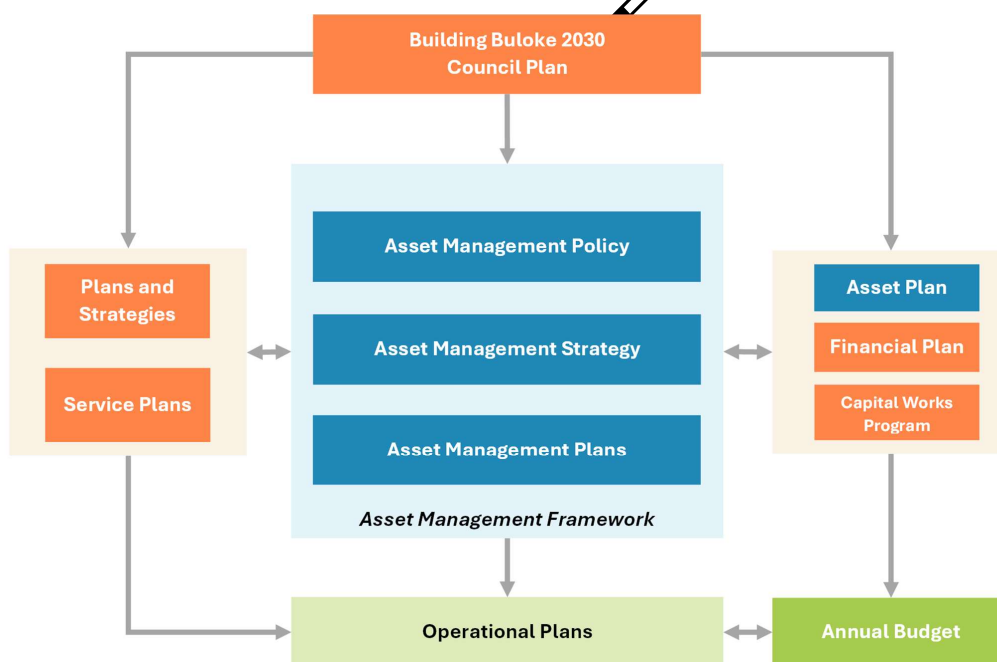


Figure 2 - Asset Management Framework

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.

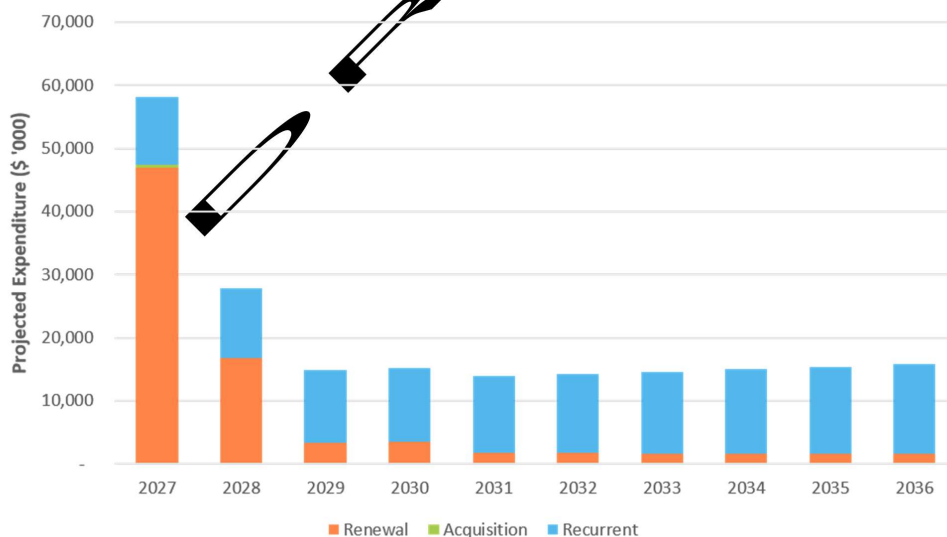


Figure 3 - Projected Total Asset Expenditure

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 million¹** 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.

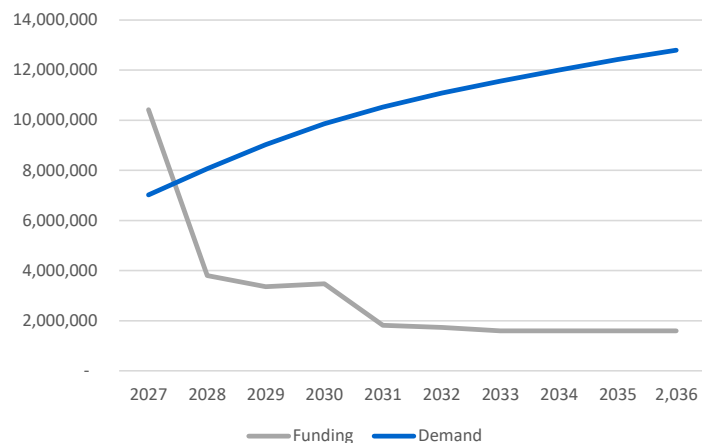


Figure 4 - Asset Renewal Projections

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.



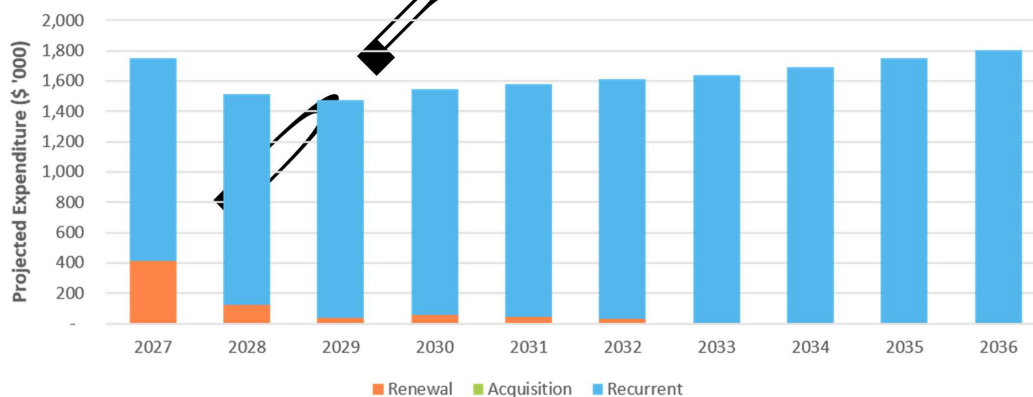
Current Condition

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 prioritised for full or part renewal in our forward capital works program.



Financial Projections

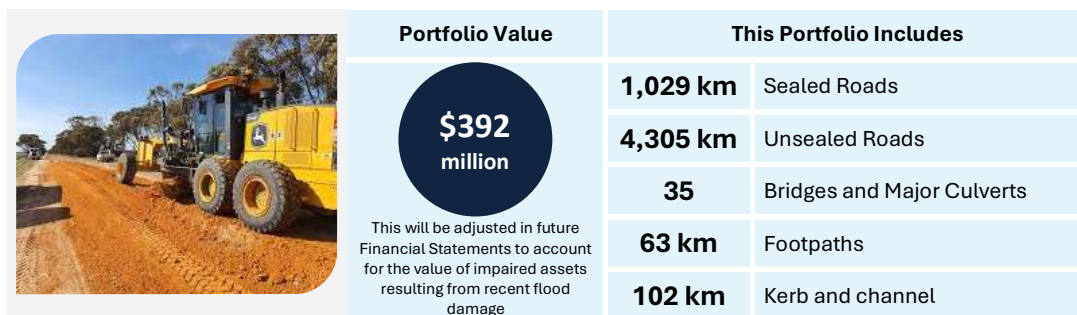
Our challenge will be striking a balance between maintaining the condition of our buildings as they age and deteriorate and providing facilities that are accessible, environmentally sustainable, and meet the service needs of our changing community.



	2026 (\$'000)	2027 (\$'000)	2028 (\$'000)	2029 (\$'000)	2030 (\$'000)	2031 (\$'000)	2032 (\$'000)	2033 (\$'000)	2034 (\$'000)	2035 (\$'000)	10 year Total
Recurrent	1,342	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.



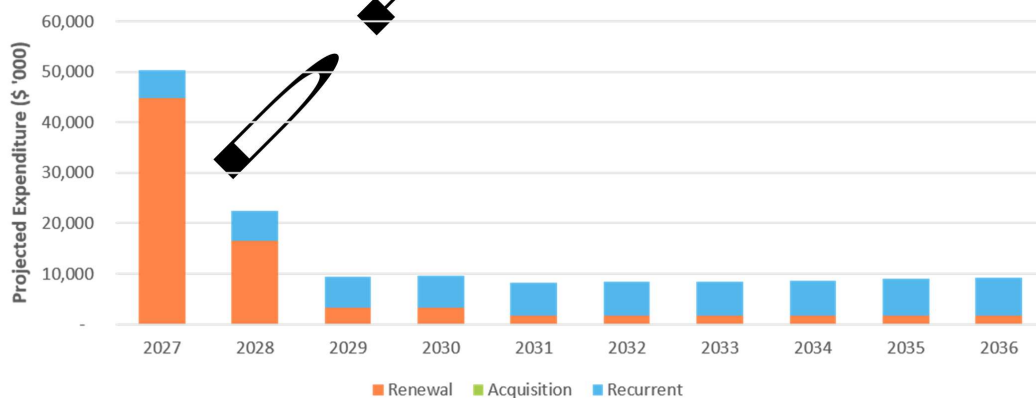
Current Condition

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.



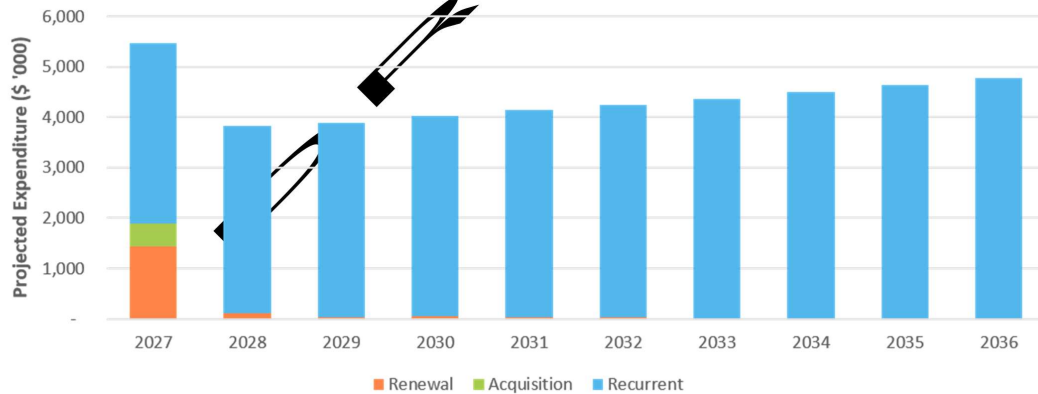
Current Condition

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



Financial Projections

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



	2026 (\$'000)	2027 (\$'000)	2028 (\$'000)	2029 (\$'000)	2030 (\$'000)	2031 (\$'000)	2032 (\$'000)	2033 (\$'000)	2034 (\$'000)	2035 (\$'000)	10 year Total
Recurrent	3,587	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.



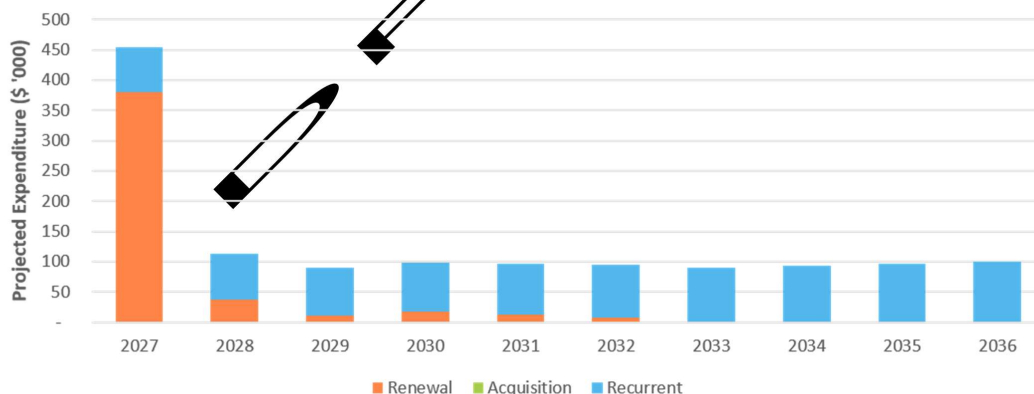
Current Condition

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

8.3 FINANCIAL REPORTS

8.3.1 2025-26 ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE STATEMENT ADOPTION IN PRINCIPLE

Author's Title: Director Corporate and Organisational Performance

Directorate: Corporate and Organisational Performance **File No:** FM/02/09

Relevance to Council Plan 2025 - 2029

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

PURPOSE

The annual report includes the Financial Statements and Performance Statement. Council is required to certify the Financial Statements and Performance Statement in principle each year, in order to lodge the statements to be formally certified by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO).

The Performance Statement contains selected indicators from the service indicators, which are audited by VAGO. This report recommends that Council adopt the 2025/26 Financial Statements and Performance Statement in principle.

SUMMARY

The preparation of Council's Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement is required under the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Before the Statements can be finalised and submitted to the auditor, Council must approve them in principle and nominate two Councillors to sign the Statements alongside the Chief Executive Officer and Principal Accounting Officer.

Councillors are asked to review the draft Statements, noting that they are currently undergoing audit by VAGO. As the audit process is still underway, the Statements remain subject to change.

Following completion of the audit, the final Statements will be included in Council's 2025/26 Annual Report, which is scheduled to be presented to Council in October 2026.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the accompanying 2025-26 Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement.
2. Notes that Council's Audit and Risk Committee recommended that Council provide its in principle support to the financial statements and performance statement (pending circulated final auditor changes) at its meeting on 9 September 2026.
3. Adopts the 2025-26 Annual Financial Statements and the Performance Statement in principle prior to them being provided to the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) for final audit sign off.

4. Nominates the Mayor and Audit and Risk Committee member Councillor Graeme Milne and Deputy Mayor and Audit and Risk Committee member Councillor Bernadette Hogan, as the two Councillors to certify the Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement.
5. Authorises the nominated Councillors to accept any further recommended changes by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office.
6. Designates Salomme Menezes, Manager Financial Strategy, as Principal Accounting Officer to certify the Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement, as required by the *Local Government Act 2020* and Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.
7. Approves the 2025-26 Governance and Management Checklist.
8. Authorises the Mayor, Councillor Graeme Milne, and Chief Executive Officer, Daniel McLoughlan to sign the 2025-26 Governance and Management Checklist.

DISCUSSION

The Financial Statements and Performance Statement will form part of Council's annual report. Section 98 (1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires Councils to prepare an annual report in respect of each financial year. The annual report must be presented to a Council meeting (open to the public).

The Financial Statements (at Attachment One) compile a general-purpose financial report that complies with the Australian Accounting Standards, other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board, the *Local Government Act 2020* and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.

The Performance Statement (Attachment Two) and Governance and Management Checklist (Attachment Three) have been prepared in accordance with the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) guidance.

The 2025-26 Financial Statements and Performance Statement accompanying this report reflect the financial results and Council Plan outcomes for the 2025-26 financial year.

Council's Audit and Risk Committee received and considered the 2025-26 Financial Statements and Performance Statement and related auditor's reports at its meeting on 9 September 2026.

The resolution from the Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 9 September 2026 was a recommendation to Council for adoption of the 2025-26 Financial Statements and Performance Statement in principle and signing, subject to any administrative changes required by VAGO.

Financial Sustainability

The resulting financial position as of 30 June 2026 aligns with the strategic objectives of the Buloke Shire Council Plan 2025-29.

Financial Statements

Income Statement

The financial statements provide commentary regarding the financial and performance outcomes for 2025-26. Key commentary related to the financial results are also provided below.

1. Council recorded a surplus of \$8.482 million for the financial year, \$20.350 lower than the adopted budget of \$28.832 million
2. Council's operating revenue of \$31.153 million was a favourable \$3.713 million increase compared to the adopted budget of \$27.440 million.
3. This result is driven by a mix of unbudgeted revenue, deferred costs, revenue and expenditure optimisation.
4. Key reasons for total variance are as follows -

- Net decrease in income due to net advance receipt of approx. \$3 million from Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) for FY2026-2027 in FY2025-2026 along with unearned Capital Grants of approx. \$24 million from flood recovery through Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.
 - Net decrease in expenditure due to lower than budgeted Employee Costs approx. \$932,000, Material & Services approx. \$919,000 and higher than anticipated depreciated approx. \$528,000 due to year-end FY2024-2025 asset capitalisations.
5. Council has undertaken an interim desktop fair value assessment of its infrastructure class of assets. This resulted in a gross revaluations surplus of \$29.963 million with an impairment of \$3.980 million. Council has recognised the net asset revaluation gain of \$25.983 million in its Other Comprehensive Income.
 6. Council's total comprehensive result for FY2025-26 stands at \$34.465 million

Balance Sheet

- Council's closing cash balance (including other financial assets) was \$37.7 million compared to \$31.128 million of the prior financial year.
- Council's closing cash balance increased primarily due to the advance receipt of Federal Assistance Grant payments for FY2026-27.
- Cash is fully allocated and will be used for ongoing capital projects and to meet current liabilities due in the 2026-27 financial year.

Capital Works

- Council has delivered 23% of its capital works program amounting to \$10.932 million in 2025-26. The result was \$35.8 million lower than the adopted 2025-26 budget, primarily due to the on-going impact of new natural disaster events occurring within Buloke and therefore delaying the delivery of flood recovery works previously expected to be realised from previous events.
- Majority of the works to be carried forward relate to -
 - a) Heavy plant and machinery (\$2M)
 - b) Flood recovery works (\$27M)
 - c) Safer Local Roads (\$2M)
 - d) Roads to Recovery (\$0.7M)

Local Government Performance Reporting Framework

The analysis of data from 2025-26 reported results within the historic trend and comments are provided for any significant variances. DJSIR has reviewed the draft results with no significant issues identified.

Performance Statement and Governance and Management Checklist

The performance statement contains 10 service indicators and 18 financial indicators which have been audited by VAGO. Council provides comments against all indicators in the Performance Statement.

The Governance and Management Checklist contains attestations by Council of the existence of key nominated policies and plans, and the dates when they were adopted.

RELEVANT LAW

The Statements have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations, the *Local Government Act 2020* and the Regulations. Council's Statements must be audited to meet the requirements as set out under the *Local Government Act 2020*.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable to this report.

OPTIONS

Not applicable to this report.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable to this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council's 2025-26 Financial Statements and Performance Statement have been independently audited by VAGO's audit appointed agent.

The completed audit of the Financial Statements and Performance statement has provided reasonable assurance that the Statements presented fairly under the Australian Accounting Standards, *Local Government Act 2020* and *Audit Act 1994*.

There are no significant issues reported through the audit process and Council is likely to receive an unqualified audit opinion, (subject to a final VAGO review), which is an extremely positive result.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The preparation of the In Principle Statements of Finances and Performance supports Council's commitment to continuous improvement through enhanced financial planning, performance monitoring and informed decision-making. The Statements provide a framework for assessing future financial and service delivery outcomes and enable Council to respond proactively to emerging challenges and opportunities.

COLLABORATION

The In Principle Statements of Finances and Performance were prepared by the Finance Department in consultation with relevant managers across the organisation to ensure that the projected financial and performance information reflects Council's service delivery requirements, strategic priorities and operational objectives.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The In Principle Statements of Finances and Performance indicate that Council remains financially viable and can meet its current and future obligations while continuing to deliver services and infrastructure to the community. The Statements have been prepared using prudent financial assumptions and provide a basis for the ongoing monitoring of Council's financial sustainability.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

The In Principle Statements of Finances and Performance have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*. The Statements support Council's integrated strategic planning and reporting framework and reflect the financial management and accountability principles established under Victorian local government legislation.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

The In Principle Statements of Finances and Performance have been prepared in accordance with Council's strategic planning and reporting framework and support the achievement of the objectives and strategic directions contained within the Council Plan. The Statements provide transparency regarding Council's projected financial position and expected performance outcomes and inform the development of Council's budget and long-term financial planning processes.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

The availability of Council's audited financial and performance reporting to the community is essential for ensuring transparency and accountability to the community and other levels of government.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No officer preparing this report has declared a conflict.

Attachments:

1. Attachment 8.3.1.1 - Draft Annual Financial Statements FY2025-26
2. Attachment 8.3.1.2 - Draft Local Government Model Sector Performance Report - FY2025-26

DRAFT

Buloke Shire Council

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT for the year ended 30 June 2026



Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Annual Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2026

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Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Annual Financial Report
for the year ended 30 June 2026

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DRAFT

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Annual Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2026

Certification of the Financial Statements

In my opinion, the accompanying financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*, the Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

Salomme Menezes
Principal Accounting Officer
Dated: dd MMMM yyyy
Wycheproof

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly the financial transactions of the Buloke Shire Council for the year ended 30 June 2026 and the financial position of the Council as at that date.

At the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances which would render any particulars in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We have been authorised by the Council and by the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* to certify the financial statements in their final form.

