



COUNCIL MEETING

AGENDA

Wednesday 12 April 2023

Commencing at 7:00pm

Wycheproof Supper Room

367 Broadway, Wycheproof

**Wayne O'Toole
Chief Executive Officer
Buloke Shire Council**

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. COUNCIL WELCOME AND STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

WELCOME

The Mayor Cr Alan Getley will welcome all in attendance.

STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Mayor Cr Alan Getley will acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting and pay our respects to their Elders and to the Elders from other communities who maybe 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 Wednesday, 8 March 2023.

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 2020; and
- a) 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

NIL

7. PROCEDURAL ITEMS

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	The Meeting may be closed to members of the public to consider confidential matters.	
9.5.1	C116 2022/23 WYCHEPROOF LIBRARY UPGRADE TENDER EVALUATION PANEL REPORT	
	If the meeting has been closed it will be brought back into open session by resolution	
10.	MEETING CLOSE	

NEXT MEETING

THE NEXT MEETING OF COUNCIL WILL BE HELD IN WYCHEPROOF SUPPER ROOM, 367 BROADWAY, WYCHEPROOF ON WEDNESDAY, 10 MAY 2023 AT 7:00PM.

Wayne O'Toole
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Nil

7. PROCEDURAL ITEMS**7.1 REPORT OF COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES**

Author's Title: Executive Assistant

Department: Office of the CEO

File No: GO/05/04

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council note the report of Councillor Assembly Meetings held 1 and 15 March 2023.

Attachments: 1 [Councillor Briefing Record - 1 March 2023](#)
2 [Councillor Briefing Record - 15 March 2023](#)

KEY POINTS/ISSUES

Transparency is a fundamental principle of democratic governance.

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

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

As per the Council Meeting Schedule adopted 9 November 2022, Councillor Briefings are held for Councillors to meet to consider matters that are likely to be the subject of a Council decision or for the exercise of delegation.

A record of the Councillor Briefings held on 1 and 15 March 2023 is attached for public information.



Councillor Briefing Record

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

Date:	1 March 2023	Time	5:00pm – 8:00pm
Location:	Sea Lake Senior Citizens		
Attendees:	Cr Getley, Cr Pollard, Cr Warren, Cr Milne, Cr Hogan, Cr Simpson, Wayne O'Toole, Michelle Stedman, Hannah Yu, Travis Fitzgibbon, Nathan Cutting, Trevor Rumbold, Jenna Allan.		
Apologies:	Cr Stewart (leave of absence)		
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 maybe here today.		
Conflicts of Interest:			

ITEMS

NO.	MATTER FOR DISCUSSION
1.	Councillor Only Time 5:00pm
2.	Confirmation of Councillor Briefing Notes
3.	Presentations
3.1	Advance Sea Lake Inc – Jenny Newell 5:30pm
3.2	Community Sustainability Grants – Jenna Allan 5:45pm
3.3	Budget Workshop – (Capital Projects) - Nathan Cutting and Trevor Rumbold 5:55pm
3.4	Revisiting Council Plan and Annual Plan Actions – EMT 7:30pm
4.	Discussion
5.	Councillor Matters
6.	CEO Updates
6.1	Draft Agenda – 8 March 2023 Council Meeting
6.2	VNI West - Briefing
6.3	Aged Care Update
6.4	Flood funding - resources
NEXT BRIEFING	
15 March 2023, Charlton District Office – Council Chamber, 5:00pm	



Councillor Briefing Record

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

Date:	15 March 2023	Time	5:00pm – 8:00pm
Location:	Charlton District Office – Council Chamber		
Attendees:	Cr Getley, Cr Milne, Cr Simpson, Cr Hogan, Cr Pollard, Wayne O’Toole, Michelle Stedman, Hannah Yu and Travis Fitzgibbon.		
Apologies:	Cr Warren and Cr Stewart (Leave of absence)		
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 maybe here today.		
Conflicts of Interest:	Nil.		

ITEMS

NO.	MATTER FOR DISCUSSION
1.	Councillor/CEO Only Time 5:00pm
2.	Confirmation of Councillor Briefing Minutes
3.	Presentations
3.1	Engage – Youth Program 5:30pm Charlton Youth Group Committee: Maggie Riley – Member Fletcher Holmes-Brown – Secretary Annie Olive – Junior Vice President Jye Roberts – Member Michael Olive – Media Committee Member
3.2	Streetscape – Dan McLoughlan and Trevor Rumbold 5:45pm
3.3	VNI Update – Rosanna Lacorcchia 6:00pm (Presentation cancelled at late notice – to be deferred to next Briefing)
3.4	Economic Development and Tourism Update – Kerrie Mulholland 6:30pm
3.5	Monthly Capital Project Update – Dan McLoughlan and Trevor Rumbold 6:45pm
3.6	Rates and Valuations Overview – Nathan Cutting 7:00pm
3.7	Verbal Update on Electoral Review Preliminary Report (released 15032023) Key Finding – Michelle Stedman 7:40pm
4.	Discussion
5.	Councillor Matters
6.	CEO Updates
NEXT BRIEFING 5 April 2023, Donald District Office – Council Chamber, 5:00pm	

7.2 CORRESPONDENCE INITIATED BY COUNCIL

Author's Title: Executive Assistant

Department: Office of the CEO

File No: GO/06/06

PURPOSE

This report notes and records correspondence initiated by Council and informs the Council of the responses received from this correspondence.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council notes the record of correspondence initiated by Council and the responses received.

Attachments: Nil

TABLE OF CORRESPONDENCE

Council Initiative	Sent/to be sent to	Sent	Response	Purpose of Letter/Response
Nil.				

7.3 LETTERS OF CONGRATULATIONS AND RECOGNITION OF ACHIEVEMENT/AWARDS

Author's Title: Executive Assistant

Department: Office of the CEO

File No: CR/13/01

PURPOSE

This report acknowledges and congratulates community persons and/or groups for their success in being recognised for a significant achievement or for being a recipient of an honourable award.

The report also informs Council of any letters of congratulations or any recognition of achievement that Council has received or been awarded in the past month.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council acknowledge and congratulate the persons and/or groups mentioned in the report for their achievements.

Attachments: Nil

RECOGNITION OF ACHIEVEMENT ITEMS

Provider	Recipient	Date	Purpose for Recognition
Wimmera Mallee Cricket Association	Robin Letts OAM		Being awarded a Life Membership for his lifelong dedication to the advancement of cricket for this District, via his family owned and operated Buloke Times (and former entities), as well as on a personal enjoyment level, as a cricket tragic, at every opportunity that arose.
Wimmera Mallee Cricket Association	Daryl Broughton		Being awarded a Life Membership for his continued involvement in the sport of cricket as an umpire, commencing from the formation of the Association, and prior to that as a player.

7.4 BUILDING PERMITS - MONTHLY UPDATE

Author's Title: Statutory Administration Support

Department: Office of the CEO

File No: DB/14/01

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides information on Building Permits approved by staff from 1 March 2023 to 31 March 2023.

The information published in the list provided, is in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council note information contained in the report on Building Permits approved by staff from 1 March 2023 to 31 March 2023.

Attachments: Nil

LIST OF BUILDING PERMITS APPROVED BY COUNCIL SURVEYOR

Council Ref.	Permit No.	Address	Project Description	Date Approved
20230006	2438132747761	Johnson Street, Birchip	Pergola	16/03/2023
20230008	4134347143186	Clifton Street, Charlton	Swimming pool & safety barrier	23/03/2023

LIST OF BUILDING PERMITS APPROVED BY PRIVATE BUILDING SURVEYOR

Council Ref.	Permit No.	Address	Project Description	Date Approved
Nil.				

7.5 PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED - MONTHLY UPDATE

Author's Title: Planning Officer

Department: Office of the CEO

File No: LP/09/01

PURPOSE

This report provides information on planning applications under consideration by staff and the status of each of these applications.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council note information contained in the report on planning applications under consideration by staff and the status of each of these applications.

Attachments: Nil

LIST OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The information published in the list provided, is in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

Application No	Address	Date Rec	Summary of Proposal	Status
PPA962/21	Corack Road, Donald (Lot 1&2 PS216306M)	11/11/2021	Use and development of land for a service station, construct and display a business identification sign and create or alter access to Road Zone, Category 1	Notice of Decision to Grant a Permit
PPA986/22	High Street, Charlton (Lot 1 TP 193629)	01/06/2022	Construct and display an 18.26m ² double-sided, externally illuminated major promotion sign	Notice of Decision to Grant a Permit
PA22005	Stannard Road, Watchupga (Lot 1 TP219186)	09/11/2022	Construction of a farrowing shed associated with existing piggery	Permit issued
PA22006	High Street, Wycheproof (Lot 1 TP516215)	15/11/2022	Extension to a dwelling in HO	Review
PA22007	Campbell Street, Birchip and Hillgrove Street, Birchip (CA 2002, CA 12L Sec. 5, CA 12N Sec. 5 & CA 12O Sec. 5, Township of Birchip, PC166801P)	29/11/2022	Boundary realignment of 5 existing tiles into 2 new titles	Review

Application No	Address	Date Rec	Summary of Proposal	Status
PA23008	Cumming Avenue Birchip VIC 3483 (Lot 1 PS210398L, Lot 4 PS439955M)	23/12/2022	Development of land for a residential building	Permit issued
PA23010	Broadway, Wycheproof (Lot 1 PS826773L)	16/01/2023	Six-lot subdivision of land and the development of land for six dwellings	Objection
PA23011	Cheetham Salt Road Bimbourie (CA 2007 Parish of Bimbourie)	19/12/2022	Earthworks to replace a septic system	Permit issued
PA23012	Main Street, Culgoa (Lot 1 TP751938G)	24/01/2023	Extend hours of trade for existing business	Objection
PA23013	Hannon Street, Sea Lake (Lot 1 TP251694)	25/01/2023	Five-lot subdivision of land	Request for further information
PA23014	Hannon Street, Sea Lake (Lot 14 LP004936)	24/01/2023	Five-lot subdivision of land and the development of land for five dwellings	Notice of application Referral
PA23015	Birchip-Wycheproof Road, Narraport	24/01/2023	Two-lot subdivision of land and the use and development of land for a veterinary clinic and associated dwelling	Request for further information
PA23017	Donald Street, Charlton (CA 8, Sec 12, Parish of Charlton)	22/03/2023	Use and development of land for a store (domestic shed Township Zone)	Notice of application
PA23018	Messines Street, Nandaly (CA 3, Sec 3, Parish of Bimbourie)	28/03/2023	Works in a Heritage Overlay (roof mounted solar panels)	Notice of application
PA23016	Jenkins Street, Charlton (Lot 5, Sec C, LP492)	06/03/2023	Building and Works in LSIO (extend carport and construct verandah)	Referral
PPA928/21	Campbell Street, Birchip (Lots 6, 7, 8 & 9 LP58023)	14/02/2023	Amend application after notice - for the use and development of land for a service station (fuel cell), business identification sign, alter access to TR22	Notice of application Referral

7.6 STATUS OF ACTION OF PAST COUNCIL MEETING RESOLUTIONS

Author's Title: Executive Assistant

Department: Office of the CEO

File No: GO/05/04

PURPOSE

To provide Council with a list of the Status of Action (SOA) of Council Resolutions outstanding for action and the SOA for the 8 March 2023 Council Meeting Resolutions.

RECOMMENDATION

Council to note the Status of Action Report for Council resolutions documented on this list.

Attachments: 1 [↓](#) Actions Taken on Council Resolutions - On Outstanding items and 8 March 2023 Council Meeting

KEY POINTS/ISSUES

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

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

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

Attached to this report for public information is a list of the SOA of Council Resolutions outstanding and introducing the SOA for the 8 March 2023 Council Meeting Resolutions.

Summary of Action on Council Resolutions – Commencing 8 June 2022 to

8 March 2023 Council Meeting

Date	Directorate	Item	Resolution	Actioning Officer/s	Status of Action	Complete or Commenced
08032023	CEO Office	3.	Amendment to Minutes 08022023	EA	Minutes on Website and Hub updated.	Complete
08032023	CEO Office	7.6	Noting amendment to list that letters for Items 8.2.1 and 8.2.2 have been sent.	EA	SOA list for tabling 12042023 has been updated.	Complete
08032023	Comm Develop	8.2.1	That Council: 1. Receives and notes the Buloke Shire Council Annual Report 2021-2022; and 2. Advertises that copies of the Annual Report 2021-2022 are available on Council's website and from Council's Wycheproof Customer Service Centre.	DCD	Annual Report available on website. Advertising to commence.	Complete
08032023	Comm Develop	8.2.3	That Council considers the following funding under the Sustainability Grants Program: \$0.00 Buloke Youth Health Expo 2023 \$2,000.00 Early Years Eco Warriors \$4,000.00 Automated Watering System \$0.00 Producing Sustainable System for Waste Product	DCD	Grant Applicants have been contacted about the success or otherwise of their applications.	Complete
08032023	Infrastructure & Delivery	9.2.3	Cr Hogan asked what date is the swimming pool season to be closed and will the pools be heated, now that the weather has cooled down. The Director Infrastructure and Delivery will confirm this date and respond to the Council accordingly.	DID	Pools close 20 March 2023	Complete
08032023	Comm Develop	9.2.4	Council to advocate to Parks Victoria on behalf of these residents, and if Cr Simpson could forward the further information she is to receive onto the CEO/DCD, the matter can be attended to.	DCD	Awaiting details.	Not commenced
08032023	Infra & Delivery	9.5.1	Engineering Services Panel of Suppliers – Contract No C 22047 Confidential resolution.	DID	Advice to Campaspe Shire Council re contract award	Commence

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Summary of Action on Council Resolutions – Commencing 8 June 2022 to

8 March 2023 Council Meeting

Date	Directorate	Item	Resolution	Actioning Officer/s	Status of Action	Complete or Commenced
08022023	Corporate and Organisational Performance	5.	Declaration of Interests to be registered and recorded by Gov Officer: Cr Simpson – Item 8.2.6 Cr Milne – Item 8.2.3	DCOP	EA confirmed with Gov Officer these have been received and registered.	Complete.
08022023	CEO Office	7.2	Letters of Congratulations and Recognition of Achievement/Awards	EA	Letters sent.	Complete
08022023	Infrastructure and Delivery	8.2.1	That Council: 1. Notes that following the 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; 2. Sells the nine-lot subdivision surplus land at 110 Sutcliff Street, Sea Lake by private treaty or auction in accordance section 114 of the Local Government Act 2020 and Council's Sale of Land Policy; and 3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to execute the Transfer of Land documents and any other documents required to affect the sale of the land.	DID	Letters sent. (amended following resolution of CM 08032023)	Commenced
08022023	Community Development	8.2.2	The Planning Permit Application 962/21 be granted under the list of conditions to be reviewed in report. (Page 83). Consideration also be given to objectors and explained. The Service Station to include an Electric Vehicle charging point.	CEO	Notice of Decision has been issued. Letters sent. (amended following resolution of CM 08032023)	Commenced.
08022023	Infrastructure and Delivery	9.5.1	CONFIDENTIAL MATTER – Contract C 114 2021/22 Tender Evaluation Report	DID	Contract awarded	Complete
14122022	Infrastructure and Delivery	8.2.3	That Council approve the Culgoa Dump Point project to continue as a stand-alone pump out system in a location to be determined by	DID	Location determined in consultation with the community – continues to form part of FY23 capital works program	Commenced

Summary of Action on Council Resolutions – Commencing 8 June 2022 to

8 March 2023 Council Meeting

Date	Directorate	Item	Resolution	Actioning Officer/s	Status of Action	Complete or Commenced
			the Culgoa community in relation to the preferred location.			
14122022	Infrastructure and Delivery	8.2.4	That Council: 1. Enter into a Management Agreement for the Wycheproof Caravan Park with Wyche Alive Inc. for up to forty-eight (48) months. 2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to finalise negotiations and execute the Management Agreement on behalf of Council.	DID		Commenced
14122022	Infrastructure and Delivery	9.1.2	That Council write to the Hon Catherine King MP, Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government urging the Federal Government to reconsider its decision to reduce the funding for the Roads of Significant Importance program as planned in the October 2022 Budget.	CEO		Complete
09112022	Infrastructure and Delivery	9.1.2	That the Council to advocate to the Federal Government and State Government for 'Betterment' works to be included in the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements funding scheme to enable Council to reconstruct assets to a more disaster resilient standard than that of its pre-disaster function.	DID		Ongoing
09112022	CEO Office	9.1.3	That Council: 1. Acknowledge the efforts of Council staff during the flood event and congratulate them on their dedication and care for the Buloke community; and	CEO	Letter of congratulations sent; event to be scheduled in May 2023.	Commenced

Summary of Action on Council Resolutions – Commencing 8 June 2022 to

8 March 2023 Council Meeting

Date	Directorate	Item	Resolution	Actioning Officer/s	Status of Action	Complete or Commenced
			2. When appropriate the Chief Executive Officer schedules a gathering for all staff to thank them for their efforts.			
09112022	Community Development	9.1.4	<p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commit to ongoing advocacy to other tiers of government, in conjunction with the Birchip Community Housing Group, to attract and secure funding to address Birchip's Rental Housing Crisis and its Economic Development Impact; and 2. In the event funding is secured for the Birchip Community Housing Group funded, consider opportunities within its Policy framework, and adopted Budget to support project delivery. 	CEO / DCD	Correspondence sent in support of BCHG	Commenced and ongoing.

