



Council Meeting **Minutes**

Wednesday 16
September 2026

Commencing at 7:00 pm

Wycheproof Supper Room
367 Broadway, Wycheproof

Daniel McLoughlan
Chief Executive Officer



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Minutes of the Meeting held on 16/09/2026.**CHAIRPERSON:**

Cr Graeme Milne (Mayor)

Mount Jeffcott Ward

COUNCILLORS:

Cr Bernadette Hogan (Deputy Mayor)

Mallee Ward

Cr Alan Getley

Mallee Ward

Cr Stephen Barratt

Lower Avoca Ward

Cr Bruce Stafford

Lower Avoca Ward

Cr Charmaine Delaney

Mount Jeffcott Ward

OFFICERS:

Daniel McLoughlan

Chief Executive Officer

Paula Gardiner

Acting Director Infrastructure and Delivery

Jenna Allan

Director Corporate and Organisational Performance

Sarah Kernohan

Director Community Development

Jessie Holmes

Executive Lead, Regional Growth & Strategic Advocacy

Anthony Smith

Acting Manager Governance

Georgia Brown

Senior Executive Assistant

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

The Mayor Cr Graeme Milne welcomed all in attendance.

STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Mayor Cr Graeme Milne acknowledged 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

Nil.

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

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

MOVED: Cr Stephen Barratt

SECONDED: Cr Bernadette Hogan

CARRIED.

(R/26/57)

4 REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Nil.

5 DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

6 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Nil.

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.

MOTION

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.

MOVED: Cr Stephen Barratt

SECONDED: Cr Alan Getley

CARRIED.

(R/26/58)

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 (\$5 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

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.

MOTION

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.

MOVED: Cr Bernadette Hogan

SECONDED: Cr Charmaine Delaney

Cr Graeme Milne called for a division on this item.

DIVISION

FOR: Cr Stephen Barratt, Cr Charmaine Delaney, Cr Alan Getley, Cr Bernadette Hogan and Cr Bruce Stafford

AGAINST: Cr Graeme Milne

CARRIED.

(R/26/59)

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

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 Objective:

- Vibrant and connected communities
- 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.

MOTION

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.

MOVED: Cr Bruce Stafford

SECONDED: Cr Bernadette Hogan

CARRIED.**(R/26/60)****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

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.

MOTION

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.

MOVED: Cr Alan Getley

SECONDED: Cr Charmaine Delaney

CARRIED.

(R/26/61)

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

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 Council leadership and engagement

Objective: 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.

MOTION

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.

MOVED: Cr Bernadette Hogan

SECONDED: Cr Stephen Barratt

CARRIED.

(R/26/62)

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

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 Council leadership and engagement

Objective: Responsible leadership and decision making

Consulting with and informing our community

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Councils 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.

MOTION

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.

MOVED: Cr Charmaine Delaney

SECONDED: Cr Bernadette Hogan

CARRIED.

(R/26/63)

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

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.

MOTION

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.
MOVED: Cr Alan Getley	
SECONDED: Cr Stephen Barratt	
CARRIED.	
(R/26/64)	

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

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>

Name: Cr Graeme Milne

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	Additional Councillor Briefing – <i>Online</i>
13/08/2026	CEO and Councillor Only Time – <i>Online</i>
17/08/2026	Birchip Forum Meeting – <i>Birchip</i>
19/08/2026	Council Meeting – <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>
20/08/2026	Robin Letts OAM Funeral – <i>Donald</i>
20/08/2026	MAV - Delegate Connect Session – <i>Online</i>
25/08/2026	CEO Mid-Term Review – <i>Wycheproof Supper Room</i>
25/08/2026	Meeting with Energy Commissioner and Team – <i>Online</i>
25/08/2026	Donald Family Precinct (Recreation Reserve) Meeting – <i>Donald</i>
26/08/2026	Donald Men's Shed AGM – <i>Donald</i>
26/08/2026	Donald 2000 Meeting – <i>Donald</i>
28/08/2026	Wycheproof Men's Shed AGM – <i>Wycheproof</i>
31/08/2026	Buloke Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee – <i>Online</i>
01/09/2026	RFA Finance Meeting – <i>Online</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

Cr Graeme Milne:

A question was raised regarding responsibility for the log cabin located at the Birchip Courthouse Heritage Centre, including ownership, maintenance obligations and whether the structure is covered by Council's insurance. Clarification was sought on Council's approach to additions or improvements located on Council-owned land and whether insurance responsibilities rest with Council or the managing organisation.

9.3 URGENT BUSINESS

Nil.

9.4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Nil.

9.5 MATTERS WHICH MAY EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

Nil.

10 MEETING CLOSE

Meeting closed at 8:02 pm.

NEXT MEETING

The next Council Meeting will be held in Wycheproof Hall Supper Room on Wednesday, 21 October 2026 at 7:00pm.