[Mayor]
Councillor
Dated: dd MMMM yyyy
Wycheproof

[Councillor]
Councillor
Dated: dd MMMM yyyy
Wycheproof

Daniel McLoughlan
Chief Executive Officer
Dated: dd MMMM yyyy
Wycheproof

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Annual Financial Report
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Victorian Auditor-General's Office Report

Insert VAGO Report here

DRAFT

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Annual Financial Report
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Victorian Auditor-General's Office Report

Insert VAGO Report here

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Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Comprehensive Income Statement
for the year ended 30 June 2026

	Note	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
Income / Revenue			
Rates and charges	3.1	15,974	15,370
Statutory fees and fines	3.2	184	161
User fees	3.3	387	439
Grants - operating	3.4	12,950	15,312
Grants - capital	3.4	10,835	2,831
Contributions - monetary	3.5	303	495
Net gain on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	3.6	27	—
Other income	3.7	1,328	1,890
Total income / revenue		41,988	36,498
Expenses			
Employee costs	4.1	12,483	12,116
Materials and services	4.2	9,898	12,609
Depreciation	4.3	9,380	9,185
Depreciation - Right of use assets	4.4	423	457
Bad and doubtful debts	4.5	332	89
Finance Costs - Leases	4.6	47	67
Other expenses	4.7	943	953
Total expenses		33,506	35,476
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		8,482	1,022
Other comprehensive income:			
Items that will not be reclassified to surplus or deficit in future periods			
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	9.1	25,983	1,920
Total other comprehensive income		25,983	1,920
Total comprehensive result		34,465	2,942

The above comprehensive income statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Balance Sheet

as at 30 June 2026

	Note	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
Assets			
Current assets			
Trade and other receivables	5.1	2,195	3,811
Cash and cash equivalents	5.1	3,718	3,128
Other financial assets	5.1	34,000	28,000
Inventories	5.2	192	96
Other assets	5.2	309	553
Total current assets		40,414	35,588
Non-current assets			
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	6.1	333,664	306,648
Right-of-use assets	5.7	532	761
Investments in associates, joint arrangements and subsidiaries	6.2	—	213
Total non-current assets		334,196	307,622
Total assets		374,610	343,210
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	5.3	1,998	2,458
Trust funds and deposits	5.3	443	427
Contract and other liabilities	5.3	609	3,150
Provisions	5.4	1,746	1,788
Lease liabilities	5.7	388	382
Total current liabilities		5,184	8,205
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	5.4	2,749	2,533
Lease liabilities	5.7	190	450
Total non-current liabilities		2,939	2,983
Total liabilities		8,123	11,188
Net assets		366,487	332,022
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		139,480	131,465
Reserves	9.1	227,007	200,557
Total Equity		366,487	332,022

The above balance sheet should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Statement of Changes in Equity
for the year ended 30 June 2026

	Note	Total \$ '000	Accumulated Surplus \$ '000	Revaluation Reserves \$ '000	Other Reserves \$ '000
2026					
Balance at beginning of the financial year		332,022	131,465	197,276	3,281
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		8,482	8,482	—	—
Other comprehensive income					
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)		25,983	—	25,983	—
Other comprehensive income		25,983	—	25,983	—
Total comprehensive income		34,465	8,482	25,983	—
Transfers to other reserves	9.1	(867)	(667)	—	(200)
Transfers from other reserves	9.1	867	200	—	667
Balance at end of the financial year		366,487	139,480	223,259	3,748
2025					
Balance at beginning of the financial year		329,080	130,856	195,356	2,868
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		1,022	1,022	—	—
Other comprehensive income					
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)		1,920	—	1,920	—
Other comprehensive income		1,920	—	1,920	—
Total comprehensive income		2,942	1,022	1,920	—
Transfers to other reserves	9.1	—	(458)	—	458
Transfers from other reserves	9.1	—	45	—	(45)
Balance at end of the financial year		332,022	131,465	197,276	3,281

The above statement of changes in equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Statement of Cash Flows
for the year ended 30 June 2026

	Note	2026 Inflows/ (Outflows) \$ '000	2025 Inflows/ (Outflows) \$ '000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Statutory fees and fines		246	200
Other receipts		1,555	1,680
Rates and charges		15,742	15,320
User fees		387	439
Grants - operating		12,895	14,922
Grants - capital		8,349	3,484
Contributions - monetary		303	495
Interest received		1,227	1,459
Trust funds and deposits taken/(repaid)		16	120
Net GST refund/(payment)		—	286
Employee costs		(12,360)	(11,998)
Materials and services		(10,207)	(12,448)
Other payments		(895)	(807)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	9.2	17,258	13,152
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	6.1	(10,413)	(10,971)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		27	—
Payments for investments		(5,787)	(4,944)
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		(16,173)	(15,915)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Interest paid - lease liability		(47)	(67)
Repayment of lease liabilities		(448)	(438)
Net cash flow provided by/(used in) financing activities		(495)	(505)
Net Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		590	(3,268)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		3,128	6,396
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year		3,718	3,128

The above statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Statement of Capital Works
for the year ended 30 June 2026

	Note	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
Property			
Land		—	—
Land improvements		9	331
Total land		9	331
Building improvements		45	8
Leasehold improvements		(1)	—
Total buildings		44	8
Total property		53	339
Plant and equipment			
Plant, machinery and equipment		92	385
Fixtures, fittings and furniture		84	21
Computers and telecommunications		140	128
Library books		—	18
Total plant and equipment		316	552
Infrastructure			
Roads		7,746	6,445
Bridges		13	—
Footpaths and cycleways		2	145
Drainage		23	—
Recreational, leisure and community facilities		309	240
Parks, open space and streetscapes		2,371	3,801
Aerodromes		—	48
Total infrastructure		10,563	10,679
Total capital works expenditure	6.1	10,932	11,570
Represented by:			
New asset expenditure		3,018	3,849
Asset renewal expenditure		7,905	7,445
Asset expansion expenditure		—	—
Asset upgrade expenditure		9	276
Total capital works expenditure		10,932	11,570

The above statement of capital works should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 1. OVERVIEW

Introduction

The Buloke Shire Council was established by an Order of the Governor in Council on 20 January 1995 and is a body corporate.

The Council's main office is located at 367 Broadway, Wycheproof, Victoria 3527.

Statement of compliance

These financial statements are a general purpose financial report that consists of a Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Capital Works and Notes accompanying these financial statements. The general purpose financial report complies with Australian Accounting Standards (AAS), other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board, the *Local Government Act 2020*, and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

The Council is a not-for-profit entity and therefore applies the additional AUS paragraphs applicable to a not-for-profit entity under the Australian Accounting Standards.

Accounting policy information

1.1 Basis of accounting

Accounting policies are selected and applied in a manner which ensures that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported. Accounting policies applied are disclosed in sections where the related balance or financial statement matter is disclosed.

The accrual basis of accounting has been used in the preparation of these financial statements, except for the cash flow information, whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

The financial statements are based on the historical cost convention unless a different measurement basis is specifically disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated judgements are based on professional judgement derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The financial statements are in Australian dollars. The amounts presented in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest thousand dollars unless otherwise specified. Minor discrepancies in tables between totals and the sum of components are due to rounding.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in the application of AAS's that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates relate to:

- the fair value of land, buildings, infrastructure, plant and equipment (refer to Note 6.1)
- the determination of depreciation for buildings, infrastructure, plant and equipment (refer to Note 6.1.).
- the determination of employee provisions (refer to Note 5.4.).
- the determination of landfill provisions (refer to Note 5.4.)
- the determination of whether performance obligations are sufficiently specific so as to determine whether an arrangement is within the scope of AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers* or AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities* (refer to Note 3.4)
- the determination, in accordance with AASB 16 *Leases*, of the lease term, the estimation of the discount rate when not implicit in the lease and whether an arrangement is in substance short-term or low value (refer to Note 5.7)
- other areas requiring judgements

Unless otherwise stated, all accounting policies are consistent with those applied in the prior year. Where appropriate, comparative figures have been amended to accord with current presentation, and disclosure has been made of any material changes to comparatives.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 1. OVERVIEW

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Income and expenses are recognised net of the amount of associated GST. Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is included with other receivables or payables in the balance sheet.

1.2 Impact of emergencies and natural disasters

In addition to the October 2022 floods, December 2023 floods and February 2024 storm event, Council remains significantly impacted by declared emergencies and natural disaster events such as 2025 fire event (AGRN 1259) and the February 2026 flood event (AGRN 1270). These events have continued to affect Council's operations, financial position, asset management planning and delivery of capital and renewal works across the municipal road network.

Council has noted the following significant impacts on its financial operations during the financial year:

- Council was reimbursed for works undertaken of approx \$370,000 through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) that wasn't budgeted for.
- Council incurred costs associated with emergency works arising from AGRN 1259 including the inspection, removal and cleanup of damaged roadside vegetation and damaged signage. These works are being progressed through the relevant disaster recovery funding process where eligible.
- AGRN 1270 further impacted Council's Road network and required urgent emergency works to restore access and support community recovery. The event also caused delays to existing flood recovery works and required Council to reassess assets that may have been re-impacted by the later event.
- Council continued to undertake reconstruction works associated with damage from the October 2022, December 2023 and February 2024 events. These works are to be funded through DRFA where eligible and subject to assessment and approval by the relevant State and Commonwealth agencies.
- Council did not experience any material reduction in user fees, charges or other operating revenue as a direct result of the events.
- Asset valuations – Council recognised impairment associated with the October 2022 flood event in the year ended 30 June 2023. Post approval from the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) Council has deferred its road, bridges and other infrastructure asset revaluation to June 2027 and any further impairment or significant valuation impacts arising from subsequent disaster events will be considered as part of that process.

Also refer to note 8.1 for further details of contingent assets and liabilities.

1.3 Impacts of other external events

Council has considered ongoing external events that have contributed to volatility in international markets, disrupted global supply chains and increased inflationary pressure, including the risk that they may cause significant changes in the carrying values of assets and liabilities in the next financial year, and has concluded that there is no material impact on the 2025-26 financial report that requires additional disclosure

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 2. ANALYSIS OF OUR RESULTS

Note 2.1 Performance against budget

The performance against budget notes compare Council's financial plan, expressed through its annual budget, with actual performance. The *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* requires explanation of any material variances. Council has adopted a materiality threshold of the lower of 10 percent or \$50,000 where further explanation is warranted. Explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality threshold unless the variance is considered to be material because of its nature.

These notes are prepared to meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

2.1.1 Income / Revenue and expenditure

	Budget 2026 \$ '000	Actual 2026 \$ '000	Variance \$ '000	Variance %	Ref
Income / Revenue					
Rates and charges	15,905	15,974	69	0.43%	1
Statutory fees and fines	124	184	60	48.39%	2
User fees	499	387	(112)	(22.44)%	3
Grants - operating	9,455	12,950	3,495	36.96%	4
Grants - capital	35,304	10,835	(24,469)	(69.31)%	5
Contributions - monetary	608	303	(305)	(50.16)%	6
Contributions - non monetary	—	—	—	∞	
Net gain on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	25	27	2	8.00%	
Other income	1,324	1,328	4	0.30%	7
Total income / revenue	63,244	41,988	(21,256)	(33.61)%	
Expenses					
Employee costs	13,415	12,483	932	6.95%	8
Materials and services	10,817	9,898	919	8.50%	9
Depreciation	8,852	9,380	(528)	(5.96)%	10
Depreciation - right of use assets	465	423	42	9.03%	11
Allowance for impairment losses	62	332	(270)	(435.48)%	12
Finance costs - leases	54	47	7	12.96%	11
Net loss on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	—	—	—	∞	
Other expenses	747	943	(196)	(26.24)%	13
Total expenses	34,412	33,506	906	2.63%	
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	28,832	8,482	(20,350)	(70.58)%	

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 2.1 Performance against budget

(i) Explanation of material variations

Variance Explanation

Ref

1. Favorable variance due to supplementary property valuations undertaken during the year.
2. Favorable variance due to excess income received than budgeted due to increase in planning permits.
3. Unfavorable variance due to lower than expected income from Compliance, Public Health & Wellbeing services (approx. \$22,000). and non-receipt of budgeted income from waste & charges and electric charging stations (approx. \$97,000). This has been partially off-set by income from other fees and charges.
4. Favorable variance primarily due to Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) received in advance for FY2026-27 in FY2025-26 (approx. \$7 million). This has been off - set by FAGs received in advance for FY2025-26 in FY2024-25 (approx. \$4 million).
5. Unfavorable variance primarily due to unearned income for floods recovery works from Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA). This was partially offset by the recognition of income received in advance, which had previously been recorded as a liability on the balance sheet.
6. Unfavorable variance primarily due to unsuccessful insurance outcome relating to Birchip Netball Court Remediation.
7. Favorable income primarily due to increase interest income from term deposits.
8. Favorable variance due to multiple vacancies across the organisation.
9. Favorable variance primarily due to lower than budgeted expenditure on operational materials, operational contracts & services. This has been setoff by excess expenditure than budgeted on consultants.
10. Unfavorable variance due to depreciation on assets capitalised at year-end June 2025.
11. Favorable variance due to lower than anticipated vehicles being leased out across the organisation.
12. Unfavorable variance due to higher than budgeted bad debts provided against infringements and other debtors.
13. Unfavorable variance primarily due to Council's unbudgeted contribution to Wimmera Southern Mallee Alliance, Silo Art Trail, Safer Together Program well as FY2022-23 contribution to Wycheproof Recreation Reserve being pai out in FY2025-26.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 2.1 Performance against budget

2.1.2 Capital works

	Budget 2026 \$ '000	Actual 2026 \$ '000	Variance \$ '000	Variance %	Ref
Property					
Land improvements	–	9	9	∞	
Total land	–	9	9	∞	
Building improvements	395	45	(350)	(88.61)%	1
Leasehold improvements	–	(1)	(1)	∞	
Total buildings	395	44	(351)	(88.86)%	
Total property	395	53	(342)	(86.58)%	
Plant and equipment					
Plant, machinery and equipment	2,101	92	(2,009)	(95.62)%	2
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	91	84	(7)	(7.69)%	
Computers and telecommunications	161	140	(21)	(13.04)%	3
Library books	18	–	(18)	(100.00)%	4
Total plant and equipment	2,371	316	(2,055)	(86.67)%	
Infrastructure					
Roads	39,687	7,746	(31,941)	(80.48)%	5
Bridges	30	13	(17)	(56.67)%	6
Footpaths and cycleways	278	2	(276)	(99.28)%	6
Drainage	202	23	(179)	(88.61)%	6
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	463	309	(154)	(33.26)%	7
Parks, open space and streetscapes	2,606	2,371	(235)	(9.02)%	8
Aerodromes	100	–	(100)	(100.00)%	6
Other infrastructure	603	99	(504)	(83.58)%	9
Total infrastructure	43,969	10,563	(33,406)	(75.98)%	
Total capital works expenditure	46,735	10,932	(35,803)	(76.61)%	
Represented by:					
New asset expenditure	3,930	3,018	(912)	(23.21)%	
Asset renewal expenditure	42,403	7,905	(34,498)	(81.36)%	
Asset expansion expenditure	152	–	(152)	(100.00)%	
Asset upgrade expenditure	250	9	(241)	(96.40)%	
Total capital works expenditure	46,735	10,932	(35,803)	(76.61)%	

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 2.1 Performance against budget

(i) Explanation of material variations

Variance Ref	Explanation
1	Favorable variance due to planned building works not being undertaken. Unspent funding will be carried forward to FY2026-27.
2	Favorable variance as planned works are pending the finalisation of the Heavy Plant and Fleet Strategy. Unspent funding will be carried forward to FY2026-27.
3	Favorable variance resulting from lower than budgeted investment in IT assets. Unspent funding will be carried forward to FY2026-27.
4	Favorable variance as assets not purchased.
5	Favorable variance primarily attributable to Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) approval being received later than anticipated during FY2025-26, resulting in project delivery being deferred to FY2026-27. Unspent funding will be carried forward to FY2026-27.
6	Favorable variance due to planned capital works not undertaken, deferred. Unspent funding will be carried forward to FY2026-27.
7	Favorable variance primarily driven by lower than budgeted expenditure on Aquatic Facility Renewal Works and higher than anticipated carried-forward project budget for the Tiny Towns program.
8	Favorable variance primarily due to lower than anticipated expenditure on the Birchip streetscape lighting, Sea Lake streetscape lighting, Donald Streetscape improvements, and Wooroonook Septic Replacement projects. This was partially offset by additional expenditure on the Wycheproof Recreation Reserve Public Toilets, Watchem Septic Replacement, and unbudgeted Playspaces initiatives, including the Nullawil Public Toilets project.
9	Favorable variance due to unsuccessful insurance outcome of the Birchip Netball Court Remediation.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 2.2 Analysis of Council results by program

2.2.1 Analysis of Council results by program

Council delivers its functions and activities through the following programs.

1. Our Built and Natural Environment

- 1.1 Work Towards Sustainability
- 1.2 Suitable Housing Options
- 1.3 An Attractive and Well Maintained Buloke
- 1.4 A Safe and Active Buloke

2. Our Community Wellbeing

- 2.1 Partnerships to Outcomes
- 2.2 Inclusiveness Plan in Action
- 2.3 Well Supported Community
- 2.4 Increased Community Wellbeing

3. Our Economy

- 3.1 Tourism
- 3.2 Attraction and Promotion of Local Business
- 3.3 Employment Opportunities
- 3.4 Digital Connections

4. Our Council and Community Leadership

- 4.1 Active Leaders and Volunteers
- 4.2 Community Engagement
- 4.3 Continuous Service Improvement for Efficient and Flexible Services
- 4.4 A Well Governed and Healthy Organisation

2.2.2 Summary of income / revenue, expenses, assets and capital expenses by program

Functions/activities	Income / Revenue \$ '000	Expenses \$ '000	Surplus / (Deficit) \$ '000	Grants included in income / revenue \$ '000	Total assets \$ '000
2026					
Our Built and Natural Environment	17,992	23,675	(5,683)	15,908	307,681
Our Community Wellbeing	988	3,276	(2,288)	698	—
Our Economy	59	292	(233)	14	41,184
Our Council and Community Leadership	8,552	6,263	2,289	7,165	—
Unattributed	14,397	—	14,397	—	25,745
Total functions and activities	41,988	33,506	8,482	23,785	374,610
2025					
Our Built and Natural Environment	11,943	25,273	(13,330)	9,308	308,844
Our Community Wellbeing	1,231	3,465	(2,234)	877	—
Our Economy	117	263	(146)	223	213
Our Council and Community Leadership	9,301	6,475	2,826	7,736	33,950
Unattributed	13,906	—	13,906	—	—
Total functions and activities	36,498	35,476	1,022	18,144	343,007

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 3. FUNDING FOR THE DELIVERY OF OUR SERVICES

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
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3.1 Rates and charges

Council uses Capital Improved Value (CIV) as the basis of valuation of all properties within the municipal district. The CIV is the value of the land and all its improvements.

The valuation base used to calculate general rates for 2025/26 was \$5.070 billion (2024/25 \$5.107 billion). The 2025/26 rate in the CIV dollar was a General Rate used for Residential of 0.486016 cents (2024/25 0.500479 cents), Commercial and Industrial Rate of 0.561970 cents (2024/25, 0.578694 cents) and a Farm Rate of 0.223567 cents (2024/25, 0.212815).

Municipal charge	830	807
Supplementary rates and rate adjustments	39	10
Interest on rates and charges	104	74
Rates - Residential	2,955	2,877
Rates - Commercial	568	552
Rates - Rural	9,750	9,443
Windfarm electricity generation charge	151	143
Garbage Charges	1,577	1,464
Total rates and charges	15,974	15,370

The date of the latest general revaluation of land for rating purposes within the municipal district was 1 January 2025, and the valuation was applied in the rating year commencing 1st July 2025.

Annual rates and charges are recognised as revenues when Council issues annual rates notices. Supplementary rates are recognised when a valuation and reassessment is completed and a supplementary rates notice issued.

3.2 Statutory fees and fines

Compliance	3	34
Planning Permits & Certificates	123	80
Revenue Collection	10	6
Building Regulations and Inspections	34	36
Other Fees and Fines	14	5
Total statutory fees and fines	184	161

Statutory fees and fines (including parking fees and fines) are recognised as income when the service has been provided, the payment is received, or when the penalty has been applied, whichever first occurs.

3.3 User fees

Pound fees and animal registrations	56	66
Public Health and Wellbeing Charges	30	32
Building Services charges	—	19
Waste and Environment	201	195
Saleyards / Truck Wash	45	23
Other	55	104
Total user fees	387	439

User fees are recognised as revenue when the service has been provided or Council has otherwise earned the income.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 3. FUNDING FOR THE DELIVERY OF OUR SERVICES

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
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3.4 Funding from other levels of government

Grants were received in respect of the following:

Summary of grants

Commonwealth funded grants	17,594	13,796
State funded grants	6,191	4,347
Total grants received	23,785	18,143

(a) Operating Grants

Recurrent - Commonwealth Government

Financial Assistance Grants - general purpose	11,674	12,731
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Recurrent - State Government

School crossing supervisors	16	16
Libraries	131	131
Maternal and child health	372	366
Other	169	141
Total recurrent operating grants	12,362	13,385

Non-recurrent - State Government

Family and children	13	86
Natural disaster - floods	102	1,034
Natural disaster - storm	136	300
Community development	10	152
Emergency Management	60	60
Other	267	295
Total non-recurrent operating grants	588	1,927

Total operating grants

12,950 15,312

(b) Capital Grants

Recurrent - Commonwealth Government

Roads to recovery	2,388	1,145
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Total recurrent capital grants	2,388	1,145
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Non-recurrent - Commonwealth Government

Regional Growth Fund/Local Roads and Community Infrastructure	1,600	—
Other - Roads Infrastructure	1,932	(80)

Non-recurrent - State Government

Recreation	163	—
Road rehabilitation	1,000	—
Parks, Open space & Streetscapes	3,126	1,576
Other	626	190
Total non-recurrent capital grants	8,447	1,686

Total capital grants

10,835 2,831

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 3. FUNDING FOR THE DELIVERY OF OUR SERVICES

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
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(c) Recognition of grant income

Before recognising funding from government grants as revenue the Council assesses whether there is a contract that is enforceable and has sufficiently specific performance obligations in accordance with AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers. When both these conditions are satisfied, the Council:

- identifies each performance obligation relating to revenue under the contract/agreement
- determines the transaction price
- recognises a contract liability for its obligations under the agreement
- recognises revenue as it satisfies its performance obligations, at the point in time or over time when services are rendered.

Where the contract is not enforceable and/or does not have sufficiently specific performance obligations, the Council applies *AASB 1058 Income for Not-for-Profit Entities*.

Grant revenue with sufficiently specific performance obligations is recognised over time as the performance obligations specified in the underlying agreement are met. Where performance obligations are not sufficiently specific, grants are recognised on the earlier of receipt or when an unconditional right to receipt has been established. Grants relating to capital projects are generally recognised progressively as the capital project is completed. The following table provides a summary of unspent grants.

Income recognised under AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities

General purpose	11,690	12,747
Specific purpose grants to acquire non-financial assets	10,834	2,831
Other specific purpose grants	238	1,331

Revenue recognised under AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers

Specific purpose grants	1,023	1,234
	23,785	18,143

(d) Unspent grants received on condition that they be spent in a specific manner:

Operating

Balance at start of year	633	1,023
Received during the financial year and remained unspent at balance date	109	506
Received in prior years and spent during the financial year	(164)	(896)
Balance at year end	578	633

Capital

Balance at start of year	2,517	1,864
Received during the financial year and remained unspent at balance date	31	1,352
Received in prior years and spent during the financial year	(2,517)	(699)
Balance at year end	31	2,517

Unspent grants are determined and disclosed on a cash basis.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 3. FUNDING FOR THE DELIVERY OF OUR SERVICES

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
3.5 Contributions		
Monetary contributions		
Revenue Collection Contributions	254	181
Capital Works Contributions	49	314
Total monetary contributions	303	495
Total contributions	303	495

Monetary contributions are recognised as revenue when Council obtains control over the contributed asset.

3.6 Net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment

Plant and equipment		
Proceeds of sale	27	—
Total net gain/(loss) on disposal of plant and equipment	27	—
Total net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	27	—

The profit or loss on sale of an asset is determined when control of the asset has passed to the buyer.

3.7 Other income

Interest	1,227	1,459
Rent Council properties	12	16
Reimbursements	138	199
Fuel tax credits	89	129
Wimmera Southern Mallee Development share of equity *	(213)	(56)
Other	75	143
Total other income	1,328	1,890

Interest is recognised as it is earned.

Other income is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable and is recognised when Council gains control over the right to receive the income.

(*) Read in conjunction with note 6.2(a) Investments in associates

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 4. THE COST OF DELIVERING SERVICES

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
4.1 Employee costs		
(a) Employee costs		
Wages and salaries	10,816	10,499
Superannuation	1,188	1,147
Fringe benefits tax	71	70
Allowances	9	9
Worksafe	387	378
Other	12	13
Total employee costs	12,483	12,116

(b) Superannuation

Council made contributions to the following funds:

Accumulation funds

Employer contributions to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	406	476
Employer contributions - Australian Super	218	225
Employer contributions - Hostplus Super	34	31
Employer contributions - Hesta	74	41
Employer contributions - Aware Super	92	106
Employer contributions - other funds	364	268
	1,188	1,147
Employer contributions payable at reporting date	—	—
Total superannuation costs	1,188	1,147

Refer to Note 9.3 for further information relating to Council's superannuation obligations.