8. GENERAL BUSINESS**8.1 POLICY REPORTS****8.1.1 COMMUNITY SUPPORT POLICY**

Author's Title: Director Community Development

Department: Community Development

File No: CD/11/09

Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025

Strategic Objective: Our Community Wellbeing

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to adopt the Community Support Policy which provides an overarching framework to determine the nature and level of support provided to community groups, organisations, and committees.

SUMMARY

The provision of community support to achieve desired outcomes is critically important; many Buloke communities have a range of events, places and spaces that require assistance from Council to be successful.

The Community Support Policy sets out the type of groups that Council is able to support including Incorporated Associations and Community Asset Committees and also a range of criteria required to be able to assist with community support.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the Community Support Policy.

Attachments: 1 [Community Support Policy](#)

DISCUSSION

Council provides support to the community in a number of ways and this Community Support Policy prescribes an overarching framework to determine the nature and level of support available.

The provision of community support to achieve desired outcomes is critically important; many Buloke communities have a range of events, places and spaces that require assistance from Council to be successful.

The attached policy sets out the type of groups that Council is able to support including Incorporated Associations and Community Asset Committees and also a range of criteria required to be able to assist with community support.

The policy includes the following types of support:

1. Fee waiver for hire of Council owned facilities;
2. Direct annual funding agreements with the recreation reserve committees;
3. Community Grants program;

4. Sustainability Grants program;
5. Fee waiver on planning permits required on Council owned or managed land, and Crown Land;
6. Fee waiver (excluding the levy) on a Building Permit required on Council owned or managed land, and Crown Land;
7. Provisions of assistance with events including signage and traffic management controls;
8. Assistance with governance arrangements and grant submissions within operational resources; and
9. Sponsorship allocations as listed in the annually adopted Budget.

RELEVANT LAW

Not applicable.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council adopted its first Community Support Policy in August 2017.

OPTIONS

Council has the option to not adopt the Community Support Policy.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Sustainability considerations will be taken into account in relation to considering planning permit applications and also with community and sustainability grant applications.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Elements that inform this policy undergo strong community engagement. Annual Budgets, Community Grants Programs and Guidelines are examples of these.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Council continuously looks to work alongside community to advance Buloke Shire and its opportunities as it realises its Community Vision.

COLLABORATION

This policy was initially developed through collaboration from each Council directorate. This updated document was reviewed and revised by the Community Development directorate and Council's Executive Management Team.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The community assistance outlined in the policy has a small financial implication with the waiving of some facility hiring fees and some planning and building permit application fees. These and any other implications are factored into annual budgeting.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Local Government Act 2020

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Buloke Shire Council Annual Budget

Buloke Shire Council Community Grants Guidelines

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

Buloke Shire Council Financial Plan

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

A Community Support Policy and its framework makes transparent the types of support Council can provide and to who.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The officers involved in the preparation of this policy and report have no conflicts of interest.



POLICY LOCATION	Community Development	POLICY TITLE	Community Support Policy
POLICY NUMBER		DATE ADOPTED	12 April 2023
REVISION NUMBER	2	REVISION DATE	April 2026

Purpose

This policy provides an overarching framework to determine the nature and level of support provided to community groups, organisations, and committees.

Guidelines

The policy applies to eligible organisations and community groups seeking support from Council.

This is defined as:

Base level criteria to be considered for all types of community support

The group or organisation is:

- an incorporated community group or auspiced by an incorporated organisation (as defined by the Australian Taxation Office),
- or a Community Asset Committee.

The group or organisation:

- has provided evidence of its financial sustainability;
- has documented evidence of need for the program, activity or service offered by the group or organisation;
- has outlined the intended community outcomes from the program, service or activity;
- will deliver the program, activity or service within the Shire;
- is willing to enter into an agreement with Council which requires the community group or organisation to undertake an acquittal and review/evaluation process; and
- is willing to publicly acknowledge Council's support in all promotional material and in the media.

Council will also consider the following aspects in determining community support:

- A Shire wide perspective of community need, access and equity;
- Avoiding duplication of service, programs and activities;
- Availability of facilities; and
- Risk management and potential liability for Council.

Council does not provide community support for:

For-profit organisations, unincorporated groups and individuals;

Council will assist through the following ways:



1. Fee waiver for hire of Council owned facilities
2. Direct annual funding agreements with the recreation reserve committees
3. Community Grants program
4. Community Sustainability Grants program
5. Fee waiver on planning permits required on Council owned or managed land and Crown Land.
6. Fee waiver (excluding the levy) on a Building Permit required on Council owned or managed land and Crown Land.
7. Provisions of assistance with events including signage and traffic management controls.
8. Assistance with governance arrangements and grant submissions within operational resources.
9. Sponsorship allocations as listed in the annually adopted Budget.

References

Legislation

This policy was developed in accordance with the following legislation:

- *Local Government Act 2020*

Documents

This policy was developed in accordance with the following documents:

- Annual Budget
- Buloke Shire Council Community Grants Guidelines
- Buloke Shire Long Term Community Vision and Council Plan 2021-2025
- Financial Plan

8.2 MANAGEMENT REPORTS

8.2.1 ADVOCACY STRATEGY 2023

Author's Title: Director Community Development

Department: Community Development

File No: ED/03/02

Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025

Strategic Objective: Our Council and Community Leadership

PURPOSE

This report is presented to Council to consider the adoption of an updated Advocacy Strategy to include advocacy efforts related to the flood event of October 2022.

SUMMARY

In line with Council's Long-Term Community Vision and Council Plan and community aspirations, a review and redevelopment of the Advocacy Strategy has been undertaken to include advocacy efforts in relation to the October 2022 flood event. The Advocacy Strategy is to be reviewed annually, or as needed.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Adopts the Advocacy Strategy 2023; and
2. Will review the Advocacy Strategy within the 2023/2024 financial year.

Attachments: 1 [Buloke Shire Council Advocacy Strategy 2023](#)

DISCUSSION

The Buloke Shire Council Advocacy Strategy outlines the key advocacy projects Council is currently committed to focusing on and seeking partnerships to implement.

Many of the projects presented reflect some of the challenges faced by Buloke Shire as one of the largest municipalities geographically, with an ageing and declining population.

It is acknowledged that many rural councils face similar challenges and therefore it is important to recognise that Council cannot, and does not, work alone – but rather aims to work in partnership with the community, service providers and other levels of government to deliver on its vision for the future.

However, the priority projects presented in the Advocacy Strategy are only some of the issues of Council and the Buloke community; therefore work will continue on a number of other priorities as stated in the Council Plan 2021-25 and Long-Term Community Vision and other adopted policies and strategies.

The Advocacy Strategy outlines the top-tier priorities impacting our community right now and follows the same themes identified by Buloke residents in the development of the Buloke 2030 Community Plan.

The Strategy now also includes advocacy pieces in relation to the October 2022 flood event that affected much of Victoria.

These strategic themes are:

- Our Built and Natural Environment
- Our Community Wellbeing
- Our Economy
- Our Council and Community Leadership

Many of the priorities in the strategy are infrastructure projects that can be staged. Whilst the strategy highlights the strategic priorities, it doesn't prohibit Council from applying for funding and requesting government support on other initiatives.

Key initiatives include:

- Commonwealth Games Tourism and Social Housing outcomes;
- Drainage and flood mitigation;
- Annual Funding for roads of strategic importance;
- Annual funding for Information and Communication Technology;
- Premier sporting facility upgrades including aquatic upgrades;
- Grain receival access upgrades; and
- Construction of a roundabout at the 'five ways' intersection in Birchip.

It also calls for state and federal government policy shifts, particularly around:

- Betterment works to be included in Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements funding schemes;
- A housing investment incentive package for rural areas;
- Increased funding for asset renewal for small rural council;
- Creation of a viable operating model that would guarantee delivery of childcare services over the medium term (five years); and
- Full completion of the Murray Basin Rail project.

It is recommended that this Advocacy Strategy is to be reviewed and updated in the 2023/2024 financial year.

RELEVANT LAW

There are no relevant law implications.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council adopted Advocacy Strategies in May 2020, September 2021 and October 2022. This version is an adaption of the document adopted in October 2022 to capture advocacy efforts related to the flood event of October 2022.

Council moved a Notice of Motion at its November 2022 Council Meeting to advocate for betterment works to be included in Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements funding schemes.

Council adopted its Recovery Plan in December 2022.

OPTIONS

Council could choose not to adopt the Advocacy Strategy. It is worth noting that this document can be reviewed at any time.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The Strategy includes a priority focussed on enhancing the environmental performance of the broader Buloke community.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This Advocacy Strategy has been developed through a review of a large range of strategies, plans and consultation efforts of Council in recent years.

A significant amount of community engagement has been undertaken in flood response and recovery that has also informed this update.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Council's Advocacy Strategies have produced extremely positive results from funding providers over the past two years. This document will build on the success of the advocacy efforts of Council in building a better Buloke.

COLLABORATION

This strategy pulls from a range of internal and external strategic documents and the only way for Council to deliver on these community priorities is to do it in partnership with other levels of government, the community, and other stakeholders.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Like all small rural councils, Buloke is heavily reliant on external funding for the delivery of large-scale capital works projects. Ultimately, one of the key aims of this document is to attract external funding for the delivery of the important projects detailed in this Advocacy Strategy. If funding is received, this will form part of future capital works programs.

Policies like the 'no betterment' approach to flood restoration works eat away at the viability of small rural Councils.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

This document will feed into key regional strategic plans, including the Mallee Regional Partnership priorities, State Government's Regional Victorian Commonwealth Games, and Regional Development Australia's work on viable childcare servicing as well as each tier of governments' flood recovery funding guidelines.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

This Advocacy Strategy has strong alignment with key strategy and policy documents, including the Council Plan, Interim Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, Inclusiveness Plan, Gender Equality Action Plan, Financial Plan, Asset Management Plan, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Plan, Municipal Early Years Plan, Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan and Community Plans and Recovery Plan.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

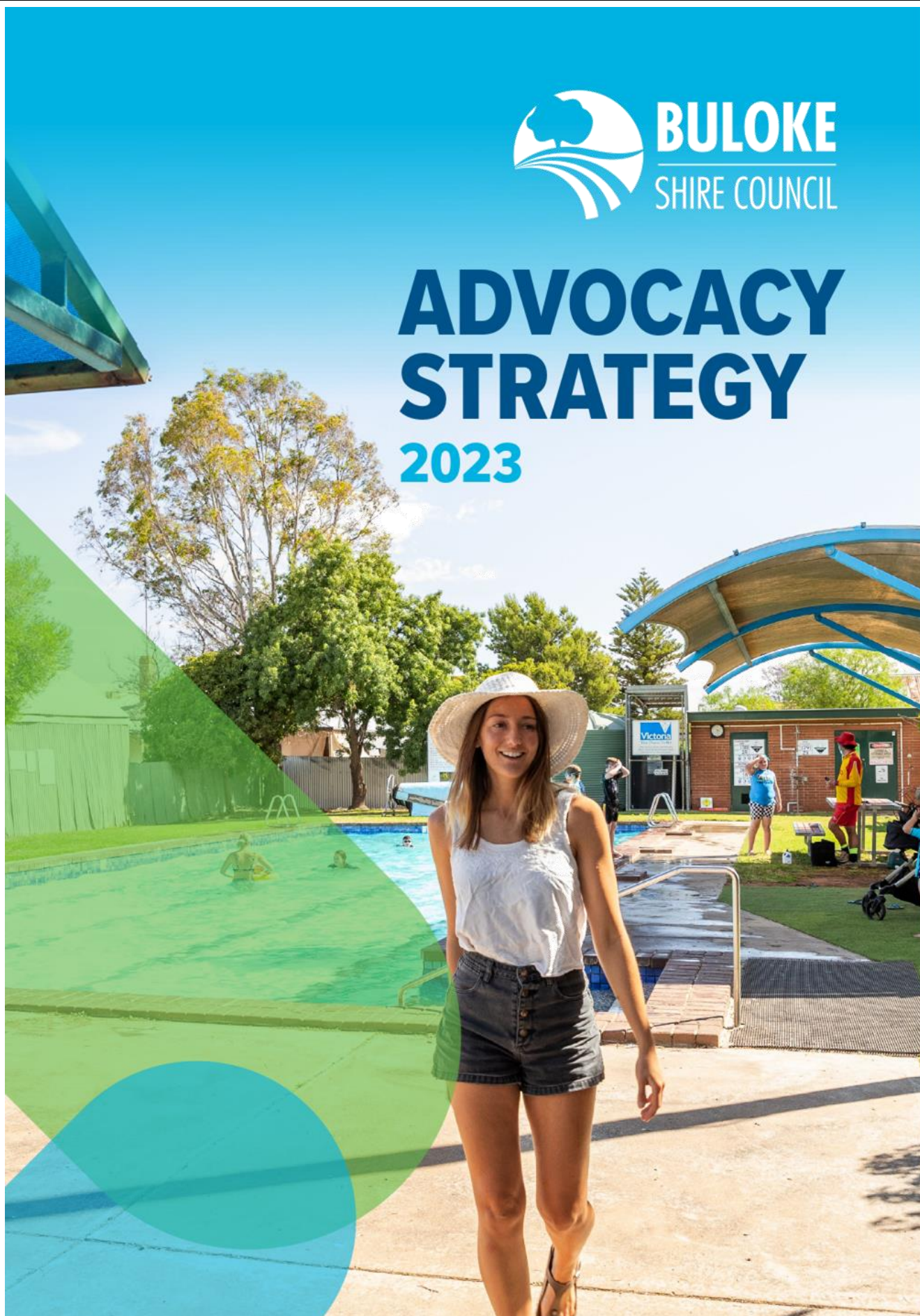
This report is being presented in an open Council Meeting.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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



ADVOCACY STRATEGY 2023



2 ADVOCACY STRATEGY 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

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.



OVERVIEW

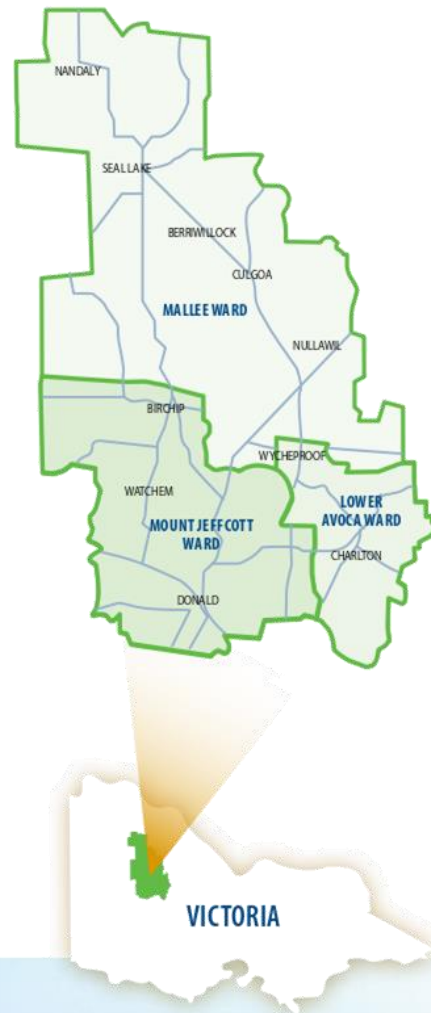
The Buloke Shire Council Advocacy Strategy 2023 outlines the key advocacy projects Council is currently committed to focusing on and seeking partnerships to implement.

Many of the projects presented reflect some of the challenges faced by Buloke Shire, as one of the geographically largest municipalities, with an ageing and declining population.

It is acknowledged that many rural councils face similar challenges and therefore it is important to recognise that Council cannot, and does not, work alone – but rather aims to work in partnership with the community, service providers and other levels of government to deliver on its vision for the future.

However, the priority projects presented in the Strategy are only some of the issues of Council and the Buloke community therefore work will continue on a number of other priorities as stated in the Council Plan 2021-25 and Long-Term Community Vision and other adopted policies and strategies.

The Advocacy Strategy 2023 outlines our top-tier priorities impacting our community right now.





OUR ADVOCACY PRINCIPLES

Our priority projects are guided by the following principles:



STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Our priorities align with those of State and Federal decision-makers as well as projects identified in our Council Plan 2021-25 and Long-Term Community Vision, Capital Works Plan, and other relevant policies, plans and strategies adopted by Council.



COMMUNITY DRIVEN AND FOCUSED

Our communities support our priorities and the projects are reflective of their needs with clear community benefits, continuous consultation and collaboration.



REALISTIC AND ATTAINABLE

We understand our capacity and will stage or breakdown larger and longer-term priority projects to ensure we deliver them on time and within budget.



DELIVERED IN PARTNERSHIP

Dynamically led by a council that informs community, has active partnerships, authentic advocacy and quality customer service delivering valued responsive community services in a responsible way.

**6 ADVOCACY STRATEGY
2023**

October 2022 Flood Event Recovery

October 2022 Flood Event Recovery



Request:

That 'Betterment' works be included in the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, realistic funding models for overall recovery and \$600,000 for a second demountable levee for Donald township.