4.2 Materials and services

Utilities	666	629
Information technology	751	710
Insurance	585	568
Consultants	1,516	2,174
Advertising	81	71
Garbage	612	679
Operational Contracts and Services	2,090	4,108
Operational Materials	1,037	1,093
Promotion/Public Education	1	7
Subscriptions/Memberships/Publications	135	219
Telephone	116	118
Vehicle and Plant Costs	1,613	1,442
Other	695	791
Total materials and services	9,898	12,609

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 4. THE COST OF DELIVERING SERVICES

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
4.3 Depreciation		
Property		
Buildings - non specialised	2,040	2,226
Leasehold improvements	27	27
Total depreciation - property	2,067	2,253
Plant and equipment		
Plant machinery and equipment	936	713
Fixtures fittings and furniture	25	3
Computers and telecomms	44	51
Total depreciation - plant and equipment	1,005	767
Infrastructure		
Roads	5,767	5,635
Bridges	103	103
Footpaths and cycleways	187	183
Drainage	83	82
Kerb & Channel	168	161
Landfill sites	—	1
Total depreciation - infrastructure	6,308	6,165
Total depreciation	9,380	9,185

Refer to note 5.7 and 6.1 for a more detailed breakdown of depreciation and amortisation charges and accounting policy.

4.4 Depreciation - Right of use assets

Vehicles	423	457
Total Depreciation - Right of use assets	423	457

4.5 Bad and doubtful debts

Rates debtors	238	1
Other debtors	94	88
Total allowance for impairment losses	332	89
Movement in allowance for impairment losses in respect of debtors		
Balance at the beginning of the year	310	301
New allowances recognised during the year	94	88
Amounts already provided for and written off as uncollectable	(87)	(79)
Balance at end of year	317	310

An allowance for impairment losses on rates debtors is recognised using an expected credit loss (ECL) model. The model incorporates both historical loss experience and forward-looking information to determine the appropriate level of impairment. For general debtors, a full allowance is recognised for outstanding balances that are more than 24 months overdue

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 4. THE COST OF DELIVERING SERVICES

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
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4.6 Finance Costs - Leases

Interest - Lease Liabilities	47	67
Total finance costs	47	67

4.7 Other expenses

Auditors' remuneration - VAGO - audit of the financial statements, performance statement and grant acquittals	57	56
Auditors' remuneration - Internal Audit	47	7
Councillors' allowances	222	208
Council Contributions and Donations	523	496
Council meeting expenses	16	19
Election expenses	4	150
Others	74	17
Total other expenses	943	953

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Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. INVESTING IN AND FINANCING OUR OPERATIONS

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
--	-----------------	-----------------

5.1 Financial assets

(a) Cash and cash equivalents

Current

Cash at bank	3,718	3,128
Total current cash and cash equivalents	3,718	3,128

(b) Other financial assets

Current

Term deposits	34,000	28,000
Total current other financial assets	34,000	28,000

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits at call, and other highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, net of outstanding bank overdrafts.

Other financial assets are valued at fair value, at balance date. Term deposits are measured at original cost. Any unrealised gains and losses on holdings at balance date are recognised as either a revenue or expense.

Other financial assets include term deposits and those with original maturity dates of three to 12 months are classified as current, whilst term deposits with maturity dates greater than 12 months are classified as non-current.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. INVESTING IN AND FINANCING OUR OPERATIONS

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
(c) Trade & Other Receivables		
Current		
<i>Statutory receivables</i>		
Rates debtors	1,499	1,267
Infringement debtors	94	148
GST receivable	284	201
<i>Non-statutory receivables</i>		
Grant debtors	180	1,765
Accrued interest	310	256
Other debtors	384	484
Allowance for expected credit loss - infringements	(65)	(57)
Provision for doubtful debts - rates debtors	(491)	(253)
Total current trade and other receivables	2,195	3,811
Total trade and other receivables	2,195	3,811

Short term receivables are carried at invoice amount. An allowance for expected credit losses is recognised based on past experience and other objective evidence of expected losses. Long term receivables are carried at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.

(d) Ageing of receivables

The ageing of the Council's trade & other receivables (excluding statutory receivables) that are not impaired was:

Current (not yet due)	275	1,267
Past due by up to 30 days	6	5
Past due between 31 and 180 days	23	118
Past due between 181 and 365 days	96	96
Past due by more than 1 year	474	1,019
Total trade and other receivables	874	2,505

Contract assets are recognised when Council has transferred goods or services to the customer but where Council is yet to establish an unconditional right to consideration.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. INVESTING IN AND FINANCING OUR OPERATIONS

	2026	2025
	\$ '000	\$ '000

5.2 Non-financial assets

(a) Inventories

Inventories held for distribution	192	96
Total inventories	192	96

Inventories held for distribution are measured at cost, adjusted when applicable for any loss of service potential. All other inventories, including land held for sale, are measured at the lower of cost and net realisable value. Where inventories are acquired for no cost or nominal consideration, they are measured at current replacement cost at the date of acquisition.

(b) Other assets

Current

Prepayments	298	545
Other	11	8
Total current other assets	309	553

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. INVESTING IN AND FINANCING OUR OPERATIONS

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
5.3 Payables, trust funds and deposits and contract and other liabilities		
(a) Trade and other payables		
Current		
Non-statutory payables		
Trade payables	1,523	1,971
Accrued expenses	475	487
Total current trade and other payables	1,998	2,458
(b) Trust funds and deposits		
Current		
Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund	223	237
Other refundable deposits	205	171
Funds held on behalf of community groups and third parties	15	19
Total current trust funds and deposits	443	427
(c) Contract and other liabilities		
Contract liabilities		
Current		
Grants received in advance:		
Grants received in advance - operating	578	633
Grants received in advance - capital	31	2,517
Total grants received in advance	609	3,150
User fees received in advance:		
Total user fees received in advance	—	—
Total current contract liabilities	609	3,150
Total current contract and other liabilities	609	3,150

Amounts received as deposits and retention amounts controlled by Council are recognised as trust funds until they are returned, transferred in accordance with the purpose of the receipt, or forfeited. Trust funds that are forfeited, resulting in council gaining control of the funds, are to be recognised as revenue at the time of forfeit.

Purpose and nature of items

Funds held on behalf of community groups and third parties - Amounts received as trust deposits to be expended in a specified manner that had not occurred at balance date.

Fire Service Levy - Council is the collection agent for fire services levy on behalf of the State Government. Council remits amounts received on a quarterly basis. Amounts disclosed here will be remitted to the state government in line with that process.

Refundable deposits - Deposits are taken by council as a form of surety in a number of circumstances, including in relation to building works, tender deposits, contract deposits and the use of civic facilities.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. INVESTING IN AND FINANCING OUR OPERATIONS

	Employee provisions \$ '000	Landfill restoration \$ '000	Gravel pit restoration \$ '000	Total \$ '000
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5.4 Provisions

2026

Balance at the beginning of the financial year	1,816	2,019	486	4,321
Additional provisions	123	91	—	214
Amounts used	—	—	—	—
Change in the discounted amount arising because of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate	—	—	(40)	(40)
Balance at the end of the financial year	1,939	2,110	446	4,495

Provisions

Provisions - current *	1,746	—	—	1,746
Provisions - non-current	193	2,110	446	2,749
Total Provisions	1,939	2,110	446	4,495

2025

Balance at the beginning of the financial year	1,699	1,955	405	4,059
Additional provisions **	166	64	81	311
Amounts used	(49)	—	—	(49)
Balance at the end of the financial year	1,816	2,019	486	4,321

Provisions

Provisions - current	1,738	—	50	1,788
Provisions - non-current	78	2,019	436	2,533
Total Provisions	1,816	2,019	486	4,321

(*) Gravel pit provision has been re-classified from current to non-current for year ending 2026

(**) Additional provisions for landfill and gravel pit FY2024-25 have been updated for presentation purposes to match the closing balances

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
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(a) Employee provisions

Current provisions expected to be wholly settled within 12 months

Annual leave	677	717
Long service leave	183	185
Accrued Days Off	40	30
	900	932

Current provisions expected to be wholly settled after 12 months

Long service leave	846	806
	846	806

Total current employee provisions

	1,746	1,738
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Non-Current

Long service leave	193	78
Total Non-Current Employee Provisions	193	78

continued on next page ...

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Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. INVESTING IN AND FINANCING OUR OPERATIONS

	2026	2025
	\$ '000	\$ '000
Aggregate Carrying Amount of Employee Provisions:		
Current	1,746	1,738
Non-current	193	78
Total Aggregate Carrying Amount of Employee Provisions	1,939	1,816

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Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. INVESTING IN AND FINANCING OUR OPERATIONS

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
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The calculation of employee costs and benefits includes all relevant on-costs and are calculated as follows at reporting date.

Annual leave

A liability for annual leave is recognised in the provision for employee benefits as a current liability because the Council does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability. Liabilities for annual leave are measured at:

- nominal value if the Council expects to wholly settle the liability within 12 months
- present value if the Council does not expect to wholly settle within 12 months.

Liabilities that are not expected to be wholly settled within 12 months of the reporting date are recognised in the provision for employee benefits as current liabilities, measured at the present value of the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled using the remuneration rate expected to apply at the time of settlement.

Long service leave

Liability for long service leave (LSL) is recognised in the provision for employee benefits. Unconditional LSL is disclosed as a current liability as the Council does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement. Unconditional LSL is measured at nominal value if expected to be settled within 12 months or at present value if not expected to be settled within 12 months. Conditional LSL that has been accrued, where an employee is yet to reach a qualifying term of employment, is disclosed as a non-current liability and measured at present value.

Key assumptions:

- discount rate	4.50%	3.94%
- wage inflation rate	4.15%	4.25%

(b) Landfill restoration

Non-current

Non-current	2,110	2,019
Total non-current	2,110	2,019

Total	2,110	2,019
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Key assumptions:

- discount rate	4.53%	3.30%
- inflation rate	3.80%	2.10%

(c) Gravel pit restoration

Current	—	50
	—	50

Non-current	446	436
	446	436

Total	446	486
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Key assumptions:

- discount rate	4.53%	3.30%
- inflation rate	3.80%	2.10%

Under provisions of the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act* (1990), Council is obliged to restore gravel pits currently operated under Work Authority Permits. The forecast life of gravel pits is based on current estimates of remaining suitable gravel availability and unrestored areas of individual sites. The provision for pit restoration has been calculated based on the present value of the expected cost of works to be undertaken.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. INVESTING IN AND FINANCING OUR OPERATIONS

5.5 Financing arrangements

The Council has the following funding arrangements in place as at 30 June 2026.

Bank overdraft	—	—
Credit card facilities	—	—
Treasury Corporation of Victoria facilities	—	—
Other facilities - Bank Guarantee	—	—
Other	—	—
Total Facilities	—	—
Used facilities	—	—
Other	—	—
Used facilities	—	—
Unused facilities	—	—

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Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. INVESTING IN AND FINANCING OUR OPERATIONS

5.6 Commitments

The Council has entered into the following commitments. Commitments are not recognised in the Balance Sheet. Commitments are disclosed at their nominal value and presented inclusive of the GST payable.

(a) Commitments for expenditure

	Not later than 1 year \$ '000	Later than 1 year and not later than 2 years \$ '000	Later than 2 years and not later than 5 years \$ '000	Later than 5 years \$ '000	Total \$ '000
2026					
Operating					
Garbage & recyclables	1,053	1,085	1,119	—	3,257
Glass recycling	—	—	—	—	—
Hire of plant	—	—	—	—	—
IT systems and technology	—	—	—	—	—
Building surveying	—	—	—	—	—
Asset valuation	—	—	—	—	—
Emergency Management	1,348	—	—	—	1,348
Others	42	—	—	—	42
Total	2,443	1,085	1,119	—	4,647
Capital					
Construction works	398	—	—	—	398
Roads	194	—	—	—	194
Total	592	—	—	—	592
2025					
Operating					
Garbage & recyclables	1,050	1,071	3,344	—	5,465
Glass recycling	10	—	—	—	10
Hire of plant	4	—	—	—	4
IT systems and technology	24	—	—	—	24
Building surveying	—	—	—	—	—
Asset valuation	—	—	—	—	—
Others	42	—	—	—	42
Total	1,130	1,071	3,344	—	5,545
Capital					
Construction works	854	—	—	—	854
Roads	3,467	—	—	—	3,467
Total	4,321	—	—	—	4,321

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. INVESTING IN AND FINANCING OUR OPERATIONS

5.7 Leases

At inception of a contract, Council assesses whether a contract is, or contains, a lease. A contract is, or contains, a lease if the contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time in exchange for consideration. To identify whether a contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset, it is necessary to assess whether:

- The contract involves the use of an identified asset;
- Council has the right to obtain substantially all of the economic benefits from use of the asset throughout the period of use; and
- Council has the right to direct the use of the asset.

This policy is applied to contracts entered into, or changed, on or after 1 July 2019.

As a lessee, Council recognises a right-of-use asset and a lease liability at the lease commencement date. The right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability adjusted for:

- any lease payments made at or before the commencement date less any lease incentives received; plus
- any initial direct costs incurred; and
- an estimate of costs to dismantle and remove the underlying asset or to restore the underlying asset or the site on which it is located.

The right-of-use asset is subsequently depreciated using the straight-line method from the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right-of-use asset or the end of the lease term. The estimated useful lives of right-of-use assets are determined on the same basis as those of property, plant and equipment. In addition, the right-of-use asset is periodically reduced by impairment losses, if any, and adjusted for certain measurements of the lease liability.

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments that are not paid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease or, if that rate cannot be readily determined, an appropriate incremental borrowing rate. Generally, Council uses an appropriate incremental borrowing rate as the discount rate.

Lease payments included in the measurement of the lease liability comprise the following:

- Fixed payments
- Variable lease payments that depend on an index or a rate, initially measured using the index or rate as at the commencement date;
- Amounts expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee; and
- The exercise price under a purchase option that Council is reasonably certain to exercise, lease payments in an optional renewal period if Council is reasonably certain to exercise an extension option, and penalties for early termination of a lease unless Council is reasonably certain not to terminate early.

When the lease liability is remeasured in this way, a corresponding adjustment is made to the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset, or is recorded in profit or loss if the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset has been reduced to zero.

Under *AASB 16 Leases*, Council as a not-for-profit entity has elected not to measure right-of-use assets at initial recognition at fair value in respect of leases that have significantly below-market terms.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. INVESTING IN AND FINANCING OUR OPERATIONS

(a) Right-of-Use Assets

	Vehicles \$ '000	Total \$ '000
2026		
Balance at 1 July 2025	761	761
Additions	—	—
Depreciation charge	(423)	(423)
Other	194	194
Balance at 30 June 2026	532	532
2025		
Balance at 1 July 2024	1,189	1,189
Additions	23	23
Depreciation charge	(457)	(457)
Other	6	6
Balance at 30 June 2025	761	761
	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000

(b) Lease Liabilities

Maturity analysis - contractual undiscounted cash flows		
Less than one year	413	424
One to five years	198	475
Total undiscounted lease liabilities as at 30 June:	611	899
Lease liabilities included in the Balance Sheet at 30 June:		
Current	388	382
Non-current	190	450
Total lease liabilities	578	832

Variable lease payments (not included in measurement of lease liabilities)

Variable lease payments are those that depend on an index or a rate, for example payments linked to the consumer price index, a benchmark interest rate or changes in market rental rates.

Buloke Shire Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. ASSETS WE MANAGE

6.1 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment

Summary of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	Carrying amount 30 June 2025 \$ '000	Additions \$ '000	Contributions \$ '000	Revaluation \$ '000	Disposal \$ '000	Depreciation \$ '000	Write-off \$ '000	Transfers \$ '000	Carrying amount 30 June 2026 \$ '000
Property	83,992	—	—	—	—	(2,067)	—	3,104	85,029
Plant and equipment	6,202	—	—	—	—	(1,005)	—	4,359	9,556
Infrastructure	203,802	—	—	25,983	—	(6,308)	—	8,583	232,060
Work in progress	12,652	10,934	—	—	—	—	(525)	(16,042)	7,019
Total	306,648	10,934	—	25,983	—	(9,380)	(525)	4	333,664

Summary of Work in Progress	Opening WIP \$ '000	Additions \$ '000	Write-off \$ '000	Transfers \$ '000	Closing WIP \$ '000
Property #	1,222	371	(28)	(326)	1,239
Infrastructure	11,430	10,563	(497)	(15,716)	5,780
Total	12,652	10,934	(525)	(16,042)	7,019

(#) Non-current asset held for resale has been re-classified as works in progress

Buloke Shire Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. ASSETS WE MANAGE

	Land specialised \$ '000	Land improve- ments \$ '000	Land under roads \$ '000	Total land and land improve- ments \$ '000	Buildings non specialised \$ '000	Leasehold improvements \$ '000	Total buildings \$ '000	Work in progress \$ '000	Total property \$ '000
Property									
At fair value 1 July 2025 [#]	7,910	–	22,312	30,222	111,004	534	111,538	1,222	142,982
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2025	–	–	–	–	(57,649)	(119)	(57,768)	–	(57,768)
	7,910	–	22,312	30,222	53,355	415	53,770	1,222	85,214
Movements in fair value									
Additions	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	371	371
Revaluation	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Disposal	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Write-off	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	(28)	(28)
Transfers	–	332	–	332	2,771	1	2,772	(326)	2,778
Non Current Assets held for resale	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
	–	332	–	332	2,771	1	2,772	17	3,121
Movements in accumulated depreciation									
Depreciation and amortisation	–	–	–	–	(2,040)	(27)	(2,067)	–	(2,067)
Transfers	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
	–	–	–	–	(2,040)	(27)	(2,067)	–	(2,067)
At fair value 30 June 2026	7,910	332	22,312	30,554	113,775	534	114,309	1,239	146,102
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2026	–	–	–	–	(59,689)	(145)	(59,834)	–	(59,834)
Carrying amount	7,910	332	22,312	30,554	54,086	389	54,475	1,239	86,268

(#) Non-current asset held for resale has been re-classified as works in progress

Buloke Shire Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. ASSETS WE MANAGE

	Plant machinery and equipment \$ '000	Fixtures fittings and furniture \$ '000	Computers and telecomms \$ '000	Library books \$ '000	Total plant and equipment \$ '000
Plant and Equipment					
At cost 1 July 2025	15,432	611	2,433	465	18,941
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2025	(9,806)	(560)	(2,252)	(121)	(12,739)
	5,626	51	181	344	6,202
Movements in carrying value					
Additions	—	—	—	—	—
Revaluation	—	—	—	—	—
Disposal	—	—	—	—	—
Transfers	4,218	17	124	—	4,359
	4,218	17	124	—	4,359
Movements in accumulated depreciation					
Depreciation and amortisation	(936)	(25)	(44)	—	(1,005)
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	—	—	—	—	—
Write-off	—	—	—	—	—
	(936)	(25)	(44)	—	(1,005)
At cost 30 June 2026	19,650	628	2,557	465	23,300
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2026	(10,742)	(585)	(2,296)	(121)	(13,744)
Carrying amount	8,908	43	261	344	9,556

Plant and equipment are carried at historical cost.

Buloke Shire Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. ASSETS WE MANAGE

	Roads \$ '000	Bridges \$ '000	Footpaths and cycleways \$ '000	Drainage \$ '000	Landfill sites \$ '000	Kerb & Channel \$ '000	Other infrastructure \$ '000	Work in progress \$ '000	Total infrastructure \$ '000
Infrastructure									
At fair value 1 July 2025	361,787	11,221	11,420	9,969	733	16,440	471	11,430	423,471
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2025	(183,252)	(5,214)	(5,147)	(4,837)	(733)	(8,585)	(471)	–	(208,239)
	178,535	6,007	6,273	5,132	–	7,855	–	11,430	215,232
Movements in fair value									
Additions	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	10,563	10,563
Revaluation	26,075	861	1,101	807	–	1,119	–	–	29,963
Disposal	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Write-off	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	(497)	(497)
Transfers	6,401	12	1,475	492	–	–	203	(15,716)	(7,133)
	32,476	873	2,576	1,299	–	1,119	203	(5,650)	32,896
Movements in accumulated depreciation									
Depreciation and amortisation	(5,767)	(103)	(187)	(83)	–	(168)	–	–	(6,308)
Impairment recognised through equity	(3,980)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	(3,980)
Transfers	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Write-off	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
	(9,747)	(103)	(187)	(83)	–	(168)	–	–	(10,288)
At fair value 30 June 2026	394,263	12,094	13,996	11,268	733	17,559	674	5,780	456,367
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2026	(192,999)	(5,317)	(5,334)	(4,920)	(733)	(8,753)	(471)	–	(218,527)
Carrying amount	201,264	6,777	8,662	6,348	–	8,806	203	5,780	237,840

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Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. ASSETS WE MANAGE

Acquisition

Initial measurement

Council initially measures its property, infrastructure, plant and equipment assets at cost. The cost of an acquired asset is the fair value of the consideration that Council has provided at the date of acquisition plus any incidental costs attributable to the acquisition.

Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset (or paid to transfer a liability) in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. Refer to Note 8.4 for more information on how Council measures fair value.

Where assets are constructed by Council, cost includes all materials used in construction, direct labour, borrowing costs incurred during construction, and an appropriate share of directly attributable variable and fixed overheads.

In accordance with Council's policy, the threshold limits have applied when recognising assets within an applicable asset class and unless otherwise stated are consistent with the prior year.

	Depreciation Period years	Threshold Limit \$ '000
Asset recognition thresholds and depreciation periods		
Buildings		
buildings	30 - 50 years	—
Plant and Equipment		
plant, machinery and equipment	3 - 13 years	5
fixtures, fittings and furniture	4 - 13 years	5
computers and telecommunications equipment	3 - 6 years	5
Infrastructure		
road formation	95 - 105 years	—
sealed road pavements	60 - 90 years	—
unsealed road pavements	15 - 25 years	—
sealed road surfaces	15 - 25 years	—
bridges	80 - 120 years	—
footpaths and cycleways	20 - 70 years	—
drainage	100 years	—
recreational, leisure and community facilities	10 - 50 years	—
waste management	10 - 50 years	—
parks, open space and streetscapes	10 - 50 years	—

Council has recognised any 'Land Under Roads' purchased and under its control prior to 2008 at cost, based on AASB 1051 Land Under Roads

Depreciation and amortisation

Buildings, land improvements, plant and equipment, infrastructure, and other assets having limited useful lives are systematically depreciated over their useful lives to the Council in a manner which reflects consumption of the service potential embodied in those assets. Estimates of remaining useful lives and residual values are made on a regular basis with major asset classes reassessed annually. Depreciation rates and methods are reviewed annually.

Where assets have separate identifiable components that are subject to regular replacement, these components are assigned distinct useful lives and residual values and a separate depreciation rate is determined for each component.

Road earthworks are not depreciated on the basis that they are assessed as not having a limited useful life.

Straight line depreciation is charged based on the residual useful life as determined each year.

Depreciation periods used are listed above and are consistent with the prior year unless otherwise stated.

Repairs and maintenance

Where the repair relates to the replacement of a component of an asset and the cost exceeds the capitalisation threshold the cost is capitalised and depreciated. The carrying value of the replaced asset is expensed.

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2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. ASSETS WE MANAGE

Valuation of land and buildings

Valuation of land and buildings was undertaken by a qualified independent valuer Ben Sawyer, Certified Practising Valuer AAPI Reg. 63163, Director, Preston Rowe Paterson Horsham and Wimmera Pty Ltd in June 2025. The valuation of land and buildings as at 30 June 2026 has been assessed at fair value using the 2025 valuations for existing assets and recognising additions post the revaluation at cost. Where land use is restricted through existing planning provisions the valuation is reduced to reflect this limitation. This adjustment is an unobservable input in the valuation. The adjustment has no impact on the comprehensive income statement.

Specialised land is valued at fair value using site values adjusted for englobo (undeveloped and/or unserviced) characteristics, access rights and private interests of other parties and entitlements of infrastructure assets and services. This adjustment is an unobservable input in the valuation. The adjustment has no impact on the comprehensive income statement.

Details of the Council's land and buildings and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2026 are as follows:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Date of valuation	Type of Valuation
Land - Non specialised	—	—	—	Jun/25	Full
Land - Specialised	—	—	7,910	Jun/25	Full
Land under roads	—	—	22,312	Jun-25	Full
Buildings - Non Specialised	—	—	54,475	Jun/25	Full
Total	—	—	84,697		

Valuation of Infrastructure

Valuation of Council's infrastructure such as road, bridges and drainage has been determined in accordance with valuation undertaken by independent valuer, Peter Moloney, Dip Civil Engineering (FIT), Member Institute of Engineers (Aust). The valuation is at fair value based on replacement cost less accumulated depreciation and amortisation as at the date of valuation.

The last external revaluation based on fair value was conducted in June 2023.

Council has sort approval from VAGO to defer the next external revaluation to June 2027.

Thus for financial year ending June 2026, Council has conducted an interim desktop assessment of Council's infrastructure class of assets based on industry indexation (i.e. Producers Price Index). This assessment indicated and upward movement of \$29.9 million. As council assets, primarily roads have been impacted by emergency events such as AGRN 1037, AGRN 1096 and AGRN 1270, Council has also recognised an impairment of \$3.9 million.

For the financial year ended June 2026, Council has a net revaluation surplus of \$25.9 million on its infrastructure class of assets.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. ASSETS WE MANAGE

Details of the Council's infrastructure and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2026 are as follows:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Date of valuation	Type of Valuation
Roads	–	–	201,264	June/2026	Interim
Bridges	–	–	6,777	June/2026	Interim
Footpaths and cycleways	–	–	8,662	June/2026	Interim
Drainage	–	–	6,348	June/2026	Interim
Kerb & Channel	–	–	8,806	June/2026	Interim
Other Infrastructure	–	–	203	June/2026	Initial recognition
Total	–	–	232,060		

Description of significant unobservable inputs into level 3 valuations

Specialised land and land under roads is valued using a market based direct comparison technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the extent and impact of restriction of use and the market cost of land per square metre. The extent and impact of restrictions on use varies and results in a reduction to surrounding land values of 90%. The market value of land varies significantly depending on the location of the land and the current market conditions.

Infrastructure assets are valued based on the depreciated replacement cost. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of infrastructure. The remaining useful lives of infrastructure assets are determined on the basis of the current condition of the asset and vary from 10 years to 100 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of infrastructure are sensitive to changes in use, expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend the useful lives of infrastructure assets.

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
Reconciliation of specialised land		
Land under roads	22,312	22,312
Community facilities	7,910	7,910
Total specialised land	30,222	30,222

6.2 Investments in associates, joint arrangements and subsidiaries

(a) Investments in associates

Investments in associates and joint arrangements accounted for by the equity method are:

Wimmera Southern Mallee Development	–	213
Total investments in associates and joint arrangements	–	213

Council was a member of Wimmera Southern Mallee Development (WSMD), a company limited by guarantee. Council had previously recognised its interest in WSMD as an investment. Effective August 2025, Council was released from its obligations and ceased membership of the organisation. As a result, Council no longer held an interest in WSMD and derecognised the associated investment balance of approximately \$213,000. The derecognition resulted in the recognition of an expense of \$213,000 in the current year. This amount has been disclosed under Note 3.7 Other Income.

Associates are all entities over which Council has significant influence but not control or joint control. Investments in associates are accounted for using the equity method of accounting, after initially being recognised at cost.

Investments in joint arrangements are classified as either joint operations or joint ventures depending on the contractual rights and obligations each investor has, rather than the legal structure of the joint arrangement.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. ASSETS WE MANAGE

For joint operations, Council recognises its direct right to, and its share of jointly held assets, liabilities, revenues and expenses of joint operations.

Interests in joint ventures are accounted for using the equity method. Under this method, the interests are initially recognised in the consolidated balance sheet at cost and adjusted thereafter to recognise Council's share of the post-acquisition profits or losses and movements in other comprehensive income in profit or loss and other comprehensive income respectively.

(b) Community Asset Committee

All entities controlled by Council that have material income, expenses, assets or liabilities, such as community asset committees, have been included in this financial report. Any transactions between these entities and Council have been eliminated in full.

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Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 7. PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS

7.1 Council and key management remuneration

(a) Related Parties

Parent entity

Council is the parent entity.

(b) Key Management Personnel

Details of persons holding the position of Councillor or other members of key management personnel at any time during the year are:

Councillors

Graeme Milne - Mayor (19 November 2025 to 30 June 2026)
Bernadette Hogan - Deputy Mayor (19 November 2025 to 30 June 2026)
Alan Getley
Charmaine Delaney
Bruce Stafford
Stephen Barratt

Key management personnel

Wayne O'Toole - Chief Executive Officer (1 July 2025 - 29 August 2025)
Daniel McLoughlan - Director Infrastructure and Delivery (1 July 2025 - 29 August 2025)
Daniel McLoughlan - Acting Chief Executive Officer (01 September 2025 - 19 October 2025)
Daniel McLoughlan - Chief Executive Officer (20 October 2025 - 30 June 2026)
Paula Gardiner - Acting Director Infrastructure and Delivery (01 September 2025 - 15 March 2026)
Travis Fitzgibbon - Director Infrastructure and Delivery (16 March 2026 to 30 June 2026)
Jenna Allan - Director Corporate and Organisational Performance
Gaynor Atkin - Director Community Development (01 July 2025 to 22 May 2026)
Kellie Burmeister - Acting Director Community Development (22 June 2026 - 30 June 2026)

	2026 No.	2025 No.
Total Number of Councillors	6	10
Total of Chief Executive Officer and other Key Management Personnel	7	5
Total Number of Key Management Personnel	13	15

Buloke Shire Council

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Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 7. PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS

(c) Remuneration of Key Management Personnel

Remuneration comprises employee benefits including all forms of consideration paid, payable or provided by Council, or on behalf of the Council, in exchange for services rendered. Remuneration of Key Management Personnel and Other senior staff is disclosed in the following categories.

Short-term employee benefits include amounts such as wages, salaries, annual leave or sick leave that are usually paid or payable on a regular basis, as well as non-monetary benefits such as allowances and free or subsidised goods or services.

Other long-term employee benefits include long service leave, other long service benefits or deferred compensation.

Post-employment benefits include pensions, and other retirement benefits paid or payable on a discrete basis when employment has ceased.

Termination benefits include termination of employment payments, such as severance packages.

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
Total remuneration of key management personnel was as follows:		
Short-term employee benefits *	1,262	1,038
Other long-term employee benefits	24	19
Post-employment benefits	142	114
Termination benefits	99	—
Total	1,527	1,171

(*) Includes councillor allowances - comparative changes have been made for previous financial year

	2026 No.	2025 No.
The numbers of key management personnel whose total remuneration from Council and any related entities, fall within the following bands:		
\$1 - \$9,999	—	3
\$10,000 - \$19,999	—	4
\$20,000 - \$29,999	3	1
\$30,000 - \$39,999	1	1
\$50,000 - \$59,999	2	—
\$70,000 - \$79,999	1	1
\$150,000 - \$159,999	1	—
\$160,000 - \$169,999	1	—
\$200,000 - \$209,999	—	1
\$220,000 - \$229,999	1	—
\$230,000 - \$239,999	1	2
\$260,000 - \$269,999	—	1
\$280,000 - \$289,999	1	—
Total #	12	14

(#) Key management personnel included an external contractor acting in a role, not remunerated as an employee

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 7. PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS

(d) Remuneration of other senior staff

Other senior staff are officers of Council, other than Key Management Personnel, whose total remuneration exceeds \$170,000 and who report directly to a member of the KMP.

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
Total remuneration of other senior staff was as follows:		
Short-term employee benefits	—	171
Other long-term employee benefits	—	3
Post-employment benefits	—	—
Termination benefits	—	—
Total	—	174

	2026 No.	2025 No.
The number of other senior staff are shown below in their relevant income bands:		
Income Range:		
\$170,000 - \$179,999	—	1
\$210,000 - \$219,999	—	—
Total	—	1

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
Total remuneration for the reporting year for other senior staff included above, amounted to:	—	174

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 7. PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS

7.2 Related party disclosure

(a) Transactions with related parties

During the period Council entered into the following transactions with related parties:

All transactions are undertaken at arm's length and in line with Council's Procurement Policy.

Organisation	2025/26 Total (GST inclusive if applicable) \$	2024/25 Total (GST inclusive if applicable) \$
Atkin Collective	-	4,576
AVS Management**	19,435	-
Buloke Tourism	-	9,000
Calder United Football Club*	10,000	-
CT Management**	1,350,618	-
Donald 2000 Inc	-	13,750
Mt Wycheproof & District Racing Club	500	500
Rex Theatre Museum Limited	-	5,000
TMC Enviro*	670,296	557,965
Watchem Development Association	2,700	-
Watchem Hall Committee of Management	275	250
Watchem Lake and Recreation Reserve Committee	19,747	11,489
Watchem Progress Association	10,000	5,000
YBS Ag Supplies*	15,600	-
Total	2,099,171	607,530

*Close family member of a member of Key Management Personnel.

**Relates to the period for which conflict existed.

(b) Outstanding balances with related parties

The following balances are outstanding at the end of the reporting period in relation to transactions with related parties:

Nil

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 7. PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS

(c) Loans to/from related parties

The aggregate amount of loans in existence at balance date that have been made, guaranteed or secured by the council to a related party as follows:

Nil

(d) Commitments to/from related parties

The aggregate amount of commitments in existence at balance date that have been made, guaranteed or secured by the council to a related party are as follows:

Nil

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Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 8. MANAGING UNCERTAINTIES

8.1 Contingent assets and liabilities

Contingent assets and contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet, but are disclosed and if quantifiable, are measured at nominal value. Contingent assets and liabilities are presented inclusive of GST receivable or payable, respectively.

(a) Contingent assets

Contingent assets are possible assets that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council.

As of June 2026, Buloke Shire Council has been impacted by five significant events in October 2022, December 2023, February 2024, December 2025 and March 2026. These events led to rehabilitation, clean-up and community recovery activities costing council in excess of \$10 million. Council has lodged claims with the Victorian State Government for assessment in line with the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements 2018 against the five events in the last 4 years. At June 2026 claims across two events namely AGRN 1037 (October 2022) and AGRN 1096 (December 2023) totalling \$27.7 million are undergoing formal assessment for reconstruction of essential public assets. The amount recoverable will not be known until later in the 2026-27 financial year.

(b) Contingent liabilities

Superannuation

Council has obligations under a defined benefit superannuation scheme that may result in the need to make additional contributions to the scheme, matters relating to this potential obligation are outlined below. As a result of the volatility in financial markets the likelihood of making such contributions in future periods exists.

Gravel pits

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action is holding Bank Guarantees in its favour totalling \$67,500 as surety for the rehabilitation of four gravel pits controlled by Council. Exercise of the guarantees would only occur if Council failed in its rehabilitation obligations under the operating licences.

Liability Mutual Insurance

Council is (was) a participant of the MAV Liability Mutual Insurance (LMI) Scheme. The LMI scheme provides public liability and professional indemnity insurance cover. The LMI scheme states that each participant will remain liable to make further contributions to the scheme in respect of any insurance year in which it was a participant to the extent of its participant's share of any shortfall in the provision set aside in respect of that insurance year, and such liability will continue whether or not the participant remains a participant in future insurance years.

(c) Guarantees for loans to other entities

The amount disclosed for financial guarantee in this note is the nominal amount of the underlying loan that is guaranteed by the Council, not the fair value of the financial guarantee.

Financial guarantee contracts are not recognised as a liability in the balance sheet unless the lender has exercised their right to call on the guarantee or Council has other reasons to believe that it is probable that the right will be exercised.

8.2 Australian Accounting Standards issued but not yet effective

Certain new Australian Accounting Standards and interpretations have been published that are not mandatory for the 30 June 2026 reporting period. Council assesses the impact of these new standards.

The Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) has issued *AASB 18 Presentation and Disclosure in Financial Statements*. When applicable AASB 18 supersedes AASB 101 *Presentation of Financial Statements*. AASB 18 aims to improve how entities communicate in their financial statements, with a focus on information about financial performance in the statement of profit or loss. It is expected to result in presentation and disclosure changes, primarily to Council's Comprehensive Income Statement. AASB 18 is expected to first apply to Council for the 2028-29 financial year.

8.3 Financial instruments

(a) Objectives and policies

The Council's principal financial instruments comprise cash assets, term deposits, receivables (excluding statutory receivables) and payables (excluding statutory payables). Details of the significant accounting policies and methods adopted, including the criteria for recognition, the basis of measurement and the basis on which income and expenses are

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 8. MANAGING UNCERTAINTIES

recognised, in respect of each class of financial asset, financial liability and equity instrument is disclosed in the notes of the financial statements. Risk management is carried out by senior management under policies approved by the Council. These policies include identification and analysis of the risk exposure to Council and appropriate procedures, controls and risk minimisation.

(b) Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of Council financial instruments will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. The Council's exposure to market risk is primarily through interest rate risk with only insignificant exposure to other price risks and no exposure to foreign currency risk.

Interest rate risk

Interest rate risk refers to the risk that the value of a financial instrument or cash flows associated with the instrument will fluctuate due to changes in market interest rates. Council's interest rate liability risk arises primarily from long term loans and borrowings at fixed rates which exposes Council to fair value interest rate risk / Council does not hold any interest bearing financial instruments that are measured at fair value, and therefore has no exposure to fair value interest rate risk. Cash flow interest rate risk is the risk that the future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. Council has minimal exposure to cash flow interest rate risk through its cash and deposits that are at floating rates.

Investment of surplus funds is made with approved financial institutions under the *Local Government Act 2020*. Council manages interest rate risk by adopting an investment policy that ensures:

- diversification of investment product;
- monitoring of return on investment; and
- benchmarking of returns and comparison with budget.

There has been no significant change in the Council's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing interest rate risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

Interest rate movements have not been sufficiently significant during the year to have an impact on the Council's year end result.

(c) Credit risk

Credit risk is the risk that a contracting entity will not complete its obligations under a financial instrument and cause Council to make a financial loss. Council has exposure to credit risk on some financial assets included in the balance sheet. Particularly significant areas of credit risk exist in relation to outstanding fees and fines as well as loans and receivables from sporting clubs and associations. To help manage this risk:

- Council has a policy for establishing credit limits for the entities Council deals with;
- Council may require collateral where appropriate; and
- Council only invests surplus funds with financial institutions which have a recognised credit rating specified in Council's investment policy.

Receivables consist of a large number of customers, spread across the ratepayer, business and government sectors. Credit risk associated with the Council's financial assets is minimal because the main debtor is secured by a charge over the rateable property.

There are no material financial assets which are individually determined to be impaired.

Council may also be subject to credit risk for transactions which are not included in the balance sheet, such as when Council provides a guarantee for another party. Details of our contingent liabilities are disclosed in Note 8.1(b).

The maximum exposure to credit risk at the reporting date to recognised financial assets is the carrying amount, net of any provisions for impairment of those assets, as disclosed in the balance sheet and notes to the financial statements. Council does not hold any collateral.

(d) Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk includes the risk that, as a result of Council's operational liquidity requirements it will not have sufficient funds to settle a transaction when required or will be forced to sell a financial asset at below value or may be unable to settle or recover a financial asset.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 8. MANAGING UNCERTAINTIES

To help reduce these risks Council:

- have a liquidity policy which targets a minimum and average level of cash and cash equivalents to be maintained;
- have a liquidity portfolio structure that requires surplus funds to be invested within various bands of liquid instruments;
- monitor budget to actual performance on a regular basis; and
- set limits on borrowings relating to the percentage of loans to rate revenue and percentage of loan principal repayments to rate revenue.

The Council's maximum exposure to liquidity risk is the carrying amounts of financial liabilities as disclosed on the face of the balance sheet and the amounts related to financial guarantees disclosed in Note 8.1(c), and is deemed insignificant based on prior periods' data and current assessment of risk.

There has been no significant change in Council's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing liquidity risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

With the exception of borrowings, all financial liabilities are expected to be settled within normal terms of trade.

Unless otherwise stated, the carrying amounts of financial instruments reflect their fair value.

(e) Sensitivity disclosure analysis

Taking into account past performance, future expectations, economic forecasts, and management's knowledge and experience of the financial markets, Council believes the following movements are 'reasonably possible' over the next 12 months:

- A parallel shift of + 1 % and - 2 % in market interest rates (AUD) from year-end rates of 4.00 - 5.00%.

These movements will not have a material impact on the valuation of Council's financial assets and liabilities, nor will they have a material impact on the results of Council's operations.

8.4 Fair value measurement

Fair Value Hierarchy

Council's financial assets and liabilities are not valued in accordance with the fair value hierarchy, Council's financial assets and liabilities are measured at amortised cost.

Council measures certain assets and liabilities at fair value where required or permitted by Australian Accounting Standards. AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement aims to improve consistency and reduce complexity by providing a definition of fair value and a single source of fair value measurement and disclosure requirements for use across Australian Accounting Standards. For assets where Council adopts a current replacement cost approach to determine fair value, Council considers the inclusion of site preparation costs, disruption costs and costs to restore another entity's assets in the underlying valuation.

All assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the financial statements are categorised within a fair value hierarchy, described as follows, based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole:

- Level 1 — Quoted (unadjusted) market prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities
- Level 2 — Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is directly or indirectly observable; and
- Level 3 — Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is unobservable.

For the purpose of fair value disclosures, Council has determined classes of assets and liabilities on the basis of the nature, characteristics and risks of the asset or liability and the level of the fair value hierarchy as explained above. In addition, Council determines whether transfers have occurred between levels in the hierarchy by re-assessing categorisation (based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole) at the end of each reporting period.

Revaluation

Subsequent to the initial recognition of assets, non-current physical assets, other than plant and equipment, are measured at their fair value, being the price that would be received to sell an asset (or paid to transfer a liability) in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. (For plant and equipment carrying amount is considered to approximate fair value given short useful lives). At balance date, the Council reviewed the carrying value of the individual classes of assets measured at fair value to ensure that each asset materially approximated its fair value. Where the carrying value materially differed from the fair value at balance date, the class of asset was revalued.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 8. MANAGING UNCERTAINTIES

Fair value valuations are determined in accordance with a valuation hierarchy. Changes to the valuation hierarchy will only occur if an external change in the restrictions or limitations of use of an asset result in changes to the permissible or practical highest and best use of the asset. In addition, Council undertakes a formal revaluation of land, buildings, and infrastructure assets on a regular basis ranging from 3 to 5 years. The valuation is performed either by experienced council officers or independent experts. Council has undertaken an interim desktop assessment of its infrastructure assets for June 2026 while the external revaluation of Infrastructure class of assets have been deferred to June 2027. The following table sets out the frequency of revaluations by asset class.

Asset Class	Revaluation frequency
Land	2 to 3 years
Buildings	3 years
Roads	3 years
Bridges	3 years
Footpaths and cycleways	3 years
Drainage	3 years
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	3 years
Waste management	3 years
Parks, open space and streetscapes	3 years
Aerodromes	3 years
Other infrastructure	3 years

Where the assets are revalued, the revaluation increases are credited directly to the asset revaluation reserve except to the extent that an increase reverses a prior year decrease for that class of asset that had been recognised as an expense in which case the increase is recognised as revenue up to the amount of the expense. Revaluation decreases are recognised as an expense except where prior increases are included in the asset revaluation reserve for that class of asset in which case the decrease is taken to the reserve to the extent of the remaining increases. Within the same class of assets, revaluation increases and decreases within the year are offset.

Impairment of assets

At each reporting date, the Council reviews the carrying value of its assets to determine whether there is any indication that these assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs of disposal and value in use, is compared to the assets carrying value. Any excess of the assets carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the comprehensive income statement, unless the asset is carried at the revalued amount in which case, the impairment loss is recognised directly against the revaluation surplus in respect of the same class of asset to the extent that the impairment loss does not exceed the amount in the revaluation surplus for that same class of asset.

Refer to Note 6 for further details on revaluation and impairment.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 8. MANAGING UNCERTAINTIES

8.5 Events occurring after balance date

No matters have occurred after balance date that require disclosure in the financial report.

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Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 9. OTHER MATTERS

	Balance at beginning of reporting period \$ '000	Increase (decrease) \$ '000	Balance at end of reporting period \$ '000
9.1 Reserves			
(a) Asset revaluation reserves			
2026			
Property			
Land and land improvements	4,032	—	4,032
Land under roads	22,307	—	22,307
Buildings	24,466	—	24,466
	50,805	—	50,805
Infrastructure			
Roads	128,705	26,075	154,780
Bridges	2,904	861	3,765
Footpaths and cycleways	4,954	1,101	6,055
Drainage	2,022	807	2,829
Kerb & Channel	7,523	1,119	8,642
Other infrastructure	363	—	363
	146,471	29,963	176,434
Total asset revaluation reserves	197,276	29,963	227,239
2025			
Property			
Land and land improvements	2,032	2,000	4,032
Land under roads	22,307	—	22,307
Buildings	24,546	(80)	24,466
	48,885	1,920	50,805
Infrastructure			
Roads	128,705	—	128,705
Bridges	2,904	—	2,904
Footpaths and cycleways	4,954	—	4,954
Drainage	2,022	—	2,022
Kerb & Channel	7,523	—	7,523
Other infrastructure	363	—	363
	146,471	—	146,471
Total asset revaluation reserves	195,356	1,920	197,276

The asset revaluation reserve is used to record the increased (net) value of Council's assets over time.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 9. OTHER MATTERS

	Balance at beginning of reporting period \$ '000	Transfer from Accumulated Surplus \$ '000	Transfer to Accumulated Surplus \$ '000	Balance at end of reporting period \$ '000
(b) Other reserves				
2026				
Defined Benefits Superannuation	1,000	—	—	1,000
Sustainability Fund	158	13	—	171
Grant Opportunity	800	200	—	1,000
Capital Project Initiations	773	200	(200)	773
Waste	550	254	—	804
Total Other reserves	3,281	667	(200)	3,748
2025				
Defined Benefits Superannuation	1,000	—	—	1,000
Sustainability Fund	100	58	—	158
Grant Opportunity	600	200	—	800
Capital Project Initiations	573	200	—	773
Waste	595	—	(45)	550
Total Other reserves	2,868	458	(45)	3,281

Defined Benefits Superannuation - This reserve is available should a call be made on Council as a result of shortfall in the Local Authorities Superannuation Fund Defined Benefits Plan. Refer to note 9.3 for further detail.

Sustainability Fund - surplus annual portion of income derived from windfarm operations within the Shire is set aside for specific community project support to promote local sustainability.

Unspent Grants - Council shows a liability under Australian Accounting Standards for unspent operating and capital grants when the grant requirements have not been met. Unspent grants are also noted as restricted cash and a reserve is not required.

Grant Opportunity - allocation from Council's Accumulated surplus to provide matching funds for grant opportunities arising outside the annual budget scope.

Capital Project Initiations - allocation from Council's Accumulated surplus to facilitate initial development expenditure for unanticipated projects in response to grant opportunities outside of the annual budget scope.