Status:

Assessment



Strategic Alignment:

Road Management Plan, Asset Management Plan, Financial Plan, Municipal Emergency Management Plan, North Central Regional Floodplain Management Strategy, Mallee Floodplain Management Strategy.

As a result of the October 2022 flooding event there has been significant damage to Council's road network and impacts on our community.

Current Federal Government funding models mean that damaged roads can only be reinstated to the level of service they were at when damaged.

This poses a narrow view and is not the best use of tax payer money as often an upgrade at the point of damage would negate or significantly decrease future flood related damage if upgrades to the network were made instead of just reinstatement works.

The 'No betterment' approach taken by the Federal Government's National Recovery and Resilience Agency is not fit for purpose. A betterment approach would enable Council to reconstruct assets to a more disaster resilient standard than that of its pre-disaster function and mitigate future events.

This would also maintain or improve the service level of road assets, give a greater value benefit across the lifecycle of the investment and maintain or improve our mostly agricultural community's ability to function.

Council has a road network of some 5,300 kilometres with a further 747 kilometres of State Government controlled road within Buloke Shire Council.

As Victoria's agricultural heartland, our road network is life. Rural communities are often left with inferior assets or assets way beyond intervention level. It is unacceptable that road works would be carried out on any road and there not be an approach to achieve the best outcome for all road users to drive safety and economic benefits.

With the size of transport vehicles increasing and reliance on road freight as opposed to rail in many parts of the state, anything less would be in contradiction of Council's Long Term Financial Planning and Road Management Planning.

During a flood event the Donald township is protected from the Richardson River by use of a demountable levee on the western side of the river and an earthen levee to the east.

The demountable levee is quick to construct and is not heavily reliant on external resourcing and transporting of materials to the site. During the October 2022 flood response, the earthen levee was left up during the La Nina forecast period due to the nature of its construction, some four months beyond the deconstruction of the demountable levee on the western side of the river.

This had a detrimental psychological effect on a great deal of the local population, viewing the levee as a scar on their town and impeding their natural movement and deterring visitation and economic outcomes for the township of Donald.



8 ADVOCACY STRATEGY 2023

Our Priority Projects for 2023 - Overview

PROJECT

REQUEST

1. OUR BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

a) Drainage and Flood Mitigation	Funding (\$3mil) - To produce a revised drainage capital works program for Donald, Charlton, Nullawil and Birchip, including further planning for additional levee bank in Donald
b) Greening Buloke	Funding (\$500k annually) - To support the implementation of a five year replacement program of dangerous trees in our recreation reserves, parks and other public spaces
c) Buloke Roads of Strategic Importance	Funding (\$3.5mil annually) - To improve our agricultural supply chains and meet the needs of our local businesses and community
d) Civic Precinct and Town Centre Upgrades	Funding (\$100k) - To develop master plans to upgrade the town centres, streetscapes and parks across the smaller towns of Nullawil, Watchem, Berriwillcock, Nandaly and Culgoa
e) Buloke Heritage Spaces	Funding (\$100k) - To undertake structural reviews and concept designs of key heritage buildings across the shire
f) Town Centre and Public Space Lighting	Funding (\$1mil) - To improve safety in public spaces and provide feature lighting to highlight key natural and built assets across all towns
g) Relocation of truck routes in Charlton and Wycheproof.	Advocacy - To work with the State Government to increase safety around the Charlton business district and the Wycheproof Early Learning Centre and P-12 College by relocating the truck routes
h) Five ways roundabout Birchip	Funding (\$5mil) - To construct a roundabout on the five ways intersection (Sunraysia Highway, Cumming Avenue, Birchip-Wycheproof Road and Corack Road) with associated road markings and signage for safer traffic movement
i) Aerodrome upgrades	Funding (\$50k) - To complete master plans to upgrade aerodromes to appropriate standards

2. OUR COMMUNITY WELLBEING

a) Buloke Premier Sporting Facility Upgrades	Funding (\$8mil) - To support the implementation of the Wycheproof Recreation and Racecourse Reserve Master Plan (\$5mil) and Birchip Recreation Reserve Master Plan (\$3mil)
b) Buloke Aquatic Upgrades	Funding (\$2.1mil) - To support the implementation of the Buloke Aquatic Strategy
c) Viable Childcare Services	Advocacy - To create a viable operating model that would guarantee delivery of childcare services over the medium term (five years)
d) Donald and Birchip Early Years Upgrades	Funding (\$500k) - To undertake upgrades at the Birchip and Donald Early Years Centres
e) Charlton Driver Education Centre	Funding (\$600,000) - To undertake the development of a new office and classroom area for students to learn the theory as well as practice at this essential learning service
f) Changing Places Facility	Funding (\$500k) - To install a changing places facility within the shire to improve accessibility standards
g) Sea Lake Walking Path	Funding (\$300k) - To develop a walking path loop network throughout Sea Lake to increase active transport and better connect people with places

PROJECT

REQUEST

3. OUR ECONOMY

a) Birchip Community Housing Expansion	Funding (\$1.75mil) - To expand on the work of the Birchip Community Housing Committee by building another five rental units in Cumming Avenue
b) Donald Tradie Park Development	Funding (\$1.35mil) - To develop a new 'Tradie Park' in the Donald Industrial Estate that will include the construction of up to eight sheds in the industrial estate and create an efficient hub for local trades businesses
c) NBN Upgrade to Birchip	Advocacy - To improve the NBN services in Birchip to increase the connectivity for schools and business and add to the liveability of the town
d) Boosting the Wimmera Mallee Art Trail	Funding (\$350k) - To expand the existing arts trail through the Wimmera and Southern Mallee region, through the street murals, activation of silo art and value-adding to the trail
f) Birchip Silo Art	Funding (\$100k) - To complete silo art on the GrainCorp Silo in Birchip.
g) Grain Reveal Access upgrades	Funding (\$1mil) - To complete upgrades to the access points of grain reveal locations in Donald, Nandaly, Nullawil and Wycheproof
h) ICT Funding	Funding (\$300k annually) To enable Council to maintain the required maturity levels for information and communication technologies by increasing their resources and capacity.
i) Accessible Buloke	Funding (\$700k) - To complete Stage 2 priority improvements identified by the adoption of the footpath network hierarchy
j) Strategic Planning for Rural Living Zone	Funding (\$50k) – To complete and implement recommendations of a Settlement and Rural Living Issues and Options Review in an effort to introduce further diverse housing solutions that will suit the Buloke context
k) Rehabilitation of Sea Lake Transfer Station	Funding (\$2mil) – To complete rehabilitation works to the old Sea Lake landfill site by digging and capping a compliant cell
l) Regional Victorian Commonwealth Games 2026	Advocacy - To collaborate with the State Government for either an athlete's village or demountable infrastructure erected in the Shire after the games (with potential use as social housing) and to promote the region and local attractions (i.e. silo/street art, lakes and reserves) to athletes and visitors

4. OUR COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

a) Clear Decentralisation and Housing Policy	Advocacy - To develop and fund a very clear decentralisation policy, that aims to address transport, housing, health and jobs
b) Asset Stabilisation Fund	Advocacy - To establish an Asset Stabilisation Fund to assist small rural Council's with the largest renewal gap to address infrastructure needs
c) Murray Basin Rail Project	Advocacy - To complete the Murray Basin Rail Project, including the standardisation of the Sea Lake and Manangatang lines

10 ADVOCACY STRATEGY
2023

OUR PRIORITY PROJECTS FOR 2023

TYRRELL

1. Our Built and Natural Environment



Drainage and Flood Mitigation



Request:
Funding \$3mil



Status:
Designed



Strategic Alignment:
Asset Management Plan



Charlton and Birchip are two of Buloke's largest townships and have had a history of flash flooding in recent years, causing damage to infrastructure and property. Nullawil has also had a history of flooding. Reviews and investigations have found the underground drainage for each township was not designed to meet current climatic changes and large rainfall events. Upgrades at Birchip, Nullawil and Charlton will mitigate against flash flooding, protect vital community and private property and provide these communities with improved security. In addition, completion of the temporary levee at the Donald Levee Bank is a necessity to protect from future flooding. Designs have been completed for these works and are ready to proceed.

Greening Buloke



Request:
Funding \$500k annually



Status:
Shovel ready



Strategic Alignment:
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Strategy



Over a five year period, the Buloke community aims to improve its sustainability performance and provide a more liveable community for residents and tourists. Council has worked closely with the CVGA to identify priority tree canopy deficiencies and aims to improve tree canopy cover and provide an appealing and cooler township.

12 **ADVOCACY STRATEGY**
2023

1. Our Built and Natural Environment



Buloke Roads of Strategic Importance



Request:

Funding \$3.5mil annually



Status:

Designed



Strategic Alignment:

Road Management Plan, Asset Management Plan, Financial Plan, Interim Economic Development and Tourism Strategy



Works are required to improve the efficiency of the road network and remove blockages for freight to use the most direct route to get products to port. Key projects include pavement rehabilitation, seal widening, line marking, improving dangerous intersections and first-and-last mile issues.

By improving efficiency of freight movements, more money will end up in farmers pockets to reinvest into their businesses. This project extends beyond dry-land farming, and considers the emergence of intensive agriculture as a driving industry within the Shire. Many projects have been designed and costed, with projects such as the Jeffcott and McLoughlins Road requiring urgent works.

Civic Precinct and Town Centre Upgrades



Request:

Funding \$100k



Status:

Scoped



Strategic Alignment:

Community Plans, Interim Economic Development and Tourism Strategy



The development of master plans to be undertaken to support the upgrade of town centres, streetscapes and parks across the smaller towns of Nullawil, Watchem, Berriwilllock, Nandaly and Culgoa.

1. Our Built and Natural Environment



Buloke Heritage Spaces



Request:
Funding \$100k



Status:
Scoped



Strategic Alignment:
Community Plans, Interim Economic Development and Tourism Strategy



The Buloke townships have amazing history and many of the heritage community buildings have an amazing story to tell. Buildings such as the Watchem and Wycheproof Halls, Charlton, Birchip and Wycheproof Courthouses and Auchmore Museum (Nullawil) stand to tell the stories of generations and pioneers of our region and are central to civic pride of current day residents. Yet, there is a need to preserve and upgrade these historical buildings and make them suitable for current day use. This project will see the refurbishment, critical renewal works and expansion of Council's halls, museums and courthouses. These facilities are some of the most utilised facilities in the Shire and are arts and culture hubs within the townships and a tourism drawcard.

Town Centre and Public Space Lighting



Request:
Funding \$1mil



Status:
Scoped



Strategic Alignment:
Community Plans, Interim Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, Inclusiveness Plan, Gender Equality Action Plan.



Increasing the lighting of places and buildings has been shown to revitalise town centres by enhancing the attractiveness of the natural and built environment, improving perceptions of safety, and increasing pedestrian usage. This project aims to improve safety in public spaces and provide feature lighting to highlight key assets across all towns.

14 **ADVOCACY STRATEGY**
2023

1. Our Built and Natural Environment



Relocation of Truck Routes



Request:
Advocacy



Status:
Shovel ready



Strategic Alignment:
Road Management Plan, Transport Asset Management Plan, Wycheproof Community Plan.



To work with the State Government to increase safety in Charlton and Wycheproof. In Charlton by relocating the truck route to Back St. Arnaud Road. In Wycheproof by relocating the truck route away from the Early Learning Centre and P-12 College from Mount Street to Camp Street.

Five ways roundabout Birchip



Request:
Funding \$5mil



Status:
Shovel ready



Strategic Alignment:
Road Management Plan, Transport Asset Management Plan, Birchip Community Plan.



To construct a roundabout on the five ways intersection (Sunraysia Highway, Cumming Avenue, Birchip-Wycheproof Road & Corack Road) with associated road markings and signage for safer traffic movement.

1. Our Built and Natural Environment



Aerodrome upgrades



Request:
Funding \$50k



Status:
Scoped



Strategic Alignment:
Interim Economic Development and
Tourism Strategy, Community Plans



To complete master plans to upgrade aerodromes to appropriate standards including access for fixed wing air ambulances.

16 **ADVOCACY STRATEGY
2023**

2. Our Community Wellbeing



Buloke Premier Sporting Facility Upgrades



Request:
Funding \$8mil



Status:
Scoped



Strategic Alignment:
Community Plans, Recreation
Reserve Masterplans,
Gender Equality Action Plan



The Birchip, Nullawil, Wycheproof and Sea Lake Recreation Reserve facilities are some of Buloke's highest utilised community assets. Currently, some of these facilities do not provide female friendly change spaces and therefore restrict the current and future usage.

The upgrades will create a function space that acts as the hub for each community, create viewing spaces, improve oval lighting and improve accessibility for players, spectators and umpires. These facilities are the heart of these communities and will increase community connectivity and participation in physical activity into the future.

Buloke Aquatic Upgrades



Request:
Funding \$2.1mil



Status:
Aquatic Strategy completed 2022/23



Strategic Alignment:
Aquatic Strategy, Community Plans,
Health and Wellbeing Plan



With seven pools across the Shire all built between 1950 - 1970 (Charlton, Donald, Sea Lake, Wycheproof, Birchip, Watchem and Berrillilock), the need for investment into Council's aquatic facilities is significant.

Upgrades to plant, pipework and pools shells are all required to ensure the pools remain accessible into the future, and value additions, such as solar heating and splash parks are also required to drive additional patronage.

2. Our Community Wellbeing



Viable Chlidcare Services

 **Request:**
Advocacy

 **Status:**
Report complete

 **Strategic Alignment:**
Community Plans, Interim Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, Gender Equality Action Plan, Municipal Early Years Plan.



Our region, and other rural areas across Victoria, have well established placed-based early years initiatives, with leadership partnerships and networks of community organisations and services, ready to work through the barriers to create a viable operating model that would guarantee delivery of childcare services over the medium term (five years).

Donald and Birchip Early Years Upgrades

 **Request:**
Funding \$500k

 **Status:**
Scoped

 **Strategic Alignment:**
Community Plans, Interim Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, Gender Equality Action Plan, Municipal Early Years Plan.



Complete much required upgrades to improve staffing, storage and play space areas for children and educators at the Donald and Birchip Early Years Upgrades.

This funding will improve safety for the educators and improve the early learning outcomes for children attending these important services.

18 **ADVOCACY STRATEGY**
2023

2. Our Community Wellbeing



Charlton Driver Education Centre



Request:
Funding \$600K



Status:
Ready to commence



Strategic Alignment:
Charlton Community Plan



The Charlton Driver Education Centre provides an essential learning service for students' right across Victoria. Whilst the cars and roads at the centre are in good condition, there is no adequate classroom and staff amenity. This funding will see the development of a new office and classroom area for students to learn the theory as well as practice at this essential learning service.

Changing Places Facility



Request:
Funding \$500k



Status:
Scoped



Strategic Alignment:
Inclusiveness Plan, Gender Equality Action Plan



A Changing Places Facility within the shire will provide people with disabilities and their families a safe, fit for purpose environment, where their dignity and needs are upheld. The location of the shire's first Changing Places Facility is proposed within Donald Memorial Park.

2. Our Community Wellbeing



Sea Lake Walking Path



Request:
Funding \$300k



Status:
Scoped



Strategic Alignment:
Sea Lake Community Plan, Health and Wellbeing Plan, Asset Management Plan



The proposed path commences near Lascelles Road and extends south east along the golf course to reach the Birchip Sea Lake Road. Following Greenswamp Road and Dunmunkle Lane, the path will cross the Calder Highway into Cox Street before heading east toward the Community Centre.

The path will then extend north, east and north around the perimeter of the township, along Wilkinson Street, George Street, Edgecumbe Street, Lascelles Street, before returning west along McLelland Avenue and Tyrell Street and heading south along Greer Street to cross the Calder again, forming a loop.

20 **ADVOCACY STRATEGY**
2023

3. Our Economy



Birchip Community Housing Expansion



Request:
Funding \$1.75mil



Status:
Shovel ready



Strategic Alignment:
Interim Economic Development and
Tourism Strategy, Wimmera
Development Association Housing
Review



The Buloke Shire has a housing shortage and has been actively looking at ways to improve the housing offerings for all segments of the market. This project expands on the work of the Birchip Community Housing Committee by building another five units on the old bowling green site.

This will cater for the ageing population and will serve to open up family homes as retirees downsize into these custom built units.

Donald Tradie Park Development



Request:
Funding \$1.35mil



Status:
Designed



Strategic Alignment:
Donald Community Plan, Interim
Economic Development and Tourism
Strategy



This project aims to deliver a new 'Tradie Park' in the industrial estate in Donald. It will service and build a series of medium size sheds to allow for the expansion of the many tradespeople that Donald has and will also promote the relocation of other tradies to town to utilise the sheds.

This will build up to eight sheds on the industrial estate using local trades and will support the community by having many trades located on the one site.

3. Our Economy



NBN Upgrades to Birchip

 **Request:**
Advocacy

 **Status:**
Scoped

 **Strategic Alignment:**
Birchip Community Plan, Interim
Economic Development and Tourism
Strategy



Birchip has a strong retail sector, with a range of shops including, bakery, supermarkets, two hotels, butcher, clothes and hardware stores and several large employers.

The town also has a Prep to Year 12 school, a hospital and a new Early Years Centre. All levels of government have joined to fund a recent delivered multi-million-dollar streetscape upgrade.

An NBN connectivity upgrade will add to the liveability and attractiveness of the town as we are seeing more and more entrepreneurs interested in moving to Birchip and be connected with the vibrant community.

Boosting the Wimmera Mallee Art Trail

 **Request:**
Funding \$350k

 **Status:**
Scoped

 **Strategic Alignment:**
Interim Economic Development and
Tourism Strategy



In recent years, Buloke has been invigorated by public and community art, and has seen the benefits of community connectedness and enhanced tourism outcomes. Off the back of the Silo Art Trail, there are now amazing painted silos in Sea Lake and Nullawil and also wall art through many towns.

To build on this and create a critical mass and a major tourism drawcard, there is the need to create public art in the 'gaps' and enhance existing art through night time activation and augmented reality. This project will paint an additional silo, street art, create night time viewing and augmented reality on key public art spaces.

22 **ADVOCACY STRATEGY**
2023

3. Our Economy



Birchip Silo Art



Request:
Funding \$100k



Status:
Designed and approved by
GrainCorp



**Strategic Birchip Community
Plan, Alignment:**
Interim Economic Development and
Tourism Strategy



This proposal is to further extend Buloke Shires inclusion in the Silo Art trail by completing a silo art installation on the GrainCorp Silo in Birchip featuring Melbourne Cup winning jockey Ray Neville.

The site will complement both the Silo Art stops in Nullawil and Sea Lake as well as new legacy street art pieces in Birchip born during the 2022 Mali Heart Festival.

Grain Receival Access upgrades



Request:
Funding \$1mil



Status:
Designed



Strategic Alignment:
Interim Economic Development and
Tourism Strategy



Buloke land and environment is well suited to broad-acre cropping, coupled with over 150 years of inter-generational expertise in growing grains. The proposal is to complete upgrades to the access points of grain receival locations in Donald, Nandaly, Nullawil and Wycheproof to ensure safety and efficiency of the cornerstone of the Buloke economy.

3. Our Economy



ICT Funding



Request:
Funding \$300k annually



Status:
Scoped



Strategic Alignment:
Business Transformation Strategy



Digital preservation is an important element to ensure that the long-term integrity and availability of important data is maintained and that it complies to Buloke Shire Council's obligation as a local government authority. Digital preservation is a vital part of business continuity and disaster recovery.

Small rural councils such as Buloke are at a disadvantage in maintaining maturity levels for information and communication technologies due to their limited resources and capacity.

Accessible Buloke



Request:
Funding \$700k



Status:
Designed



Strategic Alignment:
Asset Management Plan,
Inclusiveness



A recent review of Council's Road Management Plan 2022 and Transport Asset Management Implementation Plan 2022, including lengthy deliberative engagement, recognised the need for Buloke to comply with Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements when renewing its aging footpath network. In particular, the review of the network hierarchy identified the need for a primary footpath network, linking central business districts to health and education services.

Stage 2 will continue to address section of paths on the network determined non-compliant by both the DDA standards and Councils hazardous condition assessment.

24 **ADVOCACY STRATEGY**
2023

3. Our Economy



Strategic planning for rural living zone



Request:
Funding \$50k



Status:
Options review underway



Strategic Alignment:
Rural Land Use and Settlement
Strategy, Interim Economic
Development and Tourism Strategy,
Wimmera Development Association
Housing Review



Council is currently undertaking a Settlement and Rural Living Issues and Options Review in an effort to introduce further diverse housing solutions that will suit the Buloke context.

There is an identified need to look more deeply at the rural-residential land supply as both a result of strategic projects and anecdotal evidence of demand. There is a perception that there is a need to increase the supply of rural-residential land to broaden the range of accommodation and/or housing choices available in the Shire.

Rehabilitation of Sea Lake Transfer Station



Request:
Funding \$2mil



Status:
Shovel ready



Strategic Alignment:
Waste and Resource Recovery
Strategy



Buloke Shire Council received a Pollution Abatement Notice on the old Sea Lake Landfill site due to exposed asbestos being present on the site. Council engaged a consultant to give a recommendation of the way to address this situation.

The resultant report has recommended digging a compliant cell and putting a cap over the waste to avoid any future exposure of asbestos and waste.

3. Our Economy



Regional Victorian Commonwealth Games 2026



Request:

Advocacy



Strategic Alignment:

Interim Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, Wimmera Development Association Housing Review, Gender Equality Action Plan, Inclusiveness Plan



Buloke Shire Council sees benefit in collaborating with the State Government to provide important outcomes and economic benefits to the region in the form of organised trips from Bendigo and/or Ballarat to explore our silo and street art, enjoy our many recreational lakes and explore the scenic Lake Tyrrell. This would give athletes and visitors an experience of tourism in a rural setting.

We would also like to see an athlete's village built in our Shire to become social housing as a legacy or demountable infrastructure erected in the Shire after the games.

26 **ADVOCACY STRATEGY**
2023

4. Our Council and Community Leadership



Clear Decentralisation and Housing Policy



Request:
Advocacy



Strategic Alignment:
Interim Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, Wimmera Development Association Housing Review, Gender Equality Action Plan, Inclusiveness Plan



There is the need for the development and funding of a clear decentralisation policy that aims to address key inhibitors such as transport and accessibility, housing, health and jobs.

Asset Stabilisation Fund



Request:
Advocacy



Strategic Alignment:
Financial Plan, Asset Management Plan



A recent KPMG report into the sustainability challenges of small rural councils highlighted the need for an asset stabilisation fund to address key asset renewal challenges that face Councils such as Buloke.

The challenge of maintaining buildings across ten towns and 5,300kms of road is growing for the declining rate base and a structural funding solution that addresses these challenges would make a significant difference to the liveability of these communities.

4. Our Council and Community Leadership



Murray Basin Rail Project

 **Request:**
Advocacy

 **Strategic Alignment:**
Interim Economic Development and
Tourism Strategy, Community Plans



Council considered the Murray Basin Rail Project one of the most important funding wins for the region over many years. With the Mildura line standardised, and the Sea Lake line still on broad gauge, the outcome is simply poorer for the Buloke community.

Council advocates for the full project to be completed to ensure that Buloke farmers have access to all ports in an efficient manner. In addition to rail, \$2mil is required to upgrade the Charlton Avoca River Bridge to take Heavy Vehicles.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Advocacy Strategy is designed to be a live document and remain relevant as work on the priority projects develops. Council will monitor progress towards delivery of these priorities on an ongoing basis, with regular updates provided to Council and the community through Council reports and a formal annual review.

28 ADVOCACY STRATEGY
2023

OUR ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

Council will undertake a range of activities to promote and deliver on our advocacy projects. These activities will be undertaken by council officers, the Executive Management Team and Councillors as appropriate. Activities may include:

Undertaking public campaigns and producing collateral to raise awareness of the issues in the community and encouraging their involvement in advocacy efforts.

Developing partnerships with key stakeholders, local and regional organisations, and peak bodies whose interests align with the Advocacy Strategy objectives.

Promoting alignment with government priorities to local Members of Parliament, state and federal ministers, shadow ministers, opposition and cross bench members, and local state and federal election candidates.

Aligning Council activities and participating in the advocacy work of peak bodies and regional organisations including the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Victorian Local Governance Association.

Making submissions to government and parliamentary enquiries to advance the goals of the Advocacy Strategy.

Identifying and applying for grants to secure funding in order to deliver on our advocacy priorities.

Promoting commitments, where we receive them, to encourage other parties and stakeholders to lend their support.

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8.2.2 RESPONSE TO COMMONWEALTH AGED CARE REFORMS - FINAL REPORT

Author's Title: Manager Community Services

Department: Community Development

File No: CS/16/24

Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025

Strategic Objective: Our Community Wellbeing

PURPOSE

The report seeks Council consideration of the feedback received following an in-principle decision regarding its future role as a provider of services under the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) and Victorian Home & Community Care Program for Young People (HACC-PYP).

The in-principle decision taken by Council in February 2023 triggered transparent, engagement and consultation with clients, staff and community. This report provides an overview of the actions taken following the in-principle decision and the feedback received from these processes.

After consideration of feedback, it is recommended that Council proceed to confirm that it will commence an orderly and managed transition out of all funded home-based and community-based service provision for older residents. It is recommended that as part of this transition process, Council ensures that all obligations to clients, families, staff, and funding bodies are recognised and respected.

SUMMARY

Buloke Shire Council is a long-term provider of aged and disability services for its community.

Significant Commonwealth reforms have been implemented in the past decade and future changes to the funding and operating environment will result in Council being ill-equipped and not suited to continuing as a provider.

The current *Commonwealth Home Support Program* (CHSP) transitions to the new *Support at Home Program* after 30 June 2024. Based on this imminent transition and its understanding of community interests and needs, Council made an in-principle decision in February 2023 that it would consult with those affected, based on a transition out of the service delivery function in 2023.

Appointment of a successor provider or providers of these services is the responsibility of the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments, however a period of transition will allow Council to support existing clients through the staged process of change.

Services to the Buloke community will continue to be funded to the same levels and will be delivered under the same National Quality Framework which have applied to Council as a provider.

Council has throughout the process of consultation, remained committed to transparency and engagement with clients, staff and community and has assured all stakeholders that it will respect the service agreement and industrial obligations. Feedback received has been incorporated into planning for implementation of the Council decision.

In undertaking this decision Council understands it has responsibilities to clients and families, long serving staff, and the broader community to manage the transition effectively and to anticipate and mitigate risk.

RECOMMENDATION

That Buloke Shire Council:

- (a) Notes that since 2011 the Commonwealth has progressed implementation of a consistent and integrated national aged care service system based on increased consumer choice and control and competition between providers to drive quality improvements and service efficiencies with a final transition date of 1 July 2024.
- (b) Accepts that due to inherent service cost, financial constraints, the National competition policy and other structural challenges, Buloke Shire Council will not be able to play a meaningful future role in service delivery.
- (c) Confirms that it will not accept the service agreement extension for the 2023/24 year and will instead transition out of direct service delivery roles in the following programs:
 - (i) All funded Commonwealth Home Support Programme services
 - i. Domestic Assistance
 - ii. Personal Care
 - iii. Flexible Respite
 - iv. Social Support – Group
 - v. Social Support – Individual
 - vi. Home Maintenance and Modifications
 - vii. Delivered Meals
 - viii. Sector Support & Development
 - (ii) All HACC-PYP funded services
 - i. Domestic Assistance
 - ii. Personal Care
 - iii. Property Maintenance
 - iv. Social Support Group
 - v. Volunteer Coordination
 - vi. Occupational Therapy
 - vii. Centre-based Respite
- (d) Commits to working with the Commonwealth and Victorian governments to negotiate timing and transition processes that will protect the interests of clients, their families, much valued staff, and the broader community.
- (e) Notes that under its service agreements all processes and matters related to the transition process (i.e., names of future providers) will remain confidential until the Commonwealth and Victorian governments provide consent for release of information.
- (f) Reaffirms that in taking this decision it will continue to play an active role in ensuring its community will receive high-quality aged care services and will advocate for the needs of vulnerable members of the community.
- (g) Commits to the values and principles outlined in Appendix A to the report to underpin and support decision making through the transition process.
- (h) Notes that the appointment of a successor provider is the responsibility of the Commonwealth and Council is bound to confidentiality under its service agreement and cannot release any information about the appointment and transition process.
- (i) Realigns its policy direction towards future investment in age-friendly or positive-ageing initiatives and ensuring that Council's universal services and facilities are designed to meet the needs of a growing population of older residents. Further policy work and recommended directions will be referred to the 2023/24 budget process for review and approval.
- (j) Notes that Council's policy objective of ensuring that older adults seeking to live independently in the community will be provided with quality home support services will not be compromised by this decision. Services will continue to be provided and Council will be able to reinvest its current

ratepayer subsidy into alternative strategic priorities.

- (k) Provides delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer, or their nominee, to undertake or commission all tasks and activities related to the implementation of this council decision.
- (l) Appoints the Mayor and CEO as spokespersons for all matters related to the Home Support Transition process.
- (m) Approves immediate notification of its final decision to, and appropriate consultation with:
 - (i) Clients and families
 - (ii) Staff and union representatives
 - (iii) Media and other communications
 - (iv) Broader community

Attachments: Nil

BACKGROUND/KEY INFORMATION

Buloke Shire Council (the Council) has been an important provider of home and community care services to assist older people to continue to live independently in the community.

The investment and organisational commitment to providing services has over time become emblematic of the supportive relationship between Council and its community. Investment in these services was a means of expressing a strong commitment to many vulnerable members of the community: this included older people, people with a disability or mental illness and people at risk of homelessness.

The National Aged Care reforms

Australia's integrated national aged care program has been undergoing significant reforms over the past 10 years, this followed a Commonwealth commitment to take full responsibility for aged care in August 2011 and establishment of the National Disability Insurance Scheme at a similar time.

The key drivers for the aged care reforms include:

- The number of people in Australia requiring aged care (in some form) would increase by 350% between 2011 and 2050
- Significant system weaknesses (difficult navigation, limited services, variable quality, and no consumer choice) and inefficiencies (duplication of effort, no competition, and high-cost structures) that needed to be eradicated, and
- Real concern that the cost of providing adequate care for older people in future would be unaffordable as a nation.

Attributes of the current aged care model include:

- CHSP – 'entry level' basic home support and community-based services – domestic assistance, personal care, shopping etc – this program provides services to 839,400 older Australians nationally
- Home Care – four levels of 'packaged care' funded from basic to high care to maintain independence – services were provided to 175,000 older Australians
- Residential Care – funded residential aged care (respite and permanent) – 310,000 older Australians nationally

In 2020/21 governments (not including local government) spent \$23.6 billion or around \$5,000 per older person on aged care related services; this comprised Residential Care \$14.3 billion and Home Care and Home Support \$7.8 billion.

Design principles for the aged care reforms have remained very consistent since initiation, these include:

- **Consumer Choice and Control** – funding is provided directly to the clients based on assessed need to support choice and control – the client purchases services from a range of providers. This has a strong human rights and philosophical basis but introduces competition and signals the end of ‘block funding’ certainty for providers in most circumstances.
- **A Simplified Gateway** – My Aged Care is the single point of entry for all Australians to access aged care services – the 2017 Legislated Review of Aged Care has recommended merging of the RAS (Home Support) and Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACAT) (Residential Aged Care) into a streamlined national assessment service.
- **Demand Driven System** – the current ‘block funded’ and supply driven system will progressively move to a ‘demand driven’ funding system to ensure consistent services are delivered to where they are needed rather than what areas funding is allocated.
- **Competition Policy** – there is a renewed national focus on competition policy to drive economic growth, productivity, and efficiency in service delivery. The future program design will be based on market and competition principles meaning that local government will face direct market exposure and a continuing ratepayer subsidy will be prohibited or unlawful.
- **Monopoly Market** – the current protected market arrangements will be dismantled to facilitate regulated competition and improved efficiency. Council is not equipped to effectively operate under market conditions.
- **Market Efficiencies** – the Commonwealth is seeking to reduce transaction costs by having fewer contracts with larger organisations who can operate across large geographic areas.
- **Client Contribution** – the Commonwealth expects that all Australians will make a consistent contribution to care depending on their capacity and capability.

Recent reform decisions have reinforced the direction of the Commonwealth. In recent budgets the Commonwealth has announced significant additional investment in creating a consistent national aged care system. This included:

- \$6.5 billion for 80,000 additional aged care packages
- \$3.9 billion for improved front line residential care
- \$630 million improved access for vulnerable Australians
- \$365 million for better transition to residential care
- \$230 million to strengthen aged care quality and compliance
- \$49.4 million for aged care training
- \$21 million for improved sector governance
- \$13.4 million to Primary Health Networks to drive better coordination
- \$2.5 billion for guaranteed 24/7 onsite nursing in aged care settings
- \$48 million for a dedicated aged care complaints system
- Commitment to funding a 15% pay increase for aged care workers (decision handed down in November 2022)

During 2022, a further extension of the CHSP program to 30 June 2024 was announced to enable the design and roll-out of the new ‘Support at Home’ program. The original reform timing was for completion by 30 June 2018, and this has now been subject to five extensions.

The ‘Support at Home’ program will be a new integrated program commencing 1 July 2024 that combines CHSP, Home Care Packages, Residential Respite and Short-term Restorative Care. This integrated model will most likely be client-directed, offer a range of providers (i.e., a market-based model) and require that providers offer a suite of services across in-home, personal, nursing, and allied health.

The Regional Assessment Service that undertakes intake and assessment for the CHSP and HACCPYP programs was on a pathway to a national streamlined model by 1 July 2020. This initial plan was delayed pending the outcomes of the Aged Care Royal Commission. It is understood that a new unified program will have responsibility for all aged care assessments from July 2024.

KEY ISSUES

Reform Update – Support at Home

The Commonwealth has released a Support at Home Program overview that provided the first look at the architecture of the future Support at Home Program.