Waste - this reserve was established to make some provision for future waste related activities and initiatives, including contributing to rehabilitation requirements for closed landfill sites.

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
Summary of reserves		
Asset revaluation reserves	227,239	197,276
Other reserves	3,748	3,281
Total reserves	230,987	200,557

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 9. OTHER MATTERS

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
9.2 Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities to surplus/(deficit)		
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	8,482	1,022
Non-cash adjustments:		
Depreciation/amortisation	9,803	9,642
(Profit)/loss on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(27)	—
Amounts disclosed in financing activities	47	67
Change in assets and liabilities:		
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	1,616	1,613
(Increase)/decrease in inventories	(96)	181
(Increase)/decrease in prepayments	247	(117)
Increase/(decrease) in other assets	(3)	—
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	(460)	98
Increase/(decrease) in provisions	174	263
Increase/(decrease) in trust funds and other payables	16	120
(Decrease)/increase in contract and other liabilities	(2,541)	263
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	17,258	13,152

9.3 Superannuation

Council makes majority of its employer superannuation contributions in respect of its employees to the Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (the Fund). This Fund has two categories of membership, accumulation and defined benefit, each of which is funded differently. Obligations for contributions to the Fund are recognised as an expense in the Comprehensive Income Statement when they are made or due.

Accumulation

The Fund's accumulation category, Vision MySuper/Vision Super Saver, receives both employer and employee contributions on a progressive basis. Employer contributions are normally based on a fixed percentage of employee earnings (for the year ended 30 June 2026, this was 12% as required under Superannuation Guarantee (SG) legislation (2025: 11.5%)).

Defined Benefit

Council does not use defined benefit accounting for its defined benefit obligations under the Fund's Defined Benefit category. This is because the Fund's Defined Benefit category is a pooled multi-employer sponsored plan.

There is no proportional split of the defined benefit liabilities, assets or costs between the participating employers as the defined benefit obligation is a floating obligation between the participating employers and the only time that the aggregate obligation is allocated to specific employers is when a call is made. As a result, the level of participation of Council in the Fund cannot be measured as a percentage compared with other participating employers. Therefore, the Fund Actuary is unable to allocate benefit liabilities, assets and costs between employers for the purposes of AASB 119 *Employee Benefits*.

Funding Arrangements

Council makes employer contributions to the Defined Benefit category of the Fund at rates determined by the Trustee on the advice of the Fund Actuary. As at 30 June 2025, an interim actuarial investigation was held as the Fund provides lifetime pensions in the Defined Benefit category. The vested benefit index (VBI) of the Defined Benefit category as at 30 June 2025 (of which Council is a contributing employer) was 110.5%. The financial assumptions used to calculate the VBI were:

Net investment returns 5.7% pa
Salary information 3.5% pa
Price inflation (CPI) 2.6% pa

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 9. OTHER MATTERS

As at 30 June 2026, a triennial actuarial investigation is underway as the Fund provides lifetime pensions in the Defined Benefit category. It is expected to be completed by 31 October 2026. The VBI is used as the primary funding indicator. Because the VBI was above 100%, the 30 June 2025 actuarial investigation determined the Defined Benefit category was in a satisfactory financial position and that no change was necessary to the Defined Benefit category's funding arrangements from prior years.

Employer contributions

(a) Regular contributions

On the basis of the results of the 2025 interim actuarial investigation conducted by the Fund Actuary, Council makes employer contributions to the Fund's Defined Benefit category at rates determined by the Fund's Trustee. For the year ended 30 June 2026, this rate was 12% of members' salaries (11.5% in 2024/25). This rate is expected to increase in line with any increases in the SG contribution rate.

In addition, Council reimburses the Fund to cover the excess of the benefits paid as a consequence of retrenchment above the funded resignation or retirement benefit.

(b) Funding calls

If the Defined Benefit category is in an unsatisfactory financial position at an actuarial investigation or the Defined Benefit category's VBI is below its shortfall limit at any time other than the date of the actuarial investigation, the Defined Benefit category has a shortfall for the purposes of SPS 160 and the Fund is required to put a plan in place so that the shortfall is fully funded within three years of the shortfall occurring. The Fund monitors its VBI on a quarterly basis and the Fund has set its shortfall limit at 98% from 26 July 2024 (previously 97%).

In the event that the Fund Actuary determines that there is a shortfall based on the above requirement, the Fund's participating employers (including Council) are required to make an employer contribution to cover the shortfall.

Using the agreed methodology, the shortfall amount is apportioned between the participating employers based on the pre-1 July 1993 and post-30 June 1993 service liabilities of the Fund's Defined Benefit category, together with the employer's payroll at 30 June 1993 and at the date the shortfall has been calculated.

Due to the nature of the contractual obligations between the participating employers and the Fund, and that the Fund includes lifetime pensioners and their reversionary beneficiaries, it is unlikely that the Fund will be wound up. If there is a surplus in the Fund, the surplus cannot be returned to the participating employers.

In the event that a participating employer is wound-up, the defined benefit obligations of that employer will be transferred to that employer's successor.

The 2025 interim actuarial investigation surplus amounts

An actuarial investigation is conducted annually for the Defined Benefit category of which Council is a contributing employer. Generally, a full actuarial investigation is conducted every three years and interim actuarial investigations are conducted for each intervening year. An interim investigation was conducted as at 30 June 2025 and 30 June 2024 while a full investigation was conducted as at 30 June 2023.

The Fund's actuarial investigation identified the following for the Defined Benefit category of which Council is a contributing employer:

	2025 (Interim) \$m	2024 (Interim) \$m	2023 (Triennial) \$m
- A VBI Surplus	200.1	108.4	85.7
- A total service liability surplus	229.4	141.4	123.6
- A discounted accrued benefits surplus	242.8	156.7	141.9

The VBI surplus means that the market value of the fund's assets supporting the defined benefit obligations exceed the vested benefits that the defined benefit members would have been entitled to if they had all exited on 30 June 2025.

The total service liability surplus means that the current value of the assets in the Fund's Defined Benefit category plus expected future contributions exceeds the value of expected future benefits and expenses as at 30 June 2025.

The discounted accrued benefit surplus means that the current value of the assets in the Fund's Defined Benefit category exceeds the value of benefits payable in the future but accrued in respect of service to 30 June 2025.

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 9. OTHER MATTERS

The 2026 interim actuarial investigation

A triennial actuarial investigation is being conducted for the Fund's position as at 30 June 2026 as the Fund provides lifetime pensions in the Defined Benefit category. It is anticipated that this actuarial investigation will be completed by October 2026.

The VBI of the Defined Benefit category was 116.9% as at 30 June 2026. The financial assumptions used to calculate the 30 June 2026 VBI were:

Net investment returns 6.2% pa
Salary information 3.5% pa
Price inflation (CPI) 3% pa to 20 June 2029 and 2.6% thereafter

Council was notified of the 30 June 2026 VBI during August 2026.

Because the VBI was above 100%, the Defined Benefit category was in a satisfactory financial position at 30 June 2026 and it is expected that the actuarial investigation will recommend that no change will be necessary to the Defined Benefit category's funding arrangements from prior years.

The 2023 triennial actuarial investigation

The last triennial actuarial investigation conducted prior to 30 June 2023 was at 30 June 2020. This actuarial investigation was completed by 31 December 2020. The financial assumptions for the purposes of that investigation were:

	2020	2023
	Triennial investigation	Triennial investigation
Net investment return	5.6% pa	5.7% pa
Salary inflation	2.5% pa for two years and 2.75% pa thereafter	3.5% pa
Price inflation	2.0% pa	2.8% pa

Superannuation contributions

Contributions by Council (excluding any unfunded liability payments) to the above superannuation plans for the financial year ended 30 June 2025 are detailed below:

Scheme	Type of scheme	Rate	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
Vision Super	Defined benefit	12.0% (2025:11.5%)	—	—
Vision Super	Accumulation fund	12.0% (2025:11.5%)	406	476

Buloke Shire Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 10. CHANGES IN ACCOUNTING POLICIES

There have been no changes to accounting policies in the 2025-26 year.

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REPORT OF OPERATIONS (ANNUAL REPORT INSERT)

Service Performance Indicators

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures including explanation of results in the comments.

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2023	2024	2025	2026	
Aquatic Facilities					
Service standard					
<i>Health inspections of aquatic facilities</i>	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	Inspections were conducted by Council's Public Health Officer
[Number of authorised officer inspections of Council aquatic facilities / Number of Council aquatic facilities]					
Utilisation					
<i>Utilisation of aquatic facilities</i>	2.55	2.76	5.05	3.93	There was an error in reporting the 24/25 figures resulting in a higher usage.
[Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Population]					
Service cost					
<i>Cost of aquatic facilities</i>	\$49.33	\$51.56	\$33.15	\$42.60	There was an error in reporting the 24/25 figures resulting in a higher usage.
[Direct cost of aquatic facilities less income received / Number of visits to aquatic facilities]					
Animal Management					
Timeliness					
<i>Time taken to action animal management requests</i>	1.00	1.00	1.00	8.28	There has been an increase in the total animal management request recorded and due to staff leave and the vacancy of a position for eight months in reporting period there has been an increase in the time taken to action requests.
[Number of days between receipt and first response action for all animal management requests / Number of animal management requests]					
Service standard					
<i>Animals reclaimed</i>	50.00%	50.00%	37.50%	34.21%	
[Number of animals reclaimed / Number of animals collected] x100					
<i>Animals rehomed</i>	50.00%	50.00%	100.00%	60.00%	Council has increased cat trapping in this reporting period and a number of wild cats were unable to be rehomed.
[Number of unclaimed collected animals rehomed / Number of unclaimed collected animals] x100					
Service cost					
<i>Cost of animal management service per population</i>	\$27.11	\$25.94	\$15.22	\$0.00	The decrease in the cost of animal management service can be attributed to the vacancy of a position for the first eight months of the reporting period.
[Direct cost of the animal management service / Population]					
Health and safety					
<i>Animal management prosecutions</i>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	The animal management prosecutions listed in the reporting period have been adjourned until the next reporting period.
[Number of successful animal management prosecutions / Number of animal management prosecutions] x 100					

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REPORT OF OPERATIONS (ANNUAL REPORT INSERT)

Service Performance Indicators

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures including explanation of results in the comments.

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2023	2024	2025	2026	
Food Safety					
Timeliness					
<i>Time taken to action food complaints</i>	0.00	1.50	3.50	8.00	The time taken to action the one food complaint was delayed due to the availability of the Environmental Health Officer being able to undertake an inspection.
[Number of days between receipt and first response action for all food complaints / Number of food complaints]					
Service standard					
<i>Food safety assessments</i>	30.30%	70.31%	96.77%	89.09%	
[Number of registered class 1 food premises and class 2 food premises that receive an annual food safety assessment in accordance with the Food Act 1984 / Number of registered class 1 food premises and class 2 food premises that require an annual food safety assessment in accordance with the Food Act 1984] x100					
<i>Food safety samples</i>	New	90%	86%	0.00%	Due to staff turn over, there were no food safety samples taken in the reporting period.
[Number of food samples obtained / Required number of food samples] x 100					
Service cost					
<i>Cost of food safety service</i>	\$301.02	\$479.34	\$1,047.88	\$1,073.78	
[Direct cost of the food safety service / Number of food premises registered or notified in accordance with the Food Act 1984]					
Health and safety					
<i>Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications</i>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	There were no critical or major non-compliance notifications in the reporting period.
[Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises] x100					
Governance					
Transparency					
<i>Council decisions made at meetings closed to the public</i>	4.46%	6.50%	5.66%	7.52%	Increased number of confidential matters to be considered by Council such as: award of contracts and service agreement which contain council business and private commercial information, appointment of interim CEO and appointment of CEO containing personal information, permit application and sale of property for recovery of rates and charges containing personal information.
[Number of Council resolutions made at meetings of Council, or at meetings of a delegated committee consisting only of Councillors, closed to the public / Number of Council resolutions made at meetings of Council or at meetings of a delegated committee consisting only of Councillors] x100					
Consultation and engagement					
<i>Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement</i>	76.00	50.00	43.00	53.00	Based on community satisfaction survey
[Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on community consultation and engagement]					
Attendance					
<i>Councillor attendance at council meetings</i>	91.43%	90.00%	97.22%	97.78%	Change considered nominal
[The sum of the number of Councillors who attended each Council meeting / (Number of Council meetings) x (Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election)] x100					
Service cost					
<i>Cost of elected representation</i>	\$35,735.00	\$38,916.57	\$45,639.17	\$45,838.89	Change considered nominal
[Direct cost of the governance service / Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election]					
Satisfaction					
<i>Satisfaction with council decisions</i>	52.00	52.00	40.00	51.00	Based on community satisfaction survey
[Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how council has performed in making decisions in the interest of the community]					

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REPORT OF OPERATIONS (ANNUAL REPORT INSERT)

Service Performance Indicators

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures including explanation of results in the comments.

		Results			
Service / indicator / measure	2023	2024	2025	2026	Comments
Libraries					
Resource currency Recently purchased library collection	20.28%	24.63%	22.83%	0.00%	Due to significant staff turn over there were no new purchases in the Library Collection.
[Number of library collection items purchased in the last 5 years / Number of library collection items] x100					
Service cost Cost of library service per population	\$33.86	\$49.99	\$49.02	\$43.92	Due to significant staff turn over there were no new purchases in the Library Collection, and we had positions vacant for much of the year.
[Direct cost of the library service / Population]					
Utilisation Loans per head of population	New	0.72	1.18	1.28	
[Number of library collection item loans / Population]					
Participation Library membership	New	9%	8%	5.35%	Staff cleaned out duplicant and delinquent library users.
[Number of registered library members / Population] x100					
Library visits per head of population	New	0.24	1.79	1.49	Cost decreases of the service from previous years is due to the stability of staff and service compared with previous years.
[Number of library visits / Population]					
Maternal and Child Health (MCH)					
Service standard Infant enrolments in the MCH service	100.00%	96.61%	100.00%	100.00%	
[Number of infants enrolled in the MCH service (from birth notifications received) / Number of birth notifications received] x100					
Service cost Cost of the MCH service	\$193.58	\$207.65	\$158.78	\$99.18	Cost decreases of the service from previous years is due to the stability of staff and service compared with previous years.
[Cost of the MCH service / Hours worked by MCH nurses]					
Participation Participation in the MCH service	87.73%	85.30%	88.60%	83.83%	
[Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x100					
Participation Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children	94.12%	95.45%	86.67%	89.66%	
[Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service] x100					
Satisfaction Participation in 4-week Key Age and Stage visit	113.56%	86.44%	101.79%	95.83%	
[Number of 4-week key age and stage visits / Number of birth notifications received] x100					
Roads					
Satisfaction of use Sealed local road requests	35.45	4.06	4.55	9.01	The significant increase in sealed local road requests reflects the cumulative impact of successive flood and storm events across the municipality.
[Number of sealed local road requests / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x100					
Condition Sealed local roads maintained to condition standards	99.25%	99.30%	99.30%	98.32%	Buloke's road condition is worsening because of the cumulative impact of repeated flood and storm events including the October 2022 floods, December 2023 storm, February 2024 storm and February 2026 floods. Many roads have been damaged again before permanent restoration works from earlier events could be completed, further weakening pavements, surfaces, shoulders and drainage. Council's ability to restore the network has also been constrained by disaster funding assessments, reductions in proposed funding and uncertainty about which works and costs will be considered eligible. Each new event redirects resources toward emergency access and temporary repairs, meaning the network is being damaged faster than permanent reconstruction can be funded and delivered.
[Number of kilometres of sealed local roads below the renewal intervention level set by Council / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x100					
Service cost Cost of sealed local road reconstruction	\$52.32	\$68.09	\$64.54	\$74.00	The increase in the cost of sealed local road reconstruction reflects higher construction, materials, plant and labour costs across the industry.

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REPORT OF OPERATIONS (ANNUAL REPORT INSERT)

Service Performance Indicators

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures including explanation of results in the comments.

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2023	2024	2025	2026	
[Direct cost of sealed local road reconstruction / Square metres of sealed local roads reconstructed] Service Cost Cost of sealed local road resealing [Direct cost of sealed local road resealing / Square metres of sealed local roads resealed] Satisfaction Satisfaction with sealed local roads [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how council has performed on the condition of sealed local roads]	\$6.03	\$6.52	\$6.32	\$7.62	The increase in the cost of sealed local road reconstruction reflects higher construction, materials, plant and labour costs across the industry.
Statutory Planning Timeliness Time taken to decide planning applications [The median number of days between receipt of a planning application and a decision on the application] Service standard Planning applications decided within required time frames [(Number of regular planning application decisions made within 60 days) + (Number of VicSmart planning application decisions made within 10 days) / Number of planning application decisions made] x100 Service cost Cost of statutory planning service [Direct cost of the statutory planning service / Number of planning applications received] Decision making Council planning decisions upheld at VCAT [Number of VCAT decisions that did not set aside council's decision in relation to a planning application / Number of VCAT decisions in relation to planning applications] x100	84.00	61.50	48.50	57.50	Due to a number of planning applications receiving objections which required a Council resolution, the time taken to decide planning applications has increased. 34.62% 100.00% 66.67% 69.57% \$5,250.19 \$4,684.65 \$8,497.73 \$5,145.12 As there were no VCAT appeals in the reporting period, the costs associated with legal representation were not required. In addition, there has been a minor reduction in FTE. 0.00% 0.00% 0.00% 0.00% There were no VCAT appeals in the reporting period.

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REPORT OF OPERATIONS (ANNUAL REPORT INSERT)

Service Performance Indicators

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures including explanation of results in the comments.

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2023	2024	2025	2026	
Waste Management					
Service standard					
<i>Kerbside collection bins missed</i>	2.73	0.76	2.37	1.55	Decrease due to contracted drivers personal familiar with designated collection routes.
[Number of kerbside garbage and recycling collection bins missed / Number of scheduled kerbside garbage and recycling collection bin lifts] x10,000					
Service cost					
<i>Cost of kerbside garbage bin collection service</i>	\$78.86	\$81.89	\$89.44	\$96.41	Change considered nominal
[Direct cost of the kerbside garbage bin collection service / Number of kerbside garbage collection bins]					
Service cost					
<i>Cost of kerbside recyclables collection service</i>	\$34.23	\$35.12	\$38.72	\$75.17	The increase in service costs relates to the under-reporting of FY2024-25 expenses associated with skip bin services and associated waste processing costs. This adjustment reflects a reporting error in the prior year rather than an increase in underlying expenditure and has no material impact on Council's overall financial position or operating result.
[Direct cost of the kerbside recyclables bin collection service / Number of kerbside recyclables collection bins]					
Waste diversion					
<i>Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill</i>	18.08%	29.58%	41.14%	42.00%	
[Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins] x100					

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PERFORMANCE STATEMENT (ANNUAL REPORT INSERT)

Section 2 - Service Performance Indicators

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Service / Indicator / Measure [Formula]	Results					Comment
	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Target as per budget	2026 Actual	
Aquatic Facilities						
Utilisation <i>Utilisation of aquatic facilities</i> [Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Municipal population]	2.55	2.76	5.05	N/A	3.93	There was an error in reporting the 24/25 figures resulting in a higher usage.
Animal Management						
Health and safety <i>Animal management prosecutions</i> [Number of successful animal management prosecutions / Number of animal management prosecutions] x 100	0%	0%	0%	N/A	0%	The animal management prosecutions listed in the reporting period have been adjourned until the next reporting period.
Food Safety						
Health and safety <i>Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications</i> [Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises] x100	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	N/A	0.00%	There were no critical or major non-compliance notifications in the reporting period.
Governance						
Consultation and engagement <i>Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement</i> [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on community consultation and engagement]	76	50	43	56	53	Based on community satisfaction survey
Libraries						
Participation <i>Library membership</i> [Number of registered library members / Population] x100	#N/A	9.19%	8.06%	N/A	5.35%	Staff cleaned out duplicant and delinquent library users.
Maternal and Child Health (MCH)						
Participation <i>Participation in the MCH service</i> [Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x100	87.73%	85.30%	88.60%	N/A	83.83%	
<i>Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children</i> [Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service] x100	94.12%	95.45%	86.67%	N/A	89.66%	
Roads						
Condition <i>Sealed local roads maintained to condition standards</i> [Number of kilometres of sealed local roads below the renewal intervention level set by Council / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x100	99.25%	99.30%	99.30%	98.00%	98.32%	Buloke's road condition is worsening because of the cumulative impact of repeated flood and storm events including the October 2022 floods, December 2023 storm, February 2024 storm and February 2026 floods. Many roads have been damaged again before permanent restoration works from earlier events could be completed, further weakening pavements, surfaces, shoulders and drainage. Council's ability to restore the network has also been constrained by disaster funding assessments, reductions in proposed funding and uncertainty about which works and costs will be considered eligible. Each new event redirects resources toward emergency access and temporary repairs, meaning the network is being damaged faster than permanent reconstruction can be funded and delivered.
Statutory Planning						
Service standard <i>Planning applications decided within required time frames</i>	34.62%	100.00%	66.67%	64.00%	69.57%	

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PERFORMANCE STATEMENT (ANNUAL REPORT INSERT)

[(Number of regular planning application decisions made within 60 days) * (Number of VicSmart planning application decisions made within 10 days) / Number of planning application decisions made] x100					
Waste Management					
Waste diversion					
Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill [Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins] x100	18.08%	29.58%	41.14%	33.00%	42.00%

Section 3 - Financial Performance Indicators

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	Results					Forecasts				
	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027	2028	2029	2030	Material Variations and Comments
Dimension / Indicator / Measure [Formula]	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target as per budget	Actual	Forecasts	Forecasts	Forecasts	Forecasts	
Efficiency										
Expenditure level										
Expenses per property assessment [Total expenses / Number of property assessments]	\$5,475.47	\$5,235.51	\$5,546.75	\$5,364.00	\$5,200.37	\$5,665.87	\$5,724.44	\$5,915.67	\$6,023.13	No material variance noted.
Revenue level										
Average rate per property assessment [Sum of all general rates and municipal charges / Number of property assessments]	\$2,009.84	\$2,090.49	\$2,140.40	N/A	\$2,194.94	\$2,255.75	\$2,317.79	\$2,381.52	\$2,452.97	No material variance noted.
Liquidity										
Working capital										
Current assets compared to current liabilities [Current assets / Current liabilities] x100	354.94%	376.98%	440.03%	275.00%	779.59%	553.22%	561.17%	556.93%	560.72%	The working capital ratio improved during the period, reflecting an increase in other financial assets and a reduction in unearned income. Together, these movements increased current assets while reducing current liabilities, resulting in a stronger liquidity position.
Unrestricted cash										
Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities [Unrestricted cash / Current liabilities] x100	78.65%	67.33%	38.11%	N/A	51.43%	70.20%	73.40%	74.46%	76.64%	The reduction in unearned income has led to a lower liability base, improving liquidity ratio.
Obligations										
Loans and borrowings										
Loans and borrowings compared to rates [Interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	Council does not have any external borrowings.
Loans and borrowings repayments compared to rates [Interest and principal repayments on interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	Council does not have any external borrowings.
Indebtedness										
Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue [Non-current liabilities / Own source revenue] x100	9.68%	7.48%	16.70%	N/A	16.42%	22.41%	22.29%	22.16%	21.98%	No material variance noted.
Asset renewal and upgrade										
Asset renewal and upgrade compared to depreciation [Asset renewal and asset upgrade expense / Asset depreciation] x100	81.07%	74.57%	84.06%	482.00%	84.37%	544.84%	185.81%	37.30%	38.68%	No material variance noted.
Operating position										
Adjusted underlying result										

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PERFORMANCE STATEMENT (ANNUAL REPORT INSERT)

Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit) [Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit) / Adjusted underlying revenue] x100	13.87%	-44.33%	-2.44%	N/A	-0.04%	-20.29%	-16.61%	-17.82%	-17.00%	The underlying surplus result is primarily attributable to the advance receipt of approx. \$7 million from Financial Assistance Grants for FY2026-27 in FY2025-26.
Stability Rates concentration Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue [Rate revenue / Adjusted underlying revenue] x100	35.84%	65.00%	44.38%	53.00%	47.69%	54.37%	53.53%	53.71%	53.94%	No material variance noted.
Rates effort Rates compared to property values [Rate revenue / Capital improved value of rateable properties in the municipality] x100	0.50%	0.37%	0.30%	N/A	0.31%	0.33%	0.34%	0.35%	0.36%	No material variance noted.