This confirms that the proposed program will be radically different from the existing CHSP program, it will include:

- Individualised support plans for clients linked to funding that is based on assessed need
- A new integrated assessment tool that controls access to all aged care services, from home-based to residential-care services
- An increased reliance on technology and digital services for clients, business systems, and payment platforms
- A service list that will better define the outputs and allow flexibility for clients
- Client being allowed choice and control over the time and place services are provided; this assumes multiple providers being available within a geographic area
- The end of block funding and transition to payment for units of service delivered – a completely different business model, and
- Introduction of regulated competition between providers

The information release confirms that Council would not be able to effectively operate under the new Support at Home program without significant investment in changes to its operating model and reduction in operating costs.

The Commonwealth are currently consulting on key design elements of the new system and have indicated informally that the 2023/24 year will be spent working with providers on transition and preparatory activities for the transition into Support at Home.

Engagement and feedback from clients and families

Extensive engagement has occurred with clients and families since Council made its in-principle decision.

- Individual phone calls to all clients receiving service provision with Council have been made and a de-sensitised commentary recorded.
- Letters and Frequently Asked Questions sheets were mailed out to all clients, outlining the in-principle decision and opportunities for further consultation.
- Phone calls have been returned or taken by those who have phoned Council wishing to discuss the situation further.
- Clients and extended families attended Community Drop-In Sessions held in 6 locations, asking questions and speaking with Council staff directly.

Resulting consultation data from direct phone calls was reviewed and summarised in themes as follows:

Existing service provision and staff:

Consistent commentary from clients revealed that the current service was supported and highly valued. Carers are seen as providing good home-based services and have built valuable relationships with their clients over long periods of time.

Examples of commentary themes repeated:

- Current service is valued, carers are seen as providing good home-based services and have built valuable relationships. Current arrangement works well.
- Local carers are essential.
- Having people who know me and the local area is important.
- Happy with current service.

- Concerned for current staff, what will happen to them.
- Concerned for staffing changes, trust for local staff is important.
- Will any new providers retain existing staff?
- Will I have the same carer?

Throughout the calls process, staff felt that generally clients and their supporting family members understood and acknowledged the issues in which the national reforms are aiming to address. Scepticism for positive impacts in the short term particularly were of great concern however, with many comments seeking assurance from Council for a means of support during the period of change for existing clients. There were some comments which reflected a level of trust for a Council provided service, whilst others felt they were comfortable to 'see how it goes' and hope that what is being proposed is in fact a positive reality for a rural area in which there has only ever been one choice of provider.

Future providers:

Consistent commentary from clients revealed that the most common concern was the potential discontinuation of individual services. Other concerns discussed included privatisation and the impact of the new program structure.

Examples of commentary themes repeated:

- "As long as services continue" (most common comment made throughout process)
- Too many services are being centralised, local decision-making is being lost
- Who will the likely new providers be?
- I would prefer things to remain the same
- I am comfortable with the direction
- I went to the local meeting and they explained things well
- I read the letter, I have no concerns
- I went to the local meeting, I don't think some of the examples used were common experiences
- Will there be more than one provider?
- How will we contact the provider for any required changes?
- I've heard this is not working well in other areas
- Service provision should stay with Council
- What will happen to TAC clients?
- Success will depend on who the provider is.
- Will prices be impacted under new providers?
- Will we have to find our own service?

Another clear theme of concern raised throughout the discussions held with clients was the Meals on Wheels program. The prospect of a change towards frozen meals was consistently raised as a major concern to clients and families.

Examples of commentary themes repeated:

- Are they changing to frozen meals? – I don't want that
- The meals we get now are good, we don't want frozen meals
- Getting large amounts of frozen meals dropped off won't work for older people, of whom many don't have microwave ovens.
- Are the meals on wheels services being cut?
- We need to continue meals on wheels from the hospitals
- We need to maintain the quality and standard of meals provided.

Council Advocacy:

Consistent themes surrounding concern for a loss of local decision making and input for servicing local people was evident.

Examples of commentary themes repeated:

- I am concerned about privatisation and potential service cuts in rural areas
- Will services remain funded
- I am worried about the impact of funding on what we pay
- I hope privatisation does not impact quality
- It's important to have local control, I am worried about services moving away from the Council
- Decisions are being made in Melbourne for country communities
- How will the needs of rural and remote areas be met under the new program?
- I am worried that too much service centralisation is taking local decision making away
- I am strongly against any changes and value the existing service

The financial barriers for Council's ability to undertake service provision under the new program was widely understood by a majority of clients and family members upon discussion. Many had not considered the ratepayer subsidy that has previously been applied in conjunction with funding and client fees. Many raised concerns for client fee levels under the new program and a desire for Council to play a large role in advocacy by assisting future and existing clients to access new providers and then ensure there is accountability for those providers to maintain high standards.

Engagement and feedback from staff and unions

Staff have been kept informed through group meetings and individual follow up sessions upon request. A standing offer of support through Council's Employee Assistance Program has been made to all affected staff.

- Two meetings were held for all staff within the Service Provision department.
- Staff received an information pack including a letter and frequently asked questions sheet outlining the situation
- Individual phone calls were made to any staff unable to attend the first staff meeting
- Meetings consisted of sharing of information regarding Council's processes to date and how a potential decision may impact staff and clients, along with broader community. Questions were strongly encouraged throughout these meetings.
- A letter was sent to the union representatives extending an invitation for consultation and feedback.
- Executive and Managerial staff were informed by the project Manager and project Sponsor over an online platform meeting following the initial meeting with service provision staff.
- An all staff email was sent out to all staff within the organisation outlining the in-principle decision and consultation process, along with relevant project staff to discuss any further enquiries with.

Examples of commentary themes repeated:

- The availability for work within the industry through different providers.
- Some staff have expressed that they are not confident they will be engaged by new providers.
- Staff expressed a concern for accuracy in having to discuss the National Reforms and the new changes proposed by the Federal Government to clients through day-to-day work and interactions with clients.
- Staff expressed a desire to maintain connection with existing clients. Service and client continuity will be a priority in the transition process.
- Most staff are reassured they are valued workers and would be an asset to any provider.

Staff consultation reflected a strong desire for a client focussed approach to limit the impact of the hardships of change and support community and clients to adapt to the new program into the future. As is the nature of care-giving, staff within the Buloke Shire Council's service provision team were responsive to the information provided and proactively sought clarification on areas that were unclear in order to better explain and support their clients at this time. The impacts of localised staff in times of

emergency and sever strain were also topics of discussion. Covid -19 for instance was a particularly trying period for staff in this field, however the social connection and appreciation for the services provided has had a long lasting effect upon staff that reaffirms their selfless priorities.

Engagement and feedback from community

Council officers conducted 6 public information sessions across the municipality, offered consultation through existing communication channels and prioritised direct communication via phone. Customer service staff were provided information and were able to assist in the appropriate management of privacy control. Council wrote letters to groups of community, including Community forum groups, volunteer groups as well as Council's own Meals on Wheels volunteer base. Regular stakeholder meetings were attended and discussions were extended as point of relevance and updating community members where ever possible. These included the Buloke Disability Support network and associated stakeholders, sporting groups and volunteers, senior citizens members and local neighbourhood houses.

Examples of commentary themes repeated:

- Consistency of service provision – ensuring vulnerable community members were not left without support.
- New providers – who are they likely to be, what would the standard reflect, how would the price be impacted.
- Meals on Wheels, the standard of food should be maintained.
- Meals on Wheels, the volunteer base and social interaction between these volunteers and vulnerable clients is an essential service and is often the only interaction some people may have for the day.
- Access to a vulnerable person's list for times of emergency – how will council support people without that access in future
- Staff do a valuable service for community and should be well supported by Council
- Rate payer subsidy should not be required, considered 'double-dipping'
- How will Council support community in future?
- Can Council influence the decision for new providers?
- How could a transition process be managed?
- When would an exit for service realistically be?
- What discussions have Council had with other surrounding Councils who are also reviewing their position or who have previously exited service?

The discussions with general community members and groups were consistent with many themes identified by clients and staff in addition. There was greater general awareness for economic opportunity identified under the new program model within the community consultation sessions. In many cases a need for optimism to support anxiety and stress associated to major proposed changes for vulnerable community members was agreeable by many in attendance.

RISK MANAGEMENT

A comprehensive risk and community impact analysis has been completed for Buloke Shire Council; the high-level risks associated with this decision have been considered in previous reports to Council.

Key risks previously identified include:

- There is a national shortage of qualified personal care workers, and this has impacted on the capacity of all Councils to sustain service delivery in recent years.
- Due to ongoing financial constraints Council has operated its service model with minimum administrative and management support. This presents as a growing compliance risk due to increasing requirements under national aged care standards.

- Council has previously operated under monopoly conditions with financial and operational certainty provided by block-funding. A move to a demand-led service with client choice and control will introduce unacceptable commercial and financial risk for Council.
- Council would need to invest significant public funds with a very high degree of uncertainty and increased risk to potentially operate in the new Support at Home program. This would also include potentially taking on clinical governance responsibilities that it has never had experience in.

No additional material risks have been identified through consultation and engagement. In making this decision, Council is committed to ensuring that transition related risks are identified on an ongoing basis and addressed in a timely and responsive manner.

RELEVANT LAW AND POLICY

Commonwealth Policy

The Commonwealth took full policy, funding, and commissioning responsibility for an integrated aged care program in August 2011 and has proceeded to implement a range of reforms based on very consistent design principles. The Commonwealth is seeking to design and deliver a nationally consistent consumer centred, integrated, and flexible aged care system that meets the needs of all older Australians.

National Competition Policy

A constraint on Council decision making is the application of National Competition Policy to Local Government in Victoria. The Commonwealth is more than likely to apply market principles to a future Home Support service model and that National Competition Policy and Competitive Neutrality Principles would therefore apply to Local Government operations.

Competitive Neutrality Principles apply to the significant business activities of Councils and not to non-business or non-profit activities. The concept of 'significance' is defined on a case-by-case basis looking at the importance of competition in a specific market.

Given the Commonwealth is more than moving to a market-based model for delivery of future services, it is reasonable to assume that there will be a high degree of focus on ensuring the market is not distorted or disrupted by government subsidised activity.

There is a mandated 'public interest test' that must be undertaken if Council wishes to continue to provide services that are subsidised in competition with other 'not-for-profit' and 'for-profit' providers. There is no viable or significant public interest in Council continuing to be a provider in competition with more efficient and more effective non-government providers.

Industrial obligations

Council has industrial obligations to staff to ensure notification of change and consultation and engagement on significant decisions that impact the workplace.

The changes anticipated by this in-principle decision will trigger these obligations and therefore Council must be clear on its position around engagement of staff and notification of unions.

A final decision to exit the program will trigger redundancy provisions of the Enterprise Agreement, exploration of redeployment opportunities and payment of retrenchment packages for affected staff.

An industrial risk that Council must be aware of is transfer of business, this is where a Council seeks to transfer its funding agreement directly to another local provider through a sub-contracting or partnership arrangement. A transfer of business occurs where work, operations, employees, and assets transfer from one entity to another. The implications include that some, or all the employment

conditions (wage rates, enterprise agreement, flexibility arrangements etc) of the original employer can, in some circumstances transfer to the new employer.

For a “transfer of business” to occur it relies on whether a range of requirements are satisfied, these include:

- employees transfer between the two entities within a 3-month period,
- employees are terminated by the old employer,
- the work is the same or substantially the same as with the old employer, and
- there is an association between the old employer and the new employer.

The risk of a transfer of business is considered much higher in a sub-contracting arrangement as compared with an arrangement where a service agreement is terminated, employees paid retrenchment benefits and service agreement terminated with the Commonwealth.

Human Rights

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council will have resolved to participate in the former Home & Community Care (HACCC) Program in the mid-1980s.

Council resolved on an in-principle basis to transition out of all funded home and community home support services in February 2023. This triggered public transparency and industrial obligations to consult with community and staff. At this time, Council also supported the use of a set of Principles and Values (as per Appendix one) prepared for use in the consultation and decision making related to this matter.

This report now provides feedback from the comprehensive consultation process for Council consideration.

OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO COUNCIL

The following options are available to Council.

Option 1 – Transition out of direct service delivery and focus on broader policy

This option is recommended as being in the public interest and aligned with Council’s broader obligations to the community.

Council understands that Commonwealth policy is moving towards a consistent national integrated aged care system and that this will require more efficient providers who can deliver services across a broad spectrum of needs.

The decision to transition out of its long-term commitment to service delivery is a significant decision and not taken lightly. Council has an obligation to resource and support an effective transition for clients and staff.

Council will proactively manage an effective transition out of service delivery and ensure that all clients (and especially those clients that are vulnerable or at risk of social isolation) are provided with support.

Council accepts its moral and industrial obligations to all staff affected by this decision.

Council will effectively manage the transition and simultaneously shift focus from service delivery as its primary role to investment in broader age-friendly and positive ageing policy initiatives that are aligned with its health and wellbeing obligations.

Option 2 – Resolve to remain as a CHSP and HACC-PYP service provider until 30 June 2024

If Council does not resolve on the officer recommendation it will retain its service agreements and continue to deliver funded services until the new Support at Home Program initiates in July 2024.

Council will therefore accept that it will either:

- (a) Transition as part of a wholesale program transition with remaining councils in 2024, or
- (b) Review the possibility of being a provider under the future support at Home Program.

This option is not recommended for the following reasons:

- The Commonwealth has indicated that it prefers to work with providers who have a commitment to transitioning into Support at Home during the 2023/24 financial year
- Council will have little influence and control over the effect and mode of transition to the new program
- Council will continue to be challenged by service and business continuity challenges, and
- The costs of transition and operational barriers to becoming an effective provider under Support at Home are prohibitive.

It is anticipated that amended program and service agreement requirements have been implemented for the 2023/24 financial year and there will be a need for additional investment in business systems and administrative support.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are limited environmental sustainability implications associated with this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS

Council's in-principle decision triggered a comprehensive communications and consultation exercise; this included:

- Clients and families were informed via a physical letter (and FAQ sheet) that Council is commencing a decision process and were provided with contact details in which to raise any questions or concerns during the process.
- Clients were phoned directly as a further point of direct consultation to discuss the contents of the letter and help clarify any questions or concerns and record any feedback they wished to pass onto Council.
- A proactive media engagement strategy to explain the rationale for Council's decision, the intended process, and long-term benefits for the community.
- The Australian Services Union, acting as the industrial representatives of staff have been advised of the intention of Council to make an in-principle determination on this matter.
- Council officers hosted 6 Community Drop In Sessions, recording feedback and offering a 'Q&A' approach style public meeting.
- A comprehensive 'Frequently Asked Questions' document were made available via Council's website and customer service centres.
- Community Forum groups received a letter outlining the in-principle decision and inviting them to further engage in the consultation process.
- Community meals-on-wheels volunteers received a letter outlining the in-principle decision and inviting them to further engage in the consultation process.
- A number of additional stakeholder meetings were held or attended to outline the process and obtain feedback.

A summary of outcomes from consultation is included in this report.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS MOVEMENT

The ability to adapt to changing circumstances is essential for contemporary government.

The national aged care reforms are being driven by very significant demographic changes and the desire for an affordable and consistent national aged care system.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

This report has significant financial implications for Council.

The ongoing ratepayer subsidy (calculated at an average of \$250,000 per year) is not required to deliver Commonwealth policy objectives of an integrated aged care program to support older people to live independently in the Buloke community.

Council will need to commit resources to support an effective transition process, this has been estimated over the next 12 to 18 months.

Industrial obligations to staff in the form of redundancy payments have been estimated and will remain confidential to protect the privacy of relevant staff.

It is recommended that Council's Audit Committee receive a review report at the end of the transition process that summarises all costs and addresses lessons learnt.

REGIONAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

The policy and service reforms in disability and aged care have been driven at the national level for the past decade.

The implications of the reforms have been discussed in previous reports.

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

The *Local Government Act 2020* includes service performance principles that mandate that Council services must be responsive to changing needs and emerging trends. This decision is reflective of the radically changed policy environment, anticipates the future design of the Support at Home, and outlines a course of action that will be in the best interests of the community.

TRANSPARENCY

Council has met its transparency obligations by ensuring this final decision has been informed by appropriate client, community, staff, and other stakeholder consultation.

Council officers have engaged with Commonwealth and Victorian government agencies to provide notice and advice of the decision-making process.

Council by taking this confirming decision will trigger a comprehensive communications and consultation exercise; this will include:

- Clients and families will be informed of Council's decision will be provided with information and a priority contact number to raise any questions or concerns during the process.
- A proactive media engagement strategy to explain the rationale for Council's decision, the transition process, and long-term benefits for the community.
- Staff and union, acting as the industrial representatives of staff will be advised of the determination on this matter. An offer to establish a staff working group will be made to ensure clear communication throughout the transition process.

- Council officers will host an information and 'Q & A' session for the general community following Council determination on this matter.
- A comprehensive 'Frequently Asked Questions' document will be updated and made available via Council's website and customer service centres.

COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 & POLICY LINKAGES

1. Our community wellbeing

Council's transition from being a provider of home support services will potentially strengthen its capacity to invest in positive ageing and health and wellbeing initiatives for older citizens.

Council will continue to play a strong advocacy role to ensure older residents have access to quality aged care services and in not being a provider will be able to take a more active planning and coordination role.

Council will have a future focus on adaptation of universal services (recreation, leisure, libraries, open space etc) to meet the needs of older citizens and people with a disability.

Council will take a strengths-based approach to managing transitions and seek to empower clients, families, and staff in their engagement with the implementation of the decision.

It is in the interests of the Commonwealth and Buloke Shire to have a diverse range of home support and aged care providers servicing regional needs. The aged care system is much larger than home support services and future providers can bring additional benefits and investment.

2. Our economy

It is in the interests of the Commonwealth and Buloke Shire to have a diverse range of home support and aged care providers servicing regional needs. The aged care system is much larger than home support services and future providers can bring additional benefits and investment.

Future providers will deliver across aged care planning regions (8 to 10 LGAs) and deliver services to meet entry-level to complex care needs.

3. Our built and natural environment

Council will focus on ensuring future infrastructure meets the needs of older people and people with a disability in its community.

4. Our Council and community leadership

Under the former HACC program Council had a strong history in delivery of integrated services to its community.

Government reforms, creation of the NDIS and future Support at Home program have challenged this role and Council must now plan for its future policy objectives and potential role.

The Local Government Act 2020 includes service performance principles that mandate that Council services must be responsive to changing needs and emerging trends. This decision is reflective of the radically changed policy environment, anticipates the future design of the Support at Home, and outlines a course of action that will be in the best interests of the community.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no general or material interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

APPENDIX ONE – PRINCIPLES AND VALUES**Communication**

- Council will be timely in all communications and will ensure that all people affected by a decision will have information provided including the rationale and drivers for all decisions.
- Council will provide information (i.e., dates and times) on decision processes to all stakeholders to ensure transparency and opportunity to participate.
- Open and transparent communication between all parties will underpin the partnership and build trust and confidence.

For clients

- If Council determines to change its role in relation to aged care services, the needs of clients will be the highest priority for Council through any future transition process.
- The Council and the Council administration understand the profound nature of the decision and will ensure that the highest standards of professional behaviour and ethics are applied to managing the implementation and limiting the negative impact.
- The individual needs of all clients will be understood and considered during the transition process. It is recognised that some clients will need additional support during the transition process and Council will ensure that special attention is paid to protecting the rights of vulnerable clients.
- Council will act as an advocate for the needs of all clients and will ensure that additional resources are provided to hear and respond to individual, or group needs during transition and an appropriate time following the date of transition.
- Council will ensure that clients are provided with high quality information before, during and after transition and individual private consultations if required.

For staff

- Council values the contribution of all staff and recognises the commitment made to deliver high quality home support services to the Buloke community.
- Council understands the unique relationship that develops between carers and clients and will work towards ensuring the continuity of this relationship where possible.
- Council will identify and implement readiness activities and support that will ensure workers are prepared for the transition process.
- Council will establish a transition working group involving affected staff (and their representatives) to ensure the effective two-way flow of information.
- Council will meet all industrial obligations and will ensure investments are made to provide staff with the support and skills they need to make an effective transition to future work or retirement depending on their individual circumstances.

For the successor provider

- Council will work constructively with the appointed provider to ensure that the service transition occurs in a way that protects the interests of clients, families of clients, staff, and the broader community.

- Council will ensure that quality client and service information will be provided to the appointed provider(s) to inform decisions during the transition process.

For community

- Council will make decisions that are in the best interests of the broader community, this will include understanding the financial, economic, social, health and wellbeing implications of any decision.
- Council will act as an advocate for the needs of the community and will hold accountable Commonwealth and State Governments and the appointed home support providers for the delivery of quality services to the Buloke community.

8.2.3 DELEGATION OF FIRE SERVICES PROPERTY LEVY PAYMENT

Author's Title: Director Corporate and Organisation Performance

Department: Corporate and Organisational Performance **File No:**

Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025

Strategic Objective: Our Council and Community Leadership

PURPOSE

To delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to approve the legislated payment of the Fire Services Property Levy to the State Revenue Office up to value of \$725,000 (excluding GST)

SUMMARY

As legislated by the *Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012*, Council collects fire services property levies in conjunction with its rates and charges on behalf of the State Government. Every quarter Council makes a statutory payment to the State Revenue Office of levies collected. The required payment of \$720,425.67 (excluding GST) for the third quarter of the 2022/2023 financial year lies outside the Chief Executive Officer's delegation under the *Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer*. As such, a recommendation is made to Council to delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to facilitate this legislated payment.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council delegate to the Chief Executive Officer the authority to approve payment of the Fire Services Property Levy to the State Revenue Office up to the value of \$725,000 (excluding GST) for quarter three of the 2022/2023 financial year.

Attachments: Nil

DISCUSSION

The fire services property levy is a legislated payment that Council collects on behalf of the State Revenue Office (SRO). Property owners pay an annual levy via council rates to support emergency services. The levy is collected by local councils and generally appears on rate notices. Every quarter, Council makes a payment of collected levies to the SRO.

Prior to the introduction of the fire services property levy, Victoria's fire services were funded by financial contributions from insurance companies, the State Government and metropolitan councils. Insurance companies recovered the cost of their contributions by imposing a fire services levy on insurance premiums.

One of the findings of the 2009 Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission was that this model for fire services funding was inequitable, lacked transparency and discouraged some owners from insuring or fully insuring their property due to the additional cost the levy imposed on premiums. As a result, the Commission recommended that the insurance-based fire services levy be replaced with a property-based levy which would require all property owners, not just those with adequate insurance, to contribute to fire services funding.

On 28 August 2012, the Victorian Government announced that it would implement the Commission's recommendation. The *Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012* (the Act) was developed to establish the legal framework for the new fire services property levy. The Act received Royal Assent on 16 October 2012 and has imposed a levy on land in Victoria from 1 July 2013.

The levy for individual rate payers is calculated by a formula set by the State Government which takes into account a fixed charge and a variable rate. The variable rate is based on property classifications and capital improved values. Levy charges may also be eligible for concession discounts or exemptions based on certain criteria.

For quarter three of the 2022/2023 financial year, the required payment to the SRO of \$720,425.67 is outside the Chief Executive Officer's delegation as per the Section 1.2 of the current *Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer* which was endorsed by Council at its 12 October 2022 Council Meeting.

This report is seeking delegated authority for the Chief Executive Officer of Buloke Shire Council to administer this legislated payment on behalf of Council for quarter three of the 2022/2023 financial year.

RELEVANT LAW

Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council's Resolution at the 12 October 2022 Meeting to delegate to the person holding the position, or acting in or performing the duties, of Chief Executive Officer the powers, duties and functions set out in the *Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer*, subject to the conditions and limitations specified in that Instrument.

OPTIONS

Not Applicable – Council is legislated to make this payment to the SRO.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not Applicable

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not Applicable

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not Applicable

COLLABORATION

Not Applicable

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Not Applicable

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not Applicable

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not Applicable

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

The current Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer is available on Council's website. Endorsing this payment at a Council Meeting as it lies outside the Chief Executive Officer's delegation ensures transparency of financial and statutory processes.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No staff member involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest in this matter.

8.2.4 2023 CHANGING PLACES FUNDING ROUND

Author's Title: Capital Projects Officer

Department: Infrastructure and Delivery

File No: PR/04/37

Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025

Strategic Objective: Our Community Wellbeing

PURPOSE

This report is presented to Council for consideration of the \$200,000 from the Grant Opportunity Reserve FY23 for the purpose of a co-contribution in order to submit an application for the Changing Places Funding Round 2023. The Grant Opportunity Reserve FY23 was established to provide matching funds for unanticipated grant opportunities outside of the annual budget scope. A further recommendation seeks Council consideration to grant delegation of authority to the Chief Executive Officer to submit an application for the funding round. If successful, 100% of the fund from FY23 would be required to support the funding application.

SUMMARY

The Changing Places funding round 2023 provides funding of up to \$180,000 per toilet facility. Applications close on 14 April 2023.

Priority will be given to applications from local government areas which do not have an existing Changing Places facility within their municipality. Buloke Shire Council currently does not have a Changing Places facility within the municipality, the closest being located in Kerang, Horsham and Bendigo.

Applications will be required to demonstrate an identified need from people with disability, their families, friends, and carers for a Changing Places facility in their local community and provide evidence of the extent of local support for the proposed facility.

The Changing Places facility must be completed within 18 months of receiving formal funding approval. The funder has not indicated when successful applicants will be notified; for planning purposes it has been assumed that an announcement will be made by 30 June 2023.

The Changing Places facility must be maintained in a safe condition, kept in good repair and be available for use for a minimum period of 5 years.

The proposed Changing Places facility is recommended to be located within the Memorial Park, Park Street, Donald.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council:

1. Approve a financial co-contribution of \$200,000 from the Grant Opportunity Reserve FY23 for the purposes of a funding application towards the Changing Places Funding Round 2023;
2. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to apply for the Changing Places funding round 2023; and
3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to sign the funding agreement on behalf of the Council should the application be successful.

- Attachments:**
- 1 [Changing Places Project Details](#)
 - 2 [Changing Places Funding Round Guidelines 2023](#)

DISCUSSION

Changing Places are larger than standard accessible toilets with extra features and more space to meet the needs of people with a disability and their carers. Each facility has a height adjustable adult sized change table, a ceiling tracking hoist system, a central (peninsula) toilet with grab rails either side, and additional space for two or more carers to assist a person with high support needs to utilise a bathroom safely and with dignity.

Creating a network of truly accessible public toilets across Victoria will support the 326,400 Victorians with high support needs to participate in their local community and access recreational and tourist attractions, parks, community spaces, entertainment, and sporting venues.

Donald Memorial Park has been identified as an appropriate location for a Changing Places toilet facility to complement the upcoming play space installation which is designed to cater for all abilities.

It is recommended that the facility would be best located in a position which is visible and easily accessible from the play spaces, seating and BBQ shelter areas. The project will also incorporate 'make-good' works in order to complete the functionality of the facility, including off street parking and footpaths linking the existing infrastructure and the adjoining bowling club. The existing toilet block within the park does not include an accessible cubicle and is due for replacement.

Costings are based on an estimate obtained for a modular prefabricated building which would include 1 Changing Places cubicle, 1 Accessible Unisex cubicle and 3 Ambulant Unisex cubicles. A Changing Places facility does not act as an Accessible cubicle; if additional non-accessible cubicles are to be included in the facility, a Changing Places and an Accessible cubicle must be included. The total project costings include demolition of the existing toilet block, an electrical upgrade, sewer and water connection, carpark, footpath and fencing improvements.

RELEVANT LAW

The facility must be built and accredited as a Changing Places facility, to be called a Changing Places toilet in accordance with the *Changing Places Design Specification 2020*. The *Building Act 1993* and regulations, the *National Construction Code 2019* and all other applicable laws and standards will also have application in the proposed project.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

A Changing Places toilet facility has been identified within the Buloke Shire Council Advocacy Strategy 2022-23 with the location proposed for Donald Memorial Park.

Contract No. C114 2021/22 Buloke Playspace Trail Construction works was awarded at the Council meeting Wednesday, 8 February 2023 which includes the improvements to the play space at Donald Memorial Park.

OPTIONS

The Council may elect not to pursue this funding opportunity.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The proposed modular facility will incorporate sustainable designs features including utilising natural lighting and ventilation, high efficiency water fixtures and lighting. The modular building will also enable Council to reuse and recycle any materials in the future.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In a 2019 survey published by the Victorian Government's Department of Health and Human Services, parks and gardens were identified as the sixth most popular location of which Changing Places toilet facilities are required the most in Victoria and Australia (out of 17 preferences listed).

Council Officers have consulted with the Donald Memorial Park play space project advisory group, the President of the 'Donald 2000' community forum and Committee Members of the adjoining Donald Bowling Club, all of which are supportive of the location and scope of works proposed for the Changing Places facility. Local members of the Buloke Shire Council Disability Support Network have also been consulted and are supportive of Council pursuing an application for the Changing Places Funding Round 2023.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Australia has become the first country in the world to regulate for adult change facilities in its building code. From 1 May 2019, the National Construction Code (NCC 2019) requires a new type of public toilet called 'Accessible Adult Change Facilities' – based on the Changing Places design – to be included in certain classes of public buildings such as:

- Shopping Centres
- Sports stadiums and swimming pools
- Theatres and museums
- Domestic and international airports

Facility managers will be given the option to have their accredited Changing Places facility listed on the National Public Toilet Map. 248 Changing Places are listed Australia wide to date.

COLLABORATION

Landowners consent will be required from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action to undertake the proposed works. However, it is not expected that a LUAA will be necessary as toilet blocks are listed as an advisory activity.

All Changing Places must be approved by a Changing Places Assessor. The accreditation process ensures the Changing Places' facilities are built to standard so that users can be confident that the design is fit for purpose.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The total budget forecast for the project is \$467,480 comprising \$180,000 funding from the State Government and \$287,480 from Council Cash. \$200,000 of this allocation would be taken from the Grant Opportunity Reserve FY23 and \$87,480 would not be expended until FY25 with an anticipated construction completion date in late 2024. \$40,300 has been included as a contingency amount for the project. Ongoing maintenance requirements will be higher than the existing toilet block due to additional mechanical equipment which requires regular servicing, these costs will be offset somewhat by efficiency improvements in the new building.

The existing toilet block would be demolished once the new facility has been constructed and this has been included in the project budget.

It is noted the total cost of the Changing Places facility can rise or fall if the number of Ambulant Unisex cubicles is increased or decreased.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Creating communities that are welcoming and inclusive underpins Victoria's current plan for making things fairer for people with disability, Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan (2022–2026). The plan is a

keyway for the Victorian Government to be accountable for making all parts of the community inclusive and accessible for everyone.

The Victorian Government to date has committed funding to build 70 Changing Places in key locations across the state and will expand the network by another 11 facilities in the 2023 funding.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

1. Our Built and Natural Environment

Long term aspiration: Accessible buildings and spaces.

Long term strategies:

- Maintain, develop and plan for viable, multi-use infrastructure and assets that respond to community needs and priorities.
- Enhance parks and public spaces so they are welcoming, safe and accessible to encourage active recreation and participation.
- Improve accessibility to buildings and public facilities for all community members.

The proposal addresses key elements and actions from the Buloke Shire Inclusiveness Plan whilst also complimenting the outcomes of the Playspace Masterplan. The adjoining bowling club membership will support the facility as a multi-use asset in addition to the community based public park access.

2. Our Community Wellbeing

Long term aspiration: A well connected and inclusive community that is welcoming of diversity.

Long term strategies:

- Create and support opportunities that encourage community wellbeing, social connections and inclusion and active and healthy lifestyles.

The proposal will allow much greater opportunity for community based events to promote inclusivity in public open spaces and recreational activity that may be supported through the availability of appropriate facilities.

3. Our Council and Community Leadership

Long term aspiration: Active partnerships and good communication with Council.

Long term strategies:

- Partner with community and town forums and other key groups to advance agreed community planning priorities and address emerging issues.

The proposal demonstrates a collaborative approach between community forum, sporting/recreation-based groups and community members with special needs in order to achieve an outcome with highly beneficial long-term effects for the broader Buloke local government area.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council has met its transparency obligations by ensuring consultation has been undertaken with relevant stakeholders within the Donald community.

Council officers have engaged with the Donald Playspace project advisory group, the President of Donald 2000, Committee members of the Donald Bowling Club and a Donald local member of the Buloke Disability Support Network to seek support and feedback regarding the project proposal.

If Council resolve to accept the recommendations to access the required Council funds and apply for this Changing Places grant program 2023, officers will:

- Establish a formal project advisory group for the Changing Places facility project

- Undertake a proactive media engagement strategy to explain the rationale for Council's decision, the application process, and long-term benefits for the community if successful.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have been required to declare a conflict of interest.