Section 4 - Sustainable Capacity Indicators

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Indicator / Measure (Formula)	Results				Comment
	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Actual	
Population Expenses per head of municipal population [Total expenses / Municipal population]	\$5,735.35	\$5,517.22	\$5,956.51	\$5,691.52	
Infrastructure per head of municipal population [Value of infrastructure / Municipal population]	\$44,712.93	\$45,437.25	\$46,323.37	\$51,544.42	The increase in infrastructure assets per head is primarily attributable to a decrease in municipal population.
Population density per length of road [Municipal population / Kilometres of local roads]	1.15	1.14	1.12	1.11	No material variance noted.
Own-source revenue Own-source revenue per head of municipal population [Own-source revenue / Municipal population]	\$2,813.26	\$2,993.38	\$2,998.82	\$3,040.60	No material variance noted.
Recurrent grants Recurrent grants per head of municipal population [Recurrent grants / Municipal population]	\$2,018.49	\$593.05	\$2,439.30	\$2,505.52	No material variance noted.
Disadvantage Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage [Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage by decile]	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	
Workforce turnover Percentage of staff turnover [Number of permanent staff resignations and terminations / Average number of permanent staff for the financial year] x100	27.0%	29.3%	23.5%	22.2%	No material variance noted.

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GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST (ANNUAL REPORT INSERT)

Governance and Management Checklist

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Governance and Management Items	Assessment
1 Community engagement policy (policy outlining Council's commitment to engaging with the community on matters of public interest)	Adopted in accordance with section 55 of the Act. Date of adoption: 10/02/2021
2 Community engagement guidelines (guidelines to assist staff to determine when and how to engage with the community)	Current guidelines in operation. Date of commencement: 10/02/2021
3 Financial Plan (plan under section 91 of the Act outlining the financial and non-financial resources required for at least the next 10 financial years)	Adopted in accordance with section 91 of the Act. Date of adoption: 29/10/2025
4 Asset Plan (plan that sets out the asset maintenance and renewal needs for key infrastructure asset classes for at least the next 10 years)	Adopted in accordance with section 92 of the Act. Date of adoption: 29/10/2025
5 Revenue and Rating Plan (plan setting out the rating structure of Council to levy rates and charges)	Adopted in accordance with section 93 of the Act. Date of adoption: 18/06/2025
6 Annual budget (plan setting out the services to be provided and initiatives to be undertaken over the next 12 months and the funding and other resources required)	Budget adopted in accordance with section 94 of the Act. Date of adoption: 17/06/2026
7 Risk policy (policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risks to Council's operations)	Current policy in operation Date of commencement: 09/11/2022
8 Fraud policy (policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risk of fraud)	Current policy in operation Date of commencement: 16/07/2025
9 Municipal emergency management planning (Participation in meetings of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee.)	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) meetings attended by one or more representatives of Council (other than the chairperson of the MEMPC) during the financial year. Dates of MEMPC meetings attended: 12/05/2026 Current Plan in operation - 2025-2028. Date approved 14 August 2025. All MEMPC meetings attended by Council representatives. Meeting dates: 12.02.25, 13.05.25, 12.08.25, 18.11.25, 10.02.26 and 12.05.26.
10 Procurement policy (policy outlining the principles, processes and procedures that will apply to all purchases of goods and services by the Council)	Adopted in accordance with section 108 of the Act. Date of commencement: 29/10/2025
11 Business continuity plan (plan setting out the actions that will be taken to ensure that key services continue to operate in the event of a disaster)	Current plan in operation Date of commencement: 08/11/2017
12 Disaster recovery plan (plan setting out the actions that will be undertaken to	Current plan in operation Date of commencement: 14/05/2018

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GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST (ANNUAL REPORT INSERT)

	recover and restore business capability in the event of a disaster)	
13	Complaint policy (Policy under section 107 of the Act outlining Council's commitment and approach to managing complaints.)	Policy developed in accordance with section 107 of the Act. Date of commencement: 13/04/2022
14	Workforce plan (Plan outlining Council's commitment and approach to planning the current and future workforce requirements of the organisation.)	Plan developed in accordance with section 46 of the Act. Date of commencement: 24/12/2021 Workforce Plan under review.
15	Payment of rates and charges hardship policy (Policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to assisting ratepayers experiencing financial hardship or difficulty paying their rates.)	Current policy in operation Date of commencement: 20/05/2026
16	Risk management framework (framework outlining Council's approach to managing risks to the Council's operations)	Current framework in operation Date of commencement: 09/11/2022
17	Audit and Risk Committee (advisory committee of Council under section 53 and 54 of the Act)	Established in accordance with section 53 of the Act. Date of commencement: 12/08/2020
18	Internal audit (independent accounting professionals engaged by the Council to provide analyses and recommendations aimed at improving Council's governance, risk and management controls)	Internal auditor engaged Date of engagement: 09/05/2025
19	Performance reporting framework (a set of indicators measuring financial and non-financial performance, including the performance indicators referred to in section 98 of the Act)	Current framework in operation Date of adoption: 01/07/2014 New Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework Policy in consultation and development stage as at 26 November 2025.
20	Council Plan report (report reviewing the performance of the Council against the Council Plan, including the results in relation to the strategic indicators, for the first six months of the financial year)	Current report Date of report: 20/05/2026 Report to Council for noting - 17 December 2025, 18 February 2026 and 20 May 2026.
21	Quarterly budget reports (quarterly reports to Council under section 97 of the Act, comparing actual and budgeted results and an explanation of any material variations)	Quarterly reports presented to Council in accordance with section 97(1) of the Act. Date of report: 20/05/2026 Report to Council for noting - 17 December 2025 (Q1), 18 February 2026 (Q2), 20 May 2026 (Q3). Quarter 4 report to Council for noting due in July 2026.
22	Risk reporting (six-monthly reports of strategic risks to Council's operations, their likelihood and consequences of occurring and risk minimisation strategies)	No reports. Reason for no reports: Strategic risk reporting is in development.
23	Performance reporting (six-monthly reports of indicators measuring the results against financial and non-financial performance, including performance indicators referred to in section 98 of the Act)	Performance reports prepared Dates of reports: 10/09/2025 Performance reports prepared and presented to Council's Audit and Risk Committee.
24	Annual report (annual report under sections 98 and 99 of the Act containing a report of operations and audited financial and performance statements)	Annual report presented at a meeting of Council in accordance with section 100 of the Act. Date of presentation: 29/10/2025
25	Councillor Code of Conduct (Code setting out the standards of conduct to be followed by Councillors and other matters.)	Code of conduct reviewed and adopted in accordance with section 139 of the Act. Date reviewed and adopted: 11/11/2024

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GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST (ANNUAL REPORT INSERT)

		Model Councillor Code of Conduct presented to Council.
26	Delegations (documents setting out the powers, duties and functions of Council and the Chief Executive Officer that have been delegated to members of staff)	Delegations reviewed in accordance with section 11(7) of the Act. and a register kept in accordance with sections 11(8) and 47(7) of the Act. Date of review: 29/10/2025 Instrument of Delegation from Council to CEO: 29/10/2025. Instrument of Delegation to Staff: 19/02/2025. Instrument of sub-delegation to Staff: 20/06/2022. Instrument of Delegation CEO powers to Staff: 01/10/2021.
27	Meeting procedures (Governance Rules governing the conduct of meetings of Council and delegated committees)	Governance Rules adopted in accordance with section 60 of the Act. Date rules adopted: 10/08/2022

8.3.2 DRAFT FINANCIAL PLAN 2026-2036

Author's Title: Manager Financial Strategy

Directorate: Corporate and Organisational Performance

File No: FM/05/02

Relevance to Council Plan 2025 - 2029

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

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of the draft Financial Plan 2026 – 2036 for public exhibition and community feedback, in accordance with sections 91 and 96 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

SUMMARY

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council adopted its Financial Plan 2025-2035 at the Council Meeting held on 29 October 2025.

To monitor long-term financial sustainability, Council has committed to reviewing and revising its Financial Plan annually. The draft Financial Plan 2026-2036 (the Plan) is the first revision since last adopted. The Financial Plan provides the financial framework through which Council will deliver the Community Vision and Council Plan priorities over the next 10-year period. The Plan has been developed in conjunction with Council's integrated strategic planning and reporting framework and outlines the resources required to maintain services, renew assets and support strategic investment.

An annual review will bring forth attention to any immediate issues as well as those that may rise in the distant future.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Endorse the draft Financial Plan 2026 – 2036 for public exhibition;
2. Gives public notice of the draft Financial Plan 2026 – 2036 on Council's website and invites written submissions from Thursday, 17 September 2026 until Monday, 19 October 2026;
3. Notes that in accordance with Section 93 and 96(1)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, consultation will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy;
4. Notes that any person who makes a written submission in relation to the draft Financial Plan 2026 – 2036 may be heard by Council at a public submission hearing to be held on Monday, 26 October 2026;
5. Notes that the Financial Plan 2026 – 2036 will be considered for adoption at the Council Meeting to be held in November 2026.

DISCUSSION

Purpose of a Financial Plan

Council has undertaken comprehensive planning and financial modelling to identify the resources and investment required to deliver the objectives of the Council Plan and realise the aspirations set out in the Community Vision.

The Financial Plan is one of the strategic plans subject to the Strategic Planning and Reporting principles in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*.

In general, it aims to –

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

The Plan aligns with and supports key Council documents, including the Council Plan, Annual Budget, Community Vision and other long-term strategies such as the Asset Plan.

Preparation of the draft Financial Plan 2026 – 2036

The modelling and development of the draft Financial Plan have been undertaken internally. The plan includes the following details for the period of 10 years -

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

Council has developed the Financial Plan based on the principle of operating on a cash neutral basis, i.e. Council's day-to-day operations which are funded through operational income including rates, fees, charges, grants and investment interest. As capital income is earmarked for capital projects such as renewing and upgrading assets, this funding cannot be considered for day-to-day council operations.

Keeping the annual budget of FY2026-27 as a foundation, key assumptions have been applied to develop the 10 year Financial Plan. The two key reports which have informed these key assumptions include:

1. **CT Management** (September 2025) – A review of the draft Financial Plan 2025-35 which focused on the integrity of assumptions and calculations used regarding the key indicators and recommendations of the Victorian Auditor Generals Office (VAGO) and industry financial sustainability ratios.
2. **AFS Bendigo as part of Council's Internal Audit Program** (March 2026) – This review focused on compliance to the *Local Government Act 2020*, the applied assumptions, methodology and the robustness of the financial modelling including its integration with other strategic documents of Council and the associated levels of financial management risk. This identified eight findings (five moderate and three minor), most of which have been incorporated in this current review of the Financial Plan.

Both reports recommended Council adopt more conservative assumptions in developing its Draft Financial Plan. Management has accepted these recommendations and additionally applied them when developing the recently adopted Annual Budget 2026-27.

Analysis of the draft Financial Plan 2026 – 2036

Upon implementing these underlying conservative assumptions, Council has forecasted an operating cash surplus from year 1 to year 6. However, from year 7 onwards Council now forecasts an operational cash deficit.

Reasons attributing to this position are –

1. Increase in rate cap not being aligned with estimated increases in resourcing costs;
2. Decreasing levels of 'Other Income' such as interest on term deposits.

Although this deficit is not an immediate concern for Council operations, it will be necessary for Council to continue to monitor its forecasted operations and opportunities for an improved financial position in the longer term.

Council may consider –

1. Opportunities in receiving operational grants that offer financial stability and are recurring in nature; such as advocating for an increase in Financial Assistance Grants to support Council's essential operational activities;
2. Finding operational efficiencies either through its employment structure or under operational contracts and services;
3. Reviewing service levels and financial contributions made annually by Council;
4. Reviewing maintenance costs and discretionary expenditure for council assets.

Council's reliance on grant funding does not only become important but in the future – a necessity.

Council aims to reviewing this Plan annually as it ensures that Council stays on top of any unforeseen issues and is better positioned to make informed decisions and take necessary corrective actions.

Council has outlined the changes to the draft Financial Plan 2026 – 2036 from the adopted Financial Plan 2025 – 2035 within an attachment to this report.

RELEVANT LAW

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

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council adopted the Financial Plan 2025-35 in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* at Council meeting held 29 October 2025.

OPTIONS

Option 1 – Endorse the draft Financial Plan 2026 – 2036 for public exhibition.

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

Option 2 – Endorse placing Plan on public exhibition with amendments.

Council may undertake modelling using optimistic (less conservative) assumptions. This option is not recommended by officers, as the Plan is based on external reports and may not fully reflect emerging financial risks.

Option 3 – Do not endorse the draft Financial Plan 2026 – 2036.

Council may decide not to endorse the draft Plan. If so, the Financial Plan 2025–2035 would remain in effect. Officers do not recommend this option, as annual updates to the modelling assumptions help ensure the Plan reflects changing market conditions.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

It is proposed that the draft Plan be placed on public exhibition alongside the draft Asset Plan 2026 – 2036.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

It is proposed that the draft Plan be placed on public exhibition alongside the draft Asset Plan until 19 October 2026. Council will hear any written public submission made on 26 October 2026.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

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

COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

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

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

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

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

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

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

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

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

Attachments:

1. Attachment 8.3.2.1 - Draft Financial Plan 2026-2036
2. Attachment 8.3.2.2 - Major changes to Financial Plans



Acknowledgement of Country

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

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1. Purpose

The Buloke Shire Council Financial Plan (the Plan) establishes Council's 10-year plan for achieving financially sustainable service delivery for the community from 2026 - 2036. The Plan is a long-term forecast which demonstrates how Council's key strategic objectives will be resourced and monitored to achieve the actions within the Council Plan and the aspirations of the Community Vision.

2. Executive Summary

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

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

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

In early 2024, the Minister for Local Government appointed a Municipal Monitor to the Buloke Shire Council, and an independent external review of Council's financial position was undertaken by CT Management (Sept 2025). This report and the findings of Council's Internal Audit Report on its 'Long-Term Financial Planning' (March 2026) have formed the basis of a review and update process of Council's overall Financial Plan. . The findings from these reports have provided important guidance in shaping Council's financial principles and modelling for the next 10 years.

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

This 10-year Financial Plan marks the first review of Council's adopted Financial Plan within this Council Term, since it was adopted in October 2025. The Plan has been prepared in accordance with statutory requirements and demonstrates Council's commitment to maintaining a sound and sustainable financial position. Close alignment between the Asset Plan and the Financial Plan ensures that infrastructure renewal and service delivery priorities are matched with Council's financial capacity.

Council recognises that maintaining long-term financial sustainability may require making difficult decisions in the future, particularly when additional external pressures, unforeseen emergency events and rising operational costs limit the revenue generation options available in both the short and longer term. All decisions must be informed by thorough, deliberative engagement, sound data and information, transparent processes and a practical approach to balancing community needs, expectations and financial capacity. The Financial Plan will be reviewed and updated each year to reflect changes in economic conditions, legislation, funding opportunities and Council priorities. Regular reviews help Council identify financial challenges early and respond with appropriate actions to support long-term financial sustainability for the future generations within the Buloke community.

The key objectives of this Financial Plan continue to be:

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

3. Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework

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

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

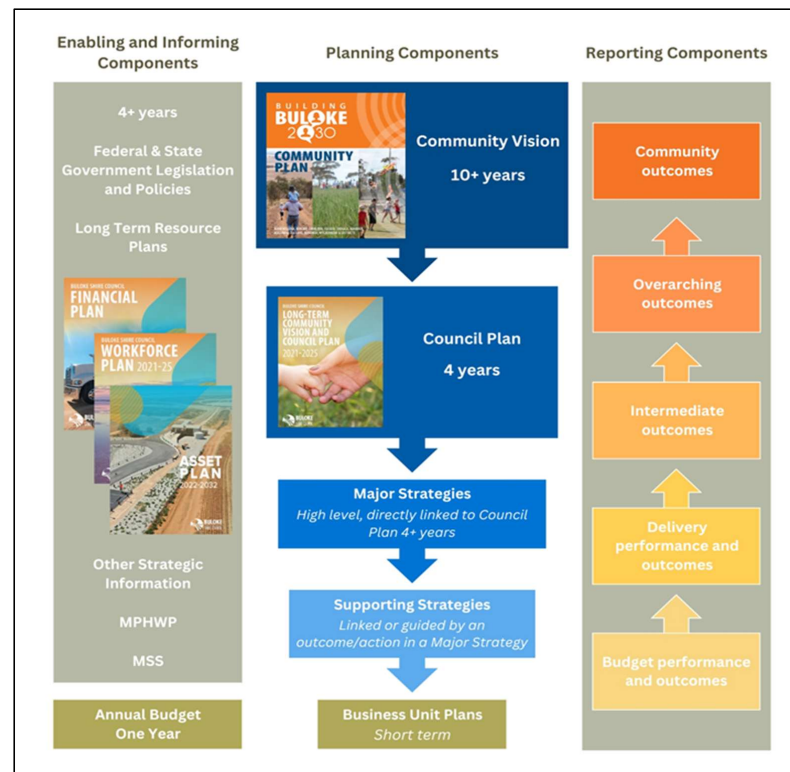


Image 1: Integrated Strategic Planning and Planning Reporting Framework

4. Legislative Requirements

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

4.1 Strategic planning principles

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

4.2 Financial Plan

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

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

4.3 Financial management principles

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

The following are the financial management principles—

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

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

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

4.4 Service performance principles

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

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

The following are the service performance principles—

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

4.5 Community engagement and public transparency

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

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

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

4.6 Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020

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

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

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

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

5. Engagement Principles

As part of the development of the 10-Year Financial Plan 2025-2035 adopted in October 2025, Council undertook a deliberative engagement process with a Community Reference Group (CRG). The CRG was established through an open expression of interest process which participated in facilitated workshops exploring Council's long-term financial sustainability, value for money, service priorities, and asset investment. The CRG's recommendations, together with feedback from the 2025/26 Annual Budget community survey and public submissions, informed the adopted Financial Plan 2025. While the strategic direction from this engagement remains unchanged for the purposes of planning the next 10 years, important changes have occurred that influence the assumptions contained therein, used to prepare an updated version of the Financial Plan.

A community summit with financially focused engagement will assist in further reviewing the Plan and establishing a strong basis of insight for the Annual Budget FY2027-28.

5.1 Asset Plan

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

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

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

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

5.2 Revenue and Rating Plan

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

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

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

6. Financial Plan

6.1 Context

The Financial Plan has used the Council Plan 2025-29, as well as Council's recent annual budgets and financial reports (internal and external) as the basis for financial modelling and planning for future service delivery. Council sets its priorities via its annual and four-year forecast budget along with the Council Plan development.

The adopted Financial Plan 2025–2035 projected positive operating cash balances throughout the life of the Plan, enabling Council to adopt a cash-neutral budgeting approach. Under this approach, new initiatives, operating expenditure and asset renewal programs were generally funded from existing cash resources.

As part of the current review, Council considered the outcomes of the external financial review undertaken by CT Management, together with the recommendations arising from the Internal Audit of its Long-Term Financial Plan 2025–2035. These reviews have informed a more conservative approach to Council's long-term financial modelling, recognising the financial risks associated with operating in a rate-capped environment, limited recurring external operating grant funding, increasing cost pressures, potential growth in employee costs arising from future Enterprise Bargaining Agreement negotiations, and ongoing asset renewal obligations.

Both reviews recommended adopting a more prudent and conservative approach for forecasting future revenue, expenditure and asset management commitments to strengthen the robustness of Council's long-term financial planning.

As a result, the revised Financial Plan 2026–2036 forecasts negative operating cash balances from Year 7 onwards. While this does not represent an immediate financial risk, it indicates that Council will need to proactively manage emerging financial pressures over the medium to long term. This will require ongoing review of service delivery, operational efficiencies, capital investment priorities and revenue opportunities to ensure Council's long-term financial sustainability while maintaining appropriate service levels for the community.

Council has not considered the current external environment volatility around fuel crisis into the financial modelling. Council will be in a better position with relevant data at the Annual Budget 2027-28 developmental stages.

Strategic Directions and major priorities incorporated in the Financial Plan have been updated:–

- Continue balancing its budgets on a cash basis for years 1-6; meaning that investments in its operations are limited to revenues generated through operational activities. Where operational cash surpluses exist, Council seeks to allocate these funds toward capital works, with a focus on addressing the 'renewal gap' identified in the Asset Plan 2026–2036

- Strengthening scrutiny and prioritisation of new initiatives, while embedding ongoing financial discipline and identifying operational efficiencies, cost containment measures and service optimisation opportunities to ensure affordability, whole-of-life cost consideration and long-term financial sustainability.
- Targeting efficiency improvements within Council's operational budget to progressively address emerging financial pressures and achieve a breakeven position from Year 7 onwards and beyond.
- Delivering efficient and effective service levels ensuring value for money in all service areas
- Prioritising asset renewal and risk-based asset management over expansionary or discretionary capital investment
- Continue advocacy for external funding to the State and Federal levels of Government
- Support a vibrant community through investments in infrastructure that enhance community and economic development
- Promote clear and transparent budgeting process through regular financial and performance reporting.

6.2 Assumptions to Comprehensive Income Statement

Buloke Shire Council follows xero-based budgeting, which forms the base of preparing the annual budget of FY2027. This section presents information regarding the assumptions to the Comprehensive Income Statement for the preparation of the 10-year Financial Plan 2026 - 2036. The assumptions comprise the annual escalations or movement for each line item of the Comprehensive Income Statement.

Escalation factors	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
<u>Rates and charges</u>										
<i>Rates capped</i>	Budget	2.75%	2.75%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
<i>Garbage rates - not capped subjected to inflation</i>	Budget	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
<i>Rates not capped</i>	Budget	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Statutory fees and fines	Budget	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
User fees	Budget	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
<u>Grants - operating</u>										
<i>Recurring - FAG</i>	Budget	2.75%	2.75%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
<i>Recurring - no growth</i>	Budget	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Non recurring</i>	Budget	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Grants	Budget	R2R	R2R	R2R	R2R	R2R	R2R	R2R	R2R	R2R
Contributions - monetary	Budget	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other income	Budget	0.25%	0.25%	0.25%	0.25%	0.25%	0.25%	0.25%	0.25%	0.25%
Employee costs	Budget	4.00%	4.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
<u>Materials and services</u>										
<i>Non discretionary</i>		3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%
<i>Discretionary</i>	Budget	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%
Bade Debts	Budget	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Depreciation		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Amortization - right of use assets	Budget	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Finance costs - leases	Budget	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Other expenses	Budget	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%

Rates and Charges

- Rates capped– Buloke Shire Council operates within a rate-capped environment, with annual increases budgeted in line with the rate cap assumption of 2.75% until 2029 and 3% hence.
- Rated not capped – These refer to garbage charges that are based on a cost-recovery model. They are expected to increase overtime in lines with inflation.