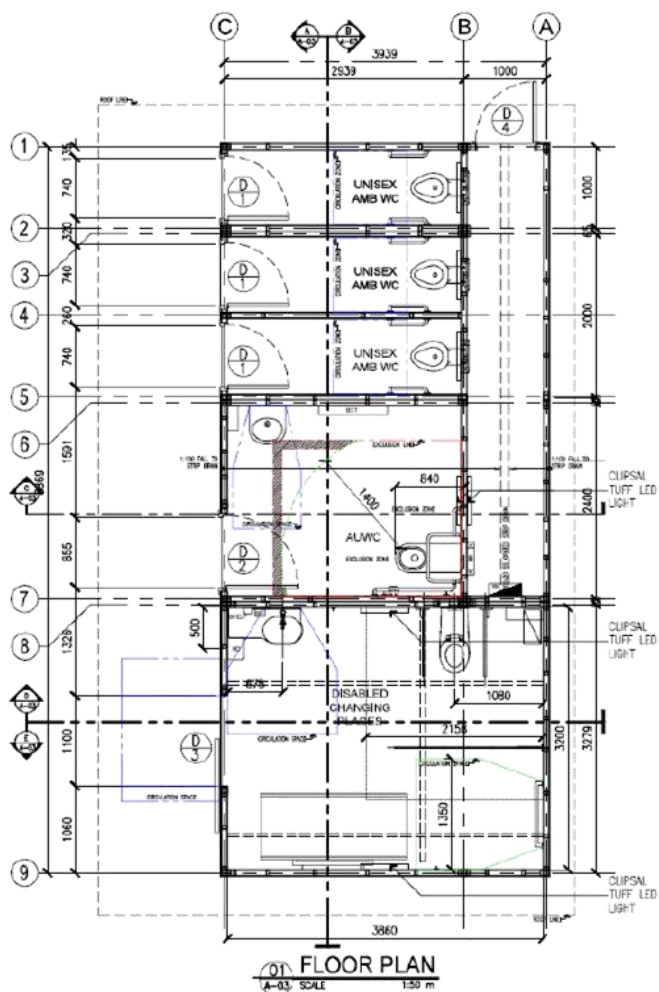
Forecast Budget

Activity Description	2023-24	2024-25	Total
Modular toilet block	314586.21	10413.79	325000.00
Demolition existing toilet block		20000.00	20000.00
Carpark & footpath		30000.00	30000.00
Sewer & water connection	3000.00		3000.00
Fence		15000.00	15000.00
Electrical Upgrade	10000.00		10000.00
Total	327586.21	75413.79	403000.00
Estimated Cost	2023-24	2024-25	Total
Project Cost	327586.21	75413.79	403000.00
Project Management Cost 6%	19655.17	4524.83	24180.00
Project Contingency 10%	32758.62	7541.38	40300.00
Total	380000.00	87480.00	467480.00
Grant (Title)	180000.00		180000.00
Council (Financial)	200000.00	87480.00	287480.00
Total Source of Funds	380000.00	87480.00	467480.00

Predicted timeline (noting that announcement date of funding has not been confirmed)

Name	Start	Finish
Project Initiation	9/01/2023	4/08/2023
Concept Evaluation	9/01/2023	1/02/2023
Stakeholder Engagement	17/03/2023	14/04/2023
Initial Design	1/02/2023	22/02/2023
Budget Quotes	23/02/2023	1/03/2023
Regulatory Approvals	28/03/2023	4/08/2023
DELWP	28/03/2023	13/04/2023
DDWCAC	3/07/2023	4/08/2023
Grant Applications	17/03/2023	30/06/2023
Prepare & Submit	17/03/2023	14/04/2023
Announcement	14/04/2023	30/06/2023
Procurement	3/07/2023	22/12/2023
Draft RFT	3/07/2023	4/09/2023
Review RFT	4/09/2023	11/09/2023
Advertise RFT	16/09/2023	25/10/2023
Evaluate RFT	26/10/2023	18/11/2023
Award RFT	18/11/2023	13/12/2023
Negotiate & Sign Contract	14/12/2023	22/12/2023
Planning	8/01/2024	1/04/2024
Final Design	8/01/2024	1/03/2024
Soil Tests	8/01/2024	2/02/2024
Construction Drawings	29/01/2024	1/03/2024
Building Permit	4/03/2024	1/04/2024
Construction	1/03/2024	30/09/2024
Fabricate building components/orderparts	1/03/2024	13/05/2024
Induct Company & Workers	13/05/2024	31/05/2024
Site Establishment	3/06/2024	14/06/2024
Site Prep	17/06/2024	15/07/2024
Construction Works	15/07/2024	23/08/2024
Defect Resolution	26/08/2024	30/09/2024
Project Closure	30/09/2024	2/12/2024
Grant Acquittal	30/09/2024	4/11/2024
Capitilisation	4/11/2024	2/12/2024

Proposed Floorplan



Proposed Location



Changing Places Funding Round 2023

Guidelines

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Families,
Fairness
and Housing

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Changing Places funding round 2023 guidelines**2**

To receive this document in another format, phone (03) 9456 3602, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or [email Advocacy & Universal Design team](mailto:email.Advocacy&UniversalDesign.team@changingplaces@dffh.vic.gov.au) <changingplaces@dffh.vic.gov.au>

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<https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/changing-places>

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Minister's foreword



The Victorian Government continues to make things fairer for people with disability, creating communities that are welcoming and inclusive.

We are working with Victorian Councils, not-for-profit organisations and tourism operators to tackle barriers and discriminatory attitudes that people with disability experience daily.

We are continuing our commitment to deliver Changing Places – accessible public toilets and changerooms for people with additional needs. Out of 248 Changing Places across Australia, Victoria has 113 across our State.

Creating a network of accessible public toilets and changerooms across Victoria will support the 326,400 Victorians with high support needs to participate in their local community, and access recreational and tourist attractions, parks, community spaces, entertainment, and sporting venues.

Changing Places make a very real difference to people's lives. Victoria initiated construction of these public toilets and changerooms in Australia, and continues to lead the way building more of these critical pieces of infrastructure nationally.

Our vision is to expand the network of Changing Places across every municipality, so that people can enjoy their local community, and visit all parts of our great state.

It gives me great pleasure to announce the 2023 Changing Places Funding Round to deliver Changing Places facilities in Victoria across two streams - local government and not for profit organisations, and popular tourism destinations and attractions. The funding round opens on 17 March 2023 and closes on 14 April 2023, with up to \$180,000 funded towards each facility.

I encourage Victorian local governments, not-for-profits/community organisations, and tourist attractions/destinations to apply so that together we can build on our reputation as the most accessible state.



Hon Lizzie Blandthorn MP
Minister for Child Protection and Family Services
Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers

Changing Places funding round 2023 guidelines

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What are Changing Places?

Changing Places are larger than standard accessible toilets with extra features and more space to meet the needs of people with a disability and their carers. Each facility has a height adjustable adult sized change table, a ceiling tracking hoist system, a central (peninsula) toilet with grab rails either side, and additional space for two or more carers to assist a person with high support needs to utilise a bathroom safely and with dignity. To be called a Changing Places toilet, the facility must be built and accredited as a Changing Places facility, in accordance with **the Changing Places Design Specification 2020**.

Originating in the United Kingdom in 2006, the Changing Places concept has now spread internationally, with Changing Places opening in several countries including Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, USA, and Germany.

The first Australian Changing Place opened in Victoria in 2014, and by 1 June 2022 there were 212 Changing Places across Australia, and 95 across Victoria with many more planned to open. For a current list of locations see the [Changing Places website](https://changingplaces.org.au/find) <<https://changingplaces.org.au/find>>

Australia is the first country in the world to regulate for public toilets based on the Changing Places design. The National Construction Code 2019 released by the Australian Building Code Board requires a new class of toilet called Accessible Adult Change Facilities, based on the Changing Places design, to be included in certain classes of public buildings.

From 1 May 2019, one unisex Accessible Adult Change Facility must be provided in:

- Class 6 buildings: shopping centres with a design occupancy of not less than 3,500
- Museums or art galleries (or similar buildings with a design occupancy of not less than 1,500
- Class 9b sports venues – with a design occupancy of not less than 35,000 or which contain a swimming pool that has a perimeter of not less than 70m
- Theatre and entertainment venues having a design occupancy of not less than 1,500 patrons
- Domestic and international passenger airports.

Toilets built according to the Changing Places design standards will generally meet the Deemed-to-Satisfy Provisions of the National Construction Code 2019.

Why is the Victorian Government funding more Changing Places facilities?

Creating communities that are welcoming and inclusive underpins Victoria's current plan for making things fairer for people with disability, **Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan (2022–2026)**. The plan is a keyway for the Victorian Government to be accountable for making all parts of the community inclusive and accessible for everyone.

The plan commits to implementing six systemic reform directions. Across the Victorian Government, all departments have agreed that over the next four years they will embed the six systemic reforms in their policies, programs, and services.

Accessible communication and Universal Design are one of the six systemic reform areas. Universal design principles such as 'equitable and flexible use' aim to ensure policies, programs and services are accessible to as many people as possible, inclusive of age, ability, gender identity, culture, language, and any other social characteristics.

Making infrastructure accessible to all Victorians is a key priority in the Victorian Infrastructure Plan, including taking a universal design approach to all future infrastructure development.

Creating a network of truly accessible public toilets across Victoria will support the 326,400 Victorians with high support needs to participate in their local community and access recreational and tourist attractions, parks, community spaces, entertainment, and sporting venues.

The Victorian Government to date has committed funding to build 70 Changing Places in key locations across the state and will expand the network by another 11 facilities in the 2023 funding round.

We know from surveys (including from the Changing Places Survey results downloaded from the [DFFH Service Providers – Disability – Changing Places page](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/changing-places) <<https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/changing-places>>) that Changing Places facilities are well utilised but there are still many locations where they don't exist and people would like to see a Changing Places built.

We want to fund Changing Places in the locations where people most want them, which is why the guidelines emphasise consultation with people with a disability.

The Changing Places funding round

The Changing Places funding round 2023 provides funding of up to \$180,000 per facility under two grant streams:

- Local government areas
- Popular tourism destinations to support post COVID-19 pandemic recovery and grow the Victorian accessible tourism economy

Submissions are limited to two applications per organisation and each submission must identify which stream they are applying for: Stream 1 – local government areas or Stream 2 – Tourism attractions and destinations.

Stream 1 – Local government areas

Stream 1 – Local government areas will provide grants to local government authorities and not for profit organisations to build a Changing Places toilet in their local community.

- Examples of eligible places and not for profit organisations include community centres and hubs including those used in emergency management (for example evacuation centres), libraries, community halls, Neighbourhood Houses, Men's Sheds, parks, gardens and playgrounds, not for profit committees of management appointed to manage public land or buildings such as foreshore committees of management.

Applicants need to:

- demonstrate an identified need from people with disability, their families, friends, and carers for a Changing Places facility in their local community and provide evidence of the extent of local support for the proposed Changing Places facility
- demonstrate the social, economic and accessibility benefits that a Changing Places facility will bring for people with disability
- build according to the Changing Places design specifications as outlined in **Changing Places Design Specifications 2020** which can be downloaded from the [Changing Places website](https://changingplaces.org.au/choose-your-design) <<https://changingplaces.org.au/choose-your-design>>
- ensure their Changing Places facility is accredited and listed on the Changing Places website and the National Public Toilet Map. The accreditation process is outlined in Appendix 1.

Stream 1 priority

Priority will be given to applications from local government areas

- which do not have a Changing Places within their municipality
- demonstrate an identified need from people with disability, their families, friends, and carers for a Changing Places facility in their local community and provide evidence of the extent of local support for the proposed Changing Places facility.

Stream 2 – Tourism Attractions and Destinations

Stream 2 – Tourism Attractions and Destinations will provide grants to build Changing Places facilities at popular Victorian tourist attractions and destinations across the state. Examples of eligible organisations and attractions include venues associated with beach locations, performing arts centres, theatres, art galleries and museums, nature-based tourism, First Peoples-led experiences, and attractions which are operated by one of the following:

Changing Places funding round 2023 guidelines

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- local government authorities and not for profit organisations (including but not limited to historical and heritage sites, cultural centres, galleries, museums, etc)
- local and state government entities (including but not limited to nature-based activity heads within local, state, and national parks and reserves, beachside locations etc)
- private sector commercial attractions (including but not limited to history and heritage sites, cultural centres, galleries, museums, iconic markets, theme parks, etc).

To be eligible, organisations must:

- be a local government authority incorporated body, cooperative or association or a registered company
- hold an ABN
- be financially solvent.

Applicants will need to:

- demonstrate that they are a popular tourism destination – such as provide visitor numbers or other local/regional tourism data
- demonstrate the social, economic and accessibility benefits that the Changing Places will bring for people with disability e.g., accessible tourism spend in the local community
- build according to the Changing Places design specifications as outlined in **Changing Places Design Specifications 2020** which can be downloaded from [Changing Places website](https://changingplaces.org.au/choose-your-design) <<https://changingplaces.org.au/choose-your-design>>
- ensure their Changing Places facility is accredited and listed on the Changing Places website and the National Public Toilet Map. The accreditation process is outlined in Appendix 1.

Stream 2 priority

Priority will be given to applications from tourism attractions and destinations that can:

- demonstrate high visitor patronage or other local/regional tourism data
- demonstrate an identified need from people with disability, their families, friends, and carers for a Changing Places facility
- demonstrate their commitment to access and inclusion with other accessible amenities such as accessible pathways and boardwalks, disabled parking bays, beach matting, beach wheelchairs, accessible viewing platforms etc
- illustrate details on the partnerships/program/activities for people with disability on offer if a Changing Places was available.

Mobile Changing Places

Consideration will be given to applicants seeking funding to construct a mobile Changing Places facility such as a Marveloo, Placeable or other portable toilet designs.

Applications for mobile facilities must include:

- a rationale as to why a mobile facility is preferred over a permanent Changing Places facility
- a schedule of anticipated events and festivals where the mobile facility will be in operation
- details of where the mobile facility is to be stored when not in use; and
- except for Marveloos and Placeable pods (which have approved designs), all applications seeking funding for portable toilets must include full construction drawings which have been reviewed by a Changing Places Assessor, with full costings for the works to be undertaken. Eligibility of any particular design will be established on the basis of the Assessor's findings and understanding of how the design relates to Changing Places standards.

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What are the funding conditions?

- The Changing Places facility must be completed within 18 months of receiving formal funding approval.
- Funding agreement:
 - Each organisation funded to build a Changing Places facility will sign a service agreement or common funding agreement with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (department). The service agreement and or common funding agreement specifies the funding amount, funding conditions and the agreed location and layout design of the Changing Places facility.
 - No funding will be released until the department and the applicant have executed the funding agreement and the appropriate milestone evidence identified in the funding agreement has been met. This includes confirmation of construction starting within the 18-month timeframe.
 - The department reserves the right to withhold payments in cases where there are concerns relating to the delivery of the project. In this instance, the department will release funding when appropriate actions have been taken to ensure the funded project will be delivered within the agreed timeframes.
- Recipients must reach agreement with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing on the location and layout of the Changing Places facility prior to the commencement of works.
- Recipients of Changing Places funding must build a Changing Places facility according to:
 - design specifications set out in the **Changing Places Design Specification 2020**, download from [Changing Places website](https://changingplaces.org.au/choose-your-design) <<https://changingplaces.org.au/choose-your-design>>
 - any planning permit/s issued for the works
 - the Building Act 1993 and regulations, the National Construction Code 2019 and all other applicable laws and standards.
- Project monitoring and delivery:
 - Funding recipients are required to comply with project monitoring and reporting requirements outlined in the funding agreement. Successful applicants must appoint a primary contact for all matters relating to reporting, monitoring and delivery. Successful applicants are responsible for project delivery, including any project cost overruns should they occur.
 - Progress reports (6 monthly project reports) and a final report will be requested throughout the life cycle of the funding agreement.
 - Successful applicants must also take full responsibility for the cost of ongoing operation and maintenance of any facilities through their asset management processes.
 - In cases where a project is delayed for an unreasonable length of time, or substantive changes to scope are made after funding has been approved, or where a project fails to be delivered, the department reserves the right to cancel the grant and, if applicable, recoup any payment that has already been provided.
 - A request to vary the timing of an approved project must be discussed with department prior to the submission of a variation request.
- Recipients must ensure the Changing Places facility is accredited and listed on the [Changing Places website](https://www.changingplaces.org.au) <www.changingplaces.org.au> and the [National Public Toilet Map](https://toiletmap.gov.au/) <<https://toiletmap.gov.au/>>
- Recipients are responsible for engaging a Changing Places Assessor and must advise the department when appointment has occurred.
- Recipients must advise the department when each of the three stages of accreditation has been achieved:
 - Stage 1: Schematic Design Review

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- Stage 2: Construction Documentation Review
- Stage 3: As Built Final Review
- Recipients must provide a copy of the Statement of Compliance when it has been issued.
- The Changing Places facility must be open to and accessible by the public during normal venue operating hours.
- The Changing Places facility must be maintained in a safe condition, kept in good repair and be available for use for a minimum period of five years.
- The Changing Places facility must be kept in a clean, sanitary, and hygienic condition with regular removal of waste for a minimum period of five years.
- Recipients must, upon written request, provide the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing with access to the Changing Places facility to inspect the progress of works for no less than five years from the completion of the Changing Places facility.
- In instances where the Changing Places facility is located at a pool or swimming complex, beach or waterfront location, design options **must** include a shower facility.

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How will applications be assessed?

Assessment Criteria

Applications for the Changing Places funding round 2023 will be assessed against three individual project assessment criteria and broader access and equity considerations. Percentage weightings are provided as a guide to the relative importance of each criterion.

Information contained in applications may be shared with other Victorian Government agencies to assist with cross government coordination.

Priority

Stream 1 – Local government areas

Priority will be given to applications that:

- are from a local government area where there are no other Changing Places facilities within that municipality (refer to appendix 1 list of local government areas without a Changing Places toilet)
- demonstrate an identified need from people with disability, their families, friends, and carers for a Changing Places facility in their local community and provide evidence of the extent of local support for the proposed Changing Places facility.

Stream 2 – Tourism Attractions and Destinations

Priority will be given to applications that:

- demonstrate high visitor patronage or other local/regional tourism data
- demonstrate an identified need from people with disability, their families, friends, and carers for a Changing Places facility
- demonstrate their commitment to access and inclusion with other accessible amenities such as accessible pathways and boardwalks, beach matting, accessible viewing platforms/areas and disabled parking bays.

Criterion 1 – Why do you want to build a Changing Places facility and how have you consulted with your local community? – 40%

Applicants will be required to demonstrate the extent to which the project addresses need identified by people with disability, their families and carers and provide evidence of the extent of local consultation and support for the project. Applicants will also need to identify the benefits delivered by the project to people with a disability and their local community.