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

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

Grants Operating – Operational grants are modelled as recurrent and non recurrent. Recurrent operating grants (with growth) include the Financial Assistance Grants while recurrent (no growth) include grants that cover Maternal and Child Health, Playgroups, Municipal Emergency Management etc. Non-recurrent grants are modelled only if known.

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

Other Income - Other income primarily comprises investment earnings and minor revenue sources, assumed to increase at 0.25% per annum as Council expects its cash balance to stay similar under the principle of 'cash neutrality'.

Employee Costs - From 2027, Buloke Shire Council will be entering into a new Enterprise Agreement, for which negotiations are currently on going. Hence, in absence of sufficient data, it is assumed that annual employee cost increases will increase by 4% until 2029 and then by 3%, covering wages, superannuation, WorkCover, training, and other employment-related expenses.

Materials and Services – This category includes the costs of operating Council services, maintaining roads and major assets, consumables, and utilities. It also incorporates reliance on external contractors for specialised services (e.g. legal advice and technical expertise). Costs are assumed to have an annual increase marginally over the estimated CPI by 0.5%.

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

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

Other Considerations – Renewable Energy Development

Council recognizes that large-scale energy developments present both opportunities and significant challenges. We acknowledge community concerns around land use, rural lifestyles, infrastructure pressures and limited consultation, and have not overlooked these issues. Although this Financial Plan does not factor in these impacts, Council has not ignored them and will revisit the assumptions in forthcoming annual budget forecasts

Buloke Shire Council is preparing early, monitoring proposals and will undertake engaging with the wider community to ensure local voices are heard. This proactive approach seeks to balance renewable energy opportunities with community wellbeing and the Shire's long-term financial sustainability.

7. Financial Statements

This section presents details regarding the Financial Plan Statements for the 10-year period from 2026/2027 – 2027/2036

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

7.1 Comprehensive Income Statement

	NOTES	Budget		Projections							
		2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
		\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Income / Revenue											
Rates and charges		16,499	16,931	17,376	17,890	18,418	18,963	19,523	20,100	20,695	21,307
Statutory fees and fines		124	128	131	135	139	144	148	152	157	162
User fees		447	460	474	488	503	518	534	550	566	583
Grants - operating		9,857	9,511	9,764	10,047	10,340	10,641	10,951	11,270	11,599	11,938
Grants - capital		41,772	16,179	3,179	3,179	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600
Contributions - monetary		259	259	259	259	259	259	259	259	259	259
Contributions - non-monetary		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net gain (or loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fair value adjustments for investment property		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Share of net profits (or loss) of associates and joint ventures		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other income		1,160	1,163	1,166	1,169	1,172	1,175	1,178	1,181	1,184	1,187
Total income / revenue		70,118	44,630	32,350	33,168	32,432	33,299	34,192	35,112	36,060	37,035
Expenses											
Employee costs		14,950	15,228	15,838	16,313	16,802	17,306	17,825	18,360	18,911	19,478
Materials and services		10,973	11,047	11,644	11,834	12,248	12,677	13,330	13,580	14,055	14,547
Bad and Doubtful Debt		60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60
Depreciation		9,099	9,099	9,099	9,099	9,099	9,099	9,099	9,099	9,099	9,099
Amortisation - right of use assets		572	572	572	572	572	572	572	572	572	572
Finance costs - leases		54	55	57	59	61	62	64	66	68	70
Other expenses		797	821	845	870	897	923	951	980	1,009	1,039
Allowance for impairment losses		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation - intangible assets		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total expenses		36,505	36,883	38,115	38,807	39,738	40,700	41,902	42,717	43,774	44,866
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		33,613	7,748	(5,765)	(5,639)	(7,307)	(7,401)	(7,710)	(7,604)	(7,715)	(7,830)

7.2 Balance Sheet

	Budget		Projections							
	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Assets										
Current assets										
Cash and cash equivalents	17,982	17,810	17,737	17,585	17,478	17,377	17,168	16,996	16,756	16,406
Trade and other receivables	4,068	4,175	4,285	4,411	4,541	4,676	4,814	4,956	5,103	5,254
Other financial assets*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Inventories	150	151	160	162	168	174	183	186	193	199
Prepayments	465	481	498	515	533	552	571	591	612	633
Non-current assets classified as held for sale	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Contract assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other assets	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Total current assets	22,674	22,625	22,687	22,682	22,728	22,786	22,744	22,738	22,672	22,500
Non-current assets										
Trade and other receivables	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other financial assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investments in associates, joint arrangement and subsidiaries	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Property, infrastructure, plant & equipment	351,227	359,034	353,329	347,750	340,503	333,162	325,664	318,165	310,666	303,167
Right-of-use assets	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650
Investment property	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Intangible assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total non-current assets	351,877	359,684	353,979	348,400	341,153	333,812	326,314	318,815	311,316	303,817
Total assets	374,550	382,309	376,667	371,082	363,882	356,599	349,058	341,552	333,988	326,317
Liabilities										
Current liabilities										
Trade and other payables	2,104	2,119	2,233	2,269	2,349	2,431	2,557	2,604	2,695	2,790
Trust funds and deposits	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Contract and other liabilities	824	741	667	601	541	486	438	394	355	319
Provisions	827	828	830	832	833	835	837	839	841	843
Interest-bearing liabilities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lease liabilities	326	326	326	326	326	326	326	326	326	326
Total current liabilities	4,099	4,032	4,074	4,045	4,066	4,096	4,175	4,181	4,234	4,295
Non-current liabilities										
Provisions	3,701	3,779	3,860	3,943	4,028	4,116	4,206	4,300	4,396	4,495
Interest-bearing liabilities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lease liabilities	384	384	384	384	384	384	384	384	384	384
Total non-current liabilities	4,085	4,163	4,244	4,327	4,412	4,500	4,591	4,684	4,780	4,879
Total liabilities	8,184	8,195	8,317	8,372	8,478	8,596	8,765	8,865	9,014	9,174
Net assets	366,367	374,114	368,349	362,710	355,403	348,002	340,292	332,688	324,973	317,143
Equity										
Accumulated surplus	164,709	172,057	165,892	159,853	152,146	144,345	136,235	128,230	120,116	111,885
Reserves	201,658	202,058	202,458	202,858	203,258	203,658	204,058	204,458	204,858	205,258
Total equity	366,367	374,114	368,349	362,710	355,403	348,002	340,293	332,688	324,973	317,143

7.3 Statement of Changes in Equity

	Total \$'000	Accumulate d Surplus \$'000	Revaluation Reserve \$'000	Other Reserves \$'000
2026 Forecast Actual				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	332,022	131,465	197,276	3,281
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	732	732	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	-	-	-	-
Transfers to other reserves	(400)	(400)	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	400	-	-	400
Balance at end of the financial year	332,754	131,797	197,276	3,681
2027 Budget				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	332,754	131,797	197,276	3,681
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	33,613	33,613	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	-	-	-	-
Transfers to other reserves	(400)	(400)	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	400	-	-	400
Balance at end of the financial year	366,367	165,010	197,276	4,081
2028 Budget				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	366,367	165,010	197,276	4,081
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	7,747	7,748	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	-	-	-	-
Transfers to other reserves	(400)	(400)	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	400	-	-	400
Balance at end of the financial year	374,114	172,358	197,276	4,481
2029 Budget				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	374,115	172,358	197,276	4,481
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(5,765)	(5,765)	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	-	-	-	-
Transfers to other reserves	(400)	(400)	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	400	-	-	400
Balance at end of the financial year	368,349	166,193	197,276	4,881

2030 Budget

Balance at beginning of the financial year	368,349	166,193	197,276	4,881
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(5,639)	(5,639)	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	-	-	-	-
Transfers to other reserves	(400)	(400)	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	400	-	-	400
Balance at end of the financial year	362,710	160,154	197,276	5,281

2031 Budget

Balance at beginning of the financial year	362,710	160,154	197,276	5,281
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(7,307)	(7,307)	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	-	-	-	-
Transfers to other reserves	(400)	(400)	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	400	-	-	400
Balance at end of the financial year	355,404	152,447	197,276	5,681

2032 Budget

Balance at beginning of the financial year	355,403	152,447	197,276	5,681
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(7,401)	(7,401)	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	-	-	-	-
Transfers to other reserves	(400)	(400)	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	400	-	-	400
Balance at end of the financial year	348,003	144,646	197,276	6,081

2033 Budget

Balance at beginning of the financial year	348,002	144,646	197,276	6,081
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(7,710)	(7,710)	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	-	-	-	-
Transfers to other reserves	(400)	(400)	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	400	-	-	400
Balance at end of the financial year	340,293	136,536	197,276	6,481

2034 Budget

Balance at beginning of the financial year	340,292	136,536	197,276	6,481
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(7,604)	(7,604)	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	-	-	-	-
Transfers to other reserves	(400)	(400)	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	400	-	-	400
Balance at end of the financial year	332,688	128,531	197,276	6,881

2035 Budget

Balance at beginning of the financial year	332,688	128,531	197,276	6,881
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(7,714)	(7,715)	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	-	-	-	-
Transfers to other reserves	(400)	(400)	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	400	-	-	400
Balance at end of the financial year	324,974	120,417	197,276	7,281

2036 Budget

Balance at beginning of the financial year	324,973	120,417	197,276	7,281
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(7,830)	(7,830)	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	-	-	-	-
Transfers to other reserves	(400)	(400)	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	400	-	-	400
Balance at end of the financial year	317,143	112,186	197,276	7,681

7.5 Statement of Cash Flows

	Notes	Budget	Projections								
		2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
		\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
		Inflow s (Outflow s)	Inflow s (Outflow s)	Inflow s (Outflow s)	Inflow s (Outflow s)	Inflow s (Outflow s)	Inflow s (Outflow s)	Inflow s (Outflow s)	Inflow s (Outflow s)	Inflow s (Outflow s)	Inflow s (Outflow s)
Cash flows from operating activities											
Rates and charges		16,303	16,764	17,206	17,703	18,228	18,768	19,325	19,898	20,488	21,096
Statutory fees and fines		124	128	131	135	139	144	148	152	157	162
User fees		447	460	474	488	503	518	534	550	566	583
Grants - operating		9,857	9,511	9,764	10,047	10,340	10,641	10,951	11,270	11,599	11,938
Grants - capital		41,681	16,096	3,105	3,112	1,540	1,546	1,551	1,556	1,561	1,565
Contributions - monetary		259	259	259	259	259	259	259	259	259	259
Interest received		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Trust funds and deposits taken		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other receipts		1,169	1,162	1,158	1,166	1,166	1,169	1,169	1,177	1,177	1,180
Net GST refund / payment		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Employee costs		(14,873)	(15,149)	(15,755)	(16,228)	(16,715)	(17,216)	(17,733)	(18,265)	(18,813)	(19,377)
Materials and services		(11,156)	(11,049)	(11,546)	(11,815)	(12,187)	(12,613)	(13,224)	(13,552)	(13,984)	(14,474)
Other payments		(797)	(821)	(845)	(870)	(897)	(923)	(951)	(980)	(1,009)	(1,039)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	4.4.1	43,014	17,362	3,951	3,999	2,377	2,292	2,028	2,066	2,001	1,892
Cash flows from investing activities											
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		(49,755)	(16,906)	(3,394)	(3,520)	(1,852)	(1,758)	(1,600)	(1,600)	(1,600)	(1,600)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Payments for investments		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds from sale of investments		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Loans and advances made		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Payments of loans and advances		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net cash provided by/ (used in) investing activities	4.4.2	(49,755)	(16,906)	(3,394)	(3,520)	(1,852)	(1,758)	(1,600)	(1,600)	(1,600)	(1,600)
Cash flows from financing activities											
Finance costs		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds from borrow ings		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Repayment of borrow ings		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interest paid - lease liability		(54)	(55)	(57)	(59)	(61)	(62)	(64)	(66)	(68)	(70)
Repayment of lease liabilities		(572)	(572)	(572)	(572)	(572)	(572)	(572)	(572)	(572)	(572)
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities	4.4.3	(626)	(628)	(630)	(631)	(633)	(635)	(637)	(639)	(641)	(643)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash & cash equivalents		(7,368)	(172)	(73)	(152)	(108)	(101)	(208)	(172)	(240)	(351)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		25,350	17,982	17,810	17,737	17,585	17,478	17,377	17,168	16,996	16,756
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year		17,982	17,810	17,737	17,585	17,478	17,377	17,168	16,996	16,756	16,406

7.6 Statement of Capital Works

STATEMENT OF CAPITAL WORKS	2026/27 \$'000	2027/28 \$'000	2028/29 \$'000	2029/30 \$'000	2030/31 \$'000	2031/32 \$'000	2032/33 \$'000	2033/34 \$'000	2034/35 \$'000	2035/36 \$'000
Property										
Buildings improvements	294	124	37	58	43	27	-	-	-	-
Buildings	118	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total property	412	124	37	58	43	27	-	-	-	-
Plant and Equipment										
Plant, machinery and equipment	2,147	87	26	41	30	19	-	-	-	-
Furniture and Fixtures	40	11	3	5	4	2	-	-	-	-
Computers and Telecommunication	130	11	3	5	4	2	-	-	-	-
Library books	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Plant and Equipment	2,317	109	32	51	38	24	-	-	-	-
Infrastructure										
Roads	44,547	16,499	3,273	3,329	1,711	1,670	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600
Bridges	-	10	3	5	4	2	-	-	-	-
Footpath and Cycleways	208	7	2	3	3	2	-	-	-	-
Drainage	380	36	11	17	13	8	-	-	-	-
Kerb and Channel	-	12	3	5	4	3	-	-	-	-
Recreational, Leisure & Community Facilities	1,123	51	15	24	18	11	-	-	-	-
Other Infrastructure	78	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Parks, open space and streetscapes	690	51	15	24	18	11	-	-	-	-
Aerodromes	-	7	2	3	3	2	-	-	-	-
Total Infrastructure	47,026	16,674	3,325	3,411	1,771	1,707	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600
Total capital expenditure	49,755	16,906	3,394	3,520	1,852	1,758	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600
Represented by										
New	180	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Renewal	49,304	16,906	3,394	3,520	1,852	1,758	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600
Expansion	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Upgrade	270	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total capital expenditure	49,755	16,906	3,394	3,520	1,852	1,758	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600
Funding sources represented by										
Grants	41,772	16,179	3,179	3,179	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600
Contribution	200	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Council Cash	7,783	728	215	341	252	158	-	-	-	-
Borrowings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total capital expenditure	49,755	16,906	3,394	3,520	1,852	1,758	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600

Statement of Human Resources

Statement of Planned Human Resource Expenditure

	Budget	Projections								
	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Staff expenditure (in '000)										
Employee costs - operating	14,950	15,228	15,838	16,313	16,802	17,306	17,825	18,360	18,911	19,478
Employee costs - capital	-									
Total staff expenditure	14,950	15,228	15,838	16,313	16,802	17,306	17,825	18,360	18,911	19,478
	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE
Staff numbers										
Employees	119.0	119.0	119.0	119.0	119.0	119.0	119.0	119.0	119.0	119.0
Total staff numbers	119.0	119.0	119.0	119.0	119.0	119.0	119.0	119.0	119.0	119.0

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

Department	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Community Development	3,840	3,994	4,113	4,237	4,364	4,495	4,630	4,769	4,912	5,059
Corporate and Organisational Performance	2,379	2,474	2,548	2,625	2,704	2,785	2,868	2,954	3,043	3,134
Infrastructure & Delivery	7,392	7,368	7,741	7,974	8,213	8,459	8,713	8,974	9,244	9,521
Office of the CEO	1,226	1,275	1,313	1,353	1,393	1,435	1,478	1,522	1,568	1,615
Total permanent staff expenditure	14,837	15,111	15,717	16,188	16,674	17,174	17,689	18,220	18,766	19,329
Other employee related expenditure	113	118	121	125	128	132	136	140	145	149
Capitalised labour costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total expenditure	14,950	15,228	15,838	16,313	16,802	17,306	17,825	18,360	18,911	19,478

Statement of Planned Human Resource Expenditure – service areas

Summary of Planned Human Resources Expenditure

	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Community Development										
Permanent - Full time	1,856	2,034	2,116	2,179	2,244	2,312	2,381	2,453	2,526	2,602
Women	901	1,041	1,083	1,115	1,149	1,183	1,219	1,255	1,293	1,332
Men	955	993	1,033	1,064	1,096	1,129	1,163	1,197	1,233	1,270
Persons of self-described gender	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Permanent - Part time	1,260	1,310	1,363	1,404	1,446	1,489	1,534	1,580	1,627	1,676
Women	1,010	1,050	1,092	1,125	1,159	1,194	1,230	1,266	1,304	1,344
Men	250	260	270	279	287	295	304	313	323	333
Persons of self-described gender	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Community Development	3,116	3,345	3,478	3,583	3,690	3,801	3,915	4,032	4,153	4,278
Corporate and Organisational Performance										
Permanent - Full time	1,970	2,257	2,347	2,417	2,490	2,565	2,642	2,721	2,803	2,887
Women	1,325	1,586	1,649	1,699	1,750	1,802	1,856	1,912	1,970	2,029
Men	489	509	529	545	561	578	595	613	632	650
Persons of self-described gender	156	162	169	174	179	184	190	196	201	208
Permanent - Part time	375	390	406	418	430	443	457	470	484	499
Women	323	336	349	360	371	382	393	405	417	430
Men	52	54	56	58	60	61	63	65	67	69
Persons of self-described gender	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Corporate and Organisational Performance	2,345	2,647	2,753	2,835	2,920	3,008	3,098	3,191	3,287	3,385
Infrastructure & Delivery										
Permanent - Full time	6,448	7,272	7,563	7,789	8,023	8,264	8,512	8,767	9,030	9,301
Women	798	830	863	889	916	943	971	1,001	1,031	1,062
Men	5,650	6,442	6,699	6,900	7,107	7,321	7,540	7,766	7,999	8,239
Persons of self-described gender	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Permanent - Part time	664	691	718	740	762	785	808	833	858	883
Women	292	304	316	325	335	345	355	366	377	388
Men	372	387	402	414	427	440	453	466	480	495
Persons of self-described gender	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Infrastructure & Delivery	7,112	7,962	8,281	8,529	8,785	9,049	9,320	9,600	9,888	10,185
Office of the CEO										
Permanent - Full time	1,156	1,202	1,250	1,288	1,326	1,366	1,406	1,448	1,492	1,537
Women	617	642	667	687	708	729	750	773	796	820
Men	539	561	583	600	618	637	656	676	696	717
Persons of self-described gender	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Permanent - Part time	70	73	76	78	80	83	85	88	90	93
Women	70	73	76	78	80	83	85	88	90	93
Men	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Persons of self-described gender	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Office of the CEO	1,226	1,275	1,326	1,366	1,407	1,449	1,491	1,536	1,582	1,630
Casuals, temporary and other expenditure	1,151	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capitalised labour costs	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total staff expenditure	14,950	15,229	15,838	16,313	16,802	17,306	17,825	18,359	18,910	19,478

Statement of Human Resources – Full Time Employment

Planned Human Resources - Full Time Equivalents	2027 FTE	2028 FTE	2029 FTE	2030 FTE	2031 FTE	2032 FTE	2033 FTE	2034 FTE	2035 FTE	2036 FTE
Community Development										
Permanent - Full time	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0
Women	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0
Men	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0
Persons of self-described gender	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Permanent - Part time	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0
Women	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0
Men	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Persons of self-described gender	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Community Development	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0
Corporate and Organisational Performance										
Permanent - Full time	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0
Women	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0
Men	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Persons of self-described gender	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Permanent - Part time	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6
Women	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Men	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Persons of self-described gender	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Corporate and Organisational Performance	19.6	19.6	19.6	19.6	19.6	19.6	19.6	19.6	19.6	19.6
Infrastructure & Delivery										
Permanent - Full time	62.0	62.0	62.0	62.0	62.0	62.0	62.0	62.0	62.0	62.0
Women	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0
Men	54.0	54.0	54.0	54.0	54.0	54.0	54.0	54.0	54.0	54.0
Persons of self-described gender	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Permanent - Part time	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3
Women	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6
Men	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7
Persons of self-described gender	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Infrastructure & Delivery	68.3	68.3	68.3	68.3	68.3	68.3	68.3	68.3	68.3	68.3
Office of the CEO										
Permanent - Full time	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Women	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Men	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Persons of self-described gender	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Permanent - Part time	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
Women	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
Men	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Persons of self-described gender	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Office of the CEO	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8
Casuals and temporary staff	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Capitalised labour	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total staff numbers	119	119	119	119	119	119	119	119	119	119

8 Financial Indicators

Indicator	Measure	Forecast	Budget	Projections									
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	
Operating position													
Adjusted underlying result (an adjusted underlying surplus is generated in the ordinary course of business)	Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)												
	Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit) / Adjusted underlying revenue	-53%	-30%	-17%	-18%	-17%	-23%	-22%	-23%	-22%	-21%	-21%	
Liquidity													
Unrestricted cash (sufficient cash that is free of restrictions is available to pay bills as and when they fall due)	Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities												
	Unrestricted cash / current liabilities			342%	338%	338%	335%	332%	322%	318%	309%	298%	
Obligations													
Loans and borrowings (level of interest bearing loans and borrowings is appropriate to the size and nature of Council's activities)	Loans and borrowings compared to rates												
	Interest bearing loans and borrowings / rate revenue	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Loans and borrowings (level of interest bearing loans and borrowings is appropriate to the size and nature of Council's activities)	Loans and borrowings repayments compared to rates												
	Interest and principal repayments on interest bearing loans and borrowings / rate revenue	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Indebtedness (level of long term liabilities is appropriate to the size and nature of a Council's activities)	Non-current liabilities compared to own-source revenue												
	Non-current liabilities / own source revenue	28%	25%	22%	22%	22%	22%	21%	21%	21%	21%	21%	
Stability													
Rates effort (rating level is set based on the community's capacity to pay)	Rates compared to property values												
	Rate revenue / CV of rateable properties in the municipal district	0.28%	0.27%	0.28%	0.28%	0.28%	0.28%	0.28%	0.28%	0.28%	0.28%	0.28%	
Efficiency													
Revenue level (resources are used efficiently in the delivery of services)	Average rate per property assessment												
	General rates and municipal charges / no. of property assessments	\$2,060	\$2,256	\$2,318	\$2,382	\$2,453	\$2,527	\$2,602	\$2,680	\$2,761	\$2,844	\$2,929	