And/or

Demonstrate the need for a Changing Places facility in their community which would enhance accessible tourism, whole of journey outcomes, emergency management/evacuation centres recovery planning and provide evidence of consultation and support for the proposed Changing Places facility.

Applications must:

- Provide evidence of assessing community needs such as Disability Action Plans, Toilet Strategies, Tourism Plans, Emergency Management and Economic Development plans or demographic data

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- Describe how you have consulted with people with disability in choosing this location for your Changing Places facility and demonstrate that the project location has support from the local community, including people with disabilities
- Provide evidence of community consultations such as advisory groups and forums, interviews, consultations, focus groups, and or results of any surveys including from [DFFH Service Providers – Disability – Changing Places page](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/changing-places) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/changing-places>
- Clearly identify the expected social, economic and accessibility benefits that the project will deliver to people with disability, their families, and carers in the community.

Criterion 2 – Where are you going to build your Changing Places facility? - 40%

Applicants must demonstrate that the site of their Changing Places facility meets the needs of people with disability, including compliance with the universal design approach, opening hours, accessibility, and ongoing maintenance.

Applications must:

- Demonstrate why this location is a good choice for building a Changing Places facility such as: popular local or tourist destination, proximity to other community facilities, complements other nearby accessible infrastructure, or that there are no other Changing Places nearby
- Illustrate why this site was selected in preference to other locations in their local community
- Demonstrate commitment to universal design principles including an overall site design which incorporates clear continuous accessible paths of travel to/from the facility and designated accessible parking bays situated within proximity.

Applications must also provide the following:

- A copy of the proposed site plan
- Information about proposed opening hours
- Information about how the public can access the facility. For example, if a Master Locksmith Access Key (MLAK) is utilised, provide details of how and where the public can borrow the key from a nearby venue. [Master Locksmith Access Key](https://masterlocksmiths.com.au/mlak/) <https://masterlocksmiths.com.au/mlak/>
- In instances where the Changing Places facility is in a beachside or waterfront location, design options **must** include a shower facility
- In instances where the Changing Places facility is part of a larger project such as the construction or refurbishment of an amenities block, or part of a new build such as a community centre, information must be provided about the larger project
- In instances where the site is not owned by the applicant, a copy of the relevant lease will need to be attached to your application.

Criterion 3 - How will you deliver your Changing Places project? - 20%

Applicants must provide evidence of their ability to deliver the project in a timely manner and within budget, including:

- Demonstrated experience or a sound approach to delivering the Changing Places project such as a Project Plan and strategies for successful completion
- Timelines for delivery of the project including project completion within 18 months from formal approval of funding
- A project budget detailing the income and expenditure for your project (excluding GST). In instances where the Changing Places facility is part of a larger project such as the construction

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or refurbishment of an amenities block, or part of a new build such as community centre, information must be provided about the larger project and an estimated total project cost

- The project budget should include how much funding you are seeking from the Changing Places funding round 2022 and the details of other income sources for the project if any, (excluding GST)
- A Communications Plan for promoting the Changing Places facility once it is open to people with a disability, their families and carers, and the local community
- A copy of your complaints handling process and evidence of how it will be implemented

Other access and equity considerations

The assessment panel will also consider broader access and equity considerations including:

- The geographic distribution of Changing Places projects across Victoria and where there are no other Changing Places facilities within that municipality
- The level of support and identified need for your Changing Places project in the local community as demonstrated by extensive consultation with people with disability, their families, friends, and carers
- Consistency with **Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan (2022–2026)** priorities and themes with particular focus on making the built environment usable for as many people as possible through the construction of Changing Places facilities.

What is the application process?

The Changing Places funding round 2023 will utilise the SmartyGrants grants on-line application process for the submission of applications. The application form is located on the [SmartyGrants Changing Places 2023 funding round webpage](https://cfr.smartygrants.com.au/CPFundingRound2023)

<<https://cfr.smartygrants.com.au/CPFundingRound2023>>

When commencing your application for Changing Places funding, you will be required to create a password protected login-in to access the application form.

For general information about SmartyGrants please refer to the [SmartyGrants webpage](https://smartygrants.com.au)

<<https://smartygrants.com.au>>.

Funding

Each organisation funded to build a Changing Places facility will sign a service agreement with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. The service agreement specifies the funding amount, funding conditions and the agreed location and layout design of the Changing Places facility.

Timelines

The Changing Places funding round 2023 opens on **17 March 2023** and closes on **14 April 2023**.

All applications must be:

- From an eligible agency (local government authorities (Victorian) and community not-for-profit organisations), registered company
- Endorsed by the Chief Executive Officer
- Submitted via the online SmartyGrants Portal and include relevant supporting documentation:
 - Proposed site plans

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- Project timelines
- Project budget
- Communications Plan
- Complaints handling process

Received no later than **14 April 2023**.

Receipt of applications will be acknowledged via email.

Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

Information session

An information session will be held as below:

- Date: 23 March 2023
- Time: 10.00am – 11.30am
- Platform: Microsoft Teams
- Register via Eventbrite: [Information Session - Victorian Changing Places funding round 2023](https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/2023-changing-places-funding-round-information-session-tickets-558474651717?keep_tld=1)
<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/2023-changing-places-funding-round-information-session-tickets-558474651717?keep_tld=1>.

Further Information

For more information about the Changing Places funding round 2023

<<https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/changing-places>>

Email [Changing Places](mailto:changingplaces@dffh.vic.gov.au) <changingplaces@dffh.vic.gov.au>.

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Glossary

Accessible Adult Change Facilities

Accessible Adult Change Facilities is a definition under the National Construction Code 2019 to describe sanitary facilities with additional features to assist people with complex disability who are unable to use standard accessible facilities independently. From 1 May 2019, one unisex Accessible Adult Change Facility must be provided in:

- Class 6 buildings: shopping centres with a design occupancy of not less than 3,500
- Museums or art galleries (or similar buildings with a design occupancy of not less than 1,500
- Class 9b sports venues – with a design occupancy of not less than 35,000 or which contain a swimming pool that has a perimeter of not less than 70m
- Theatre and entertainment venues having a design occupancy of not less than 1,500 patrons
- Domestic and international passenger airports.

Toilets built according to the Changing Places design standards will generally meet the Deemed-to-Satisfy Provisions of the National Construction Code 2019.

Accreditation

Funding recipients must engage a Changing Places Assessor. Assessors can be found on the [Changing Places Australia website](https://changingplaces.org.au/engage-an-assessor) <<https://changingplaces.org.au/engage-an-assessor>>.

The Changing Places Assessor must be engaged prior to the construction of a Changing Places facility to assess project documentation at the following three stages:

- Stage 1: Schematic design review
- Stage 2: Construction documentation review
- Stage 3: As-built final review.

Once a Changing Places Assessor has assessed a facility and is satisfied it meets the requirements of the **Changing Places Design Specification 2020**, they issue the venue owner with a Statement of Compliance.

Changing Places

Changing Places are larger than standard accessible toilets with extra features and more space to meet the needs of people with a disability and their carers. Each facility has a height adjustable adult sized change table, a ceiling tracking hoist system, a central (peninsula) toilet with grab rails either side, and additional space for two or more carers to assist a person with high support needs to utilise a bathroom safely and with dignity. Changing Places toilets are built to the design specification as outlined in the **Changing Places Design Specification 2020** downloadable from the [Changing Places website](https://changingplaces.org.au/choose-your-design) <<https://changingplaces.org.au/choose-your-design>>.

Only facilities that have been accredited can be listed as Changing Places facilities on the Changing Places Australia website listing, map of Changing Places in Australia, [Changing Places website](https://changingplaces.org.au/build-a-changing-places/register-your-facility) <<https://changingplaces.org.au/build-a-changing-places/register-your-facility>> and the [National Public Toilet Map](https://toiletmap.gov.au/) <<https://toiletmap.gov.au/>>.

Changing Places Australia website

The [Changing Places Australia website](https://changingplaces.org.au) <<https://changingplaces.org.au>> was originally developed and administered by the Association for Children with a Disability (ACD) and is currently managed by Think HQ, with oversight by the Department Families, Fairness and Housing. The website is the main information channel for the initiative in Australia and contains a list of all accredited Changing Places facilities, the **Changing Places Design Specification 2020**, design files, online registration and accreditation processes, news and contact information.

Changing Places Design Specification 2020

The **Changing Places Design Specification 2020** has been developed to assist architects, local councils, community not for profit organisations, developers, designers and facility managers with all the information required to build and maintain a Changing Places toilet. Download from the [Changing Places website](https://changingplaces.org.au/choose-your-design) <<https://changingplaces.org.au/choose-your-design>>

The **Changing Places Design Specification 2020** includes the approved design specifications and design layouts for Changing Places toilets in Victoria and Australia as well as other required information such as indicative design option costings, design files and layouts, guidelines for use, and door and key locking mechanisms.

Changing Places Surveys of 2016 and 2019

These two surveys were online surveys undertaken in 2016 and 2019 are downloadable from the [DFFH Service Providers – Disability – Changing Places page](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/changing-places) <<https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/changing-places>> seeking feedback from people with disability, their families and carers and the community about where Changing Places facilities are needed most.

Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan 2022-2026

Victoria's current plan for making things fairer for people with disability. The plan is a key way for the Victorian Government to be accountable for making all parts of the community inclusive and accessible for everyone. [Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan webpage](https://www.vic.gov.au/state-disability-plan) <<https://www.vic.gov.au/state-disability-plan>>

Master Locksmith Access Keys (MLAK)

Many Changing Places require a [Master Locksmiths Access Key](https://masterlocksmiths.com.au/mlak/) (MLAK) <<https://masterlocksmiths.com.au/mlak/>>. MLAKs have been fitted to many Changing Places across Australia, including:

- Council municipalities
- Sports and entertainment venues
- National parks
- Playground equipment – such as Liberty Swings.

The MLAK gives people with disability and their carers access to a network of facilities, seven days a week; including many Changing Places.

[Victorian Companion card holders FREE MLAK](https://masterlocksmiths.com.au/mlak-order-form-for-victorian-companion-card-holders/) <<https://masterlocksmiths.com.au/mlak-order-form-for-victorian-companion-card-holders/>>

Mobile Changing Places Facilities

Mobile Changing Places facilities incorporate many of the features of Changing Places and are available for hire for events and festivals. Examples of mobile facilities include the Marveloo and Placeable Pods.

National Construction Code

The National Construction Code 2019 provides the minimum necessary requirements for safety and health, amenity and accessibility, and sustainability as part of the design, construction, performance, and liveability of new buildings (and new building work in existing buildings) throughout Australia. It is a uniform set of technical provisions for public building work, plumbing and drainage installations throughout Australia whilst allowing for variations in climate and geological or geographic conditions.

National Public Toilet Map and app

As part of the National Continence Program, the [National Public Toilet Map](https://toiletmap.gov.au/) <<https://toiletmap.gov.au/>> and app provide information on over 19,000 public toilets across Australia, including information about each toilet such as its accessibility features, opening hours and type of toilets. The map includes icons for both Changing Places facilities and Adult Change facilities.

Universal Design

Universal Design involves making built environments, facilities, information, policies, products, programs, and services accessible for all people and abilities from the beginning of the design stage and onwards.

Victorian Infrastructure Plan

The **Victorian Infrastructure Plan** is the Victorian Government's response to Infrastructure Victoria's 30-year Infrastructure Strategy. It presents priorities and future directions in nine key sectors: transport; culture, community, and sport; digital connectivity; education and training; energy; environment; water; health and human services; and justice and emergency services.

Appendix 1: Accreditation Process for Changing Places funding round 2023

Purpose

To ensure that all Changing Places funded by the Victorian Government during 2023 funding round are built and accredited as Changing Places facilities, in accordance with the **Changing Places Design Specification 2020**.

All funded organisations are required to engage a Changing Places Assessor, to facilitate the accreditation process and issue a Statement of Compliance upon completion of their built facility.

Alternative Layouts or Variations to the Requirements may be approved, provided the design has been assessed and confirmed to be compliant, and approved by a Changing Places Assessor and the department prior to commencement of any works.

Background

The Victorian government has provided funding during 2022-2023 to construct an Changing Places facilities across Victoria to support its ongoing commitment to inclusive and accessible communities.

Basis for Accreditation

All Changing Places must be accredited by a Changing Places Assessor. The accreditation process ensures that Changing Places are built to specifications, so that users can be confident that the design is fit for purpose.

Accreditation provides venue owners with peace of mind, knowing that if they build to the **Changing Places Design Specification 2020**, they will be compliant with the National Construction Code 2019 requirements for Accessible Adult Change Facilities (F2.9 and Specification F2.9), if applicable.

Only accredited Changing Places facilities are permitted to use the Changing Places branding (name and logo), signage and can be listed on the Changing Places Australia website.

Changing Places Assessors

A Changing Places Assessor is a person suitably qualified to assess a Changing Places toilet to for accreditation.

Funded organisations must engage a Changing Places Assessor, and advise the department when this engagement has occurred, so their facility is accredited as a Changing Place.

Changing Places Assessors can be found on the [Changing Places Australia website](https://changingplaces.org.au/engage-an-assessor/)
<<https://changingplaces.org.au/engage-an-assessor/>>

Funded organisations must engage a Changing Places Assessor prior to the construction of a Changing Places facility to assess project documentation at the following three stages:

- Stage 1: Schematic Design
- Stage 2: Construction Documentation
- Stage 3: As-Built Final Review.

This three-stage process identifies issues or concerns at the early stages of the building process to ensure that Changing Places facilities are built to the correct design specifications.

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Statement of Compliance

Once the Changing Places Assessor has assessed the facility and is satisfied it meets the requirements of the Changing Places Design Specification 2020, they will issue the funded organisation with a Statement of Compliance. The funded organisation is responsible for providing the department with a copy of its Statement of Compliance.

Three Stage Accreditation Process

Step 1: Schematic Design

The Changing Places Assessor will assess the documents and information provided by the funded organisation and complete the Changing Places Performance Specification Checklist - Schematic Design Stage word document. Upon approval by the Changing Places Assessor, the funded organisation can start to prepare its construction documents for approval.

Note: in instances where the proposed design does not comply, the Changing Places Assessor will provide advice to the funded organisation outlining the steps required to achieve compliance.

Step 2: Construction Documentation

The Changing Places Assessor will assess the documents and information (including relevant Product Specification Brochures) provided by the funded organisation and completes the Changing Places Performance Specification Checklist – Construction Documentation Stage word document. Upon approval by the Changing Places Assessor, the funded organisation can commence construction of the Changing Places facility.

Note: in instances where construction documentation does not comply with design requirements, the Changing Places Assessor will provide advice to the funded organisation outlining the steps required to achieve compliance.

Step 3: As-Built Final Review and accreditation

The Changing Places Assessor will complete their assessment using the Changing Places Performance Specification Checklist – As-Built Review Stage word document. This assessment includes an on-site inspection and or review of relevant photos to ensure the facility complies with Changing Places requirements.

If compliance is achieved, the Changing Places Assessor will certify the facility as a Changing Places facility. The Changing Places Assessor issues a **Statement of Compliance** to the funded organisation.

The funded organisation provides a copy of its Statement of Compliance to the department and to register the facility on the Changing Places Australia website and the National Public Toilet map an on-line registration is required. [Changing Places Australia registration](https://changingplaces.org.au/build-a-changing-places/register-your-facility)
<<https://changingplaces.org.au/build-a-changing-places/register-your-facility>>.

Note: in instances where the built facility documentation does not comply with design requirements, the Changing Places Assessor will provide advice to the funded organisation outlining the steps required to achieve compliance.

Definitions

Alternative layout

Alternative layouts provide different design options to the standard layouts. They still meet the requirements of the **Changing Places Design Specification 2020** by achieving the required

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circulation spaces and hoist coverage for each component. A Changing Places Assessor can approve an alternative layout.

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Appendix 2: Local government areas without a Changing Places toilet as at 9 February 2023

Name of LGA

- Borough of Queenscliff
- City of Maribyrnong
- Golden Plains Shire
- Pyrenees Shire
- Rural City of Ararat
- Rural City of Benalla
- Rural City of Swan Hill
- Shire of Buloke
- Shire of Hepburn
- Shire of Hindmarsh
- Shire of Loddon
- Shire of Mansfield
- Shire of Mount Alexander
- Shire of Moyne
- Shire of Northern Grampians
- Shire of Strathbogie
- Shire of Towong
- Shire of Wellington
- Shire of West Wimmera
- Shire of Yarriambiack
- South Gippsland Shire

8.3 FINANCIAL REPORTS

Nil

8.4 ORGANISATIONAL REPORTS

Nil

8.5 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

Nil

9. OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 NOTICES OF MOTION

Nil

9.2 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Nil

9.3 URGENT BUSINESS

Nil

9.4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.5 MATTERS WHICH MAY EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC**RECOMMENDATION:**

That pursuant to section 66(1) and (2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020* the meeting be closed to the public to consider the following reports that are considered to contain confidential information on the grounds provided in section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* as indicated:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 9.5.1 C116 2022/23 WYCHEPROOF LIBRARY
UPGRADE TENDER EVALUATION PANEL
REPORT | (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 |
|--|---|

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council reopens the meeting to the public pursuant to section 66(1) and (2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

10. MEETING CLOSE