9 Strategies and Plans

9.1 Borrowing Strategy

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

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

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

9.2 Reserves Strategy

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

9.3 Treasury Management

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

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

9.4 Investment Strategy

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

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



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CHANGES TO FINANCIAL PLAN FOR COUNCIL TERM 2025-2029 OUTLINED AS BELOW			
Parameter	Financial Plan 2025-2029	Financial Plan 2027-2036	Commentary
External Reviews	Based on the Municipal Monitor's Report (December 2024).	Based on the CT Management Review and Internal Audit of the Long-Term Financial Plan.	These external reviews have informed Management's strategic direction and financial planning assumptions.
Strategic Objective	Achieve a cash-neutral operating budget.	Achieve a financially sustainable budget	Council is expected to maintain cash neutrality for the majority of the 10-year planning period.
Rates and Charges	Overall Rates and Charges revenue modelled using growth assumptions based on the annual rate cap.	Revenue has been separated into: • Capped rates – growth based on assumed annual rate cap; • Non-capped rates – growth based on cost recovery; • Non-capped rates (fixed) – no growth applied.	Revenue categories have been refined to better reflect legislative requirements and cost recovery principles that apply to waste and garbage charges, consistent with recommendations from the external reviews.
Statutory Fees	Growth based on inflation assumptions.	Growth based on inflation assumptions.	No change to the underlying assumption.
User Fees and Charges	Growth based on inflation assumptions.	Growth based on inflation assumptions.	No change to the underlying assumption.
Operating Grants	Overall operating grant income modelled using inflation-based growth assumptions.	Operating grants have been categorised as: • Recurring grants (indexed) – growth aligned with assumed rate cap; • Recurring grants (non-indexed) – no growth; • Non-recurring grants – excluded from long-term projections.	Grant revenue modelling has been refined in accordance with recommendations from the external reviews.
Other Income	Overall Other Income modelled using inflation-based growth assumptions.	The majority of Other Income comprises interest earned on term deposits. As Council's objective is to maintain a financially sustainable position, it does not expect its cash balance to grow and hence, interest income is assumed to experience only nominal growth.	Income assumptions have been refined based on management review and external recommendations.
Employee Costs	Overall employee costs modelled using inflation-based growth assumptions.	Employee costs are assumed to increase by 4% in Years 1-2 to reflect Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) negotiations, before reverting to inflation-based growth from Year 3 onwards.	Assumptions have been updated to reflect current industrial relations expectations.
Materials and Services	Overall expenditure modelled using inflation-based growth assumptions.	Expenditure is projected to increase by inflation plus 0.5% annually. This remains the primary area where Council will pursue continuous efficiency improvements.	Assumptions have been revised following management review and recommendations from the external reviews.
Amortisation – Right-of-Use Assets	Lease costs for the light fleet, including principal and interest, assumed to remain constant over the planning period.	Principal repayments relating to light fleet leases are assumed to remain unchanged, as no significant increase in lease principal is anticipated.	Principal and interest components have now been modelled separately.
Finance Costs – Leases	Not separately identified.	Interest expense relating to light fleet leases is modelled to increase in line with inflation.	Separate recognition of finance costs provides greater transparency and aligns with management's revised modelling approach.
Other Expenses	Overall expenditure modelled using inflation-based growth assumptions.	Overall expenditure modelled using inflation-based growth assumptions.	No change to the underlying assumption.
Operating Cash Break-even Position	Operating cash surplus achieved throughout the entire 10-year planning period.	Operating cash surplus projected for Years 1-6, with operating cash deficits forecast from Year 7 onwards.	More conservative financial assumptions have resulted in projected deficits in the latter years of the plan.
Asset Renewal Funding	Operating cash surpluses contribute to asset renewal, supplemented by external grant funding.	Operating cash surpluses contribute to asset renewal during Years 1-6. From Year 7 onwards, no operating contribution is available, with asset renewal reliant on external funding.	Reduced operating capacity limits Council's ability to internally fund asset renewal in later years.
Strategic Direction	Management's priorities are to: • Maintain cash-neutral budgets; • Address the asset renewal funding gap.	Management's priorities are to: • Increase advocacy for additional external operating funding, including Financial Assistance Grants; • Deliver organisation-wide efficiency initiatives to maintain at least a cash break-even operating position; • Prioritise asset renewal investment based on available funding and efficiencies achieved.	Strategic priorities have evolved to reflect the more constrained long-term financial outlook and the need for ongoing financial sustainability initiatives.
Risks	No emerging risks identified when modelling	Although no immediate risks - early indicators of cash deficiency have been flagged while modelling. Amount of cash deficit is not a material \$ amount and can be managed by identifying into efficiencies	
Overall Cash Balance	Budgeted to stay constant	Budgeted to stay constant for years 1-6 Budgeted to drop nominally from Year 7 onwards	

8.4 ORGANISATIONAL REPORTS

8.4.1 SUPPORTING RURAL COUNCILS VICTORIA ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

Author's Title: Director Community Development

Directorate: Office of the CEO

File No: GR/17/11

Relevance to Council Plan 2025 - 2029

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

Council leadership and engagement
Advocacy and partnering to deliver priorities

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Councils endorsement to support Rural Councils Victoria (RCV) advocacy as Council enters into the State Government election campaign.

SUMMARY

Rural Councils Victoria has developed a comprehensive election platform. The headline call is for the government to establish a \$1 billion Rural and Regional Victoria Productivity and Growth Fund.

Funding would be delivered across four complementary streams:

1. Community wellbeing and local places renewal
2. Economic development
3. Council sustainability; and
4. Housing Supply.

In addition, RCV is calling for additional funding for roads and Council sustainability, reforms to enhance Councillor safety, and genuine reform of the emergency services volunteer fund.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes Rural Councils Victoria's strong advocacy for rural communities.
2. Acknowledges the critical role rural communities play in supporting Victoria's economy, including through agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, freight, energy production and regional employment.
3. Recognises the significant infrastructure, housing, financial and emergency management challenges currently facing rural councils and communities.
4. Endorses the key advocacy priorities in Rural Councils Victoria 2026 election platform, including:
 - a) Increased investment in rural and regional roads;
 - b) Expanded support for local infrastructure and community facilities;

- c) Additional investment in housing enabling infrastructure;
 - d) Greater support for emergency preparedness and resilience;
 - e) Measures to improve long-term council sustainability and financial capacity;
 - f) Increased support for regional economic development.
5. Supports calls for the establishment of a dedicated \$1 billion Rural and Regional Victoria Productivity and Growth Fund, as detailed in the Rural Councils Victoria election platform.
6. Urges all Members of Parliament and political candidates to publicly support the Rural Council Victoria platform and act on its recommendations after the election.

DISCUSSION

Buloke Shire Council is a member of the advocacy alliance Rural Councils Victoria.

In direct consultation with regional representatives, RCV has developed a statewide advocacy platform calling for greater investment in rural communities and a stronger long-term partnership between state and local government.

A formal, public-facing campaign will support this advocacy platform. While largely driven by RCV centrally, Council is being asked to support local delivery and promotion of the campaign.

The campaign will be non-partisan. It will not endorse any political party or election candidate.

The resolution does not commit Council to any specific or new financial contribution. Any spending will be at Council's discretion and managed within existing budget allocations.

The resolution is designed to formalise Buloke Shire Council's support for the RCV campaign and signal this support publicly.

The resolution is intended to provide a clear mandate for Council staff to participate in the RCV campaign.

RELEVANT LAW

Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, councils must give effect to several overarching governance principles, including:

- Achieving the best outcomes for the community;
- The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the shire;
- Pursuing innovation and continuous improvement;
- Collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies; and
- Ensuring the ongoing financial viability of the council.

Participating in the Rural Councils Victoria Advocacy Campaign aligns with the governance principles set out in the *Local Government Act 2020*.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable.

OPTIONS

Councillors could choose not to participate or support the Rural Councils Victoria campaign, however the campaign has been delivered based on feedback and direct input from its membership base.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Buloke Shire Council is classified as an unsustainable rural Council as outlined in the Merv and Rohan Whelan "Local Government Financial Sustainability" Report (2010). Unless increased government funding is provided Council will be unable to meet its asset renewal gap and maybe required to reduce service

levels to ensure it is a going concern. The proposed recommendation proposes advocating to address key long-term sustainability challenges facing rural and regional communities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement will commence if the resolution is endorsed, promoting the need for investment in rural Victoria via social media, media release, and signage across the Shire. The community will be encouraged to share Council's social media posts and support Council's and RCV's advocacy efforts.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Rural Victoria is central to Victoria's economic growth, agricultural productivity, export performance and community identity. The campaign advocates for investment in rural Victoria through a \$1 billion Rural and Regional Victoria Productivity and Growth Fund, as outlined in the RCV State Election Priorities.

COLLABORATION

All Rural Councils Victoria member Councils have been invited to participate in the advocacy campaign. The campaign has been developed based on feedback and direct input from its membership base. Participation in the joint advocacy campaign will strengthen our advocacy position and allow us to continue to raise the issues with State Government representatives and Ministers.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Council is a member of Rural Councils Victoria with the membership fee included in the 2026/27 Budget. Participation in the RCV campaign is covered within Council's operating marketing budget, and is under the procurement threshold.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Rural Councils Victoria – Invest Campaign.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

This report aligns with the Buloke Shire Council Plan 2025-29 strategic objectives. There is strong alignment with Strategy 5.2 Advocacy and partnering to deliver on priorities.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

There are no related transparency of council decisions which are applicable to the preparation of this report.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

Attachments:

1. Attachment 8.4.1.1 - RC V- Election- Detailed



Invest in rural Victoria.

Strong Rural Communities. A Stronger Victorian Economy.

The RCV 2026 State Election Priorities sets out RCV's election priorities and policy proposals. This companion briefing provides practical and supporting detail showing how those priorities translate into housing, jobs, services and resilience outcomes across rural Victoria – with benefits felt statewide.

Rural Victoria is central to Victoria's economic growth, agricultural productivity, export performance and community identity.

As infrastructure pressures intensify and population growth accelerates across rural areas, targeted investment in rural councils is critical to unlocking housing supply, supporting business growth and sustaining liveable communities.

Rural Councils Victoria (RCV) is calling on the next Victorian Government to **invest in rural Victoria through a \$1 billion Rural and Regional Victoria Productivity and Growth Fund**, as outlined in the *RCV State Election Priorities*.

The Fund is designed to deliver practical, high-return investment aligned with government priorities for productivity, housing, infrastructure, liveability and regional growth.

RuralCouncilsVictoria.org.au

AT A GLANCE

Why Rural Victoria Matters

- Nearly one in four Victorians lives in rural and regional Victoria
- Rural and regional areas generate almost 20% of Victoria's economic output — more than \$118 billion annually.
- Around 850,000 jobs are supported across agriculture, manufacturing, tourism and services.
- Victoria's agriculture sector generates \$20.2 billion annually — 23% of national agricultural output.
- Regional communities underpin food security, exports and resilient supply chains.

Strong rural communities benefit all Victorians by easing pressure on metropolitan housing, infrastructure and services while supporting statewide productivity and economic resilience.

The Challenge Facing Rural Councils

Despite their economic significance, rural councils face growing pressures:

- Smaller and less flexible revenue bases.
- Higher per-capita service and infrastructure costs due to distance and dispersed settlements
- Ageing and insufficient connecting trunk infrastructure constraining housing and business development.
- Increasing exposure to drought, bushfire, flood and climate impacts
- Rising governance, planning and compliance obligations without matching resources
- Extremely limited options to increase revenue, especially in a rate capped context.
- Difficulty attracting and retaining highly skilled councillors and staff.

Without targeted state investment, housing delivery will stall, workforce shortages will worsen and opportunities for regional economic growth will be lost.



How the \$1 Billion Productivity and Growth Fund Works in Practice

The RCV election platform proposes a **\$1 billion Rural and Regional Victoria Productivity and Growth Fund** of new investment over 4 years, delivered through four complementary streams. The examples below demonstrate how targeted investment through each stream would deliver immediate and long-term benefits.

We are calling for a guaranteed minimum of 25% to go to rural Victoria, to ensure that rural councils and communities get their fair share.



These streams are explained in more detail across the following pages.

\$1 Billion Productivity and Growth Fund

Stream 1: Community Wellbeing and Local Places Renewal

Objective

Renew ageing local assets that support participation, community resilience and growth.

What this investment would deliver

Rural councils are responsible for maintaining a wide range of community assets that underpin liveability and social cohesion. Many of these assets are ageing and require renewal to remain safe, accessible and fit for purpose.

Investment through this stream would support:

- Renewal of community halls, aquatic facilities, libraries and multi-use precincts
- Upgrade of parks, public spaces and recreation assets
- Creation of inclusive, accessible community facilities that support participation and wellbeing

Targeted renewal of local places strengthens rural communities, supports population retention and growth, and ensures residents can access the services and facilities they need close to home.

\$1 Billion Productivity and Growth Fund

Stream 2: Economic Development

Objective

Provide investment for rural councils and businesses to grow jobs, economic activity and local prosperity.

Investment in this stream would support:

- Development of economic strategies such as economic growth plans, precinct development plans and other economic development initiatives.
- Co-investment opportunities for business expansion, innovation and capability uplift.
- Projects designed to support businesses and increase economic activities
 - Support local events, tourism infrastructure, and visitor experiences to attract more people to regional communities and boost local spending.
 - Invest in streetscapes, silo art trail activations, and rail trails to enhance town appeal and build on existing cultural and natural assets.
 - Fund targeted, place-based initiatives that drive jobs, support small businesses, and strengthen long-term economic resilience in rural areas.

\$1 Billion Productivity and Growth Fund

Stream 3: Council Sustainability and System Reform

Objective

Address structural funding gaps and cost pressures on rural councils.

Example

Untied, needs-based support for compliance and state priorities.

Provision of untied, needs-based funding is essential to enable rural councils to meet growing governance, planning and compliance obligations that arise from State Government policy and projects.

This includes requirements such as:

- Responding to Environmental Effects Statements (EES), Gender Equity reviews, increased reporting requirements, and responding to Treaty.
- Monitoring and enforcing planning conditions for state-significant projects
- Processing increased planning and reporting demands to meet state housing and growth projections

Without flexible support, these unfunded obligations divert scarce council resources away from service delivery and infrastructure renewal. Investment through this stream enables councils to support State priorities efficiently while maintaining financial sustainability.

Investment in this stream would also support:

- Councils to adopt new technologies that save money and time
- Provide support for councils to conduct feasibility studies on how they can perform more effectively for their communities.
- Provide direct support for the resourcing and staffing requirements that are needed to meet changing compliance expectations.

\$1 Billion Productivity and Growth Fund

Stream 4: Housing Supply and Enabling Infrastructure

Objective

Unlock rural housing by investing in enabling infrastructure, council capacity and risk mitigation.

Examples

Essential infrastructure to unlock development.

Basic infrastructure — power, water, sewer and drainage — is a prerequisite for housing development in rural towns. However, the upfront cost of infrastructure provision is often a major barrier.

In many communities, sewer main extensions or essential service connections can cost as much as the land purchase itself, making development commercially unviable.

Targeted investment through this stream would:

- Fund enabling infrastructure that unlocks zoned land
- Reduce risk and upfront costs for private developers
- Support council-led housing facilitation and capacity programs
- Accelerate delivery of housing to attract workers and support growth

Strategic infrastructure funding is essential to turning planning decisions into built housing outcomes across rural Victoria.

\$1 Billion Productivity and Growth Fund

Stream 4: Housing Supply and Enabling Infrastructure

Continued

Investment in this stream would also support:

- Council housing facilitations program including Housing Broker roles
- Risk reduction to unlock private investment
- Funding and expansion of Regional Planning HUB – accelerating growth and investment

Example

Example: Regional Planning HUB – accelerating growth and investment

RCV calls for continued and expanded investment in the Regional Planning HUB, funded through the Economic Development stream, to support rural councils to unlock housing and economic development and respond to regional shortages to planning resources.

The Planning HUB enables councils to:

- Progress complex planning reforms and assessments
- Deliver precinct development
- Rural and industrial land strategies
- Reduce planning bottlenecks that delay private investment and job creation

Expanding the Planning HUB is a cost-effective way to lift productivity, accelerate development and align local delivery with State planning and housing objectives.

Roads: A Separate and Critical Priority

Roads funding should sit outside the proposed Productivity and Growth Fund and remain a distinct, dedicated investment priority.

Rural roads are fundamental to Victoria's economy, supporting:

- Agricultural productivity and freight movement
- Manufacturing and regional supply chains
- Tourism and visitor access
- Community access to services and employment

RCV calls for increased road funding, an increase to the maintenance budget of \$500 million per year for 4 years to a total of \$2 billion extra over the next term. Our focus is across three priority areas:

1. Increased maintenance funding for state-owned roads to address declining condition and safety
2. Roads and productive corridors to improve freight efficiency, address bottlenecks and support the visitor economy
3. Act local by extending and expanding the Safe Local Roads and Streets Program beyond 2027

Dedicated road funding recognises the statewide economic value of rural road networks and ensures investment is not diluted.



Supporting Delivery: Building RCV and Sector Capacity

Strong outcomes for rural Victoria require a strong rural peak body.

Rural Councils Victoria is seeking \$2 million in dedicated funding to support Building Local Government Capability, as outlined in its 2026 Budget Priorities.

This investment would enable RCV to deliver:

- Professional development and leadership training for councillors and executives
- Mentoring and governance support programs
- Targeted capability building tailored to rural councils and their specific issues, in financial management, compliance and leadership
- Production of information toolkits to help councils, conduct research and policy development.

This is a low-cost, high impact investment that reduces risk, improves governance and strengthens delivery across the entire rural local government sector, this complements existing programs while meeting the unique needs of rural councils.



Additional Priorities to Support a Stronger Rural Local Government Sector

In addition to the proposed \$1 billion Rural and Regional Victoria Productivity and Growth Fund, Rural Councils Victoria is calling for action on a set of system-level priorities that are essential to the effective functioning, safety and sustainability of rural local government.

These priorities address governance, regulatory burden and sector capability, and are critical enablers of successful delivery across all funding streams.

Apply a Rural Lens to Government Reform

The Victorian Government should require a Regulatory Impact Statement for all legislated changes that directly affect rural communities or rural councils, supported by meaningful engagement with the sector.

Applying a rural lens upfront improves policy design, reduces unintended consequences and supports better implementation outcomes.

Establish a Local Government Cost Index

RCV calls for prompt implementation of the recommendations from the 2024 Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Services, including establishment of a Local Government Cost Index.

A Cost Index would ensure annual rate cap settings better reflect the real and growing costs faced by councils, particularly in rural areas.

Scrap the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund Levy

RCV strongly opposes the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund (ESVF) levy and calls for it to be abolished. At a minimum, councils should not be responsible for collection of the levy.

Removing this burden would reduce administrative cost, risk and community dissatisfaction for rural councils.

Boost Council Safety

Local government should be included in Workplace Protection Orders, set to be established in Victoria in 2026. These orders will enhance the safety and rights of local government employees, particularly in frontline rural settings.

These additional priorities complement the Productivity and Growth Fund by ensuring rural councils have the governance, capability and safety settings required to deliver outcomes for their communities.



Invest in rural Victoria.

The \$1 billion Rural and Regional Victoria Productivity and Growth Fund provides a practical framework for targeted, high-return investment in rural communities.

By backing rural councils through these four funding streams and maintaining a strong, separate commitment to roads the next Victorian Government can unlock housing, grow regional economies, strengthen communities and deliver a more balanced and productive state.

What We're Asking of MPs and Candidates

Rural Councils Victoria calls on all parties to:

- Support the establishment of the \$1 billion Rural and Regional Victoria Productivity and Growth Fund
- Guarantee a fair share of funding for rural Victoria
- Maintain a strong, separate commitment to rural roads
- Support dedicated funding for RCV to build sector capability and improve delivery

Backing rural councils and the organisation that supports them is an investment in Victoria's future.

RuralCouncilsVictoria.org.au

8.5 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

Lower Avoca Ward

Name: Cr Stephen Barratt

Date: 6 August 2026 to 2 September 2026

Meetings Attended:

Date	Meeting / Event
12/08/2026	Coffee with a Councillor – <i>Wycheproof Resource Centre</i>
12/08/2026	Additional Councillor Briefing – <i>Online</i>
13/08/2026	CEO and Councillor Only Time – <i>Online</i>
19/08/2026	Strategic Councillor Briefing – <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>
19/08/2026	Council Meeting – <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>
25/08/2026	CEO Mid-Term Review – <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>
01/09/2026	Wycheproof Friends of the Mount Meeting – <i>Wycheproof</i>
02/09/2026	Councillor Briefing – <i>Donald Council Chambers</i>

Name: Cr Bruce Stafford

Date: 6 August 2026 to 2 September 2026

Meetings Attended:

Date	Meeting / Event
06/08/2026	Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance Board Meeting – <i>Online</i>
12/08/2026	Additional Councillor Briefing – <i>Online</i>
13/08/2026	CEO and Councillor Only Time – <i>Online</i>
18/08/2026	Charlton Forum Meeting – <i>Charlton</i>
19/08/2026	Strategic Councillor Briefing – <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>
19/08/2026	Council Meeting – <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>
25/08/2026	CEO Mid-Term Review – <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>
31/08/2026	Charlton Community Bank: 2026 Community Investment Night – <i>Charlton</i>

Mallee Ward

Name: Cr Alan Getley

Date: 6 August 2026 to 2 September 2026

Meetings Attended:

Date	Meeting / Event
12/08/2026	NGSC Transmission Forum – <i>Online</i>
12/08/2026	Additional Councillor Briefing – <i>Online</i>
13/08/2026	CEO and Councillor Only Time – <i>Online</i>

18/08/2026	VNI West Reference Group – <i>Charlton</i>
19/08/2026	Strategic Councillor Briefing – <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>
19/08/2026	Council Meeting – <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>
25/08/2026	CEO Mid-Term Review – <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>
28/08/2026	Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Transport Group – <i>Horsham</i>
02/09/2026	Councillor Briefing – <i>Donald Council Chambers</i>

Name: Cr Bernadette Hogan

Date: 6 August 2026 to 2 September 2026

Meetings Attended:

Date	Meeting / Event
07/08/2026	Birchip Neighbourhood House Morning Tea ('Loneliness Awareness Week') – <i>Birchip</i>
12/08/2026	NCLLEN Chair Finance and Risk Committee Meeting – <i>Online</i>
14/08/2026	Rail Freight Alliance Meeting – <i>Melbourne</i>
17/08/2026	Aerodrome Strategy Community Consultation Meeting – <i>Sea Lake</i>
17/08/2026	Birchip Forum Meeting – <i>Birchip</i>
18/08/2026	Aerodrome Strategy Community Consultation Meeting – <i>Birchip</i>
19/08/2026	Strategic Councillor Briefing – <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>
19/08/2026	Council Meeting – <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>
20/08/2026	NCLLEN Executive Meeting – <i>Online</i>
25/08/2026	CEO Mid-Term Review – <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>
25/08/2026	Nullawil Progress Association AGM – <i>Nullawil</i>
26/08/2026	NCLLEN Board Meeting – <i>Online</i>
28/08/2026	Open CWA Regional Conference – <i>Birchip</i>
01/09/2026	NCLLEN Cultural Awareness Session – <i>Boort</i>
02/09/2026	Councillor Briefing – <i>Donald Council Chambers</i>

Mount Jeffcott Ward

Name: Cr Charmaine Delaney

Date: 6 August 2026 to 2 September 2026

Meetings Attended:

Date	Meeting / Event
11/08/2026	Watchem Progress Association Meeting – <i>Watchem</i>
12/08/2026	NGSC Transmission Forum – <i>Online</i>
12/08/2026	Additional Councillor Briefing – <i>Online</i>
13/08/2026	CEO and Councillor Only Time – <i>Online</i>
19/08/2026	Strategic Councillor Briefing – <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>

19/08/2026	Council Meeting – <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>
25/08/2026	CEO Mid-Term Review – <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>
25/08/2026	Donald Family Precinct (Recreation Reserve) Meeting – <i>Donald</i>
02/09/2026	Councillor Briefing – <i>Donald Council Chambers</i>

9 OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 NOTICES OF MOTION

Nil.

9.2 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

9.3 URGENT BUSINESS

9.4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.5 MATTERS WHICH MAY EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

Nil.

10 MEETING CLOSE